

# Cantos on "one bit of cloud at Shamanka Mountain"

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# CANTOS ON «ONE BIT OF CLOUD AT SHAMANKA MOUNTAIN»

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## 1. Introduction: «Shamanka Mountain is High»

Eight cantos to the tune of the song «One Bit of Cloud at Shamanka Mountain» (*Wu shan i tuan yün* 巫山一段雲) survive. All of these were written at about the same time by four poets, two cantos (*tz'u* 詞) in the form of double stanzas from the pen of each of them. The poets are Li Yeh 李嶠 [T'ang Chao Tsung 唐昭宗] (867–904), Mao Wen-hsi 毛文錫 (fl. 913), Li Hsün 李珣 (fl. 896), and Ou-yang Chiung 歐陽炯 (896–971). Li Yeh's cantos have the syllabic count 5.5.7.5/6.6.7.5. The cantos of the other three have the count 5.5.7.5/5.5.7.5.

A song with this name was taught in the royal academy of song and dance – the so-called «Instruction Quarter» (*chiao fang* 教坊) – in the eighth century,<sup>2</sup> and it is possible that the same tune survived along with the title and syllabic pattern until the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century, when our four writers were active.

This article is a study of the language and content of the eight survivors, preceded by a brief account of their antecedents and by a translation of an authoritative biography of the Divine Woman they all, in some manner, celebrate. The latter is Taoist hagiography, distilled out of many traditions, both profane and arcane. It is the work of a contemporary of our poets, the celebrated prelate and prolific writer on religious themes, Tu Kuang-t'ing 杜光庭 (850–933), who undoubtedly counted some of their authors among his personal acquaintances at the court of Shu 蜀 in the tenth century. His devout history of the career of the goddess who, for him, was only briefly and trivially associated with Shamanka Mountain, helps us to understand the atmosphere of orthodox Taoism that invests at least two of the cantos and adds minor nuances to others.

The poetic history of the goddess begins with the two famous «rhapsodies» attributed to Sung Yü 宋玉, the *Kao T'ang fu* 高唐賦 and *Shen nü fu* 神女賦, which establish her as an enchanting but elusive spirit, wreathed in mists and rainbows, the tantalizing and transient consort of

the ancient kings of Ch'u.<sup>3</sup> In the interval between the composition of these two kaleidoscopic fantasies and the writing of the eight cantos – that is, from the Han to the T'ang inclusive – the Divine Woman was poetized chiefly in a style of «Music Archive» (*yüeh fu* 樂府) verse called «Shamanka Mountain is High» (*Wu shan kao* 巫山高). This literary tradition is directly ancestral to the cantos styled «One Bit of Cloud at Shamanka Mountain,» especially in theme and diction, although sometimes quite different in tone, and of course entirely different in metrical form. I do not know how many T'ang poems with this title are extant. A standard collection preserves only nine from the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties.<sup>4</sup> The same source contains thirteen examples by eleven T'ang poets – the same selection that represents the species in a special section of the «Complete T'ang Poetry.»<sup>5</sup> However, quite by chance, I have discovered others scattered through the pages of that great anthology that have been unaccountably omitted from the *yüeh fu* section. These include specimens written by Chang Chiu-ling 張九齡,<sup>6</sup> Yen Lipen 閻立本,<sup>7</sup> and Ch'en T'ao 陳陶.<sup>8</sup> Doubtless there are others which I have not noticed.

Not many of the *Wu shan kao* poems of the T'ang period have been translated – to say nothing of earlier periods – or so it appears. There is a fair sampling in my book *The Divine Woman*.<sup>9</sup> Otherwise I have come across only three.<sup>10</sup> Here too, others have undoubtedly eluded me.

Simple inspection reveals that the pre-T'ang examples of «Shamanka Mountain is High» follow the treatment of the theme in the two classical rhapsodies rather closely, although in the former the diction is more restricted and uncomplicated. The persona is not intrusive in these early versions: a muffled poet reflects wistfully on the age-old legend and the allusions suggested by the landscape in which it is set, either placidly in view or in absentia, in either case modified by the imagination. The scenery is presented briefly and conventionally – swirling mists on sodden slopes above the Yangtze; the traditional and presumably evocative place-names of ancient Ch'u; allusions to the wonders and charms of the southland. Such, in brief, are the *Wu shan kao* poems of the fifth century. The poets of the sixth century enriched this atmosphere somewhat. Particularly noticeable is the emergence of the ape<sup>11</sup> as an avatar of the deserted King of Ch'u – a lonely, grief-stricken howler hidden in the dripping foliage. This development appears to have been fairly rapid. Among our fifth century examples only one, that written by Wang Yung 王融 (469–493), anticipates the trend, and that only weakly. His double quatrain refers collectively to «apes and birds» as part of the natural setting

at Wu Shan, but no royal ape has been individualized. Still other ingredients were added to the poetic amalgam in the sixth century. These were specifically Taoist linguistic tokens – in particular, the general use of the epithet «transcendent (lifted above the moils of this world)» (*hsien* 仙) when referring to the ancient goddess. Such phrases as «divine transcendent» (*shen hsien* 神仙), used by Wang T'ai 王泰 (fl. ca. 471–519), «transcendent courtesan» (*hsien chi* 仙姬)<sup>12</sup> – a precursor of her regular name in T'ang, «Azure-gem Courtesan» (*yao chi* 瑶姬)<sup>13</sup> – used by Ch'en Shu-pao 陳叔寶 (that is, Ch'en Hou Chu 陳後主) (553–604), and «transcendent cloud» (*hsien yün* 仙雲), used by Hsiao Ch'üan 蕭詮 (apparently sixth century). But despite the invasion of a more sophisticated – or at least more modern – element of religious terminology,<sup>14</sup> the total effect was hardly revolutionary, and direct Taoist influence on the imagery remained minimal. The Shamanka Mountain poems of the Six Dynasties period are, taken as a whole, much less magical, mysterious and unearthly than those of the T'ang. Particularly noticeable is the absence from the scene of the prominent persona of the poet-pilgrim – a visitor to the shrine of the Divine Woman near the foot of her mountain, rapt by dreams and visions, bewildered by phantoms and illusions. He is a very common figure in T'ang poetry.

To illustrate the mature treatment of this variety of *yüeh fu* in the sixth century, I offer a rather plain translation of the version of Hsiao Ch'üan:<sup>15</sup>

Shamanka Mountain is reflected in Shamanka Gorge;  
 Height upon height – never once traversed to its end.  
 Langur sounds – one cannot define the place;  
 Rain colors – how to distinguish them from the sky?  
 At a hanging cliff – a moon that has lowered an osmanthus;<sup>16</sup>  
 In a deep ravine – a wind that echoes in the pines.<sup>17</sup>  
 There, set apart, a sylphine cloud lifts up;<sup>18</sup>  
 Incessantly it turns toward the palace of the King of Ch'u!

Consider, by way of contrast, an excellent specimen of the developed T'ang version of *Wu shan kao*, immersed in Taoist atmospherics, and quite comparable to the treatment of the subject in some of the *Wu shan i tuan yün* cantos and in the mythic elaborations of Tu Kuang-t'ing's ha-geography. In these the Divine Woman has become Azure-gem Courtesan, one of the eternal jade women who were crystallized out of the primordial breath, and nominally one of the daughters of the Royal Mother of the West. The poem was written by Ch'en T'ao:

Jade peaks – twelve halcyon-blue upthrusts:  
 Mother of Metal has blended clouds as a gift for



Azure-gem Courtesan.  
 Her flowered palace – a stony pile beyond the  
 Palace of Ch'u:  
 Ranks of transcendents face all eight ways – the  
 Starry Dipper hangs low.  
 Blooming, fair-faced, without a peer, she resents  
 the Three Gorges;  
 How often, in the spring wind, has she dreamed of  
 the Exalted King's hunt!  
 The blue simurgh is not present: she blows tenderly  
 on her syrinx,  
 Inscribes a poem on spotted bamboo to send to the  
 Consort of the Kiang.  
 Tossing and fluttering – filaments scatter in the  
 sky of the Thane of Pa;  
 Mossy aprons – reins of jade – pennants of pink  
 aurora –  
 Now as they return, White Thearch is covered with  
 green particles.  
 On snow-gem branches, straggling in disorder, are  
 traces of the haze of the Hsiang.

#### Commentary:

1. Alternate versions of this line are preserved in CTS. I prefer *ts'ui sung* 翠笋 to the *ch'ing yün* 青雲 preferred by the editors. According to tradition Shamanka Mountain has twelve peaks.
2. Mother of Metal (*chin mu* 金母) is a medieval Taoist title of Hsi Wang Mu. «Metal» symbolizes «West.»
3. «Flowered palace» (*hua kung* 花宮) refers to the dwelling place of the goddess. Li Po has written of a comparable one: «The Silver Ho flickers by the flowered palace»; he writes of the mansion of the Weaver Woman.<sup>19</sup>
4. The gift-bearing embassy hovers in a circle over the Divine Woman's mansion. Divine approval is indicated by the lowering of the potent stars of the Dipper. Compare the blessings betokened by the descent of the Sky River.<sup>20</sup>
5. Her beauty is unparalleled, but she lacks a worthy lover, and resents her confinement.
6. «Exalted King» (Hsiang Wang 襄王) is the title of the King of Ch'u with whom she was involved long ago.
7. The blue simurgh symbolizes Hsi Wang Mu.

8. *Chiang ch'ieh* 江姝, evidently the Consort of the Kiang (*Chiang fei* 江妃), for whom see *Divine Woman*, p. 38. She was one of the two children of God (*Ti* 帝), and the twin or alter-ego of the Consort of the Hsiang (*Hsiang fei* 湘妃). The spotted bamboo was marked by the tears of the two Consorts of the Hsiang, mourning for their husband Shun 舜.
9. These are the skies over the ancient nation of the Thane of Pa (*Pa tzu* 巴子). That lord ruled a small state on the Yangtze gorges upriver from Shamanka Mountain, approximately the Pa-tung-chün 巴東君 of Sui and the K'uei-chou 夔州 of T'ang.<sup>22</sup> In T'ang poetry there are references to the Thanedom of Pa, the Gorge of the Thane of Pa, the Residence of the Thane of Pa, and the Enceinte of the Thane of Pa, all referring to haunts of the Divine Woman. The fluttering filaments are the ribbons that festoon the cortege from K'un-lun, now returning home; they appear as wisps of clouds high up in the sky.
10. «Mossy apron» are probably the garments of the divine visitors. *T'ai ch'ang* 苔裳 reminds one of *t'ai i* 苔衣 «mossy dress», which means both the mosses and lichens that cover stones, and costumes suitable for a recluse or hermit.
11. «[The Enceinte] of the White Thearch (*Po ti [ch'eng]* 白帝城) is the name of a mountain in eastern Szechwan, represented as a residence of the white god of the west. The aerial procession looks down and sees the mountain spotted with patches of green vegetation.
12. «Snow-gem» is *ch'iung* 瓊, which in antiquity referred to a red gemstone, identity uncertain; accordingly I have often translated it as «rose-gem» (cf. English. «rhodonite»). But to many, perhaps most, T'ang poets the hue had been lost, and *ch'iung* was a fairy-white gem, often representing the white blooms on apricot trees and the like, easily mistaken for snow, or vice versa. In *Chuang tzu* 莊子, «I p'ien» 逸篇, these are the branches of a great cosmic tree with jewelled fruit, for instance fruit consisting of *lang-kan* 琅玕.

The «haze» of the Hsiang indicates the spiritual presence of the protean goddesses of the Kiang and the Hsiang.

The scenario underlying these three quatrains is roughly as follows:

I. A company of transcendent beings bring an artifact made of clouds by the Royal Mother of the West as a gift to the Divine Woman of Shamanka Mountain.

II. The latter is still inconsolable for the prolonged absence of her old lover, the King of Ch'u. She distracts herself by playing music, and writing to her sister.

III. The divine cavalcade rises high above the dwindling panorama, and returns to K'un-lun.

Particularly noteworthy here, in addition to the infusion of Taoist images and allusions, is the reversal of roles – traditionally it is the King of Ch'u who longs for the coy, indifferent, or haughty oread.

## 2. «The Lady of the Cloud Flowers»

The poem just translated shows the assimilation of elements of the accepted hagiography of Mao Shan Taoism in its developed T'ang form to the old tradition of Shamanka Mountain. As this injection applies to the literary image of the Divine Woman in particular, we may inspect the amalgam in its most refined and enriched form in the rationalized version of her myth, composed with conservative elegance by Tu Kuang-t'ing in his polished set of histories of Taoist peris styled «Register of the Transcendents Gathered in the Castellated Enceinte.»<sup>23</sup> This reveals to us the elevated version of the Divine Woman familiar to educated persons of the late T'ang. In addition to a new role as divine preceptress of the culture hero Yü 禹, mover of mountains, this account presents her, while still invested with her archaic glamor, in a purified and ennobled guise – a deity equipped with awesome wisdom and power. It is this image of the goddess that colors, sometimes vividly and enthusiastically, sometimes minimally and reluctantly, the confessions of the writers of *tz'u* of the ninth and tenth centuries, including the lyrics written to the tune of «One Bit of Cloud at Shamanka Mountain.» Here is Master Tu's account of her:

The Lady of Cloud Flowers (Yün hua fu-jen 雲華夫人) is the twenty-third daughter of the Royal Mother, and the younger sister of the Grand Realized Lady Wang (T'ai chen Wang fu-jen 太真王夫人).<sup>24</sup> Her name is Azure-gem Courtesan (Yao chi 瑤姬).<sup>25</sup> She received the Tao of «Mutation for Flight by Refining the Spirit, through the Matching and Synthesis of the Myriad Phosphors by the Whirlwind» (Hui feng hun ho wan ching lien shen fei hua 回風混合萬景練神飛化). Once she journeyed to the Eastern Sea.<sup>26</sup> On her return she passed above the Kiang, just where Shamanka Mountain is to be found: peaks and precipices – prominently upthrust; forested ravines – secluded<sup>26</sup> and ravishing; with a huge rock like a sacred stage<sup>27</sup> – flat and wide, and worthy of a discriminating taste. She prolonged her stay there for quite a while. Now the Great Yü, while organizing the waters, was lodged below that mountain. A great wind came suddenly upon him, shaking the cliffs and valleys, but with his impaired strength he was unable to constrain it. Chancing upon the Lady, he saluted her and sought her assistance. Straightway she enjoined a serving woman to give Yü the text for summoning the Hundred Spirits by means of yarrow stalks.<sup>28</sup> Then she commanded the spirits Mad Chang,<sup>29</sup> Yü-yü,<sup>30</sup> Yellow Demon,<sup>31</sup>

Great Mask,<sup>32</sup> G-Draco,<sup>33</sup> and T'ung Lü,<sup>34</sup> to assist Yü in splitting rocks, dispersing waves, disposing of blockages, and guiding through gorges, in order to smooth the [river's] flow. Yü thanked and saluted her. Yü once visited her on the pinnacle of the «Revered Stack.»<sup>35</sup> Just as he was staring around, wide-eyed, she was transformed, and became a stone. Sometimes she would swoop up in flight, as quick as a flash, and be dispersed in light clouds; then stop in a coagulation, or gather to make the evening rain. Sometimes she would mutate into a roving dragon, sometimes become a soaring crane: a thousand attitudes! a myriad aspects! she could in no way be fixed in the vision, nor could her constants be understood. Yü suspected that these were cunning grotesqueries and sly simulations, and that she was, in fact, neither Transcendent nor Realized. He asked T'ung Lü about this, and T'ung Lü said, «The root of Heaven and Earth is the Tao. To practise the phasing of the Tao is Genius.<sup>36</sup> But the category of Genius is subordinate to that of the Realized Person and the Transcendent Person. Instances of persons who achieved Realization through a natural endowment of Pneuma, and won to the Tao without self-cultivation, are the Patrician of Wood and the Mother of Metal,<sup>37</sup> who are surely the progenitors and begetters of the Two Pneumas,<sup>38</sup> the font and root of Yin and Yang, the lords and masters of transcendent and realized ones, and the primes and antecedents of the fashioned mutations.<sup>39</sup> The Lady of the Cloud Flowers is the daughter of Metal Mother. Long ago she took the Tao Lord of the Three Primes<sup>40</sup> as her teacher, and received the precious scriptures of Highest Clarity. On receiving these writings under the pylons of Purple Clarity,<sup>41</sup> she was made Lady of the Superior Palace of Cloud Flowers. Her charge was to direct the instruction of youthful gentlemen among the Realized Ones. Her organization was located at the Estrade of Jade Reflections.<sup>42</sup> A secret view of Evolution and Mutation<sup>43</sup> is surely normal for her. Moreover, it was by way of condensing her pneumas that she achieved realization, and conjoined her frame with the Tao. Indeed, she is not a form once lodged in a foetus, with an endowment of mutation<sup>44</sup> – rather she is the pneuma of the Lesser *Yin*<sup>45</sup> of Western Florescence.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, since the Pneuma pervades and interlaces Heaven and Earth, to make up the tissue and framework of moving and planted things<sup>47</sup> – so great as to embrace the fashioned mutations,<sup>48</sup> and so slender that it penetrates the finest hair – so surely it does not stop short of clouds and rain, dragons and cranes, swan-geese<sup>49</sup> in flight, or phoenixes swooping upward!» Yü agreed with this, and went once more to pay her a visit. Suddenly he saw tall cloudy buildings on estrades of jade, and azure-gem palaces with rose-gem pylons, reaching forest-like up to the sky. There were numinous officers and attendant guards who could neither be named nor recognized. Lions brooded at the pylons, sky horses opened the way for him. There were venomous dragons and lightning beasts. The Eight Daunters<sup>50</sup> were ready at his coach. The Lady sat at feast high on her Azure-gem Estrade. Yü knocked his head, and asked about the Tao. She summoned Yü, let him sit, and spoke as follows «Lo! when the Peerless Artisan was initially exalted, He split the monadic stuff of Grand Homogeneity<sup>52</sup> to make a lac of myriads of structures,<sup>53</sup> and sent forth the monadic capsule of the Great Hoard,<sup>54</sup> scattering it as inexhaustible creatures. Then, once he had paced through the Three Lights,<sup>55</sup> he fixed their positions with the gnomon's shadow,<sup>56</sup> and once he had sealed off the Nine Precincts, he held them in check with states and nations. The graduated clepsydra served to separate night and day. Cold and heat served to achieve the sequence of years. . .<sup>57</sup> served to rectify the square surface [of the earth]. Mountains and

rivers served to divide the hazardous from the easy. Enceintes and barbicans served to assemble the folk. Arms and machines served to guard the hosts. Carriages and costumes served to reveal nobility and commonalty. Rice and millet served to prepare against malignancy and dearth. All of these formal constraints were implanted by the starry chronograms<sup>58</sup> above, while finding their prototypes among the divinely realized ones.<sup>59</sup> Below they are sustained by creatures possessing form. For these reasons in sun and moon there is occultation and luminosity; in life and death there is cold and heat; in thunder and lightning flash there is an appointed time for issue and entry; in wind and rain there is a regularity of motion and stasis. While the clear pneuma floats in the heights, the turbid pneuma drifts in the depths. The numerology of dissolution and exaltation, the phasing of order and disorder, the native stuff of ignorance and competence, the temperaments of goodness and wickedness, the pneumas of rigidity and pliancy, the ordainments of longevity and mortal frailty, the positions of nobility and commonalty, the precedence of reverence and humility, the resonance of benignity and malignancy, the periodicity of destitution and attainment – these are implanted by the Tao, and sent down by Heaven; such are the lifelines of the Supermen. As a man's nature emanates from Heaven, so its Ordination is completed in man. What establishes him is Heaven. What activates him is the Tao. If the Tao is preserved, he exists. If the Tao is removed, he does not exist. Without the Tao no creature can be preserved. Without self-cultivation the Tao can not be achieved. There is a saying of the Mysterious Lao<sup>60</sup>: 'Achieve vacuity to the utmost; guard immobility with zeal: the Myriad Creatures will then be spontaneously restored.'<sup>61</sup> 'Restored' means 'being returned to the Tao, one is preserved continually.' The function of the Tao is to evolve and transmute the myriad contingencies without losing its own unity. It is for this reason that Heaven is in the Triad as darkest of darks;<sup>62</sup> Earth is in the Triad as homogeneous yellow;<sup>63</sup> Man is in the Triad as the virtue of the Tao. But truly, putting these aside, what single creature is not set fast in the Tao? So it is forever. Now the core of it is this: Heaven treasures its darkness; Earth conserves its creatures; Man nurtures his [vital] breath. In this way all is kept whole. So a person's fate lies in that person. It is not that Heaven or Earth kills him, or that ghosts or spirits destroy him. Having lost the Tao, he automatically passes away. Indeed you are determined! Indeed you are zealous! So your honorable service has now reached [all] creatures! Your zeal has now been extended to [all] folk! Your goodness is now on a par with Heaven! Yet I have heard nothing of attaining the core of the Tao. My teacher, the Tao Lord of Three Primes, said, 'The Inner Scripture of the Highest Realized [Ones]<sup>64</sup> is treasured by the Celestial Realized [Ones]. It is kept under seal at the Golden Estrade, and they gird themselves with it when they enter Grand Tenuity.'<sup>65</sup> Then their cloudy wheels wend above, while divine champions invest their barricades. They shake their garments at an azure-gem chamber,<sup>66</sup> and ramble to feasts in a forest of divine mushrooms.<sup>67</sup> On the left, they summon the transcendent lords; on the right, they perch on the white mountains,<sup>68</sup> from which they may gaze entranced at Grand Hollow.<sup>69</sup> They drift on the Ford of Heaven<sup>70</sup> before mounting clouds and driving their dragons at dash for a tour of these notable mountains. There the Realized Persons visit their apartments; a myriad of spirits offer themselves as guards; the elementals of the mountains<sup>71</sup> watch for them and make them welcome. For motion they have jade palanquins of eight phosphors;<sup>72</sup> when at rest they take their places at feasts in a golden hall. This<sup>73</sup> has also been called 'Most Miraculous Text of the Jade Pen-



dants and Gold Bangles.<sup>74</sup> You will desire to pass above huge seas without tempest wheels;<sup>75</sup> to get across flying sands without a cloud coach;<sup>76</sup> to climb paths in gorges without the means to lift yourself; to wade through mud and waves without the means to transport yourself. On land you will be inhibited by far-sundering distances; on sea you will be fearful of being wave-tossed and engulfed. With what will you find your way through a hundred valleys, or get safely over a myriad rivers? What perils! What cares! But if the Most High<sup>77</sup> should take pity on you, and if he should make you a gift of the Realized Text of Numen and Gem,<sup>78</sup> by land you could whip tigers and leopards,<sup>79</sup> and by water you could constrain krakens and dragons. You could cut off the heads of a thousand demons as your trophies, and bring a flock of malignancies under your custody and constraint. So might you achieve success in your exploits! But that [book] lies in the Heaven of Solar Luminosity.<sup>80</sup> However, the treasured writings that I have received make it possible to enter or depart from water and fire, to whistle up [beings] shrouded in tenebrity and curse them, to bring and bind tigers and leopards, to call and summon the Six Ting,<sup>81</sup> to walk the land muffled and hidden from sight, to turn the Five Stars<sup>82</sup> upside down. Your vision will be prolonged and your body preserved<sup>83</sup> – indeed, to be subverted only with the heavens!» Then she gave orders to her serving woman Ling Jung-hua 陵容華, commanding her to produce a satchel of jade and cinnabar, which she opened [to take out] the «Treasured Text of Highest Clarity,»<sup>84</sup> which she bestowed on Yü. Yü accepted it with a salute and departed. Then he got the help of G-Draco and Yü Yü,<sup>85</sup> and so was able to set the waves on the right way, and to clear passages for the rivers, for the completion of his worthy enterprise. He gave reverence to the Five Marchmounts,<sup>86</sup> and separated the Nine Insular [Regions],<sup>87</sup> whereupon Heaven bestowed a Mystic Wand upon him, and made him a Realized Person of the Purple Court.<sup>88</sup>

After that, Sung Yü 宋玉, a grandee of Ch'u, spoke to the Exalted King<sup>89</sup> about these matters. But the king was unable to discover the core of the Tao as a means to search for eternal life. He built a platform at the hostel of Kao T'ang,<sup>90</sup> and there constructed the Palace of Yang T'ai,<sup>91</sup> in which to make sacrifices to her. Sung Yü made the «Rhapsody on the Divine Woman»<sup>92</sup> in which he allegorized the wildness and intemperance of such passions, lodging their filthiness and dissipation in his verses. Truly, the High Realized Ones and Upper Transcendents can never be made to descend by false testimony!

There is a fane on the lower part of the mountain. In our times it is called «The Great Transcendent.» On an interjacent bank<sup>93</sup> there is a «Stone of the Divine Woman,» which is a transmutation of her body. There is also the Heavenly Revered One in stone.<sup>94</sup> At the side of the altar [«sacred stage»] of the Divine Woman there is an overhanging bamboo which resembles a broom. Should any flying things or decaying leaves alight on the altar, the bamboo, relying on the wind, sweeps them away. Throughout the year it is limpid and clean – nothing will make it dirty. In Ch'u, generation after generation has made sacrifice there.

### 3. «One Bit of Cloud at Shamanka Mountain»

The idea of a «scenario» underlying a specific «libretto» such as the one sketched for Ch'en T'ao's poem above can sometimes be usefully applied



to whole classes of poems, particularly those of the *yüeh fu* and *tz'u* genres, where there is an inducement or challenge to the poet to compose a fascinating variation on a conventional plot.<sup>95</sup> In the case of «One Bit of Cloud at Shamanka Mountain» only the sketchiest and most general of outlines will accomodate the surviving eight cantos. To achieve minimal accounting for detail and development it seems necessary to distinguish three traditions, each with its own distinct plot:

### *I. The Pilgrim at the Shrine*

(A T'ang amplification of the *Wu shan kao* tradition.)

1. The persona is a suitor at the fane of the goddess at Shamanka Mountain.
2. He observes ambiguous tokens of her presence.
3. He hears the miserable complaint of the ape-king.
4. He is left uncertain.

(Realizations: Li Yeh No. 1, Mao Wen-hsi No. 1, Li Hsün No. 1, Li Hsün No. 2)

### *II. The Deserted Lover*

(An ancient theme injected into the form, with increasing secularization; but the latter is not always present, e.g. in the *Nü kuan tzu* cantos where the atmosphere is consistently supernatural.)

1. The persona broods over the absence of love.
2. Frustrated longings.

(Realizations: Li Yeh No. 2, Ou-yang Chiung No. 2)

### *III. Celestial Identities*

(The heroine is assimilated to some Taoist or other astral divinity. This must be considered the most «advanced» permutation of the theme, although «The Deserted Lover» seems to have become dominant in Sung times.)

No fixed scenario: celestial or Taoist aspects.

(Mao Wen-hsi No. 2, Ou-yang Chiung No. 1)

#### *Li Yeh No. 1*

Haunting! that being among the clouds!

Voluptuous! that person above the waves!

When the net-gauze of her sleeve is raised aslant it agitates dust and dirt.

Luminous! ravishing! in insupportable springtime!

Halcyon earlocks, evening makeup – as mists thicken:  
 Hushed and lonely at the Solar Platform – the unique dream!  
 Icy pupils, lotus cheeks – seen eternally renewed:  
 At Shamanka Gorge – who else could there be?

Commentary:

1. A phantom materializes in the mists over the Kiang.
2. It assumes a lovely form.
3. It twitches its celestial garment, agitating crass earthly things.
4. This lovely figure perfuses the air with the spirit of spring (i.e. Eros): unbearable longings.
5. Her features congeal out of the vapors.
6. She is revealed as the Divine Woman dreamed of at Yang T'ai long ago.
7. She is immortal: her semblance can be conjured up even now, like that of Helen in «Dr. Faustus.»
8. Who else could be present at this epiphany? Only the ghost of the King of Ch'u – or the persona as his surrogate?

*Li Yeh No. 2*

A butterfly dance – snow in the Pear Garden;  
 Bushwarblers cry – willows girded with mist.  
 Fading sun on a small pool – it glamorizes the  
     sunlit sky;  
 Ramie Mountain – and mountains beyond.  
 The Blue Bird does not come: misery in the extreme  
 To endure the sight of a pair of Aix intertwined.  
 The spring wind is wholly in step with the heart of  
     one whose years are few:  
 I barricade my feelings – but [silent] rancor is  
     not taboo!

Commentary:

1. The pear Garden was the site of T'ang Hsüan Tsung's royal academy of song and dance: butterflies, snowflakes, young dancers, pear-blossom petals – all interchangeable – a ballet of delicate, white, winged beings.
2. The sweet-voiced, inconspicuous warblers perform invisibly in the misted willows.
3. The sunglade on the pond miniaturizes – and humanizes – the rays of the dying sun in the evening sky. Intimations of separation.

4. Ramie Mountain (Chu-lo Shan 茅蘿山) was the birthplace of Hsi Shih 西施, the immortal Helen of Wu and Yüeh, born to a poor woodcutter. Her counterpart is here, at another mountain; neither can be completely explored.
5. The Blue Bird is the messenger and harbinger of Hsi Wang Mu, often announcing a divine rendez-vous or revelation (here there is a brief injection of Taoist atmosphere – the prospect of a divine lover).
6. «Aix» is the generic name of the beautiful Mandarin Duck (the American Wood Duck is congeneric), emblematic of true love consummated. «Mandarin Duck» seems a bit turgid and pompous for such gemmy creatures.
7. The persona, evidently a palace woman, possibly a royal ballerina, finds her young heart in tune with the mating season.
8. But she experiences only bitter frustration.

*Mao Wen-hsi No. 1*

Rain clears away above Shamanka Mountain;  
 Clouds are lightened – they glint against the cyan sky.  
 Winds from afar blow them to bits – they link up once  
 more  
 In front of the twelve evening peaks.  
 Darkness and damp, at the tree of the howling gibbon,  
 But a high globe, on the boat of the passing visitor.  
 Sunrise after sunrise, sunset after sunset, at the  
 edge of the Kiang in Ch'u –  
 How often has [anyone] brought down the Divine  
 Transcendent?

Commentary:

1. Rain was the precursor or presence of the Divine Woman, descended from her high home.
2. The remnants of nimbus clouds are her traces.
3. Their permutations represent her protean character.
4. Evening has come on. (Traditionally the mountain was a cluster of twelve peaks; the goddess's sanctum was at the central one, although the date of this part of the tradition is uncertain.)
5. The disconsolate ape-king is confined in obscurity – like that of death.
6. «Globe» represents *lung* 籠 «cage», that is, a spherical lantern of perforated metal, presumably at the masthead of the pilgrim's boat as it approaches the shrine. He is a rival of the abandoned king, and has the advantage of light and life.

7. This verse begins with a direct quotation from the *Kao T'ang fu*. Here the indirect reference is to the eternal revivification of the goddess.
8. The persona wonders: has *any* suitor ever caught more more than a fleeting glimpse of her. (As «Divine Transcendent» she is here invested with the attributes of a Taoist super-being.)

*Mao Wen-hsi No. 2*

A semblance covers the colors of Shamanka Mountain:  
 It has just crossed these waves that have washed  
     polychrome damask.  
 Who is it that takes up a brush, ascends the Silver  
     Ho,  
 And limns Ch'ang-o inside the moon?  
 Thin-spread she applies the lead powder;  
 Full-blown she hangs her white-damask net.  
 The dreaming soul of the servant of the sweet-flag  
     flowers is prolific –  
 Years and eons in the employ of the Primal Harmony!<sup>96</sup>

Commentary:

1. A cloudy shape bleaches the colors of Shamanka Mountain.
2. She passes above the Yangtze which, above at Ch'eng-tu, is the river in which the Szechwanese rinse their fine damasks, and so is there called Chin Chiang 錦江.
3. She slides up the Milky Way with her makeup kit.
4. She renews the crystalline moon-stuff as she paints her face.
5. She uses the traditional foundation – snowy ceruse.
6. She drapes herself in fine white damask (contrast the earthly polychrome).
7. So she realizes the illusionist dreams of the nocturnal king of *Lieh tzu*.<sup>97</sup>
8. She has brought *yin* to its climax in the eternal cycle of *yin-yang* phases.

*Li Hsün No. 1*

Here is a stranger crossing Shamanka Gorge:  
 He rests his oars, facing the water's verge.  
 A King of Ch'u once dreamed of Azure-gem  
     Courtesan here;  
 The whole dream is blurred – no tryst is fixed.  
 In dusty darkness a beaded screen is rolled up;  
 Incense fades, halcyon curtains are lowered.  
 The west wind turns my head – insupportable grief!  
 Sunset rain sprinkles the vacant fane.

## Commentary:

1. A suitor comes by boat to Shamanka Mountain.
2. He pauses near the shore in wonder.
3. (The basic legend.)
4. The old king's aspirations have faded with his person. Those of the stranger are obscure.
5. As night falls, he rolls up the screen of his cabin to watch.
6. The incense he burned is exhausted; blue curtains shut off the darkening scene.
7. He lets the wind turn the prow of his boat away; he is sad with disappointment.
8. The only trace of the goddess is a spatter of rain.

*Li Hsün No. 2*

Her ancient temple leans against a blue-green barrier;  
 My mobile palace is pillowed on the cyan flow.  
 Water sound and mountain color lock up her high  
     boudoir –  
 Bygone things are dim and distant in my mind.  
 Clouds and rain – dawn and evening too;  
 Mist and flowers – spring as well as autumn.  
 A shrieking gibbon: why must it approach my lonely  
     boat?  
 The wayfaring stranger is himself full of gloom.<sup>98</sup>

## Commentary:

1. The shrine of the Divine Woman presses against the cliff in Shamanka Gorge.
2. My well-appointed boat rests on the dark Yangtze.
3. Her real home is far back in the mysterious mountains.
4. I brood about her ancient legend.
5. Her attributes (quoting *Kao T'ang fu*).
6. Her allure is the same at all seasons.
7. The dead king's spirit, in rapport with mine, approaches.
8. But I am already as unhappy as he.

*Ou-yang Chiung No. 1*

A perfected child – one who has climbed to the rose-  
     gold pylons –  
 In a tossing turbulence she reins in a painted simurgh.  
 Wind and rain from the cyan void are zoned with  
     light and cold:

Gathering in her sleeve-cuffs she descends the  
tag-ends of the clouds.  
Drapery for the moon – her auroras of daybreak  
are thin;  
Crowned with stars – clusters of jade stamens.  
She roves far off to P'eng Seamount, [even] descends  
among humans;  
But her unique aim is to salute the draconic features!

Commentary:

1. «Rose-gold» is *chiang* 絳, originally a red-yellow pigment containing gambodge, sometimes translated «orange» or «scarlet». (See «The Capeline Cantos», p. 22.) In Taoist texts I have sometimes translated it «rose-gold», to suggest its association with dazzling cosmic energies and glittering alchemical processes. In the microcosm, the «Rose-gold Pylons» are the watchtowers of the Rose-gold Palace of the earth. For this usage, see «Cantos on Pacing the Void», n. 98. Compare the construction «realized child» (*chen tzu* 真人), and its full Taoist connotation, with the old phrase «god's child» (*ti tzu* 帝子) referring to the goddess of the central Kiang and the Hsiang.
2. Her tempest car – the vehicle of Taoist divinities – is drawn by a magical, many-colored bird.
3. She exhibits the tokens of her origin in the glare and intense cold of the depths of space.
4. She prepares for her appearance in the lower worlds.
5. Her garment is pink gossamer woven of dawn-stuff, through which even the pallid moon is visible. (For the auroral capes of Taoist priestesses and their divine counterparts, see «Capeline Cantos», p. 30.)
6. Taoist priestesses and goddesses wore star-studded caps. See «Capeline Cantos», p. 29. «Clusters of jade stamens» are the gemmy constellations of her crown – pure white mineral stamens terminating in jewelled stars. Here we see the archaic fertility goddess fully transmuted into an astral queen of medieval Taoism whose true home is a palace among the stars.
7. She roves at will through the sea-girt island-homes of lower Transcendents and even deigns to visit the world of men.
8. Above all, her ambition is to look upon the radiant face of the master of the universe. She has evolved far beyond the rainbow vision who mated with a kinglet of the late Bronze Age.



*Ou-yang Chiung No. 2*

Spring is gone – autumn is here indeed!  
 My sombre heart is like one toxic with drink.  
 At the time of her going – a compact, inviting the  
     early return of her [carriage] wheels,  
 But when she left, then – did it ever happen?  
 Her song fan: flowered points of light;  
 The pearls of her dress: renewed as dripping tears.  
 Resentful that my body may not be converted into the  
     dust on her car,  
 That I might follow that lady for a myriad miles!

## Commentary:

1. The springtime of love is followed by autumnal decay: is the absent lady human or divine?
2. I am dazed by the inevitable separation.
3. It seemed then that we would surely meet again.
4. But now – it is far from certain.
5. A «song fan» was used by a singer to accent the rhythms and highlights of her performance. He imagines that he sees its jewelled surface in the flickering candlelight.
6. Her pearls and my tears are seen in the wax droplets of the candle.
7. Cf. «Less than the dust, beneath thy Chariot wheel.» (Laurence Hope, *India's Love Lyrics* [New York and London, 1919], p. 1.)
8. However abased, I would prefer her company to this misery.

## Notes:

- 1 See *Ch'üan T'ang shih* 全唐詩 (Fu-hsing shu-chü 復興書局, Taipei, 1967), han 12, ts'e 10. (Hereafter abbreviated to CTS.)
- 2 Ts'ui Ling-ch'in 崔令欽, *Chiao fang chi* 教坊記 (in *T'ang tai ts'ung shu* 唐代叢書, Taipei, 1968), pp. 357–362. A tune with the name «Woman of Shamanka Mountain» (*Wu shan nü* 巫山女) is also listed in the repertory, but no examples of lyrics written to it survive, to my knowledge. The list contains the names of a great many familiar *tz'u* titles: *Wang Chiang nan* 望江南, *Ho tu shen* 河湟神, and *Lin Chiang hsien* 臨江仙, to name only a few; but there are many others for which no texts are extant.

- 3 For a summary of her classical image, see E. H. Schafer, *The Divine Woman: Dragon Ladies and Rain Maidens in T'ang Literature* (University of California Press, 1973), pp. 34–38 (also pp. 43–48 of the paperback edition published by North Point Press in 1980). See p. 3 for the word «shamanka». Among many important contributions to this subject, see especially David Hawkes, «The Quest of the Goddess», *Asia Major*, 13 (1967), 71–94, and Wen I-to 聞一多, «Kao-t'ang shen-nü shuo chih fen-hsi» 高唐神女說之分析, *Ch'ing-hua hsüeh-pao* 清華學報, 10 (1935), 837–865. Wen I-to has also discovered hitherto unrecognized traces of her presence in the *Shih ching*.
- 4 *Yüeh fu shih chi* 樂府詩集 (Szu pu ts'ung k'an 四部叢刊 ed.), ch. 17. They are said to have been set to a Han military tune of the *nao ko* 鐢歌 type.
- 5 CTS, han 1, ts'e 4.
- 6 CTS, han 1, ts'e 9, pp. 3a–3b.
- 7 CTS, han 1, ts'e 8, p. 7a.
- 8 CTS, han 11, ts'e 4, ch. 1, p. 12a.
- 9 By Chang Chiu-ling, Yü Fen 于夔, Li Ho 李賀, and Ch'i-chi 齊己. There are also fragments of others: one quatrain of Yen Li-pen's version, and one couplet each from those of Shen Ch'üan-ch'i 沈佺期 and Meng Chiao 孟郊.
- 10 The Li Ho version, translated in J. D. Frodsham, *The Poems of Li Ho (791–817)* (Oxford, 1970), p. 196; one by Lu Chao-lin 盧照鄰 translated by Robin D. S. Yates, in Wu-chi Liu and Irving Y. Lo, eds., *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry* (Anchor Books, New York, 1975), pp. 85–86; the complete version of Shen Ch'üan-ch'i translated by Suzanne E. Cahill in her unpublished paper «Lyrics to the Tune of 'The Transcendent who Overlooks the River',» Berkeley, California, 1977, pp. 4–5.
- 11 *Yüan* 猿, a gibbon or langur, both long-armed arboreal creatures, wearing clown-like masks.
- 12 «Courtesan» in the double sense of court lady and tart (the latter connotation became quite prominent by T'ang times). See, for instance, E. H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (University of California Press, 1963), p. 21 and especially no. 125 (p. 284). In the context alluded to there, I translated *chi* as «hour».
- 13 See below.
- 14 Although the word *hsien* goes back to Han times at least, by the fourth century, if not earlier, it had become formalized in the vocabulary of organized Taoist religion.
- 15 *Yüeh fu shih chi*, 17, 2a.
- 16 *Yüeh kuei* 月桂. That is, the moon has deposited its own tree on the sacred hillside.
- 17 In such poetry as this, the sound of the wind is always a symbol of a pneuma, a spirit, a Presence.
- 18 Or «transcendent cloud»; see above. This is, of course, the Divine Woman herself, always immersed in her fertile mists.
- 19 Li Po 李白, «Ch'iu yeh su Lung men hsiang shan szu chi Wang fang ch'eng shih ch'i chang feng kuo ying shang jen tsung ti yu ch'eng ling wen» 秋夜宿龍門香山寺寄王方城十七丈奉國瑩上人從弟勣成令問, CTS, han 3, ts'e 5, ch. 12, p. 2b.
- 20 See E. H. Schafer, «The Sky River», *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 94 (1974), 407.
- 21 *Tso chuan* 左傳, Huan 桓 9 (711 B.C.) reports that the Thane of Pa sent an emissary to his powerful neighbor Ch'u 楚.

- 23 Tu Kuang-t'ing, *Yung ch'eng chi hsien lu* 塘城集仙錄 (HY 782), ch. 3. («HY» represents Wen Tu-chien, *Combined Indices to the Authors and Titles of Books in Two Collections of Taoist Literature* [Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series No. 25, 1935], pp. 1-37.) For an account of Tu's career, see Imaeda Jirō 今枝二郎, «To Kōtei shō-kyō» 杜光庭小考, *Yoshioka hakase kanreki kin-en, Dōkyō kenkyū ronshū: 'Dōkyō no shisō to bunka'* 吉岡博士還暦記念道教研究論集 道教の思想と文化, (Tokyo, 1977), pp. 523-532.
- 24 This elder sister is listed among the divinities in T'ao Hung-ching 陶弘景, *Tung hsüan ling pao chen ling wei yeh t'u* 洞玄靈寶直靈位集圖 (HY 167), p. 6a.
- 25 For this and other attributes of the Divine Woman of Shamanka Mountain (*Wu Shan Shen Nü* 巫山神女) see *Divine Woman*, pp. 34-38. (There I styled her «Turquoise Courtesan».)
- 26 I.e. to P'eng-lai.
- 27 «Secluded» is *yu* 幽, basically «shrouded; occult,» with acquired overtones of «remote, uncommon, exclusive,» even «aristocratic». «Sacred stage» is *t'an* 壇, usually translated «altar»; it is the platform or arena on which sacred dramas are performed.
- 28 *Ts'e* 策, synonymous with *shih* 蓍, the holy yarrow stems used in divination, and for conveying divine messages and advice.
- 29 *K'uang Chang* 狂童, possibly a graphic error for «Mad Lad» of «Crazy Kid» (*k'uang t'ung* 狂童). This is the first name on a list of spirits assigned to do the heavy labor needed to carry out Yü's scheme for taming the raging waters that made the primeval world uninhabitable. Most of these personages cannot be found in early texts. (*K'uang t'ung*, my doubtful emendation, does occur in *Shih ching* 詩經, «Cheng feng» 鄭風, «Ch'ien ch'ang» 騷裳, but only in the sense of a doting lover. It occurs again in Li Shang-yin 李商隱, «Hsing tz'u Chao-ying hsien...» 行次昭應縣, CTS, han 8, ts'e 9, ch. 3, p. 8a; here the term refers to belligerent recruits for the army. I have found no trace of it, or of «Mad Chang», as the name of supernatural navy.)
- 30 \*Ngyu-yo 虞余; unidentified.
- 31 A T'ang cult of this personage is attested. In 860 an official journeying upriver to Szechwan dreamed that a spirit with red hair and dark blue eyes, identifying himself as «Yellow Demon» (*Huang mo* 黃魔), a resident of the Palace of the Purple Culmen (*Tzu chi kung* 紫極宮), promised to get him safely through the turbulent waters. This creature was evidently a low-class divinity associated with the celestial pole, and, on earth, a genie of the Yangtze gorges. (See the account of the renovation of his shrine in Yüan Hsün 袁煥 [fl. 874], «Hsiu Huang Mo shen miao chi» 修黃魔神廟記, CTW, 816, 1a-2a.) The «Purple Culmen» had a special relationship with the deified Lao tzu, that is, with the Resplendent Thearch of the Arcane Prime (*Hsüan yüan huang ti* 玄元皇帝). As a result of the spectacular apparitions and revelations of that deity at the end of the reign «Opened Prime» (*K'ai yüan* 開元) of Li Lung-chi 李隆基, that sovereign ordered the construction in 741 of a shrine to the god in the major cities of the nation. These were first called «temples» (*miao* 廟) of the Resplendent Thearch of the Arcane Prime, but they were renamed in 743. The one in Ch'ang-an became «Palace of Grand Clarity» (*T'ai ch'ing kung* 太清宮), named in honor of Lord Lao's celestial domain, the one in Lo-yang became «Palace of Grand Tenuity» (*T'ai wei kung* 太微宮), while those in other

towns became «Palaces of the Purple Culmen» (*Tzu chi kung* 紫極宮). The Palace of Grand Clarity was located in the southwest corner of the Quarter of Great Peace (*Ta ning fang* 大寧坊), itself in the northeast corner of the capital, near the entrance to the palace. (See Hsü Sung 徐松, *T'ang liang ching ch'eng fang k'ao* 唐兩京城坊考, in Hiraoka Takeo, ed., *Chōan to Rakuyō* (Kyoto, 1956), ch. 3, pp. 18a–18b.) A ritual dance was designed especially for performance in this temple. It was called «Dance of the Purple Culmen of Coalesced Perfection» (*Hun ch'eng tzu chi chih wu* 混成紫極之舞), and performed there on 22 May 742, as the introit for the ritual honoring Lord Lao. In 793 a poetry composition was held in the temple. Talented Courtiers composed «rhapsodies» (*fu* 賦) on the theme «Watching the Dance of the Purple Culmen» (*Yü hai* 玉海 [1860 ed.], ch. 107, p. 26b.) Both Pei Tu 裴度 and Li Kuan 李觀 are reported to have made contributions. Unfortunately neither has survived. The Yellow Demon, then, was evidently an inhabitant of a Lao tzu temple near the upper Yangtze.

- 32 *Ta I* 太一; unidentified.
- 33 *Keng ch'en* 庚辰, actually the designation of the seventeenth position in the 60-year (or 60-day) cycle. A wonder tale of the ninth century, attributed to a certain Li Kung-tso 李公佐, tells how the author, in 814, found an old and arcane text, «The Scripture of the Marchmounts and Conduits» (*Yüeh tu ching* 嶽瀆經), in a grotto near Lake Tung-t'ing. This told of the hero Yü's attempts to calm the waters of the Huai 淮 region, and how he employed G-Draco to quell the rebellious spirit of that river. See Li Kung-tso, *Ku Yüeh tu ching* 古嶽瀆經 in Lu Hsün 魯迅, *T'ang Sung ch'uan ch'i chi* 唐宋傳奇集 (Hong Kong, 1964), p. 76. (Kung-tso is also known as the author of the romantic tale *Hsieh Hsiao-o chuan* 謝小娥傳; see *Ch'üan T'ang wen*, 725, 9a–12b.)
- 34 T'ung Lü is the form given in the *Tao tsang* version, but Li Kung-tso, *loc. cit.*, has Chang Lü 章律. (The phrase *chang lü* is attested in a description of literary structure, in the sense of «rules of composition.»)
- 35 *Ch'ung yen* 崇巖. The reference is apparently to Shamanka Mountain. *Yen* «stack» is a mountain with vertical sides, resembling a «steamer», i. e. a cooking vessel stacked on top of a boiler. In short, it is the same word as *yen* 甗. As for the word «stack», compare our usage in «sea stack», defined as «a columnar mass of rock . . . rising precipitously out of the sea.» (*Oxford English Dictionary*).
- 36 *Sheng* 聖.
- 37 *Mu kung Chin mu* 木公金母, the great spirits of East and West.
- 38 That is, of the vital energies of *yin* and *yang*.
- 39 *Tsao hua* 造化. See E. H. Schafer, «The Idea of Created Nature in T'ang Literature,» *Philosophy East and West*, 15 (1965), 154.
- 40 *San yüan tao chün* 三元道君. He is the same as *Tzu yüan t'ai wei pa su san yüan hsüan ch'en tao chün* 紫元太微八素三元主晨道君, who occupies an important place in the Highest Clarity realm. (See T'ao Hung-ching, *Wei yeh t'u*, 3b.)
- 41 *Tzu ch'ing ch'üeh hsia* 紫清閣下. These are the ceremonial watch-towers at the entrance to the Palace of Purple Clarity (*Tzu ch'ing kung* 紫清宮), the supernal residence of other female divinities, such as the Lady Wang, Central Watcher of the Eastern Palace (*Tung kung chung hou Wang fu-jen* 東宮中候王夫人) and the Realized Consort of Nine Flowers (*Chiu hua chen fei* 九華真妃). See *Tung chen ching* 洞真經 and *Tao chi ching* 道經, cited in *Wu shang pi yao* 無上秘要 (HY 1130), 22, 13b, and in *Wei yeh t'u*, pp. 7a and 6a respectively.

- 42 *Yü ying chih t'ai* 玉映之臺 . This emends the *wang ying* 王映 of the *Tao tsang* version, and follows the version in *T'ai p'ing kuang chi* 太平廣記 , ch. 56 (hereafter cited as TPKC).
- 43 *Pien hua* 變化 , a common expression for the creative flux.
- 44 *Pin hua* 變化 . This phrase occurs also in one of Wu Yün's 吳筠 ecstatic verses: «with my endowment of mutations I congealed my proper pneuma.» («Pu hsü tz'u» 步虛詞 , No. 4, CTS, han 12, ts'e 6, p. 7b.) I translated the verse somewhat differently in E.H. Schafer, «Wu Yün's 'Cantos on Pacing the Void', to appear in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. My comment on the passage in that study is: «The inner being of the adept is at last substantially identical with the divine, uncontaminated, creative breath.» In the same place I paraphrased the verse thus: «My reborn self is clotted cosmic breath.»
- 45 See Manfred Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence* (Cambridge and London, 1974), p. 49: «Metal corresponds to potential structivity, to minor yin (*yin minor*) [= yimi].» Hence «metal» is an appropriate epithet of the Royal Mother of the West, otherwise «Metal Mother.»
- 46 *Hsi hua* 西華 . This designates the noumenal quality of the west, most fully represented by Hsi Wang Mu, and represented by Hua («Florescence») Marchmount in China. Elsewhere Tu Kuang-t'ing refers to the Royal Mother of the West as «the ultimate [expression] of the florescence of the west.» See *Yung ch'eng chi hsien lu*, 1. 9a. Although the Lady of Cloud Flowers (= Florescence) was nominally one of the many «daughters» of Hsi Wang Mu, she was not of woman born, but congealed *directly* (unlike Wu Yün's persona) out of the cosmic breath.
- 47 I.e. animals and plants.
- 48 *Tsao hua*: that is, all of creation. See n. 39 above.
- 49 *Hung* 鴻 : *Anser cynoides*, largest of the wild geese, comparable to a swan, hence its name. It breeds in Siberia and Mongolia, and migrates southward over China in the summer.
- 50 *Pa wei* 八威 : they police the eight directions; each represents one of the eight trigrams.
- 51 *Sheng chiang* 聖炁 . The creative spirit, presumably to be equated with the «Fashioner of Creatures» (*tsao wu che* 造物者 ).
- 52 *T'ai hun* 太混 , i.e. the undifferentiated proto-substance. The *locus classicus* for the phrase *t'ai hun chih p'u* 太混之極 is *Huai nan tzu*, «Ching shen hsün» 精神訓 .
- 53 Translating *t'i* 體 .
- 54 *Ta yün* 大淵 , i.e. the reservoir of potential forms.
- 55 *San kuang* 三光 : sun, moon, and stars.
- 56 *Kuei ying* 晷景 [for 影].
- 57 The text has *tui li* 兌離 , apparently a combination of a hexagram and a trigram. This makes no sense to me. A possible emendation is *k'an li* 坎離 , the two trigrams which represent north and south respectively. If that is the case we have to do with some sort of geomantic symbolism. (TPKC has *tui li* 兌離 , not an improvement. Possibly the emendation should be *t'o li* 脫離 , but the idea carries little conviction.)
- 58 *Hsing ch'en* 星辰 ; see E.H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void; T'ang Approaches to the Stars* (University of California Press, 1977), p. 5.
- 59 *Shen chen* 神真 , i.e. the regular inhabitants of the realm of Highest Clarity; analogous to *shen hsien* 神仙 «divine transcendents.»



- 60 The deified Lao tzu, under his combined titles of «Most High Lord Lao» (*T'ai shang lao chün* 太上老君) and the one awarded to him in the eighth century «Resplendent Thearch of the Mysterious Prime» (*Hsüan yüan huang ti* 玄元皇帝).
- 61 *Chih hsü chi shou ching tu wan wu chiang tzu fu* 致虛極靜篤萬物將自復. The received text of the *Lao tzu* (ch. 16 «Kuei ken» 歸根) has «Achieve vacuity to the utmost; guard immobility with zeal: as the myriad creatures are fashioned, I regard them in terms of their restoration» (*wu kuan i ch'i fu* 吾觀其復).
- 62 *Hsüan hsüan* 玄玄: a contraction of the first phrase of the *Lao tzu*, «Even darker than the dark» (*hsüan chih yu hsüan* 玄之又玄).
- 63 I have not been able to trace the antecedents of this expression.
- 64 Here I follow the TPKC version in inserting «teacher». The identity of the rather vaguely named book *Shang chen nei ching* 上真內經 is revealed below.
- 65 I.e. when they visit the Tao Lord of the Three Primes. (I am uncertain where this quotation ends.)
- 66 «Shake their garments»: free them of dust upon their arrival. «Azure-gem chamber» (*yao fang* 瑤房) is a common name for Taoist residences.
- 67 *Hsi lin* 希林. I take *hsi* to be short for *hsi-i* 希夷, the name of a numinous fungus, and also (apparently metaphorically) a characterization of the ineffable nature of the Tao. See, for instance, the *Tung chen t'ai shang shuo chih hui hsiao mo chen ching* 洞真太上說智慧消魔真經 (HY 1333), 1, 10a, an old Highest Clarity scripture: «To open wide the gate of the grotto in a forest of divine mushrooms; to search for evidence of realized [beings] in a cavern of cinnabar.» *Wei yeh t'u*, p. 3b, lists an important Highest Clarity divinity styled Lord Yen 燕君, «Realized Person of the Forest of Divine Mushrooms» (*hsi lin chen jen* 希林真人).
- 68 The *Tao tsang* text is unintelligible here; I follow TPKC.
- 69 *T'ai k'ung* 太虛 is «the locus of the stellar mansions.» See «Wu Yün's 'Cantos on Pacing the Void',» n. 67.
- 70 *T'ien chin* 天津, an asterism in Cygnus, which affords to the gods safe passage across the great Sky River. See Schafer, «The Sky River», p. 404.
- 71 *Shan ching* 山精. These are ectoplasms or emanations of natural objects, such as trees and stone, which haunt the mountain forests, and may assume any transient form they desire. See E.H. Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird; T'ang Images of the South* (University of California Press, 1967), p. 109.
- 72 These are the beacons, equivalent to stars in their power, which not only shine into the eight corners of the universe, but propel these vehicles like rockets through the depths of space. See «Wu Yün's 'Cantos on Pacing the Void',» n. 66.
- 73 «The Inner Scripture of the Highest Realized Ones,» which has just been quoted or paraphrased by the Lady.
- 74 *T'ai shang yü p'ei chin tang chih miao wen* 太上玉珮金璫之妙文, now represented in the Canon by the first «scroll» of *T'ai shang yü p'ei chin tang t'ai chi chin shu shang ching* 太上玉珮金璫大極經書上經 (HY 56). This is a most venerable Highest Clarity scripture, containing portions which antedate the revelations of the fourth century. See, for instance, Isabelle Robinet, «Randonnées extatiques des Taoistes dans les astres,» *Monumenta Serica*, 32 (1976), 170–172.
- 75 Referring to the «tempest car» *piao ch'e* 飄車 which provides rapid transit of the skies for divine beings. For full information on these vehicles see Isabelle Robinet, «In-



trodition au Kieou-tchen tchong-king,» *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions*, 7 (Fall, 1979), 34.

- 76 *Yün hsüan* 雲軒 . «Coach» is intended to suggest a conveyance suitable for a high-born person.
- 77 *T'ai shang* 太上 . That is, the Tao Lord of the Three Primes and his sacred texts.
- 78 *Ling pao chen wen* 靈寶真文 . presumably the divine prototype of the basic Ling Pao scripture, now preserved as the first section of *Ling pao tu jen ching* 靈寶度人經 (HY 1).
- 79 I.e. as the steeds that draw your carriage.
- 80 *Yang ming* 陽明 . This is the name of the «grotto-heaven» below Mount Kuai-chi 會稽 in Yüeh-chou 越州 (modern Shao-hsing 紹興 in Chekiang). See Tu Kuang-t'ing, *Tung t'ien fu ti chi* 洞天福地記 (in *T'ang tai ts'ung shu* 唐代叢書, Taipei, 1968), p. 3a.
- 81 These are the spirits of the six digraphs in the cycle of sixty which begin with the character *ting* 丁 . In Han times already it was believed that magicians could summon them to do their bidding. (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書 [K'ai ming 開明 ed.], 80, 0810c, gloss on biography of Prince Liu Ch'ang 劉暢 .) «The Emissaries of the Six Ting» (*liu ting shih che* 六丁使者) appear among the lesser divinities in *Wei yeh t'u*, p. 15b. In medieval Taoism they figured as «the jade women of the yin spirit» (*yin shen yü nü* 陰神玉女). See *Huang t'ing nei ching yü ching chu* 黃庭內景玉經注 (HY 263), section 22, commentary of Po Lü-chung 白履忠 .)
- 82 I.e. the planets.
- 83 The *Tao tsang* version is garbled here; again I follow TPKC.
- 84 *Shang ch'ing pao wen* 上清寶文 , presumably the prototypical *Shang ch'ing ching* 上清經 .
- 85 For these agents, see notes 30 and 33 above.
- 86 *Wu yüeh* 五嶽 . For the word «marchmount» see *Pacing the Void*, p. 6.
- 87 *Chiu chou* 九州 , the nine subdivisions of the magic square of 15; habitable zones, each bounded by a watercourse.
- 88 *Tzu t'ing chen jen* 紫庭真人 . The title implies that he was given court rank at the palace of the Celestial Pole. See *Wei yeh t'u*, p. 9b, which gives Yü the title of «Realized Person of Bell Mountain» (*Chung shan chen jen* 鍾山真人).
- 89 *Hsiang Wang* 襄王 . («Exalted» is one of the possible meanings of the archaic appellation.)
- 90 高唐 .
- 91 陽臺宮 .
- 92 *Shen nü fu* 神女賦 . For an outline of the traditional tale of the Divine Woman of Shamanka Mountain as presented in *Kao t'ang fu* and *Shen nü fu*, attributed to Sung Yü, see *Divine Woman*, pp. 34-38.
- 93 Following the reading *ko an* 隔岸 of the TPKC text.
- 94 The «Heavenly Revered One» is *Yüan shih t'ien tsun* 元始天尊, ruler of the universe.
- 95 I have applied this simple type of analysis with moderate success to the «Cantos on Pacing the Void» of Wu Yün, and with considerably better success to the *tz'u* of the late T'ang and Five Dynasties set to the tune *Nü kuan tzu* 女冠子 . Although this was adumbrated in my published study of these cantos (E.H. Schafer, «The Capeline Cantos: Verses on the Divine Loves of Taoist Priestesses,» *Asiatische Studien*, 32

[1978], 5–65), I did not there unveil the detailed scenario which I now think fits the form very well, allowing for cuts in specific realizations of it. This is possible for *tz'u* written down until the beginning of the Sung, when the content came to conform less and less to the theme of the title – a divorce already under way in the tenth century. In the end, sentimental treatment triumphed over all (popular criticism tends to make this habit retroactive to the T'ang): the tune was lost, and any romantic subject was fitted arbitrarily to the syllabic count. But excepting the poems that exhibit this tendency, we see that each tune had its appropriate cast of characters and suitable environment. The poet developed a specific and detailed libretto to fit this program, employing a conventional set of images, but adding his own nuances – this was the test of his skill. Not only does the program outlined below fit the *Nü kuan tzu* form, but also, I think, allowing for a wrenching of locale, the *Nan hsiang tzu* 南鄉子 scheme. It remains to be seen whether it works with others: to decide this will require the abandonment of the common approach to the *tz'u*, which assumes that «all *tz'u* are merely...» and minimizes the differences. The proposed scenario is tripartite: 1. *Phenomenal Aspect*. This is the ideal stereotype: how things are, or have been – the good times (often embellished with worldly beauties and delights); surely this is the way we thought it always would be; our love would never end, etc. (But this is folly: even now there are faint forebodings of impermanence and change.) 2. *Transition*. The scene is a Half-way House, a Limbo, even a Purgatory. Premonitions of change are heightened; expectation turns to fretful musings, doubt, fear of loss, even fright. Images of uncertainty, decay, even hostility, may appear. There is a tremulous sense of bewilderment, suspense, even dissatisfaction. This in turn may dissolve into expectation on a higher level: not a return to the old relationship, but the recognition that a better one is possible. Our dreams have been shallow: they can be superseded by nobler and more permanent ones. (In the *Nü kuan tzu*, there may be an interval of dance.) 3. *Noumenal Aspect*. This scene often has aspects of an initiation. Phase I: separation or desertion; sense of retirement of the loved or desired one to a distant, mysterious place; tropes on death. Phase 2: uncertain signs of hopeful transition to a new condition, a different sort of union – its nature remains rather unclear. In *Nü kuan tzu*, this possible reunion may be in a non-human world, e.g. a sky palace. Finally – glimmerings of an unearthly consummation, a spiritualization of the worldly union with which the poem began. Sometimes this outcome takes the form of a vision or revelation, or perhaps its reverse – a pessimistic realization of the truth of eternal alienation, if the mortal persona is quite unworthy. I had hoped that this program, perhaps more generalized, might apply to other *tz'u* patterns (aside from the *Nan hsiang tzu*, exemplified in one of Li Hsün's 李旬, translated in *Sunflower Splendor*, p. 290, which also echoes the *Wu shan kao* motif, transposed to a tropical environment: «Listen to the man-ape howling in malarial rain.» This motif is found also in one of the same writer's *Wu shan i tuan yün* cantos, translated below). But possibly a scenario to which even a fair proportion of the *tz'u* librettos could be made to fit would have to be so abstract as to be virtually useless.

- 96 This translation differs somewhat from the one published in *Pacing the Void*, p. 206. The chief difference is that I now see the spectral painter who ascends to the moon to whiten her face and don her candent garment as the Divine Woman herself, assuming her other-identity of Ch'ang-o, and bringing the waxing moon to the full.
- 97 See the note on this line in *ibid*.
- 98 This improves the translation published in *Divine Woman*, p. 79.