



CHINA STUDIES

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINESE FICTION

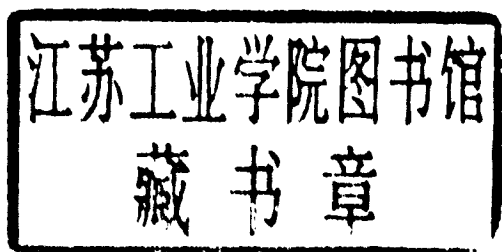
Lu Hsun



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A Brief History of Chinese Fiction

by Lu Hsun



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Publisher's Note

A *Brief History of Chinese Fiction* grew out of the lecture notes Lu Hsun sed when teaching a course on Chinese fiction at Peking University between 1920 and 1924. In December 1923 a first volume was printed and in June 1924 a second volume. In September 1925 these were reprinted as one book. In 1930 the author made certain changes, but all subsequent editions have remained the same.

"The Historical Development of Chinese Fiction" in the Appendix served as notes for a series of lectures Lu Hsun gave at a Sian summer school in July 1924. The preface to the Japanese edition appeared first in the edition published in 1935 by the Sairosha Press, Tokyo, Japan.

This translation has been made from the *Complete Works of Lu Hsun* published by the People's Literature Publishing House: *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* can be found in Volume 9, while the preface to the Japanese edition comes from the second series of *Essays of Cbieb-cbieb-ting* in Volume 6.

Preface to the New Edition

NEARLY ten years have passed since I began to lecture on the history of Chinese fiction, and this brief outline was first printed seven years ago. Since then much research has been done in this field and new discoveries have cleared up certain points which were obscure. For example, the discovery by Professor Shionoya Akushi of the mutilated Yuan dynasty edition of *Illustrated Vernacular Tales* and Feng Meng-lung's three collections of popular stories, as well as his researches on these, are of major significance in the history of Chinese fiction; and the contention of some Chinese scholars that there should be separate histories for the fiction of different periods is a sound one. All this means that my brief outline should now be outdated; but since no new histories have yet been written, there are still readers for these notes. For a new edition, this book should by rights be revised, but since I started moving from place to place I have given up literary studies, and have nothing but a vague recollection of what I wrote in the past. So I simply made a few changes in Chapters 14, 15 and 21, keeping the other chapters unchanged as I have no new theories regarding them. Since great vessels take years to produce, this earthenware pot of mine still serves some purpose; but though this fact has prolonged the life of my book, I am disheartened by this dearth of new writing. In a melancholy mood I have

gone through these proofs, hoping that better scholars will soon produce a more authoritative book.

Lu Hsun

Night of November 25, 1930

Preface

*T*HERE has never been a history of Chinese fiction, if we except the accounts in the histories of Chinese literature written by foreigners. Recently certain summaries have appeared in Chinese works too, but the space devoted to fiction is usually less than one-tenth of the whole. Hence we still lack a detailed account of the development of Chinese fiction.

Though this book is concerned entirely with fiction, it is nothing but a rough outline. I wrote it because three years ago, happening to give some lectures on this subject and fearing that my defects as a speaker might make it hard for my hearers to understand, I jotted down this outline and had it duplicated for my students. Then, in order not to give the copyist too much trouble, I compressed it by using the classical language, omitting certain examples but keeping the main outline which I have been using ever since.

These notes are finally being printed because they have been duplicated so many times and given those in charge so much trouble that printing appears to be more economical.

During the preparation of this copy for the press, four or five friends have lent me reference books or helped me with proof-reading; indeed, for the last three years they have proved consistently helpful. I would like to thank them here.

Lu Hsun

Night of October 7, 1923, Peking

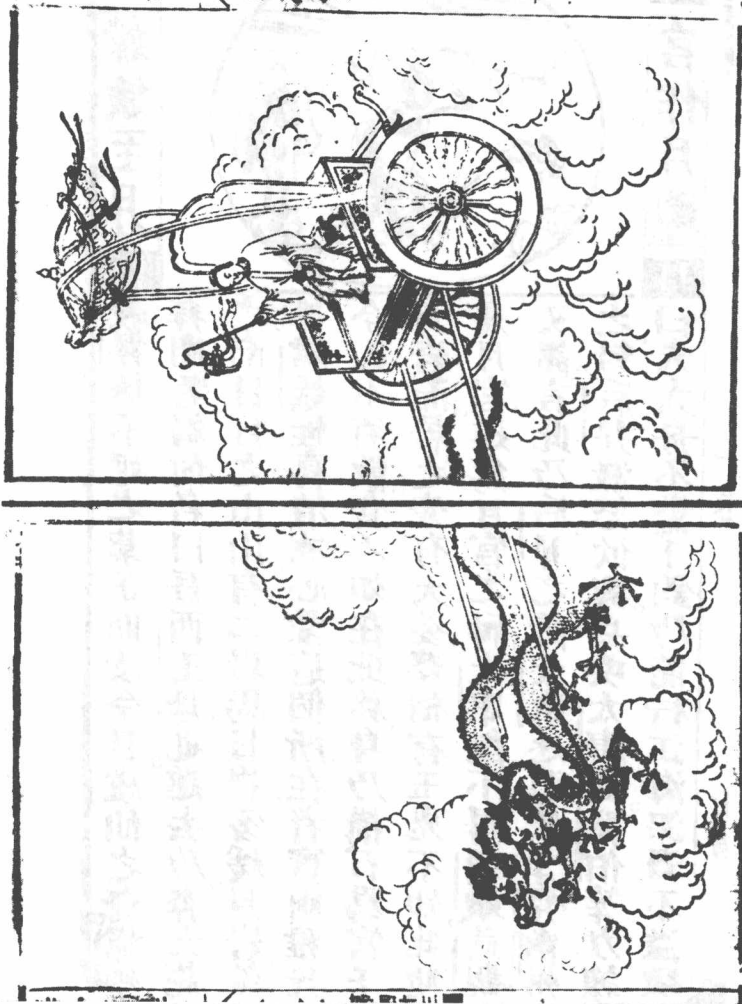


Illustration from an old edition of *The Book of Mountains and Seas* published about 1615

嫦娥至月



官作月神

教羿採不死之藥。正助汝今日成仙之資。嫦娥拜問老嫗何名。曰。吾西王母也。遂去。乃奔大荒之南。日月之山。山有二岩焉。日岩多煖。月岩多涼。嫦娥性喜清涼。心愛這個所在。着實幽雅。我今已不須飲食。不在此終身。乃構石爲宮。于月岩而居之。旁有大婆娑樹。有玉兔。不知此便是月宮。遂爲月宮之神。太康旣不得嫦娥。武觀又譖言。此乃后羿之計。太康遂遣使奪羿幽州之封。后羿激怒。欲興兵攻太康。武羅伯等力諫曰。夫大舟不驚千鈞。乃能行江海。深淵不溢驟

A Ming Dynasty account of the legend
“Chang Ngo Goes to the Moon”

搜神記卷二

晉干寶撰 明沈士龍胡震亨同校

壽光侯者漢章帝時人也能劾百鬼衆魅令自縛見形其鄉人有婦爲魅所病侯爲劾之得大蛇數丈死於門外婦因以安又有大樹樹有精人止其下者死鳥過之亦墜侯劾之樹咸夏枯落有大蛇長七八丈懸死樹間章帝聞之徵問對曰有之帝曰殿下有怪夜半後常有數人絳衣披髮持火相隨豈能劾之侯

An old edition of the *Records of Spirits*
published about 1603

世說新語卷下之上

宋 臨川王義慶 撰

梁 劉孝標 注

容止第十四

魏武將見匈奴使自以形陋不足雄遠國

魏氏春秋曰武王姿

貌短小而神明英發使崔季珪代帝自捉刀立牀頭既畢令問

謀問曰魏王何如匈奴使荅曰魏王雅望非常

曰魏

琰字季珪清河東武城人聲姿高然牀頭捉刀人此

乃英雄也魏武聞之追殺此使

何平叔美姿儀面至白魏明帝疑其傅粉正夏月與



An illustration from a play by Pai Pu
of the Yuan Dynasty



The Man with the Curly Beard. From the prose romance *The Girl with the Red Whisk* by Chang Feng-yi (1527-1613)



Portrait of Lady Yang. By Tang Yin (1470-1523)

操曹見回德玄請婿



曹操只可共愛不可共樂是以急行却說程昱郭嘉較穀糧及回聞玄德去慌入諫曰
 日今如備為豫州牧是等國謀丞相不助今又與兵去是放龍入海縱虎歸山日后制之其可
 得乎嘉曰備有雄才又得民心固張力敵萬人今又與兵如虎添翼操曰吾現玄德閉中亭關

鴻後畏雷非成事業之人何足愛也程昱曰李關者為備丞相耳畏雷是非
 本情丞相明照天下何彼如備備過慷慨即今許都引兵追趕玄德未知

關雲長長驅直入

却說玄德與關張止行之間只見塵埃起處玄德曰必是操兵追至也便下
 寨準備許潛下馬入見曰奉丞相命請皇叔國兵別有商議玄德曰將在
 君命有所不受况傳丞相之言汝回見丞相復得程昱郭嘉緊問我索金帛
 不曾相贈因此結怨誤言善我故不汝起來提督官若無仁義之心就此砍
 汝為泥吾感丞相大恩未嘗敢忘遂回善言以達丞相許潛回見曹操時
 備之言京知操嘆程昱郭嘉曰汝於劉備處竟取金帛不從因此結怨每於
 有前說之此何理也程昱郭嘉曰丞相又欲知備備過也操笑曰彼既去矣追
 趕成仇焉勝其美德出朝自回西涼州去了玄德兵至徐州刺史車胄出迎入城宴待孫乾糜
 竺簡雍等卻來相見打听表術因駭者太過曹操陳關首投嵩山去了術勢甚衰乃作書端帝

An old edition of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*
 published about 1610



Illustration from an old edition of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* published about 1625