

**TRACING THE CROSS-CULTURAL LITERARY EXCHANGES
BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA:**

**A COMPARATIVE THEMATIC STUDY OF SELECTED
NARRATIVES OF MEDIEVAL CHINA AND MEDIEVAL INDIA**

By

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Table of Contents

❖ Introduction	1
❖ Chapter One	16
❖ Chapter Two	48
❖ Chapter Three	94
❖ Chapter Four	129
❖ Chapter Five	177
❖ Chapter Six	221
❖ Conclusion	253
❖ Appendix I	262
❖ Appendix II	269
❖ Appendix III	282
❖ Works Cited	298

INTRODUCTION

Whenever we intend to conduct a comparative literary study, classifying the literary resemblances into contactual relationships and typological affinities becomes a mandatory implication in this interliterary process within two countries or civilizations – the emitter and the receiver (the target and the source). While we attempt to discuss the phenomenon of reception we have to take in to consideration the literary structures of the two groups (cultures) and then only can we head towards the analysis and interpretation of the interliterary development of literary traditions.

In the matter of India and China, since they are both ancient civilizations containing complex social structures, therefore the transmission and the intercourse of these immensely rich cultures were not an easy and simple method. The transmitters had to take into regard linguistic differences, a contrasting set of social values and eschatological views shaped by Confucian ideas of filial piety (Tansen, *Buddhism* 1). We have to keep in mind that no colonial power or strategic imperial oppression induced this contactual blending of cultures. It was a spontaneous contact that happened primarily as a result of an intellectual quest by the Buddhist monks and the trading relations between these two countries. The early encounter between India and China started with military exigencies which were subsequently fostered by traveling merchants (Tansen, *Buddhism* 3). This literary-historical comparative study will reveal the spontaneous interliterary contacts between these two civilizations. This is different from the reception which

happens because of external power factors like colonization and is reflected and applied immediately within the actual structure of the literary phenomenon of the recipient country. The foreign literary values contribute to the formation and the development of these new trends in the recipient literature. This contribution also depends on the inner potentialities of the source culture for taking effect within the bounds of the native country of the recipient literature. This reception between India and China is important because Chinese literature has been enriched by Indian literature not only as a consequence of direct contacts but also because of the inner potentialities of the emitting Indian phenomenon and this happened in spite of the existence of China's own strong and powerful cultural heritage. The interliterary reciprocity of these two countries formed a concrete literary and cultural relation and the impact of the source culture was almost undistinguishable and had a creative manifestation in the recipient narrative tradition. The creative manifestation of the narrative tradition due to direct impact from the source culture was only possible for the recipient culture of China because it already had its own strong and written literary tradition.

This contactual study (Durisin 108) or reception study is a methodological device that would help me to incorporate and analyze the comparative study within my thesis. This analysis is expected to evaluate the literary problems that are likely come up in the course of this study of literary relationship. For this purpose, we cannot solely conduct a theoretical study. But this study will also reveal the individual manifestations of the transmission of the literary elements from the source group (India) to the recipient group (China). The India-China contactual relationship is spontaneous and happened over a long period of time without any intervention of an oppressive, hegemonic power. So

however hard we try, a systematic analysis and a clear or mechanical distinction of the cultural, aesthetic and intellectual situation will be impossible to trace and define. But we can always mention the lapses, the surviving and the residual elements. In this thesis I have taken up a comparative thematological study as my preferred methodology. The entire thesis deals with the themes of the strange stories. In order to steer clear of confusion and complication, I have consciously avoided a generic study of the stories. The generic study definitely would have helped us in understanding the evolution and the growth of narrative literary trends in the Indian and Chinese traditions. But this might also have complicated the thematic study as we often have to struggle to understand the exact genre of the Chinese stories. Thereafter, in this thesis, I have considered them all as strange stories and executed a comparative thematic study.

I have studied some of the previous research works on the comparative thematic study of the strange tales of China and India. The advent of supernatural writings in the Chinese culture and literary tradition is a very complicated phenomenon. There are evidences of the intervention of supernatural themes in the Chinese literary and cultural corpus before the advent of Buddhism and even after the immediate arrival of Buddhism. This gradual process of the development of this strange tale tradition is quite visible from various instances. The tales of supernatural got their foothold during the Six Dynasties – (Three Kingdoms (220–280 AD), Jin Dynasty (265–420), and Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589) and flourished during the Tang dynasty (618-907AD). While talking about the Chinese strange fiction, we must touch upon the Tang dynasty activities of the Buddhist monks and the genre called *bianwen*. *Bianwen* is a genre that best expressed the literary connection between China and India. It shows how the Indian *gatha* tradition travelled to

China and created an entirely new generic category. *Bianwen* is meant for reciting and singing. Some of the strange tales were transmitted to China through the course of translation. Pilgrims or monks who used to travel from India to China or vice versa, carried out such translations. This ceaseless translation of Buddhist texts later proved to be greatly significant in the Chinese literary tradition. This gave birth to this full-grown literary tradition named *bianwen* in China during the Tang dynasty. Moreover, it also strengthened the existing tradition of *chuanqi*. These traditions were strong enough to be considered as a counter stream to Confucian orthodoxy. The *bianwen* tradition or the Tang 'transformation texts' is a remarkable literary tradition that has defined the Sino-Indian relationship for centuries.

In order to understand the phases of contact and the migration of tales between India and China we must look into Chinese history. This will give us an idea of what was existent before and during the advent of Buddhism in China. The Confucian classics developed an immense canonical authority regarding the core statement of the received truth; it depicts a system of knowledge that stresses on the ways in which language can be an adequate manifestation of the inner life and the social world around the writer (Owen, *Readings* 8-9). Confucius highlights the love and the rational happiness of the people. He says that happiness should not be marred by poverty. Poverty is not synonymous to happiness and at the same time alerts the people that wealth also should not corrupt society. This is why the spirit of happiness is called rational and hence people are advised to look forward to the vitality of life rationally. Chinese literary thinking begins its development around the question of knowledge - a special kind of knowing as in 'knowing a person' or 'knowing the conditions of the age'. Confucius is concerned with recognizing moral qualities and

the character of a person or a social state and he says that a certain kind of attention can enable us to observe the inner truth through the external manifestation. Confucius thus depicts a codified knowledge in which a complicated confluence of circumstances may veil any particular inner truth, which is truth immanent in the outer phenomena. This is also true for reading a literary text according to Confucian ideology – this is a fact-based reading: fact that arises out of a real person. For that reason a great emphasis is placed on the documentation of history - the fact that manifests human behaviour and nature and above all truth. So this is the reason behind the presence of a huge amount of non-fictional literature in Chinese literary tradition dominated by Confucian canonical ideas and nurtured by the elites who commanded the wisdom to harmonize all levels in society to the corpus of historical writings. In such a phenomenon the entrance of Buddhist ideals and thoughts was not an easy task.

My main attempt would be to trace the most significant stages where the manifestation of the thematic similarity contributed in a special way to create a major narrative evolution for the Chinese and Indian literary traditions. The reception also depends on the aesthetic demand of the recipient country. For India and China this relation, not only aesthetic, but also contains several other historical and political nuances. Several external contactual influences were there. Among them the Fall of the Han dynasty is one major event. This fall of the Han dynasty triggered a huge political discontent that naturally led the populace towards distrust in the absolute reign of the heaven and their adverse psyche refused to accept that the reign of the king is the heaven's mandate through the king. This was the circumstance under which Buddhism and Daoism found their ground in the minds of the God-fearing people. Now the new Chinese philosophy became a summation

and reconsideration of the ethics, morals and beliefs of the past. In this course, Buddhism got connected to Confucianism and Daoism. The powerful philosophy of life that Buddhism advocated, found its fitting foundation in the ethics and morality of Confucianism and the fantastic philosophy of the indigenous religion of Daoism.

This contactual confluence was possible because both cultures were powerful and the major event acted as a catalyst in this. An attempt to study the effect of the fall of the Han dynasty in the literature created immediately afterwards would make us miss the inner dynamics of a relationship and reception. It takes considerable amount of time to implement the effect within the literature, especially if the new phenomenon is powerful enough to create a new trend as is the case with Chinese literature. The advent of Buddhism and its blending with the Confucianism and Daoism eventually made the miraculous or the strange tale tradition stronger and it flourished over the centuries. The India-China literary traditions show a significant manifestation of interliterary co-existence. For the Chinese literary tradition, after the advent of Buddhism in the 1st century, the literary-critical, philosophical, historical and theoretical amalgamation of two countries form the entire system of aesthetic opinions of individual authors, groups, schools etc.

Myths of any civilization always condition the idea of literature and the interliterary reception. The civilization not only creates myths about themselves, but also about other nation's fictive and complex ideas. Sometimes they deform reality and create and affect a new reality. This new reality is no more fictitious because of its immense creative possibilities. The strange tales to some extent determined the attitude of the world towards China and also influenced their relations to others.

In this introduction we will also determine the basic methodological standpoint and methodic procedure and we will follow it in the following chapters also. Our comparative analysis can be guided by the line of relationship of equivalent phenomena. This refers to the principle of resemblance and difference. This is mostly a method that is based on influence and survival, a simplified conception of classificational analysis (Durisin 119). The principle of resemblance is the accumulation of interliterary parallels and various analogies. This methodology does not really limit the boundaries of comparative study as said by Durisin (Durisin 119), but this in a way expands the boundaries by accumulating material across the countries and cultures and languages and by showing resemblances and differences without coming to an abrupt conclusion. This methodology opens up a space for observation and discussion. A synchronic study and literary historical evaluation of the collected material across countries might help in understanding the evolution and development of a social, political or philosophical phenomenon. The threats of simplification and inconsistency will always haunt the study. This study might sometimes point out some problems in the recipient literature but the problems remain within the aesthetic canon of the phenomenon. The conditionality of the individual forms is required to examine and these conditions can be literary or extra literary. They might not have a relationship of causality. For the India-China relationship we find only a complex process of intermediate contacts between these two countries. The intellectual and the aesthetic intentions of the original often get transferred to the recipient literature and before becoming a part of the native tradition, it is moulded into the recipient's knowledge-system. The intention of the original often changes and remains to be a subplot of the narrative.

An influence-seeking comparative study is not what I intend to do here. But in the following chapters a collection of material will be displayed. They portray the intermediate contacts between India and China. In order to execute this task, I have taken up certain motifs and their related themes. In the next chapters, we will examine the resemblances and differences found in the collection. Tracing the influence or exact source or the causality is not what I am doing and an attempt to find the source is always a futile effort when two ancient civilizations are concerned. But we can find the stark resemblances of themes and motifs and we can trace the cross cultural transmission of literary elements, philosophical thoughts and social values. The primary challenge of Buddhism definitely was to find a toehold in the Chinese context.

In 220 AD, the Han dynasty collapsed for the last time. After ruling for four hundred years, the Han dynasty collapse was a consequence of the earlier Han expansionism and the state oppression in the name of cultural diversity (Bao, DeWoskin and Crump XXIII). By the third century the regional cultures and the ethnically different people formed strong states and with their powerful administrative techniques they formed their own identities. In all this, the position of the literati and chroniclers became vulnerable and the insecurity and anxiety about an unstable society and patronization became the major threat for their cultivated reputation and survival. Some of the literati families migrated to Luoyang or towards the Eastern reach of the Chang Jiang. This migration demanded a new historiography and it was created due to this pressure of the change in the established court historical format. This resulted into a proliferation of new forms and genres in the narrative tradition which treated the new material as their subject matter. The earliest concept of the mainstream literary art was the Jian'an poetry (196-220 AD).

Jian'an poetry (建安風骨) is a style of poetry that flourished in the end of the Han dynasty and the beginning of the Six Dynasties era. It was different from the reactive discourses on politics and society by the state sponsored critics. This literary art was regarded as a private and personal art form for self-expression (Bao, DeWoskin and Crump XXIV). The changing times now demanded a prose writing form as well. Therefore a narrative parallel to the court history was created and these private historical documents narrated the events of their personal worlds. It often resembled the court history. The new literati group did not collect the narratives about the eminent courtiers or events of an emperor's reign, or rituals and laws. Literary activities were no more a service to the government. The literati scholars collected experiences of people and the reports of their new world. Since they were all personal experiences, therefore some of them had their basis in the reality and some in the imaginary. This post-Han period had many important literary works on the strange tales. One of the major work is *Soushen Ji* 《搜神記》 "In Search of Supernatural: The Written Record" written by Gan Bao in the 350 AD. It is a compilation of legends and hearsay about spirits, ghosts and other supernatural phenomena. These kinds of literary works belonged to the *zhiguai* genre, a narrative genre, which was a consequence of the decline of the Han orthodoxy. In this entire process of paradigm shift the impact of Buddhism acted as a powerful instrument that not only changed the literary tradition but also changed in order to accommodate itself in the new Chinese world.

Buddhism in India primarily advocated the abandonment of personal desires and relationships in order to attain *Nirvana*. It had always eulogized the virtues of celibacy and depicted the misery and sufferings inherent in family life. So in China it was attacked

for this particular reason but eventually it went through a transformation and it praised the virtue of filial piety in order to adapt itself to the new soil. Literary works depicting filial piety were often composed - for example, the stories of the Shan Zi 睽子 (*Syama* in Sanskrit) and Mulian 目連 (*Maudgalyayana* in Sanskrit). The first story can be found in the Buddhist sutra *Pusa Shanji Jing* 《菩薩睽子經》 translated during the Western Qin dynasty 385-400, 409-431 AD). This is based on the *Jataka* story named *Syama Jataka*. This story definitely established the virtue of filial piety and the Buddhists also thought that this story will impress the Chinese populace. The story of Maudgalyayan, his filial piety towards her mother was also translated in the Buddhist sutra named *Yulanpen Jing* 盂蘭盆經 translated by Dharmaraksha in the Western Qin dynasty. It would be interesting to observe how, over a period of time, Buddhism adapted to the Confucian dominated system. In the Buddhist sutra named *Bian Zheng Lun* 辯正論, the author Ming Ji says this:

Buddhism teaches filial piety ... to civilize the myriad countries, that is the highest form of benevolence of the enlightened ruler. ... the monk abandons secular life to pursue the true religion ... and considers all sentient beings as equal to his own parents. (Ch'en, "Filial Piety" 97)

This Buddhist *sutra* is one instance where the basic Buddhist teaching is seen to have undergone an ideological transition. In order to acclimatize itself to the new environment which emphasizes on the filial piety and one's responsibility towards the society, Buddhism in China altered its idea of rejecting the transient and illusory worldly ties. The Buddhist monks are no longer expected to live a secluded life but he is expected to experience the affairs of the material world with a mission to perform a task for the

benefit of the greater number of sentient beings. This will also in turn contribute to the maintenance of the social integration.

The cross literary and cross cultural exchange between India and China mostly is about the adaptation of a foreign system within the recipient system. The Confucian orthodox system is immensely powerful and here comes a foreign system with a purpose primarily based on the devotional quest. This is an example of cultural impact where the foreign culture arrives and transforms itself voluntarily to adapt itself to the recipient system. The source culture arrived and an unforced adaptation to the recipient system occurs in order to satisfy an agenda which is quite spiritual in nature. This arrival of Buddhism and its subsequent spreading of Buddhist doctrines were challenged by the contemporary court literati. To overcome the hurdles, Buddhism in China also started changing its usual ways to preach doctrines and they started upholding those ideas that suited the Chinese psyche. A deliberate ideological dedifferentiation¹ started, which eventually led towards a spontaneous intellectual exchange. The fall of the Han dynasty and the social and political instability prepared the situation of hospitality on the part of the recipient culture. This is an example of reception where the source ideology changes its own parameters in order to accomplish its spiritual and intellectual pursuits and this creates a significant paradigmatic change in the knowledge system of the recipient culture.

Several works on the Chinese strange tale literature and also the comparative study of the Indian and the Chinese strange tales have been published quite recently. Some prominent authors and their works would be, *Shifting Stories, History, Gossip, and Lore in Narratives from Tang Dynasty China* by Sarah M. Allen published in 2014. Then we can

¹ This is a term used by Durisin in his Introduction to the book titled *Theory of Literary Comparatistics*

also mention an article by Carrie Reed titled “Parallel Worlds, Stretched Time, and Illusory Reality: The Tang Tale "Du Zichun"” published in 2009. These works entirely focused on the ‘strange’ as a subject category and then the authors looked into its nature as expressed through the stories. My thesis makes a difference by introducing a way in which I would be taking up certain motifs and related themes. Through those themes as expressed in the Chinese and the Indian stories I would be looking into the journey of those specific Buddhist motifs that had given rise to those themes. I have taken up motifs like “Illusion and Reality”, “Transformation or Change” and “Devouring”. A detailed examination of these themes expressed through the Chinese and the Indian strange stories will help the readers to experience and understand the gradual but obvious transmission of Buddhist elements and their influence on the Confucian and indigenous Chinese literature.

In this thesis I have incorporated six chapters besides a conclusion and this introduction. The first chapter gives a historical background of this cultural confluence. It attempts to understand Confucianism and its developments and also contains an introduction to Buddhism and its interaction with the traditional Chinese culture and the Daoist supernaturalism. The chapter also describes the different phases of interaction between Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. The chapter also tries to look at the terms that had been translated often from Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. It says how these two civilizations set out for the search of a new spiritual world and attempted to form a bridge through literary translation. The translation phase is one of the most important phenomena facilitating a fruitful intellectual exchange. This exchange will eventually

lead towards the growth of new literary genres like *zhiguai* and *chuanqi*. This chapter also sets forth the primary background of the main work.

The second chapter looks into the development of the Chinese and Indian new narrative genres that flourished after the advent of Buddhism in China. The genres from the Chinese literary traditions include *zhiguai*, *chuanqi*, from the Six Dynasties and the Tang dynasty. All these genres included the fantastic and the strange tales. The second chapter will specify which genres I will mostly be dealing with. The thesis does not really conduct a generic study of the stories discussed. But it takes the 'strange' as a subject matter and executes a thematic study only. Since the rise and the growth of the strange tale genres also marked the proliferation of the strange and the fantastic tales in both the traditions, so this chapter becomes a necessary part of the thesis. The third chapter, therefore, goes on to define the position of the concept of the strange and the fantastic in the Chinese and Indian literary traditions. This chapter will primarily introduce the main idea that I intended to convey in this thesis. It will explore the idea of the strange as a concept that is conveyed through the strange tales and also merges the borderlines of the normal and abnormal, the ordinary and the extraordinary. In Chinese tradition the term strange has three counterparts in the Chinese characters, yi 異, guai 怪, qi 奇. Qiguai 奇怪, guaiyi 怪異, qiyi 奇異 are developed from these characters. In the Indian tradition the *adbhutarasa* (sentiment of wonder) arises from the *vismaya* (amazement) *bhava* (psychological states). Via the translations of several Buddhist scriptures like the *adbhutadharma* tales in the *Lotus Sutra* certain specific themes related to the miracle or the strange and the fantastic (*adbhuta*) traversed to China. In the Tang dynasty (618 CE - 907 CE) these strange tales created a deep impression on the evolution of Chinese fiction

(虛構小說 *xugou xiaoshuo*). After this I will move on to the main section of the thesis. The fourth, fifth, and the sixth chapters, each one describes one particular theme. The fourth chapter describes the theme of 'Illusion and Reality' (幻境 and 塵世). The fifth chapter analyses the theme of 'Transformation' (變化). The sixth chapter illustrates the theme of 'Devouring' (吞). These chapters take up several stories from the Chinese, Indian Sanskrit, and Buddhist traditions and conduct a comparative thematic study. They also attempt to examine the Buddhist and Hindu philosophical ideas that are interspersed within the stories and ultimately contributed to the formation of a completely different thematic as well as ideological structure. All these chapters execute a comparative study of the Buddhist motifs and themes found in the Sanskrit and the Chinese literary traditions. The *Jataka* tales work as the causal factor that initiated the parrot tale tradition in China. The transmission of *Jataka* and *Avadana* tales through the Buddhist sutras, transformed the already existent indigenous strange tale tradition in China and the growth and flourishing of several new genres and themes began which would continue for the next two thousand years. These motifs mark a major paradigm shift in the Chinese literary traditions. Finally the thesis draws out a conclusion that briefly discusses the queries that remained unanswered in this thesis. The acute deficiency of material had stopped the author from going into further research. The author wishes to find answers to those queries in her post-doctoral research work.

So with the help of these chapters my thesis proposes to examine the Indian and Chinese strange and the fantastic tale tradition. The idea of the strange and the fantastic is different for each country. I have attempted to establish the definition of the strange and the fantastic in both these traditions. Examining the *Rasa* theory along with the ancient

Chinese dictionary meanings of the strange and the fantastic had led us to the basic difference between these two ancient civilizations. Eventually this difference will only facilitate the spontaneous infusion of two different cultures. The thesis executes a comparative thematic study of the stories that not only represents the cultural and intellectual exchange between India and China, but also marks a major paradigm shift in the Chinese and Indian narrative traditions by introducing the 'strange' as a subject category.

Chapter One

India and China: Cross-Cultural Literary Relations

Buddhism, a religion and a philosophy founded around 5th century B.C by Gautama Buddha, preaches free-will in a hierarchy-based social structure and also provides a revived life to a cast-ridden Indian society. It advocates a new way of life which includes self-restraint. It became a pathfinder in a hierarchic society predominated by Hinduism. Buddhism is the only religion, which was able to determine the cultural, socio-political, religious and literary relationship between India and its neighbouring countries, especially China. In India, Buddhism, usually as a counter stream to Hinduism, offers a different way of life and philosophy with respect to existing indigenous religion and Confucianism, an ancient Chinese ethical and philosophical system originally developed from the teachings of the early Chinese scholar and philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC). Its focus is primarily on non-religious secular ethics, secular morality as well as well as the cultivation of the civilized individual which in turn would contribute to the establishment of a civilized society or country and ultimately world peace. Much disputed in the Warring States period (475 B.C. - 221 B.C.) and forbidden during the short-lived Qin dynasty (221 B.C-206 B.C.), Confucianism was chosen by Emperor Wu of Han who uses it as a political system to govern the Chinese state. Confucianism lost its influence during the Tang dynasty (618 A.D.-907

A.D.) because of the overwhelming influence of Buddhism among the populace but the Confucian doctrines remained in the mainstream Chinese orthodoxy for thousands of years till date. This chapter will discuss the Confucian social system in China and thereafter the advent of Buddhism in China. It will also talk about the confluence of the Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism and the philosophical and social impact of these on the Chinese literary tradition. This discussion will help us understand the situation in which new genres of strange tales developed and flourished.

The advent of Buddhism to China is a remarkably important phenomenon in the nourishment of the thoughts, the culture and Buddhism as a religion itself. Buddhism in India is vastly different from Buddhism in China, regarding its influence and subsequent developments in the Chinese pantheon. Buddhism, when it traversed to China, discovered itself in a totally different background consisting of a diverse set of ideas and thoughts and in a society immensely influenced by Confucian ideologies. After much peril and a difficult process of absorption, the newly developed teaching was able to ascertain itself as a major system of thought. It of course contributed immensely to the enrichment of the traditional Chinese philosophy creating a new phenomenon for Chinese popular literature and culture in the later period. By the time Buddhism reached China (according to the official sources, in the first century AD), it had already undergone a sea of changes over several centuries. These changes mostly took place both at the philosophical and the religious level.

In this section we will briefly discuss the ideas related to Confucianism and its developments in China. Confucianism dominated Chinese thought for twenty-five centuries consistently. Of course it began with Confucius but later on was carried on by his true disciples- Mencius and Xun Zi (310-237 BC). Confucian principles bear some humanistic characteristics that focus on the human relations and virtues, meticulously rejecting all the questions that arise out of the ontological details or talks about the supernatural. His ethics, politics, views on life, all the supreme virtues are the cardinal principle of humanism that has been displayed in Chinese cultural achievement for thousands of years. The *Analects* expresses the Confucian ideal of culminating human relations and developing human faculties, their personalities and human rights. Confucius tried to define the supreme virtues of a Junzi that is 'noble man' - "The superior man does not, even for the space of a single meal, act contrary to virtue" (Legge, *Analects* 92). It is the 'perfect virtue' 仁 *ren* that surpasses the barrier of race, credo and time. According to the *Analects*, *xiaoti* 孝弟 (Legge, *Analects* 83,192) is the filial piety and fraternal submission or duty and these two together uphold the idea of the unselfish human feeling. Confucius says that *xiao* 孝 signifies a state of spiritual communion with the eternity of time and *ti* 弟 implies a state of spiritual communion in the infinity space. Hence they become the foundation stone of the social structure. Confucius by expanding and diffusing their influence through all other related virtues, made these two most important virtues essential for the bond of social solidarity and the connection between successive generations. In their broader sense they are the traditional values based on the love of humanity. In the *Analects* -4.15, *Zhong* 忠

(faithfulness) and *Shu* 恕 (altruism) are mentioned. It is mentioned that the doctrine of Confucius is to be true to the principles of human nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others. Confucius asked for this only and nothing more - 「夫子之道，忠恕而已矣。」 (Legge, *Analects* 93). *Zhong* 忠 implies a state of mind when one is completely honest with oneself. *Shu* 恕 refers to a state of mind when one is in complete understanding and sympathy with the outside world. Hence it preaches the true and unselfish love of mind that is a way of loving others. In the community life, there are things that should be done for their own sake, because they are morally appropriate or essential in themselves. It says that one should shun the idea of *Li* 利 (personal profit) and adopt the virtue of *Yi* 義 (righteousness) implying the responsibility that is unconditional and absolute (Legge, *Analects* 93). Mencius says that if one is gifted with some compassion and the sense of humiliation and dislike, he will naturally renounce things that go against the principles of *Yi*. They are intrinsic to the traditional spirit of the nation. Xun Zi develops the idea of *Li*, basically a norm of social conduct or a social order; it is a code of ritual profoundly religious in nature that includes all forms of rituals. The desire of a human being is not often satisfied and the restraint of the desires brings in the contention within the self which may lead to a chaos and hence ultimately to dissolution. The kings instituted *Li* and the *Yi* together to delimit the disordered phenomena that helped in nourishing human desire leading to the gratification. In the society, human beings are interconnected and integrated. If they all begin to follow their personal yearning without regard to those of others, then the society may face disintegration. Hence Xun Zi

emphasized on the conduct of men living in a group, governed by a code of tested and accepted rituals (*Li*). *Li* is the fundamental ritual to lead a social life. *Yi* and *Li*, these two precisely underline the Confucian doctrines and principles. These are the established norms that the Chinese people abided by for thousands of years. They had so far consistently contributed in developing the Chinese culture. *Yi* is followed as the utmost principle entrenched in the activities of mankind and *Li* works as the expression of the moral sentiment and the standard of conduct and *Yi* by bringing the whole performance into harmony with reason and order. In this way the foundation of Confucianism is set, into which all the humanistic doctrines and the filial values are incorporated. Confucius thus preaches an idea of a uniformed society and a homogenous culture to strengthen the national integration. It can well be assumed that Buddhism was supposed to be the first and foremost threat to this national integration because it negates the omnipotent power of the ruler who is assigned by heaven to control the common people.

Warring states (475 B.C. - 221 B.C.) and the Han dynasty (25 A.D.-265 A.D.) onwards, the humanistic ideas (those of Mencius and Xun Zi) were further elaborated in an important book known as *Liji* 禮記 or the *Book of Rites*. One section of the book titled *Da Xue* 大學 (*The Great Learning*) follows the ideas of Xun Zi and its unique attribute that is the rational and logical reasoning it shows in support of a general thesis. There is a detailed illustration of the unity of ethics and politics that contribute to the idea of humanism. It says that no matter how much the world has fallen into chaos, moral cultivation is the universal remedy for all social and political maladies. As Confucius mentioned that moral

cultivation that explores the self is the root of everything, be it a well-balanced individual or the well-ordered family or a well-governed state. It is believed that only this can harbinger a happy, harmonious and integrated world.

During the Han dynasty (205 BC-220 A.D.) the impact of the Confucian classics was being revived along with the resumption of the letters. The emperor Wu (140-87 BC) used to uphold a political unity by indiscriminately accepting all the schools of philosophy and chose Confucian principles to offer it preeminence as the state-orthodoxy. Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.) was one of the greatest early Han emperors who advocated a system of education based on the Confucian classics and thus institutionalized the Confucian orthodoxy and reframed the Chinese examination system. This time Han Confucianism was threatened by the rise and the popularity of some rival schools like Daoism. Dong Zhongshu intended first to work out a philosophical interpretation and the justification for the Han imperial institution and secondly wished to devise a formula of subjecting the people to the ruler and the ruler to the Heaven. The catastrophe occurred when one of the most powerful and influential dynasty, the Han dynasty collapsed. The disintegration of the dynastic rule brought about a huge political chaos. This naturally led the common people's belief in the absolute reign of the heaven through the king to a moral crisis. This was the circumstance under which Buddhism and Daoism took their hold over the psyche of the God-fearing people and nearly overshadowed Confucianism. Chinese philosophy blossomed afresh during the following period. This period was noted for the rise of the school of Study of Li based on 'Reason'. Later this came to be known as neo-

Confucianism. It was a summation and reconsideration of the ethics, morals and beliefs of the past and here the principles of Confucianism were comprehensively shaded with Buddhism exactly the way Buddhism is interconnected with Daoism. It is thought that the post decline phenomena in China caused great misery in the lives of the people. They conceived the present world as the sea of bitterness. But the same incident filled into them a love for life, a national characteristic in steadying the nation. To them life seems to be transcendental and it is like a dream, a bubble, a shadow, dew, lightening and anything that is transient.

During the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BC), the Zhou rulers called for the concept called *tianming* 天命 or the Mandate of Heaven (Bary, *Chinese Tradition* 28). Heaven elected or commanded certain men to be rulers over the tribes of the world, and their heirs were subsequently allowed to continue to exercise the Heaven-sanctioned power. They would continue this as long as they carry out their religious and administrative duties with piety, wisdom, and justice. But it will go on until the power and importance of the ruling family remained constantly unchanged. As soon as the worth declines and if the rulers turn their backs upon the spirits and abandon the virtuous and righteous ways of living that initially marked them as worthy of the mandate to reign over the Chinese populace, then Heaven might cast them off and elect a new family or tribe to be the ordained rulers of the world. This way the early Chinese populace believed in a supreme deity or moral force, which ruled the world and expressed a very personal interest in the relationships of mankind. They used to nurture a belief in the existence and the power of a number of nature spirits and the spirits of the

ancestors who had to be served and appeased with sacrifices. This was the situation when Buddhism arrived in the Chinese society.

This section will first introduce Buddhism briefly and then subsequently will discuss the introduction of Buddhism in China. A brief discussion of the Buddhist teachings and principles would help us to discern its transformation or development and evolution in a foreign country like China. Buddhism that originated in India believed in four fundamental truths, basically the doctrines of the “Four Noble Truths”. They are i) that life is inevitably sorrowful, ii) that sorrow is due to craving, iii) that it can only be stopped by the controlling of craving, and iv) that it can only be done by a carefully disciplined and moral conduct, culminating in the life of concentration and meditation led by a Buddhist monk (Bary, *East Asian Tradition* 223-224). Buddhist doctrines characterize the nature of the world in three ways: sorrowful, transient, and soulless. These are frequently reiterated in the Buddhist literature in which it says that without a totalitarian view and understanding of it, no one can attain salvation or ‘*nirvana*’ that will mitigate the human cravings for the permanence. The process by which life continues and one thing leads to the other is explained by the Chain of Causation or Dependent Origination (Bary, *East Asian Tradition* 224). It says that the chief reason for the cycle of birth and death and rebirth is nothing but ignorance and the deep-seated illusion that in the human world permanence and individuality exist. Rebirth is stated as the outcome of *karma*, drawing a parallel with Hinduism. According to the Buddhist doctrines everything is in a constant state of flux. Thus there cannot be any permanent soul. Also it is also found quite

contradictorily that there is a space for the doctrines of transmigration. It obviously declines the idea of rebirth after salvation but in practice and in the popular literature of Buddhism we find the transmigration of Buddha's soul in the *Jatakas*, the stories based on Buddha's former lives.

There are some specific reasons why Buddhist doctrines and philosophy were received arduously in China. From the point of view of the Buddhist doctrines, even the highest among the gods was liable to error. A monk who follows Buddha is not liable to come under any social hierarchical system. According to this theory Buddha had passed away from the universe, had ceased in any sense to be a person, and no longer affected the world in anyway. The 'Three Jewels' that is, 'I take refuge in Buddha, I take refuge in the Doctrine and I take refuge in the Order' refers to the omniscient Buddha (Bary, *Chinese Tradition* 269). Now it is here that a jolt comes to the concepts of the traditional Chinese culture in which the King is the representative of Heaven and therefore omnipotent and irrefutable. According to the Buddhist principles, a monk does not bow down before a King, which was quite truly unthinkable to the Chinese populace. When any man enters the Buddhist clergy, he leaves his clan, his caste, and all his worldly possessions. As one standing outside the social order he is no more liable to respect the secular royal leaders. The early Buddhist clerics in China displayed no special veneration to layman authority and even to the emperors. Previously this was supposed to be a great problem as the most distinguished monks used to visit the royal personalities and did not bow down, thus violating the codified Chinese etiquette. They reason themselves this way that the Buddhist clerics are far removed from

the worldly interests and therefore they cannot be expected to acknowledge loyalty and respect to the emperors like ordinary lay men. Buddhism preaches that, heaven and earth are inevitably great as they give birth to the living beings but even these do not have the power to attribute immortality to the living being, which means its permanence cannot be ensured. Kings and princes, though they have the power to determine the presence and existence of a creature, cannot still ultimately protect them from all sufferings and woes. Actually in this context, the people were able to raise a very relevant question as to where exactly does the power of the King lie? Also to what extent should they be acknowledged by the common people in the matters of deciding their ways of life?

These questions were answered to some extent after the arrival of Buddhism in China. This section will discuss Buddhism and its interaction with the traditional Chinese culture. The early intercourse between India and China started with military exigencies which were afterward fostered by the traveling merchants to China from Central Asia. It was Zhang Qian (167?-114 BC) who was sent to Bactria Central Asia in 138 BC by the former Han dynasty court (202-23 BC) and he only reported to the court about the presence of a trade route linking south western China and India (Tansen, *Buddhism* 3). The first Chinese dynastic history *Shiji* 《史記》 narrated the plan of the Han Officials who wanted to locate and monopolize this particular route to India (Tansen, *Buddhism* 3). But the Han emissaries failed. After the collapse of the Xiongnu Empire and the Han expansion into the Pamir regions, the exchange and relation between the Han court and the northern India grew faster (Tansen, *Buddhism* 3). The *Hanshu* by

Ban Gu (32-92 AD) narrated the hostility between the Han court and the Jibin kingdom (around Gandhara region). Eric Zurcher argued that the process of the filtration of Buddhist ideas into China from India might have started between the first half of the 1st century BC (Zurcher 23). The early Buddhist imagery in China can be found on the boulders of Mount Kongwang of Jiangsu province engraved during the middle of the second century AD. There were images of Buddha and the representations of the *Jataka* tales, foreign donor figures, secular figures wearing Kusana style dress and the traditional Chinese motif of moon and a toad. So it is evident from this art that the Buddhist images had already started intermingling with the indigenous ideas, especially Daoist motifs (Tansen, *Buddhism* 5). From the excavated relics in the Sichuan and Gansu provinces it is evident that the Chinese were initially drawn to the mortuary implications of Buddhism (Rhie 47). The Indian ideas entered China through the trading channels of Central Asia, Myanmar and also by the maritime route. Wu Hung argued that the early images of China found in China had hardly any relevance to Buddhist teaching but they enriched “the representations of Chinese indigenous cults and traditional ideas.” (Hung 273). Wu Hung also said that these cannot be regarded as early Chinese Buddhist art, but they are also not a reflection of a fusion of Buddhism and the Chinese tradition (273). They only represent a random borrowing of Buddhist elements by the Han dynasty popular art.

Very soon the elementary teachings of Buddhism that included the idea of Buddhist suffering, karma, retribution and the idea of *samsara* or continuous birth, were transmitted to China through the narration of Buddhist *Jatakas* and

Avadanas. After proselytization the Buddhist ideas gradually absorbed indigenous ideas and local beliefs into its body via the medium of the travelling monks and the dissemination of the Buddhist literature (Tansen, *Buddhism* 7). During the 3rd to the 5th century, Buddhism flourished in China. With the increasing number of the monks from India, the translation projects also progressed and Chinese monks also started visiting India in search of Buddhist doctrines. The Buddhist idea of the *Karma* and the cycle of the birth and death, the description of torments in the hell, and the circulation of several ways to escape worldly suffering influenced the Chinese society profoundly. The amalgamation of Buddhist ideas with the Confucian Chinese views of filial piety and corporeal longevity captured the imagination of the Chinese common folks and they became concerned about the pains of after-life punishments as well as joys of paradise (Tansen, *Buddhism* 7). The miraculous and marvellous events associated with Indian monks, images and other sacred objects that started entering China from about 3rd century AD caught the fascination of the Chinese audience. The thaumaturgical skills of the Indian monks like healing, rainmaking and the prognostication of fate portrayed them as wonder workers and this justified the political and social role of Buddhism. The narration of such activities also asserts the supernatural strength of the foreign doctrines against the contemporary Daoist priests and local cults (Tansen, *Buddhism* 8).

Sylvian Levi suggested that Buddhism intermingled through the centuries with every sphere of Chinese culture and civilization (Wright, *Buddhism and Chinese Culture* 17-42). It of course included literary and philosophic traditions along with

economic and political institutions, with ethnicity, customs and behavioural norms and indigenous traditions in art and architecture, with religions of all classes and of all subcultures of China. Also it is well assumed at the same time that the response of an alien source of influence at the philosophical level must be different from the socio-political level. Yet the homogeneity of the Chinese culture and civilization brings in separate cultural, literary and intellectual levels close and they were interconnected and dominated by the mainstream classical Confucian authority. Any significant change in one stratum must influence the others as well, because the officially acceptable cultural tradition was led by Confucian principles as it advocated the uniformity in society and any other subversive traditions were on absolute prohibition. Other subordinate traditions were completely ignored to subvert any flicker of rebellious attitude that threatens the existence of the uniform society. Religious impact must result in philosophical change while the philosophical system decides minute modifications in the literary phenomenon.

This section will discuss the phases of interaction between Buddhism and Chinese culture. The interaction between Buddhism and Chinese culture can be divided into certain specific phases. The question of influence and reception must be raised while segmenting the interaction between the two ancient cultures and civilizations into one chart. It is not difficult to determine the intensity of the influence, but exactly which tradition influences the other is a subject which requires careful attention. It is so because the result of the interaction is never a completely overpowered single, monochromic tradition sans all its original

characteristics. This is a process of intermingling, an amalgamation of two traditions where they both lose their individual characters and result into a continuous process that manifests the struggle between various levels. As Arthur F Wright, rightly says, he is dealing with “two culture complexes in continuous process of change” (Wright, *Confucian Persuasion* 390). This indiscernible influence, this process of transformation, provides Chinese culture and society with parallel and comprehensive changes resulting in some kind of amelioration and ultimately a great drive to come out of the aura of the mainstream and didactic Confucian ethics. It took almost half a million years to activate the influence of Buddhism in China. The advent of Buddhism created an atmosphere of receptivity and approachability and thus led its way towards domestication. Wright (Wright, *Buddhism and Chinese Culture* 17-42) says that there are two things that need to be looked at: first, the evolution of the social and the intellectual circumstances that makes the Chinese receptive to a foreign religion and its cultural accompaniments, and secondly, the development of ways and means of translating the foreign religious texts and scriptures into language, metaphor and patterns of behaviour which the Chinese could understand and adopt. The primary social cause was the disintegration of the great Han Empire, a really major event in the Chinese socio-political, cultural and especially in the intellectual domain. The weakening of the imperial authority empowered the nobles and the eunuchs who occupied the key positions after the great fall and exploited power and fortunes. The Han socio-political order was completely driven by conflict. The former moral and political sanctions were undermined and

discredited as consequences of the fall of the Han dynasty. The economic burden of supporting corrupt and divided nobility fell upon the underprivileged peasantry. Peasant bitterness and the resentment found its expression in the mounting power of the Daoist religious fraternities, which provided both religious solace in a troubled age and a focus for the organized opposition to intolerable oppressions. As a result the Han peasant society broke down. This falling apart is one of the factors that paved the way in this period for the spread of an alien religion like Buddhism. This upper-class power conflict afflicted the ideological and philosophic focus of the Han Confucian synthesis. The coherence and validity grows inconsistent from the time of Wang Chong (27-97 A.D.) and its formulae of an organic society [as preached by Confucius] proved to be inapplicable in the time of crisis. Now the troubled Chinese nobility began to look for the means of understanding the befallen society and also the prescriptions for its illness. Daoism finds its way out because of its refutation of the Confucian tradition and for the radical notions suitable to an age before which no such ideals exist. Daoism remained in the body of Chinese thought. People found in the theories of Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi and Yi Jing, the ways of talking about the individual and the social dissatisfaction that afflicted them. It is a vocabulary of protest and the *raison d'être* behind escapism. These socio-political upheavals destroyed the Chinese self-confidence and led to the birth of new ideas, innovative endeavours and new institutions. The peasantry turned to religious Daoism and the literate groups towards neo-Daoist philosophy. In the interim period, Buddhism underwent acclimatization through the process of being adapted, translated and

prepared in the Chinese society. The problems that delineate the discrepancy between the two utterly different cultures are given below (Wright, *Buddhism and Chinese Culture* 17-42).

<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Chinese Context</u>	<u>Indian Buddhist</u>
Language	Uninflected ideographic and in its written form largely monosyllabic, no systematized grammar	Highly inflected, alphabetic, polysyllabic with a highly elaborated formal grammar
Literary modes	Terseness, metaphors from the familiar nature, limited imaginative range, concreteness	Discursiveness, hyperbolic metaphors, unlimited imaginative flights, predilection for the abstract.
Psychology of the individual	No disposition to analyze the personality into its components	A highly developed science of psychological analysis
Time and Space	Finite, life-time, milieu and generation oriented	Infinite, aeon-oriented

Socio-political values	Familism, supremacy of the secular power, pursuit of the god society	Individualism (in the Mahayana universal salvation), supremacy of spiritual power, pursuit of non-social goods
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In the capitals of Han, Wu, Wei and the Western Jin, a succession of devoted Central Asian monks arduously worked at the texts and translation at the Dunhuang in the far North West, at the Luoyang in the central China, in the Nanjing and Wu-Chang on the Changjiang River, in the eastern Zhejiang, possibly in Shandong. About 1191 AD, a Chinese official organized a group of scholars in the northern Jiangsu. This is also a centre for religious and social observances. In this period Buddhism developed outside the Chinese philosophical mainstream literature. Earlier the Chinese were not interested in the doctrines but only in the practices. However, the works of translation went on with great success. The translation work increased the interaction and further facilitated the exchange of ideas between the Chinese and the Indian monks. The consequences of such exchanges were evidently reflected in the later growth of Chinese literary tradition.

This section will briefly discuss the interaction between Buddhism and Daoism. This interaction was instrumental in creating new literary and cultural trends and awareness. Buddhism and Daoism entered and began to flourish in China as dominant religions almost at the same time in the first century A.D., during the

early part of the eastern Han dynasty. Very often it was quite difficult to distinguish the difference between the two religions. The traditional religious sacrifices through animal killings were replaced by the human sacrifices as depicted in the Buddhist doctrines. The *Buddhist Sutra in Forty-Two Sections* that came into China and was translated into Chinese during the Eastern Han dynasty described Buddha as one who was considered to be parallel to an immortal of the Chinese legends having supernatural power of longevity, changeability and ability to fly (Beal, *Sutra* 340). Like the other Daoist texts, this *sutra* also is said to teach the people how to purify their minds and to restrain their desires (清心寡欲 *qingxin guayu*).

Buddhism as practiced in India, is quite different from the Buddhism that existed in China. The early Buddhism in India did not treat Buddha as a deity, but only followed his doctrines which were to establish the transitoriness of the emptiness of the 'self'. Then emerged the Mahayana school of Buddhism, which was responsible for establishing Buddha as a deity along with the principle that everything is transitory and empty. During the Han dynasty Buddhism was spreading rapidly and the Buddhist sutras were being translated into Chinese. In the mean time Daoism also began to find its place. The first Eastern Han scripture was the *Classic on the Great Peace (Taiping Jing)*. The Daoist doctrines illustrated in the text were pertaining to this world, and not particularly other-worldly. Here is an overview of what Daoism speaks of. The central idea of Daoism as depicted in 《太平經合校》, is to advocate the harmony of the three *qi* and the ascendancy of emperors and kings (*he sanqi xing diwang fa*

和三氣興帝王法), and all these is intended to achieve the Great Peace - *zhi taiping* 知太平 (王明 sec. 卷十八至三十四乙部不分卷). The three ‘qi’ are the great positive (*taiyang* 太陽), the great negative (*taiyin* 太陰) and the harmony (*zhonghe* 中和), the equivalents of heaven, earth and man; or the sun, the moon and the stars; or the monarch, the ministers and the people (Liu and Shao 36). This is a triadic form that describes the designations of the respective personalities and this seems to come from Laozi. In the *Dao de Jing* chapter 42, it is said that “道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。” James Legge translated it this way, “The Tao produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things.” (Legge, *Tao Te Ching* 85) If these three go along together harmoniously then the world will be in Great Peace that is a quasi paradise will be created in the human world itself. According to this hierarchical power structure the ‘yang’ is superior to the ‘ying’ and this tells that the people have to be filial to the parents, obedient to the teachers and loyal to the sovereign (Jiahe Liu 36). There are other teachings also that deal with the self-cultivation and the secrets of Alchemy that tells how to become immortal. Here we also can find that the Merit system or the doctrine of retribution expounded here in certain ways resembles the Buddhist conception of ‘Karma’. The presence of all these things together proves that Daoism is a synthesis and an accumulation of the traditional Chinese culture because it comprises of the ideas of Daoism, Confucianism, *ying-yang* and the immortality schools. The correlation between Buddhism and Daoism is difficult to establish as they scrounged extensively from each other, thus sharing many concepts and terminologies at the same time.

In this section we will talk about the spread of Buddhism with respect to Daoism. Of course Buddhism had to deal with resistance from Chinese traditional culture as it extended its wings. But there was also a counter stream in which many scholars defended Buddhism. During the late phase of the Eastern Han period a late 2nd-century Confucian scholar-official named Mouzi 牟子 wrote an essay entitled *The Disposition of Error* 《理惑論》. The general tone of the composition says that it was written at the time when Buddhism had gained a sufficiently strong toehold and was being feared by many Chinese because of its profound influence and its gradual empowerment. Mouzi should be mentioned here because he was the person who actually questioned the King's power for the first time. He was also the first person who argues and replies to the people's queries on Buddhism as an alien religion with respect to the traditional Chinese culture and Confucian principles. Mouzi tried his level best to defend Buddhism. He said that it is possible to be a good Chinese and a good Buddhist at the same time. He said that there is no fundamental conflict between these two ways of life and the great truths preached by Buddhism are somewhat similar to those preached by Confucianism and Daoism, but in a different language (Bary, *Chinese Tradition* 422). Mouzi was confronted with questions like, if the ways of Buddha are the greatest and venerable, then why is it not incorporated in the Five Classics. In reply he says that not necessarily does every written work have to be the words of Confucius. Mouzi says, "What accords with principle is to be followed, what heals the sick is good" (Bary, *Buddhist Tradition* 132) even the teachers of Confucius like Lao Zi are not included in the classics. Therefore it is

not necessary to refute Buddha and his learning, whose ‘distinguishing marks are extraordinary and whose superhuman powers know no bounds!’ (Bary, *Chinese Tradition* 422-423). For example, the Chinese tradition that previously followed the Confucian tradition had focused on filial piety. In this regard, the Buddhist ideas of shunning the family and any kind of activity that is related to the family structure and discarding of parents, wife and sons could be questioned as opposing the filial piety advocated by Confucianism. Mouzi argues that Buddha depicts all for a greater good of humanity (Bary, *Chinese Tradition* 421-429). He says that in this way, the nation of the person’s father will be saved from the disasters and would bring good luck. Thus Buddha could release the soul of the parents and the brothers from suffering. In this way he established its filial ground emphasized so far by Confucianism. Mouzi says in some other arguments that Confucian principles meant to rectify the way of the world, and what Mencius said was to deplore the one-sidedness. The commentary said that the land of China is not necessarily positioned under the centre of the heaven. But according to Buddhist scriptures, above, below and all around, all beings containing blood belong to the Buddha-clan (Bary, *Chinese Tradition* 425). Mouzi supports thus his rationale to revere Buddhism, which he felt, never clashed with Confucianism. Interestingly enough, he answered the questions by drawing reference to the fact that even the teachers of Confucius were not mentioned in the Confucian classics. The records and teachings of the five classics including the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 《詩經》) and *The Book of History* (*Shujing* 《書經》) do not contain

everything. He said all these in order to make the Chinese people understand the essence of Buddhism (Bary, *Chinese Tradition* 422-423).

The interaction between Buddhism and the Chinese culture can be interpreted in the following manner. I would agree with what Idema thinks about the conquest of Buddhism in China. He says that the Buddhist conquest of China only succeeded in the end because Buddhism adapted itself to Chinese society (Idema, *Illusion* 48). To accomplish this, Buddhism had to undergo a process of sinicization to a certain extent. Hence it led to the signification of the foreign ideas although the purpose was to introduce it to the native land. This two-way process is true for any cultural exchange between the two civilizations. Thus we find during the 2nd century A.D., Mouzi's *Li-huo-lun* (《理惑論》) is a kind of cyclopedia of the points at which Buddhism had to reconcile with the Chinese tradition, that is Sino-centrism vs. Indo-centrism, familism vs. monasticism, ritual and behavioural prescriptions of the Chinese classics versus those of the Buddhist canon (Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* 38). It was also the conflict and reconciliation between the Chinese notion of a finite existence versus Buddhist ideas of transmigration and above all, realism versus imagination, innovation and creation. This is the circumstance in which Buddhism flourished in this phase.

In this section, some of the terms from the Buddhist scriptures that have been translated into Chinese language are provided. The translators previously used Daoist terminology to express Buddhist ideas (Wright, *Buddhism and Chinese*

Culture 17-42). Some examples are given below. It is done to understand the nature of the change or the transformation that used to take place when these two totally different cultures interacted with each other. During the period of the late Eastern Han and the three Kingdoms, there were hoards of Buddhist scriptures, which had been translated into Chinese from Sanskrit and Pali. These translations can be categorized into two types. One was the *dhyana* practice of Hinayana and the other was the *prajna* theory of Mahayana. The first one was proposed to acquire personal experience of the power of Buddha and to lay emphasis on the calmness of mind (*Samadhi*), and eviction of all the distracting thoughts and hence thinking and imagining only in accordance with Buddhist principles. The full name of the other theory is *prajnaparamita* meaning the highest degree of wisdom. But often it was translated only as 'wisdom'. But it is actually the 'wisdom' of 'nonwisdom' that negates ordinary wisdom. It was regarded as the way to realize the *sunya* (void) that can lead to salvation. During the Wei Jin period, both the *dhyana* practice of Hinayana and the *prajna* theory of Mahayana were quite popular because both of them interacted with Daoism and Daoist principles. Buddhist *dhyana* practices and the Daoist breathing exercises developed an affinity, while Buddhist *prajna* theory and Daoist metaphysics in the Wei Jin period influenced each other profoundly. In the Daoist texts by Laozi and Zhuangzi it is mentioned that the human body and life is there only to conciliate the mind so that they can nourish life's vitality without any so called religious intention, such as seeking immortality (Liu and Shao 38).

The *prajnaparamita* theory can be interpreted by the ideas of the Daoist Schools. Daoist ideas were represented in Buddhist intellectual terms very often in order to sinicize the alien culture in a reverse way. In the chapter forty of *Dao de Jing* it is said “天下萬物生於有，有生於無。” - All things under heaven sprang from It as existing (and named); that existence sprang from It as non-existent (and not named) (Legge, *Tao Te Ching* 84). One eminent scholar Wang Bi (226-249AD) interpreted it as ‘All things under heaven depend on It for life; but the beginning is void [*wu*]’ (Liu and Shao 39). During the Wei Jin period everybody discussed about void and nothingness. Wang Bi’s theory was influenced by the *prajnaparamita* theory of Buddhism that holds that all is empty. Therefore it can be said that Wang Bi’s interpretation in the *Annotation to the Laozi* is erroneous and partial because in the 2nd chapter of the *Dao de Jing* it is said that ‘So it is that existence and non-existence give birth the one to (the idea of) the other;’ (Legge, *Tao Te Ching* 48) that is they are mutually dependent on each other. However, Dao is not nonexistent, it is hidden.

Secondly, many Chinese people were reading *prajnaparamita* theory and the Daoist ideas together and they also understood them. They were often applying Daoist terms and ideas in order to illustrate and analyze the *prajnaparamita* theory. It is officially called ‘ge yi’ that is ‘matching the meaning’. The kernel of the *prajnaparamita* theory is that all phenomenal things are assumed to exist but are really devoid of permanency. Since being is assumed but only emptiness is real, therefore it reached the level of ‘essence’. After this it was mistakenly depicted that essence is empty (Liu and Shao 40). Later it was derived quite

wrongly that the void is the source of reality. This is the way in which many Buddhist theories were interpreted quite incorrectly in the Daoist or traditional Chinese intellectual terms.

Now we will discuss supernaturalism as it grew up to be an important aspect of the Daoist and Buddhist philosophy. Wei Boyang (Little and Eichman 130), the Chinese author and alchemist of the Han and Wei period practiced Alchemy as an essential means of cultivating supernaturalism and becoming immortal. Wei Boyang believed that if one starts meditating by stopping the streams of thoughts and thus concentrates on the things in his body and applies his mind to directing a certain circulation inside his body, then he would attain the objective of cultivating his quintessence, breath, and spirit. He says in addition that if someone takes an elixir with an interaction with the inner and the outer palettes, he can achieve immortality and become a supernatural being. Here it can be highlighted that the ideas concerning supernaturalism began to enter in the scriptures and were already extremely popular and much discussed among the common people, thereafter it was struggling for its foothold in the official and courtly ground.

In 313 A.D. Luo-Yang fell to the Huns and the Chinese emperor was defeated. The psychological and the intellectual impact of it were massive. Buddhism turned out to be responsive to this dismal temperament of the Chinese mind. Arthur Wright talks about the monk like Chin-Dao-lin 道琳 (447–519 AD) who was profoundly versed in the concepts and the vocabulary of neo-Daoism and could present Buddhist ideas in the familiar *Qingtán* 清談 or ‘pure conversation

mode'¹. In a parallel stream many monks tried to shift from Confucian basic teaching to the neo-Daoist ideas and thence adopted Buddhism to express them. In this way Buddhist ideas underwent some degree of Sinification. They brought forth many new thoughts from the translated Buddhist scriptures and their critically explanatory writings. These ideas endowed the Chinese mind with some miracle tales and supernatural stories especially related to Buddhism. For example the figure of *Vimalakirti* was presented as an ideal model character, overshadowing and outmoding the old ideals of the Confucian Junzi and the Daoist sage. These were no bloodless moral archetypes, no naked ascetic but a wealthy and influential aristocrat, a brilliant talker, a respected householder and father, a pure and self disciplined persona, yet a man who denied himself no luxury or gratification while he changed all whom he met, for the better (Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* 52). Buddhism presented the southern aristocrats with a new model for a worldly life which was rare until now. Buddhism provided with a sophisticated and aesthetically pleasing regimen for a meditative life along with a diversified and richer body of doctrines and philosophy and the Chinese psychology discovered a stronger ethical justification for such a life in the Bodhisattva ideal. In the monasteries the clergy began to study the volumes of foreign literature in translation. It was the phenomenon within which Buddhism developed. It did not contain all its original traits of Indian Buddhism, but it was now an admixture of the Chinese Dao and Buddhist *Dharmakaya* (Hansen 208), a

¹Developed during the Wei-Jin (魏晉) period *qingtan* involved witty conversation or debates about metaphysics and philosophy.

completely renovated philosophy modified according to the current hassled state of the Chinese mind.

Now we will move on to a discussion of the time when translation of Buddhist sutras marked a significant paradigm shift in the history of Chinese literature. The confusion regarding the first arrival of Buddhist missionaries to Han China always remained unsolved. Whether it was a journey via the maritime or overland routes of the Silk Road remained a matter of debate. According to Rong Xinjiang, a history professor at Peking University, who studied the overland and maritime hypotheses through a multi-disciplinary methodology of recent discoveries and research on the Gandhāran Buddhist Texts, had concluded that the maritime theory of the transmission of Buddhism is comparatively unconvincing. The “Chinese Buddhism” taken from the *Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia*, states that the first-century Buddhist manuscripts recently found in Afghanistan shows that most probably Buddhism reached China from the Greater Yuezhi of northwest India and took the land route to reach Han China. After entering into China, the Buddhist ideas got amalgamated with the early Daoist and Chinese traditional esoteric ideas and its images received immense appraisal (*Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia*).

There are some popular accounts in the history of Chinese literature that had created certain legends regarding the introduction of Buddhism into China. One such legend says that Emperor Ming (28–75 AD) had introduced the Buddhist teachings in China. The *Li-huo-lun* (early 3rd to early 5th century) by Mouzi records this legend for the first time. It says,

In olden days emperor Ming saw in a dream a god whose body had the brilliance of the sun and who flew before his palace; and he rejoiced exceedingly at this. The next day he asked his officials: "What god is this?" the scholar Fu Yi said: "Your subject has heard it said that in India there is somebody who has attained the Dao and who is called Buddha; he flies in the air, his body had the brilliance of the sun; this must be that god." (Henri 402)

It is said that the emperor sent an envoy to the Southern India to inquire about the teachings of the Buddha (Hill 31). Two Indian Buddhist monks Dharmaratna and Kasyapa Matanga and some Buddhist scriptures reached China. The first documented translation of Buddhist scriptures from various Indian languages into Chinese was done in 148 AD with the monk An Shigao (安世高). The Buddhist temples in Luoyang were established and he organized the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. He translated Buddhist texts on basic doctrines, meditation, and *abhidharma*. The Buddhist concept of *sangha* and alienation from the social affairs were contradictory to the Confucian Chinese social system. The ascetic meditative and esoteric side of Buddhism could be associated with Daoism. Therefore, the Indian monks were interested in using Daoist terms for Buddhist concepts. The Six Dynasties (220-589) was a time when this adaptation of Buddhism in the Chinese soil occurred. Around the 5th century, Buddhism was established in South China. The Indian monks also kept on flowing into China along the Silk Road to spread Buddhism. The primary translation work was done by foreign monks rather than by the Chinese. The history of translation of the Chinese Buddhist scriptures was marked by the arrival of Kumarajiva (334-413 AD).

Kumarajiva was highly valued by Emperor Yao Xing of the state of Later Qin. He revolutionized Chinese Buddhism with his high quality translations (from AD 402-413). He translated Buddhist texts semantically. There are many legends regarding his methodology of conducting translation. Kumarajiva not only criticized literal translation but he also discussed problems of translating Sanskrit sutras into Chinese and pointed out the aspects that are lost in translation (Zhong). Among his remarkable translations, there are the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Amitabha Sutra*, the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, and the *Astasahasrika Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. Huiyuan (334 - 416 AD), Sengrui (371 - 438 AD), Sengyou (445 - 518 AD), Xuanzang (600 - 664 AD) are some notable translators of the Buddhist sutras. Sengrui investigated problems in translating the names of things and he also criticized his master Kumarajiva who, according to Sengrui, was not aware of the Chinese tradition of linking names to essences (名實). Xuanzong introduced the theory of the Five Untranslatables (五種不翻) or five instances where one should transliterate.

With the continuous proliferation of the Buddhist texts, various Buddhist traditions started emerging in China. Among them the most prominent branch of the Mahayana Buddhism was the practice of the 'Pure Land Buddhism' 淨土宗 'Jingtu Zong' established by Hui Yuan. It focused on Amitābha Buddha and his pure land of Sukhāvātī. This pure land refers to India, known as the Western Regions by the contemporary Chinese Buddhist scholars. Other early traditions included the Tiantai Buddhism, Huayan Buddhism, the Vinaya School and so on.

During the early Tang dynasty, the Buddhist monk Xuanzang travelled to India (629-645). After visiting over one hundred kingdoms he wrote an extensive and detailed record of his travel named *The Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* (大唐西域記). While returning he also brought with him many Sanskrit texts. With the imperial order he translated about 657 Sanskrit texts (Watters, Davids, and Bushell 20). After coming back to Xi'an (Then Chang'an) with the emperor's support, he set up a large translation center. Many students and collaborators from all over East Asia came there to contribute.

From 589 AD to 907 AD the Tang Dynasty and many other dynasties witnessed remarkable literary and cultural movements and developments. All these happened because Buddhism had now begun to take its place in the society, thus influencing even the everyday lives of the common people. In this phase we find the rise of some important literary traditions like *Bianwen*, which was an adopted version of the stories from Buddhist miracle tales and *Jatakas*, the stories of the former lives of Buddha. In the Sui and Tang dynasty domesticated elements of Buddhism were accepted and resulted in the splendid and innovative literary productions like *Bianwen* or 'the Transformation Texts' and other miracle tales. This was a completely new kind of Buddhism acknowledged by the Chinese populace and the state. The state assigned some Buddhist clergies to facilitate the fusing of Buddhism and indigenous cults.

We can well assume how Buddhist scholars were exhausted by the complexities of Buddhist doctrines, texts, practices and symbolism as they have been guided by the generations of the Confucian historians. Buddhism, to them, was a foreign

cultural experience and the Buddhist period in the Chinese history was considered to be a shameful chapter in the life of the powerful critics and scholars of China who used to look down upon Chinese popular culture and literature. There was hardly any space for popular literature, as they were considered as non-literature and deliberately kept off the mainstream literary tradition occupied by historical dates and classics. Modern scholarships in China, Japan, and in the West made great strides in the last century to understand the impact of Buddhism in the development of the Chinese civilizations and culture. The scenario actually changed since the first decade of the 20th century when a host of manuscripts was discovered in a small room connected to the side of a cave-shrine at the Dunhuang in the province of Gansu in the north western China. These texts deal with both religious (mostly Buddhist) and secular themes representing the earliest known examples of the alternating prose-verse prosimetric narrative style in China. The discovery of these manuscripts opened up new directions in the domain of researches regarding the India-China literary relationships. This rise of the new genres marked a paradigm shift in the Chinese historiography. The strange tale traditions also existed during Han dynasty and before. But they had mostly come from the desks of the Han scholars as brief notes about Non-Han Empire in order to establish the realistic structure that Confucian system had produced (Bao, DeWoskin, and Crump, XXIV). With the growing insecurity after the Fall of the Han Dyansty, the subversive tradition of strange tales flourished and the brief notes on the strange events started taking the shape of a longer narrative. The most remarkable genre that the post-Han society recognized was the *zhiguai*. In

course of time the popular *zhiguai* narrative became longer and the content was more embellished with literary essence. In the next chapter, the rise, growth and the development of certain new genres in the Six Dynasties and the Tang Dynasty will be elaborated. Along with the Chinese tradition we will also discuss the narrative genres in the Indian tradition that newly flourished around the 1st century AD. The development of the new genres and their founding in the mainstream court literature in the Indian and Chinese traditions is a remarkable phenomenon and the impact of Buddhism and Buddhist parables on this growth cannot be ignored. The next chapter will be an introduction to the new genres that developed and flourished after the advent of Buddhism in China.

Chapter Two

The Genres

The Chinese and the Indian literary traditions of the narrative genre are placed together parallelly in this chapter along with their variations. This is an attempt to understand their reciprocal and mutual influences on each other. The Indian and the Chinese narrative traditions (till 10-11th century AD), their characteristics and nature are introduced here to facilitate the discussion of the analogous stories in the following chapters on ‘Motifs’. The fourth, fifth and the sixth chapters conduct a comparative thematic study of the ‘reception’ of Buddhist *Jatakas* in Chinese and Indian literary traditions. We will be looking into the circulation of certain similar motifs in both the traditions. We will see how they were received and what kind of narrative they produced. In this chapter we are also going to execute an inter-reference between Chinese strange tales till Tang dynasty (618 CE - 907 CE) and the Indian Sanskrit literature till the 11th century. The strange tale literature in Chinese literary tradition from the first century AD till the Tang dynasty includes genres like *zhiguai* 志怪, and *chuanqi* 傳奇. In the Indian tradition, we will refer to the Sanskrit text *Kathasaritsagara* by Somdevabhata written during the 11th century. The stories which are being discussed in this thesis belong to this time span and are taken from the books mentioned above. In order to collect the stories in the books, I took the help of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》 (first published in 978 AD) in which most of the

strange and fantastic stories are compiled. The stories I have consulted here are mostly the *zhiguai* 志怪 and the *chuanqi* 傳奇 genres belonging to the Six Dynasties (六朝 220 or 222–589 AD) and Tang Dynasty (唐朝 618–907 AD). Here I would also like to mention that I have used the online *Chinese Text Project* website (<<http://ctext.org/>>) and *Handian* 漢典 website (<<http://www.zdic.net/>>) for consulting the *Taiping Guangji* stories. I have also used CBETA 中華電子佛典協會 - Chinese Electronic Tripitaka Collection) website in order to consult Chinese Buddhist sutras from the *Taisho Tripitaka* (<<http://www.cbeta.org/>>).

After the fall of the Han dynasty (189 – 220 CE) the Confucian ideological framework fell into disrepute. The intellectuals turned increasingly to the escapist ways of thoughts and this was accompanied by an increasing interest in the supernatural and human relationship with the unseen world. The gradual sinicization of the Buddhist motifs already had started by that time. Chinese fictional prose narratives have a complicated yet very interesting development over the centuries. During the Tang Dynasty many remarkable literary and cultural movements and developments took place because Buddhism had now begun to take its place in the society, thus influencing even the everyday life of the native people. In this phase we find the rise of one important literary tradition like the transformation texts *bianwen* 變文, which was an adopted version of the *Jataka* stories. In the Sui and Tang dynasty, domesticated elements of Buddhism

were accepted and resulted in the splendid and innovative literary productions and other strange tales and romances.

As *Jatakas* and *Avadanas* are extremely important links connecting India-China literary relations, in this section I have attempted to introduce the *Jataka* tales and the *Avadanas*, the prime sources of Buddhist biography and teaching, and have traced their transmission to China. The migration of the *Jataka* tales to China brings forth a distinguished literary tradition like *Bianwen*. Another literary tradition based on supernaturalism existing in China during Tang dynasty was the *chuanqi* 傳奇 tradition which dealt with the strange and miracle tales. These tales used to circulate in society and provide entertainment for the people. There are many evidences from which it is known that the *Jatakas* and the *Avadanas* were transmitted to China through translation. Pilgrims or monks, who used to travel from India to China or vice versa, facilitated the migration of these tales and carried out such translations. These ceaseless translations of the Buddhist texts later proved to be greatly significant in the Chinese literary tradition. This gave birth to a full-grown literary tradition named *bianwen* in China during the Tang dynasty. Moreover, it also strengthened the existing tradition of *chuanqi*. These traditions were strong enough to be considered as a counter-stream to Confucian orthodoxy. An attempt to summarize the nature of this exchange process would also help to analyse how the forces of impact and influence were at work.

An introduction to the *Avadanas* would first require a definition. *Avadana* means a good illustrious, heroic or noble act (Vaidya Introduction). It designates Buddha's *vacana* and makes up seven of the twelve dharma *pravacanas* of Sanskrit Buddhism. We can only assume the existence of a vast amount of literature under the category of *Avadana* literature. According to Speyer (Speyer Introduction V), *Avadanas*' qualification as a Hinayana text is based on Chinese authority. It was translated into Chinese in the 3rd century A.D. and was now extant and found its place in the Chinese *Tripitaka*. The original book was composed half a century before the translation. There are four works in print naming *Divyadana*, *Jatakamala*, *Avadanakalpalata* and the present *Avadanasataka*.

The *Avadanasataka* is a compilation of sacred tales comprising of about hundred *Avadanas*. It is divided into ten sections (*Vargas*) and each section contains ten stories. In the Sanskrit version five tales are believed to be lost. The *Avadanas* are closely related to the Buddhist *Jataka* stories. The *Jatakas* usually refer to the past life of Buddha as Boddhisattva, while in the *Avadanas* Buddha himself plays an important role. Both the *Jatakas* and the *Avadanas* deal with edifying tales whose purpose is to preach and inculcate moral teachings and *dharma*. The moral purpose is primarily to show the all pervading, irresistible power of man (determined for each creature) and the fate of his existences within the immense and boundless circle of never-resting *Samsara*. It also attempts to convince the minds of the audience about the individual power of every creature and to gather them by means of the performances of the good actions. There are collections of

Avadanas, which are made up of younger compositions as they are incorporated into it much later. The one difference between the *Jatakas* and the *Avadanas* is that in the *Jatakas*, Bodhisattva is the only dramatis personae. But both of them include Buddhist teachings and they also consider the spiritual need of the audience. But of course neither of them pretends to claim any higher philosophical learning or meditation.

The India-China literary relationship is distinguishably marked by the huge amount of translation from Pali and Sanskrit literature into Chinese and vice versa. In this regard we get the names of Asvaghosa, who is described as a contemporary of Kaniska (100 A.D.) in the translated works (Nariman et al. 28). The *Sutralamkara*, the Chinese translation of it by Kumarajiva (405 A.D) consigns the credit to Asvaghosa (Nariman et al. 36). Fragments of the same work in Sanskrit were discovered in a central Asian region and identified by H. Luders (Dasgupta, and De 655). He quite rightly identified the author as Kumaralata, who was a junior contemporary of Asvaghosa and the title of the Sanskrit version was the *Kalpana-manditika* or *Kalpanalamkrtika*. It is a set of moral tales and legends written in prose and verse in the style of an ornate *kavya* – told after the manner of the *Jatakas* and the *Avadanas* (Dasgupta, and De 72). The work points to the proficiency of turning the tales into Buddhist propaganda. These tales encompass a great variety of cultures, which have been very influential over a large span of time. Around the same time of Asvaghosa the Buddhist poet Aryasura wrote the *Jatakamala* in imitation of Asvaghosa's *Sutralamkara* (Dasgupta, and De CV).

The *Jatakamala* consists of thirty-four tales written in both prose and verse in an elegant Sanskrit version (although the Chinese translation is comprised of only fourteen stories). The selected legends from the Pali *Jatakas* and *Cariya-pitaka*, illustrate the parameters or the perfections of a Bodhisattva. The graceful form in which the old stories are retold in the *Kavya* style shows that they were intended for a wider but sophisticated audience. We have Yijing's (義淨 635-713 AD) testimony, established by the existence of Chinese translations, that the work was once appreciated in India and abroad (Dasgupta, and De 80). The date of *Aryasura* is not known but according to the dates of the later works, it must have been before 434 A.D (Dasgupta, and De 81). Another important work that was translated into Chinese is the *Avadana* literature (Pali *Avadana*). It is said that the actual *Jataka* stories are contained in it. As S.N Dasgupta and S.K De mentioned, the themes of the *Avadanas* are the fruits of man's deeds; these stories have strong moral and ethical discussions, which conclude with absolute devotion to Buddha. These tales are sometimes produced in the form of narration by Buddha himself (of a past, present or future as in *Jatakas*). These are historically important because they are the illustrations of a peculiar type of storytelling in Sanskrit. The oldest of these collections is the *Avadanasataka*. The tales of the *Avadanasataka* are greatly didactic and less significant regarding literary essence (Dasgupta, and De 81). Its date is not certain but from the Chinese translation of the work it can be well assumed that it is dated in the first half of the 3rd century AD. So there were many Indian works that evidently established their existence as translated works in the Chinese literary panorama. The Buddhist anecdotal literature reflects

an aspect of the literary as well as popular taste of the time. It represented a story-telling process in an uncomplicated and unembellished but manifestly elegant manner. In the corpus of Buddhist literature we have works like the *Divyadana* and the *Avadanasataka* but we also have the *Jatakamala* of Arya Sura which believed to have existed in the 4th century A.D. It is written in prose with many interspersed verses, in part gnomic, in part narrative (Keith, *Sanskrit Literature* 70). These are important resources to the later works that adopt their theme and form. The *kavya* tradition that started with all these works flourished in the later centuries. The impact of the storytelling tradition was always very powerful on the Indian as well as Chinese literary traditions. In the next chapters on the specific themes and motifs, we will notice how the Hindu, and Buddhist oral tradition and their storytelling culture affected both Chinese and Indian literary traditions.

Now we will touch upon the Indian classical Sanskrit literary tradition. The narrative tradition in the Indian literary corpus can be traced back to the work of Gunadhya. The Sanskrit *Panchatantra* and the Prakrit *Brhatkatha* are synchronous. A variety of extant versions of these two works belong to a much later period (Dasgupta, and De 83). The determination of the exact date of Gunadhya is a matter of great dispute. *Brhatkatha* by Gunadhya is a popular tale in the *Paisaci* Prakrit language, represented through a number of works in Sanskrit and the stories are known from the three comparatively late Sanskrit adaptations. These are the *Brhatkathamajari* by Ksemendra, the *Kathasaritsagara* by Somedevabhata and in another variant form in the

Slokasamgraha by Buddhaswamin. Around the 1st century A.D. Gunadhya was a renowned court writer. It is assumed that his work, the *Brhatkatha*, was mostly based on popular folk tales. Around this 1st or the 2nd century A.D. some of the important *Avadanas* were written. One of them was the *Asokavadana* which was actually translated into Chinese in the 3rd century A.D. These *Avadanas* were written in Sanskrit, while more or less around the same time the *Brhatkatha* of Gunadhya was written in *Paisaci*. The essential parts of many of the *Avadana* legends can be found in Ksemendra's work (Dasgupta, and De CVI). The *Avadana* literatures such as the *Avadana-Sataka*, the *Divyavadana*, and the *Mahavastu* as well as the *Lalitavistara* are closely connected with the *Jatakamala*. All were written during the 1st and 2nd century A.D. Both the *Avadana* tales and the *Jataka* stories were of didactic nature. So were the *Brhatkatha* and the *Pancatantra*¹. But these narratives include stories that do not have professed Buddhist teachings. But these narratives also include several stories which are also present in the *Jatakas* and the *Avadanas*. These two Indian traditions (Buddhist and Sanskrit) are well-connected. This connection had also helped in merging the Indian and the Chinese traditions so well that their native characteristics were almost mitigated and indistinguishable. Hence we can conclude here that the *Jatakas* were a major link in establishing literary and cultural relationships between India and China.

The exact date of the original work is not known. Gunadhya seemed to have written the book during 1st century AD possibly near Pratisthana, a city on the

¹ One of the versions of the entire *Pancatantra* is styled on the *Tantrakhyayika* (Dasgupta, and De 614).

Godavari (Winternitz 25). Many scholars opine differently regarding this. The two major sources, from which we can know this, are *Vasavadatta* of Subandhu, *Kadambari* and *Harshacharita* of Bana (7th century AD) and we can well assume that they already acquired recognition before 600 A.D. Dasgupta and De discuss elaborately the date and the origin of the *Brhatkatha* and its later adopted versions (Dasgupta, and De 92-100). According to them, the Gunadhya legends are quite problematic regarding the controversy that pivots around the term and its language. It is written in some form of *Paisaci* – the dialect of the wild people of the Vindya regions. Dandi in his *Kavyadarsha* mentions the legends and he calls it *Bhuta-bhasa* (Dasgupta, and De 94). Dandin considers it as *Katha* (verse is allowed to be inserted). The exact context of *Brhatkatha* cannot be determined. The main theme of *Brhatkatha* has constantly been interrupted in its two later recession by a vast cycle of legends. Ksemendra and Somedeva are not in perfect agreement, regarding the sequence and arrangement of the extra mass of material. It seems that these two versions are not able to produce a unified work. Somedeva being an expert storyteller tries to preserve the effect of the main story.

How far these episodes and legend cycles of Somedeva and Ksemendra belonged to the original *Brhatkatha*, cannot be exactly determined, but it is clear that much of them are remotely and sometimes confusedly connected with the main theme. The legendary account of the origin of the work and the personality of the author is provided with some variations in the introductory account of the two

Kashmirian Sanskrit versions of Somedeva and Ksemendra and also in the Nepalese version of Buddhasvamin (Dasgupta, and De 97).

We can acquire some basic knowledge regarding the content of Gunadhya's work from two main sources. The *Brhatkathamajari* of Ksemendra is written about a quarter century before the *Kathasaritsagara* by Somedevabhata. The *Kathasaritsagara*, according to Keith, more properly can be called the *Brhatkathasaritsagara*. It was composed between A.D. 1063-66 and A.D. 1081-88 (Keith, *Classical Sanskrit* 86). But another work that determines the authentic source is the *Slokasamgraha* by Buddhasvamin. This is a Nepalese work that has been assigned to the 8th-9th century A.D. This work is comprised of a fragment of 28 chapters and 4,524 verses. Keith says that the Kashmir texts are adopted from a very different version than the original *Brhatkatha* itself (Keith, *Classical Sanskrit* 86). In Kashmir there was a *Brhatkatha* that gradually evolved on the basis of the original one. This is said perhaps on the basis of the extraneous incorporation of matters including a portion of the *Panchatantra* itself. There are different opinions concerning these inclusions (Keith, *Classical Sanskrit* 86).

The 11th century Kashmiri polymath Ksemendra composed the *Brhatkathamajari* together with Somedeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, and these are the sole source of information regarding the content of the lost *Brhatkatha*. Both of these books contain stories, which find their origin in heaven: Siva told the stories to Parvati which a *gana* overheard and repeated to his wife. The goddess put a

curse on him so that he would have to take birth on earth and he was to be released only after he had repeated the tales to a *yaksa* who has also been cursed in a similar manner. The *gana* was born as Vararuchi Katyayana, the minister of King Nanda of Kausambi, and released after reaching the tales to the *yaksa*, Kanabhuti. The *gana*'s friend Malyavan is now born as Gunadhya, enjoying the favour of the illiterate King Satavahana, who insulted by his accomplished wife decided to learn Sanskrit. His minister promised to train him within six months which Gunadhya challenged and took vows of not using Sanskrit or any vernaculars spoken by common folks if he is defeated. The minister managed to have heaven's aid and thus defeated Gunadhya. Thus he went on an exile in a deep forest and learnt the *Paisaci* language in which he wrote *Brhatkatha*. Only 1/7th of the narrative was finally recovered (Keith, *Sanskrit Literature* 267).

We can gather, though indistinctly, some conception of the essential character of Gunadhya's work, which was marked by a degree of originality decidedly beyond the average. The plan of his work, obscured in the Kashmirian versions by the addition of enormous masses of extraneous material, perhaps to the extent of nine-tenths of that version, was based on the scheme of the *Ramayana*. In the story, Rama had Laxmana to help and support him, and recovered Sita and the throne of his father at the same time. In the *Brhatkatha* Naravahandatta sets out on his first venture with Vegabati, then with Gomukha on a series of adventures, which finally result in his marriage with Madanmanchuka, and hence the acquiring of the throne as the emperor of Vidyadharas. The influence of the

Buddhist legend of the Cakravartin is also apparent. Narabahandatta is born with the thirty-two marks, which establishes that he is a boy who would renounce family life in the pursuit of some remote quest. Keith says that the detailed adventures of the heroes of the *Brhatkatha* highlight that Gunadhya drew freely on the traveller's tales and the popular narratives of his days (Keith, *Classical Sanskrit* 88). Ujjayini and Kausambi were the two places which had rich tradition of legends of their princes. The tales of Udayana and Pradyota are adopted from the popular tales. It is highly evident as we find that this has parallels in the "Attha-katha" of *Dhammapada* and also in the *Divyavadana*. This Udayana legend also appears in the Chinese and Tibetan versions of the Vinaya belonging to the school of the Mulasarvastivadins (Dasgupta, and De 695).

Ksemendra and Somedeva have used different perspectives and different methodologies in their works. Ksemendra is found to be much more precise and abbreviated in respect to Somedeva's writing. He has completed the whole thing in 7,500 *slokas* while Somedeva finishes this within 22,000 *slokas*. It seems that Ksemendra is quite indifferent to the transparency and interest of the original theme. But he is comfortable in the descriptive deviation. He has displayed a mannered and elegant style in the descriptive passages. Somedeva shows far better judgment and good taste in his writing. His narrative is much more lucid and easy. His self-restraint is widely recognized even in Indian classical literature. He can convey in his diverse narrative effects and achieves a certain carelessness as opposed to the precision of the *kavya* tradition. In comparison to Ksemendra,

he preserves the main theme better. Other tales are fitted into this main theme to develop it into a fully extended ocean of stories – the *Kathasaritsagara*. Somedeva, a devout worshipper of lord Shiva composed the *Kathasaritsagara* in order to entertain the queen Suryamati at the time of a civil war in Kashmir and to remove her anxiety about her dissolute son. He tries to preserve the continuity and the propriety and also the elegance and lucidity. It portrays social degeneration. There are abominable images of a depraved society relieved by these two who harbour genuine goodness in their hearts.

The translation of *Kathasaritsagara-Ocean of Stories*, Volume-1 contains an introduction by N. M. Penzer. This work is translated in ten volumes. I have followed this translation for my research work. The work is basically developed into 18 *Lambakas* with 124 *Tarangas*, billows, and the latter division is an innovation of Somedeva (*Kathasaritsagara* Introduction xxxi). The 1st Book provides us with the tale of Gunadhya under the title of Kathapitha. The 2nd book describes the Udayana-story. In the 3rd book we have the story of his winning of Padmavati. The 4th book gives an account of Narabahandatta's birth story. The next book describes the story of the Vidyadhara prince Shaktivega. In the 6th book Narabahandatta meets Madanmanchuka and quite unexpectedly, Narabahandatta narrates his adventures interrupting the actual pace of the story. In this section we have a long series of Buddhist tales. In this book, we have completely different motifs. Even the tales depicted in the subsequent chapters have little relevance to the main story of Udayana. In these sections we encounter some extraordinary

incidents, which are often found to bear close relation to the popular Buddhist tales. The old Buddhist motifs and old mythological figures appear and mingle with the main story. There are tales closely related to *Mahabharata*-Book-IX. The *Vetalpanchabingsati* is also incorporated in it. But most critics have admitted that it is impossible to decide the actual size of the main story from the two adaptations which occurred much later.

Arya Sanghasena, a Buddhist monk, compiled about half of the *Brhatkatha* tales and his disciple Gunavrdhhi translated them into Chinese in 492 A.D. (Keith *Sanskrit Literature* 283). Most of these tales are about fools, knaves, tricksters and courtesans. This Chinese translation is the source of our earliest knowledge about the book and is quite contextual. The real one (the *Brhatkatha*) is lost. The later authors compiled the verses of the text and summarized them. The fact that the last two adaptations by Ksemendra and Somedeva are divided into eighteen books, gives us the hope to expect that the original one also had as many chapters as these two had. Our knowledge of the original text stops here. In the next section we will focus on the adaptation of the *Jataka* tales in the Chinese literary tradition.

The interpenetration of two geographies, the mythical and the real, imaginary and the factual, is a significant feature of the mediaeval Indian literature (Das 17). The dominance of supernatural in the biographical works and the predominance of miraculous elements in the narrative literature do not turn the medieval Indian narrative literature unrealistic. Contrarily the evidence of a strong element of

realism, the life and the milieu of regions could be witnessed. The narrative literature, especially the stories which were often located in imaginary places, is quite prominent. These are basically the observations of the behavior of men and women. With time regional themes that are non-epical in nature slowly started emerging and the trends of realism began to assert themselves (Das 17). From the 9th and the 10th century onwards when anthologies like *Kathasaritsagara* began to be composed, one can notice a new trend in which the close proximity of the real life and nature could be seen.

The tale that we are going to discuss now in this section is the tale of the Dunhuang city - a northwestern Chinese province of Gansu, where the Howling lands hill lies. At the foot of the hill there is the Monastery of the three Realms (*Triloka*) and beside this monastery there are many conglomerated rock caves—“Grottoes of Unsurpassed Height” (*Mo-Gaoku* 莫高窟) - the Caves of Thousand Buddhas (*Qian Fo* 千佛). In May 1907, Aurel Stein and in February 1908 Paul Pelliot discovered thousands of manuscripts from Dunhuang, in the Gansu province, China which are today preserved in the British Museum and the Bibliotheque Nationale, France. The manuscripts, the scriptures and the translations provide us with the impression that Dunhuang was an isolated provincial town in terms of its connection to China. This was like a cosmopolitan and sophisticated city, a junction in between Indian territories and China’s entrance. Even the term ‘Dunhuang’ is thought to be a foreign word deriving out of Greek or Iranian sources (Mair, *Transformation* 1-2).

Dunhuang was a place for an international community – a bustling crossroads of cultural and commercial transaction. The capital of Chang’an was a place for meeting, both for governmental and religious personages and for merchants. Dunhuang was a district or sub region (*xian*) and served as the seal of the prefecture (*Zhou*) of Sha (the sandy region). Joseph Needham comments on this internationalism of the paintings as well as the place, which features a juxtaposition of oriental and occidental features. Many of the most renowned Buddhist translators and pilgrims stayed in Dunhuang for significant periods of time. Fa Xian began his journey to the west that is towards the Buddhist holy land at Dunhuang. Xuan Zang on his return from India remained there while awaiting the Emperor Xuan Zong’s orders. Dharmaraksha (230-380 A.D.) Kumarajiva spent quality time there along with other Buddhist monks from Persia, Bactria, Sogdia, Khata, India and numerous other places. They spent time at Dunhuang just to get acclimatized to the weather and the place itself before entering Mainland China with their manuscripts and messages. This place turned out to be an institution for translation and literary transactions. The literary and artistic relations were being greatly encouraged here. This was a phenomenon ceaselessly continued unheeded by the rest of the world from the Han dynasty to Tang dynasty. ‘The Biography of P’ei Chu’ in the history of the Sui, referring to the preface to his ‘Notes on Pictures of the Western Regions’- describes that altogether there are three ways that begin at Dunhuang and reach to the western ocean (Mair, *Transformation* 3). Each of the various countries on each of these

three ways also has its own roads for communication with north and south. The eastern kingdom of women and Brahmin kingdoms in the south, and so forth can reach everywhere by the following roads. These are all the gates to the western regions, and they all congregate at Dunhuang. So Dunhuang was the crossroads for the transmission of the artistic motifs and the techniques—all the central-Asiatic influences and Indian traditions or Indian Buddhism are evidently shown in Dunhuang (Mair, *Transformation* 3). It can safely be assumed that these were the routes and the ways through which Buddhist *Jatakas* and the *Avadana* literatures once migrated to China, a process much facilitated by the monks and pilgrims and travellers. These tales travelled both in oral and written forms.

However, now we will focus more on the development of the new kind of genre in the Chinese and Indian literary traditions. The fine lines between Chinese historiography and fiction are difficult to determine. The structured dialogues in the historical writings had been used as a resource for fiction. After the fall of the Han dynasty (the fall of Han dynasty written above) the Sui unification of China occurred in 589 AD. That time the Daoist mysticism went through political chaos and discordance. This Daoist art of invoking supernatural power along with the imported concepts of Buddhism expanded the bounds of the Chinese imagination. The marvellous and strange tales about demons, ghosts and reincarnations constructed a new dimension for the interpretation of everyday experience². The later writers and readers followed this fantastic writing tradition later on. By the Tang dynasty the oral tradition and the initiation of dramatic performance already

² In the word of Hans Robert Jauss it can be said that new horizons of expectation for the readers were set (Selden, and Widdowson 52-53).

had started. Three major genres emerged eventually that shared similar resources. They were vernacular stories, the classical style tale and the theater piece. During the 13th and 14th centuries these genres flourished and achieved their best possible forms.

Buddhism also helped in nourishing the existing native traditional Chinese narrative tradition *zhiguai* 志怪 and *chuanqi* 傳奇. However Buddhism in China is responsible for initiating the tradition based on supernaturalism that allowed imagination or fanciful ideas. The strange tales in China signify a movement. It is a rebellion against the established Confucian order and all that refers to change or transformation of the existing system of rationality. The non-Buddhist tradition was amalgamated within it as well. The literary transaction between China and India started around the first century A.D. The Buddhist *Jatakas* were the most powerful oral tradition in India and they were carried over to China by the Buddhist scholars and monks. After the fall of the Han dynasty the early Six Dynasties brought in rapid developments in prose and poetry. Several new genres emerged. It is during this time that the writing was considered to be a private act. At this time attention was only being paid to the literary aesthetics and the personal expressions and edifications. This is the time when *Zhiguai* developed. *Zhiguai* is short form of narrative which means “describing anomalies”. It emerged as a new form with new subject from the traditional restraints of social utility. They excluded many historical materials from their content. Here we can discuss in short the *xiaoshuo* tradition of Chinese literary tradition. *Zhiguai* 志怪 and *chuanqi* 傳奇 both come under the same category of *xiaoshuo* tradition.

Xiaoshuo 小說 or trivial talks usually did not have historical authenticity. Initially it also designated a historical content, referring to stories and events not worth recording in the official annals or histories. These were stories that the people talked about and narrated on the streets and in the inns, often with exaggerations and interspersed with supernatural incidents. These kinds of stories were very popular since the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). Over the centuries, a huge collection assembling semi-historical and fantastic tales came into being. Many fantastic stories have an affinity to Daoist biographies. We will mainly focus on the strange tale literature. Among them we can mention Six Dynasties and Tang *zhiguai* 志怪 and *chuanqi* 傳奇 stories. The most remarkable strange tale books or compilations written in the Tang dynasty are given here – *Jiyiji* 《集異記》 by Xue Yongruo 薛用弱, *Boyizhi* 《博異志》 by Gushenzi 谷神子 (鄭還古 Zhen Huang), *Duyang Zabian* 《杜陽雜編》 by Su E 蘇鄂, *Chuanqi* 《傳奇》 by Pei Xing 裴鏞, *Qiandinglu* 《前定錄》 by Zhong Lu 鐘輅, *Guiyuan Congtan* 《桂苑叢談》 by Fengyizi 馮翊子, *Jutanlu* 《劇談錄》 by Kang Pian 康駢, *Xuanshizhi* 《宣室志》 by Zhang Du 張讀, *Tangqueshi* 《唐闕史》 by Gao Yuanxiu 高彥休, *Ganzeyao* 《甘澤謠》 by Yuan Jiao 袁郊, *Yiwenji* 《異聞集》 by Chen Han 陳翰, *Guangyiji* 《廣異記》 by Dai Fu 戴孚, *Luyiji* 《錄異記》 by Du Guangting 杜光庭, *Xuanguailu* 《玄怪錄》 by Niu Sengru 牛僧孺, *Xu xuanguilu* 《續玄怪錄》 by Li Fuyan 李復言, *Duyizhi*

《獨異志》 by Li Yin 李尤, *Xu Youminglu* 《續幽明錄》 by Liu Xiaosun 劉孝孫³.

In the early-Tang time there were four major types of *xiaoshuo*. The first category would be *Zhiguai Xiaoshuo*. This is a collection where all kinds of ‘miscellaneous’ strange accounts were documented. For example: Wei Caopi’s 魏曹丕 *Lie Yi Chuan* 《列異傳》, *Sou Shen Ji* 《搜神記》 by Gan Bao from the Eastern Jin dynasty 東晉干寶, *You Ming Lu* 《幽明錄》 by Liu Yiqing of Liu Song dynasty 劉宋劉義慶. The word *Zhiguai* first appeared in Zhuang Zi’s *Xiaoyaoyou* “齊諧者，志怪者也” (莊子，逍遙遊). James Legge has translated it this way, “There is the (book called) *Qi Xie* 《齊諧》，a record of marvels.” (Legge, *Kwang-Dze* 165)⁴. Chang Xuanying 成玄英, the 6th century Daoist Master cum critic-author commented that this book *Qixie* 《齊諧》 collects strange accounts⁵. The main characteristic of *zhiguai* stories is that the stories deal with the strange and the fantastic accounts. They deal with supernatural spirits and other strange things. But it also does not mean that all the strange accounts can be categorized as *zhiguai xiaoshuo*. Then there is also *Zachuan Xiaoshuo* or

³The website “ChinaKnowledge.de - An Encyclopaedia on Chinese History, Literature and Art” lists the *Zhiguai* and the *Chuanqi* texts extensively written during the Tang dynasty. I have followed this link - <<http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Novels/xiaoshuojia.html>>. Last Accessed on 12.8.2016

⁴For the works of Zhuang Zi in original Chinese I have consulted this website of Chinese Text project and have followed this link - <<http://ctext.org/zhuangzi>>. In order to consult the translated works of Zhuang Zi into English by James Legge, I have consulted Internet Sacred Text Archive and have followed this link for Zhuang Zi’s translation (1891) - <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/sbe39/index.htm>>

⁵Xuanying wrote this in the book "Commentaries on the South Scriptures" 《南華真經注疏》 which is a commentary on Zhuang Zi.

miscellaneous *xiaoshuo* 《雜傳小說》. *Zachuan Xiaoshuo* refers to the individual entry of biographical *xiaoshuo*-for example *Mu Tian Zi Chuan* 《穆天子傳》, *Yan Danzi* 《燕丹子》, *Feiyan Waichuan* 《飛燕外傳》. Two other categories of *Xiaoshuo* are *Zashi Xiaoshuo* and *Zhiren Xiaoshuo*. The first one records different kinds of strange accounts that have historical connections (歷史異聞) and anecdotes of people. Examples of such accounts would be: *Xijing Zaji* 《西京雜記》 by the Western Han Dynasty author Liu Xin 劉歆 and *Xiaoshuo* 《小說》 by the Liang Dynasty (梁 502–557) author Yin Yun. *Zhiren Xiaoshuo* is a segment of writing that records the words and actions of people. Examples of such *xiaoshuo* would be: *Yulin* 《語林》 by the Eastern Jin Dynasty author Pei Qi 裴啓 and *Shishuo Xinyu* 《世說新語》 by the Liu Song Dynasty author Liu Yiqing 劉義慶. In my thesis I have referred to stories from any type of the *xiaoshuo* genre which contains such strange accounts. I have not chosen my stories according to the genres. But generally the stories I have mostly dealt with, are from the *Zhiguai Xiaoshuo* and *Chuanqi Xiaoshuo* genres. Since in this thesis I have avoided a generic study of the stories, taking the *xiaoshuo* genre as a general category for my research will not hamper the comparative thematic study.

As *xiaoshuo* is the general generic category I have considered in this thesis, so I will discuss the concept of *xiaoshuo* 小說 as expressed in the early Tang dynasty. There are certain concepts related to *xiaoshuo*. Professor Li Jiao Guo had briefly made a survey of the characteristics of the *xiaoshuo* genre. In this section of the

chapter I will be discussing them. This section will also deal with the idea of *xiaoshuo* as expressed in various classics over the centuries. The Chinese term *xiaoshuo* 小說 originally means a shallow and trivial talk. This term was first used by 莊子 Zhuang Zi (369BC-286 BC) in his “Waiwu” 外物 section of the “Zapian” “雜篇” where he said, “飾小說以干縣令，其於大達亦遠矣。” (Zhuangzi). James Legge translated this as “Those who dress up their small tales to obtain favour with the magistrates are far from being men of great understanding;” (Legge, *Texts of Taoism* 134). In the 347 section of the “Yiwenzhi” 《藝文志》 taken from the *Book of Han* (漢書) by the historian Ban Gu 班固, it is depicted that the officials of the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC) used to collect “the chitchat of the street” – “小說家者流，蓋出於稗官。街談巷語，道聽塗說者之所造也。” The dating of the earliest testimony of this art of story-telling varies within a time span of about one thousand years, from the Han dynasty (202 BC—220 AD) to the late Song dynasty (960-1279 AD). The Confucian historians used to collect fictional stories and write them down as short tales. In the “Zi Zhang” 《子張》 section of the *Analects* the disciple of Confucius Zi Xia mentioned “雖小道，必有可觀者焉，致遠恐泥，是以君子弗為也。” (sec.4). Legge translated it this way, even in inferior studies and employments there is something worth being looked at, but if it be attempted to carry them out to what is remote, there is a danger of their proving inapplicable. Therefore, the superior man does not practice them (Legge, *Analects* 154). The same words are mentioned (but here it was said to be uttered by

Confucius) in the section 347 of the “Yiwenzhi” 《藝文志》 taken from the *Book of Han* (漢書)⁶, Ban Gu mentioned what Confucius said about a *Junzi*. The literal meaning of this section refers to the significance of paying attention to apparently insignificant things. It says that even though the alleys are small, there is always something worth looking at. If someone, willing to travel far is afraid of mud, then he cannot be called a *Junzi*.

The next important trait of *xiaoshuo* is *shiguan weishi* “史官末事”. It says that *xiaoshuo* is the unimportant things documented by the historiographers. The next feature of *xiaoshuo* that Professor Li Jian Guo discussed in his class lecture on “唐傳奇概述” delivered on 10th July, 2012, is *youxin wanmu* 遊心寓目. It means the observations of a travelling heart. *Xiaoshuo* is also called a cluster of residual small talks. It is a concept that is broad enough to encompass a large area narrative. There is no uniform style and the narration notes may actually contain a narrative discussion. The content is assorted. In the Tang dynasty the historian named Liu Zhiji (661–721 AD) called them ‘miscellaneous stories’ “雜家小說” (《史通》. 卷六. 《敘事篇》). He said ‘街談巷議，時有可觀，小說卮言，猶賢於己。’ (《史通》. 卷一〇. 《雜述》). This roughly means - street gossip is sometimes important to look at when there is something substantial. Meaningless, fragmented words of tête-à-tête can be worthy of listening to also.

⁶ For consulting the original Chinese source for this, I have followed the online source from the Chinese Text Project. The reference can be found here - <<http://ctext.org/han-shu/yi-wen-zhi>> .last accessed on 13.8.16

In this section we will discuss the strange tale genres in the Chinese literary traditions. First we will discuss the *zhiguai xiaoshuo* 志怪小說 genre from the Six Dynasties and the Tang dynasty and then we will move on to the discussion of the *chuanqi xiaoshuo* 傳奇小說 genre from the Tang dynasty.

Kenneth J. DeWoskin in his essay “The Six Dynasties Chih-Kuai and the Birth of Fiction” mentions in the footnote that the first one who used the term to designate the genre was Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 of the Ming dynasty (Plaks, Birch, and DeWoskin 22). According to him the term *zhiguai* 志怪 means “describing anomalies.” He discussed this genre elaborately. *Zhiguai* 志怪 appeared much earlier in the writings from Eastern Jin and later dynasties. *Zhiguai* 志怪 bears many formal similarities to a number of historical types of writings, but they actually exclude plausible historical materials from their contents. In the corpus of *zhiguai* 志怪 we can find from one lined stories to a well-structured story. It includes elaborate descriptions, love poetry, and the “telling” presence of a narrator. ‘Telling’ here denotes the continuing conscious attitude of telling a story, of making a structured narration, and that is a consistent feature of many *zhiguai* 志怪. Although as a genre, *zhiguai* 志怪 is difficult to delineate because the official authors included anything under this category which did not fit in anywhere else. The roots of fiction can be traced back to the Six Dynasties *zhiguai* 志怪. While resolving the confusion whether it is a fiction or proto-fiction

or simply an antecedent of fiction, Kenneth J. DeWoskin in this regard said that these were the earliest moments of Chinese narrative writing itself, the classical histories and certain sections of the classical philosophical works (Plaks, Birch, and DeWoskin 23). He also pointed out that in classical literary criticism Chinese and Greek historians distinguish between fact and fiction and both preferred to discard the fiction from it (Plaks, Birch, and DeWoskin 23-24). As it is said, fiction is not perfectly opposite to fact. Fiction does not exclude the elements of true records. It should also be noted that the apparent historicity or even the plausibility of the content of a work cannot be the only determinant factor of whether it is fictional or factual. A survey of the scholarship on early Chinese narratives produces a variety of expressions where the historicity and the fictionality of early narratives have been described, and most of the expressions speak about distinctions of degree. In chapter III of *Topics in Chinese Literature; Outlines and Bibliographies* entitled “Early Narrative Prose: History, Fiction and Anecdote”, Highwater mentions different kinds of fictions and history like pseudo–history, ‘fictionalized history’, euhemerized⁷ history, fictionalized biography, historical fiction, imaginary oratory, invention, fiction treated as history, genuine history with an admixture of fiction and ‘anecdotes’. The ideas of the court writers were mostly dominated by the Confucian orthodoxy. The historical records were mostly dedicated to write history based texts and fragments and it was all intended to improve their understanding of the past and for contributing to the contemporary materials that might serve the needs of future

⁷Euhemerism is an approach to the interpretation of mythology in which mythological accounts are presumed to have originated from real historical events or personages. Source-Wikipedia. Accessed on 24th July, 16.

generations. So all of these had a professed purpose of serving the society. Ultimately the court writers can be considered only to be official servants who would help in maintaining the unity and integrity of the society. Therefore this Confucian idea of documentation of the historical events had led the Post Han literati to write similar documents following the old format. But now these documents included the descriptions of foreign people, popular practices, and customs, the transcription of foreign and popular lore as the content of this record. So now we see that the new topics are included and expressed within the structure of the old formats. This is how the strange accounts were being written and they were considered to be the history of the other worlds. This style of writing will continue for a long time and this style of writing only started the creation of genres like *zhiguai*.

There are two perspectives on narrative. The writer and the readers, the origin of the material and the nature of its acceptance in the tradition, between which reside the most profound complexities about the emergence of literary fiction. *Zhiguai* 志怪 is fictional and this is justified by the writer's view and qualified by the reader's. No narrative can be the pure example of history or fiction. It is in between the two. According to him, the contribution of the sources remote from the writer and proximate to him as well, should be taken into account. The singular continuity and durability of the written tradition in China promoted innumerable texts, the contents of which range from the great myths of prehistoric cultures to the commonplace fictions of itinerant healers or entertainers.

Throughout the Six Dynasties and the early Tang, the standards by which historians measured their sources were being refined and the range of what was felt to be appropriate material was being narrowed. Then critics of that time criticized the trend of the authors who were being fascinated by the strange stories. According to the critics neither *xiaoshuo* 小說 nor *zhiguai* 志怪 could be recognized as a genre. On the contrary, the *zhiguai* 志怪 writers justified themselves saying that even the best historical records are uncertain. The critics asked the strange story writers to cultivate a strict ‘spirit of doubt’ while writing the stories. The writers were freed to indulge in the conscious fictionalizing that is the distinctive feature of late Six Dynasties *zhiguai* 志怪 and Tang dynasty *chuanqi* 傳奇. The *zhiguai* 志怪 writers adapted the biography form from their historical models and eased the development of fiction during the Tang and Song toward a more extended narrative.

During the Six Dynasties, the *Zhiguai* 志怪 collections started appearing in greater number. The critic Karl Kao elaborately discussed the compilation and the rise of *Zhiguai* fiction. The authors, who had the ‘unorthodox’ status accorded by traditional scholars, did not leave much information about the circumstances surrounding the compilation of *zhiguai* 志怪 collections. The development of the *zhiguai* 志怪 as a narrative literature depends on the circumstances and motivations for the compilation of the collections. But frequent fabrications and false attributions of authorship made it difficult. Literary activity in the Six Dynasties period was confined within the circles of closely related men of letters,

members of the Royal Family and usual scholar officials. These scholarly people often engaged in intellectual exchanges on several topics and these were conducted in the form of serious debates and social gossip. It is assumed that in the Six Dynasties some of the *zhiguai* 志怪 anthologies were compiled by literati officials like court historians and also the peripheral members like *Fangshi* 方士 or Daoist magicians who were associated with the royal courts (Kao 17). The method of such compilation is however unknown. It incorporated hearsay and legends. The court literati recorded them either in their own words or in the words of the informer. Sometimes the literati cull and transcribe materials from the existing written sources. *Lie Yi Zhuan* 《列異傳》 (Display of Marvels) is one earliest *Zhiguai* collection which has been attributed to Caopi 曹丕 (186-226 AD) of the Wei of Three Kingdoms. Caopi 曹丕 was intensely influenced by Caocao 曹操 (155-220), who was famous for his robust intellectual and political thoughts. Caopi's intellectual curiosity about *Zhiguai* 志怪 materials probably grew as a result of his personal contact with *Fangshi* 方士 magicians at court (Kao 18). The compilation was not done to develop the belief systems they represented. It can also be assumed that the *Fangshi* 方士 magicians might have been responsible for starting such collections as a way of propagating their beliefs and advancing their careers. They might have gathered or written the material for the members of the ruling class, especially for the sovereigns themselves, for the purpose of entertaining them, courting their favours or winning their faith in the magic arts (Kao 18). The stories having the *guai* 怪 phenomena were mostly connected to

the Buddhist and Daoist origins. Ge Hong 葛洪 (280-340 AD) in the text *Shenxian Zhuan* 《神仙傳》 advocated the Daoist faith by creating a canon of hagiography to embody the mysteries of the faith. He also wrote the philosophical text *Baopuzi* 《抱朴子》 which expresses an unambiguous belief in the existence of transcendental beings and in the possibility of human beings achieving immortality through proper alchemical cultivation (Kao 19). Similarly Wang Jia 王嘉 (died approximately in 390 AD) who is thought to be the author of the *Shiyiji* 《拾遺記》 (Records of Historical Remnants) was a well-known Daoist hermit and was well-versed in the art of *bigu* 辟穀. *Bigu* refers to abstinence from grains as part of the immortality cult (Kao 19). More such examples also can be found in the history of *Zhiguai* compilation. The *Mingxiangji* 《冥祥記》 (Manifestations from the Dead) by Wang Yan 王琰 (5th CE) and *Haiyuanji* 《還冤記》 (Accounts of Requiting Grievances) by Yanzhitui 顏之推 (birth 531 AD) were compiled by literati-officials with a clear intention of propagating Buddhist doctrines. In some stories from *Zhiguai* collections, the conflicts and rivalries between the indigenous belief system such as shamanism or Daoism and a foreign culture like Buddhism could be seen. This conflict had worked as a religious motivation in these compilations (Kao 19).

Kenneth J. DeWoskin has argued that the origin of *Zhiguai* 志怪 collections had much to do with the historians' gathering of materials for writing the dynastic histories. At that time the flourishing of the fields of learning gave historians the license to acknowledge non-canonic subjects within their horizon of interest. This

included expertise in the exotic places and objects (Plaks, Birch, and DeWoskin 22-25). Hereby we can mention Gan Bao, who was appointed as the head of Office of History at the court by Emperor Yuan 元帝 of the Jin dynasty (317-323 AD) to compile a history of the Jin dynasty (Kao 20). He is best-remembered for the *Zhiguai* book *In Search of the Supernatural* (*Sou Shen Ji* 《搜神記》). This book incorporates several short *Zhiguai* stories and witnesses reports about spirits and supernatural events. This material was collected as an ethnographic enterprise mainly performed for the official work. One report (2,41) even talks about a Hindu *Fakir* performing magic tricks before an enthralled audience (Bao, DeWoskin and Crump, xxix).

Karl Y S Kao in the introduction to his book *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* also discusses the motivations of the Six Dynasties compilers of *Zhiguai* fictions elaborately. The motivations are mostly of three types. Some of them are explicitly tendentious, some are disinterested, and some are implicitly tendentious. *Zhiguai* compilations with an explicit tendentious purpose are religious. The disinterested collections are mostly the ethnographic field work undertaken by historians. The *In Search of the Supernatural* (*Sou Shen Ji* 《搜神記》) and the *Shu Yi Ji* 《述異記》 (Records of Marvels) by Ren Fang (460-508 AD) are such examples. Here Karl Kao clearly mentioned an important point. The materials in these books have been preserved with a focus on their value as ‘historical facts’. But the material is never detached from the subjective influence of the collectors and compilers. The material has the nature of fiction but it has been given the credibility of fact. Therefore it involves

such questions regarding its historic value. Gan Bao's book was an effort to preserve all materials, including those of supernatural phenomena and it was also a manifestation of the author's personal belief in the factuality of the supernatural. There was a natural intellectual curiosity of the ruling class concerning the folk material. They were, therefore, used in the text to document the public values, beliefs and their attitude toward the King (Kao 21).

By the time the Tang dynasty came to power, 'wonder' was often combined with natural aberrations in the stories of immortality cults. In fact with the Tang *zhiguai* 志怪, how the events of anomalies or supernatural themes are represented in a tale became important. Nevertheless, with respect to *guai* 怪 typology, Tang tales introduced certain typical anomalies and some of the Six Dynasties characteristics gradually disappeared and were excluded from *zhiguai* 志怪 writings. The tales which were based on 'factual' Daoist biographies and Buddhist miracle tales were distinctively recognized in their subject-matter and were removed from the category of fictional narrative during the Tang dynasty to form specialized anthologies. The notion of predestination (*Yuanfen* 緣分) was amalgamated with the Buddhist karmic law and the idea of cyclical alternation of *Wu Xing* 五行 theory (Kao 11). This theme became increasingly prevalent in the strange tales. Karl S. Y. Kao elaborately discussed the readily observable newly introduced themes. Some of these were not even new. Their origins could easily be traced back to an earlier time (Kao 11-12).

- Black magic that transforms humans beings into beasts

- The process of alchemical concoction manifested as a psychological trial of perilous encounters.
- Dragon lore that features human involvement in the family feuds of dragon clans.
- Predestination or revelation of what is in store for a man in the future.
- New kinds of strangeness involved in dream phenomena.
- Knight errantry that admits supernatural fantastic elements

In the fifth chapter of my thesis, I will be discussing the first two themes as they are the most prominent and earliest examples of the Buddhist and Daoist influence on Chinese literary traditions. The theme of black magic may be considered in the larger context of magic transformations in *zhiguai* 志怪. Three kinds of human transformations may be distinguished in *zhiguai* 志怪 stories. The first one is the self-induced transformation of the Daoist and Buddhist saints. The second one is the metamorphosis of man into beast or other creatures without any apparent cause. The third one is the transformation of human beings into bestial forms caused by a third party, usually through the use of black magic. The first two kinds are common in the Six Dynasties. The third one is new in the Tang dynasty but can be traced back to the black magic and *wugu* 五蠱 sorcery in the shamanistic tradition⁸. This theme has its origin in the early folk literature but the phenomenon does not appear often in the early *zhiguai* 志怪. In the story from the

⁸蠱 is a kind of black magic usually practiced by female shamans which inflicts harm on the victim with poisonous insects normally administered secretly with food. The ghosts of the victims dying from certain kinds of such 蠱 witchery also become the slaves of the witch (Kao 12).

Tang dynasty entitled the “Third Lady of the Wooden Bridge” (elaborately discussed in the fifth chapter), it is represented in that way (Kao 12).

The second theme of the alchemical pursuit (which is our first theme for discussion in the thesis), which is somewhat similar to the trials of Daoist neophytes, but depicted in terms of a psychological quest, is seen in tales like “Du Zichun” 《杜子春》 and “Xiao Dongxuan” 《蕭洞玄》 from the “Scroll about Immortal Beings 404” 《神仙四十四》 from the *Taiping Guagji* 《太平廣記》. Many scholars have identified the source of this particular motif in the legend of the “Lieshi Chi” 《烈士池》, a chapter in the *Da Tang Xiyuji* 《大唐西域記》 by Xuanzang 玄奘 (596-664 AD). While discussing the stories with similar themes we will see that the origin of the story can be traced back to the Hindu *Puranic* sources. The origin explains the striking Indian flavour of the psychological theme of these stories.

The third theme incorporates tales about the feuds of dragon clans and the involvement of human beings in these affairs. Man is the most spiritual and intelligent among the bare-skinned creatures. Likewise the dragon is considered to be the most spiritual and intelligent (靈) among the five categories of scaly creatures. This is so because the dragon observes the ethical precepts and moral code of the human. We will not discuss much here as it is not relevant to the motifs I am working on. The fourth type of theme is predestination or 緣分 *Yuanfen*. It is an old theme from the Six Dynasties and was a common theme in the Tang dynasty. Chinese belief in predestination is probably related to the *Wu*

Xing 五行 theory. Earlier it was mostly associated with the notion of the Heavenly Decree that controls the fate of a ruling house or Empire. The first ever distinct statement relating to the determination of a person's fate (predestination) can be found in Ban Gu's (32-92 AD) *Baihu Tong* 《白虎通》. In this three kinds of *Ming* 命 (destiny) are specified for a human being. Predestination developed into a prominent theme in Tang *zhiguai* 志怪 because of the belief given by the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* (Kao 14). The manifestation of the concept in Tang stories (e.g., a predetermined marriage) is often described with the Buddhist terminology, such as *Yuan* 緣. It also means a cause or a predestined relationship. I have taken this up because it is a very important theme. In the fifth chapter I will only touch upon it briefly. The fifth and sixth types are also irrelevant to my research. So I shall not discuss them at length.

The element that distinguishes the Six Dynasties *Zhiguai* from the Tang dynasty *Zhiguai* is the question of factuality. The question of factuality was a major issue in the Six Dynasties *Zhiguai* 志怪. The recorded event was considered to be real. *Zhiguai* 志怪 material was never consciously considered to be figments of the imagination and as pure literary fantasy (Kao 21). The assumption behind the recording of the *Zhiguai* 志怪 literature by the literati was that the natural and the supernatural world were governed by the same set of laws as that of the human world. The supernatural was recognized and accepted as a part of reality of the natural world and therefore human beings could make themselves part of a reality

that existed beyond the realm of rationality. The Six Dynasties *Zhiguai* 志怪 definitely had played a pioneering role in introducing a new narrative tradition outside the orthodox historiographic tradition for the Tang writers. This strange and fantastic literary material was an interesting alternative to the historical subject matter and everyday reality.

By the end of the Six Dynasties, *Zhiguai* 志怪 was criticized as an unreliable source of history by later historians. But in the Tang dynasty *zhiguai* did not fall under the fact and fiction dichotomy anymore. Then it was essentially concerned with the aesthetics of representation. The fantastic and supernatural *Zhiguai* 志怪 fictions of the Six Dynasties are known for their brief reporting style of the incidents of the anomalies without any self-conscious process of presentation. The holistic approach towards nature and the unity with supernatural realities characterized the Six Dynasties *Zhiguai* 志怪 and some of it was retained in the Tang *Zhiguai* 志怪. The Tang *Zhiguai* 志怪 literature was produced through the reworking on the old material and utilizing its linguistic properties and literary conventions. The ‘naturalization’ of the supernatural events was an accepted norm (Kao 21). The elements of strange or *guai* 怪 were being transformed by the New Tang literati and they were getting prepared to represent their writing through the newly developed literary imagination. Here we can see the Chinese literary history taking a new direction and subsequently the *chuanqi* 傳奇 as a genre emerged. The rise of *chuanqi* has been attributed to a number of factors and conditions or stimuli. The oral story-telling tradition played an important role

here. The narrative tradition of the Six Dynasties *Zhiguai* 志怪 was much developed in the Tang dynasty and eventually it was developed in *pianwen* 駢文 (parallel prose). The reinforcement of the *Guwen* 古文 (archaizing prose) movement also played a great role in the development of Tang *chuanqi*. The importance to literati increased because of the Civil Service Examinations and particularly of the Imperial Examination or *Jinshi* 進士 Degree Examination. These examinations tested the ability to write literary compositions (Kao 23).

The Six Dynasties *pianwen* 駢文 also contributed to the development of the *chuanqi* 傳奇. The *pianwen* 駢文 influenced the stylistic aspects and literary elegance of the Chinese prose narrative *zhiguai* and *chuanqi*. The Classical Prose Movement (*Guwen Yundong* 古文運動) of the late Tang dynasty and the Song dynasty in China advocated clarity and precision rather than the ornate *pianwen* (駢體文) or parallel prose style that had been popular since the Han dynasty (Wikipedia). Parallel prose had a rigid structure and came to be criticized for being overtly ornate at the expense of its content. The aim of the *guwen* stylists was to follow the spirit of pre-Han prose rather than to imitate it directly. It was a reaction against the artificiality and ornamentation of *pianwen* 駢文. They preferred to use elements of colloquial language to make their writings more direct and unambiguous. The movement also had political and religious aspects, as Confucian scholars tried to combat the influence of Daoism and Buddhism on the emperors. Some also saw it as an effective tool

to expose the reality of corruption and weakness in the central government. It also has influenced *chuanqi* 傳奇. Hanyu 韓愈 (786-824) and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) composed some of the most refreshing and ingenious narrative fantasies and ‘biographies’ (*chuan* 傳) (Kao 23). Storytelling helped in developing the fiction in classical prose. The stories like *Liwa Zhuan* 《李娃傳》 is related to Buddhist doctrines and is mostly a story transmitted orally. Many of the strange and the fantastic stories were related to the civil service examination system. After the late 7th century, there was a civil service system of standardized Imperial Examinations for recruiting the scholar-officials. This was the only channel to recruit the civil servants and the literati sought advancement in bureaucracy. The *toujuan* 投卷 (presentation of scroll) and the *wenjuan* 溫卷 (warming up of scrolls) mostly inspired the literati to write fictional narrative as an exhibition of the candidate’s literary skills. This process helped in producing *chuanqi* 傳奇 to a great extent. Apart from practicing with the *toujuan* 投卷 (presentation of scroll) and the *wenjuan* 溫卷 in the Imperial Examination, many allegorical stories were also produced in order to entertain the superior or someone in power and for attacking the political enemies. This genre with non-pragmatic purposes often has a moralistic and didactic overtone (Kao 25). For example, the stories like “Du Zichun”, “Wei Zidong” and “Xiao Dongxuan” taken from the *Taiping Guangji* exhibit the Daoist philosophy by showing the transcendental and illusory nature of the world and the difficulty in severing human emotions. Most of the Tang narrative fiction that makes use of the *Zhiguai* 志怪 motifs from the Six Dynasties also belongs to this category. The *Pianwen*

駢文 and the *Guwen* 古文 movement contributed a lot in developing the narrative form in China. The existing motifs were accumulated and reworked while the Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism were being integrated by the philosophical syncretism of the time. The fact-fiction conflict also disappeared and the stress was put more on a tale's historicity rather than its factuality. The fictional figure might be having some value of a historical personage as the figure embodies certain historically affirmed qualities. Both kinds of materials fictional and historical were absorbed by the literary imagination as valid substance for the *chuanqi* 傳奇 narrative.

The study of tale-literature from the Tang Dynasty started with May Fourth scholars especially Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936). In his book *Tang Song Chuanqi Ji* 《唐宋傳奇集》, he explained the generic term 'chuanqi' 傳奇 or the "transmission of the strange" for the first time and his book includes about 30 傳奇 stories. Glen Dudbridge argued that the term 傳奇 is a label generated by the May Fourth scholars and not all those mentioned in 鲁迅 Lu Xun's volume can be referred as *chuanqi* (Nienhauser xiii). The renowned scholar on the *chuanqi* tale, Prof. Li Jianguo 李劍國 says that many more *chuanqi* 傳奇 tales are there in Chinese literature (Nienhauser xiii). The *chuanqi* 傳奇 "Transmission of strange tales" is a collection of fantastic stories compiled by the Tang dynasty writer Pei Xing 裴鉞 (825-880 AD) (Shen 3). The stories of supernatural and love are of an excellent narrative quality and were therefore quite widespread. Many of them have been quoted by later authors or were used in novels and theatre plays.

The literary style is a mixture of prose and rhymed prose, a method known as *pianwen* 駢文 that was typical for late Tang period writings. The *chuanqi* was epoch-making with its mixed style tied to a certain literary content, which was therefore also called *chuanqiti* 傳奇體 during the Song dynasty (960-1279). The imperial bibliography in the official dynastic history *Xintangshu* 《新唐書》 speaks of a three *juan* or scrolls of long *Chuanqi* (新唐書 sec.903), which is lost. The received version is a reconstruction on the basis of quotations mainly from the encyclopedias *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》 and *Leishuo* 《類說》. The edition of Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 is included in the series *Shijie Wenku* 《世界文庫》. In 1980 the Shanghai Guji press (上海古籍出版社) published a modern edition, which is commented upon by Zhou Langqie 周楞伽⁹. Tang Five Dynasties *xiaoshuo* can be divided into these genres: *Zhiguai xiaoshuo* 志怪小說, *xiaoshuo* of trivias or *zashi xiaoshuo* 雜事小說 and *chuanqi xiaoshuo* 傳奇小說. Moreover there are other *xiaoshuo* produced in the folk oral art of the *huaben xiaoshuo*. The Tang dynasty people called it "City *Xiaoshuo*" “市人小說” or common people’s *xiaoshuo* -“人間小說” (this can also be explained as 人(民)間小說)(《唐會要》卷四《雜錄》)¹⁰.

⁹This information has been taken from the website called Chine Knowledge. I have followed this link - <<http://www.Chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Novels/chuanqibook.html>>. Last accessed 24th July, 2016

¹⁰ In order to see the original Chinese text I have taken the help of Wiki Source where the entire text is given. I have followed this link in order to access the text - <<https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E5%94%90%E6%9C%83%E8%A6%81/%E5%8D%B7004>> Last accessed 24th July, 2016

Chuanqi is the new form of the literary *xiaoshuo*. The *chuanqi* fiction becomes a means to foreground the problematic struggle between public commitment and private integrity. The Mid-Tang *chuanqi* usually represented individually chosen and socially unauthorized relationships between men and women. The public domain made the Tang dynasty *chuanqi* writers fabricate stories having heroes following a lifestyle of personal choice in a private space isolated from public values. But in these stories the autonomous life was finally interrupted and destroyed by the public world. Their individual voice was heard by their artistic depiction of the unusual, the marvellous, the private and the particular. This dramatic contrast of individual interpretation and the awareness of the public values created major conflict in the minds of these authors. The manifestation and an emphasis on the display of the superhuman prowess in the Late Tang dynasty is so intensified that often it plainly becomes supernatural. The Daoist tendency to make the *Xia* 俠 hero/heroine retire from the human world after his or her accomplishment of a mission indicates the unorthodox or non-Confucian nature of the solution the *Xia* 俠 provides to social and political problems. The nature of the supernatural and fantastic events plays a forceful role in determining the shape of the narrative.

The changes of the values and tastes in the Tang dynasty also brought about many changes in the literary system. It broke off the naivette of the early Tang *xiaoshuo* style and marked the rising prosperity of the classical *xiaoshuo*. The late Tang author Pei Xing used the word *chuanqi* for the first time in his book named

Chuanqi 《傳奇》. The emergence of Tang *chuanqi* occurred through a historical process. The two possible sources are early Tang dynasty *zhiguai xiaoshuo* 先唐雜傳小說, *Zhun Zachuan Xiaoshuo* 準雜傳小說 (quasi-fiction biographies) and Tang dynasty *Zachuan xiaoshuo* 雜傳小說. The themes of *chuanqi* can be many, for example, love, history, ethics, politics, fairy, gallant, heroic, retribution, fate, fantasy and so on. They are realistic but at the same time its fantasy is different. They deal with those that Confucius preferred not to talk about. The subject matter is different like gods, immortality, Buddhism, Daoism, different people, foreign bodies, ghosts, Monsters etc. and the writing styles also can vary. For example, *chuanqi* of historical biography, *chuanqi* of fable type, and the classical type *chuanqi* romance, *chuanqi* having creative style, *chuanqi* having strong realistic plot, *chuanqi* of interests. Tang *chuanqi* had used varied themes. The themes included love affairs (mostly unrequited love), history, ethics, politics, supernatural or immortals, gallant, heroic, retribution, fate, fantasy and so on. Written in a realistic manner, the Tang *chuanqi xiaoshuo* celebrates the subject matter of bizarre and sensational that Confucius would like not to speak about (see 3rd chapter on the concept of the strange and the fantastic). The authors of Tang *chuanqi xiaoshuo* had chosen the themes of the strange incidents, spirits, Daoist immortals, Buddhism and Daoism, unusual people having different powers, foreign bodies, ghosts, monsters, odd and grotesque incidents or people and so on. All these constitute the system of discourse and the imagery of Tang *chuanqi xiaoshuo*. The Tang *chuanqi xiaoshuo* maintains a diverse style. They are historical *xiaoshuo*. They have the profound touch of historical reflections. For

example, the “Suiyangdi Sanji” 《隋煬帝三記》 from the book *Dongchang Laofuchuan* 《東城老父傳》 is an example of such a *chuanqi*. The fable type *chuanqi xiaoshuo* deals with certain fantastic imagery which is also a part of philosophy of human life. “The World inside a Pillow” and the Governor of the Southern Tributary State” are great examples of such *chuanqi* fictions. Classical style *chuanqi* fictions usually have profound meaning and the authors have followed a classical Guwen style while writing these stories. “Hanyu” 《韓愈》 from the collection named *Shiding Lianju Shixu* 《石鼎聯句詩序》 and “Liu Zhong Yuan” 柳宗元 from the book *Lichuzhuan* 《李赤傳》 are examples of such type of *chuanqi*. The *chuanqi xiaoshuo* that focus on creating a specific lyrical mood also was quite a popular type. Such fictions include stories like *Record of Dreams* 《異夢錄》 and *Xiangzhong Yuanjie* 《湘中怨解》. Having a very strong plot, plot-based *chuanqi xiaoshuo* mostly focuses on a meticulous reproduction of the real living conditions. In these *chuanqi* the narrative situations have twists and turns. Such stories are “The Biography of Li Wa” 《李娃傳》 and the “Biography of Huo Xiaoyu ” 《霍小玉傳》. Some *chuanqi* fictions narrate an amusing, humorous and interesting plot. Many stories from the books like *Dongyang Yeguailu* 《東陽夜怪錄》 and *Xuanguailu* 《玄怪錄》 are examples of such stories.

Chuanqi stories contain motifs mostly borrowed from foreign literature; for example we see the mention of Persian traders in the *chuanqi* stories (e.g. “Du Zichun”) which reflected the cosmopolitanism of the Tang dynasty. Many

scholars showed that Tang tales were not part of the *wenjuan* 溫卷 or practice scrolls sent to potential patrons (Mair 593). *Chuanqi* fiction was circulated with the intention of winning friends and influencing people. The young authors often were aspiring historians, therefore the writings were narrative centered and politically inspired. These works often had reflected the author's attempt to strengthen their own potential network of connections. One type of *Chuanqi* features real characters in what were fictionalized or stylized narratives. As noted above, real characters which figure in twelve of the twenty-five representative *Chuanqi* are of the first category. The second type of *Chuanqi* employed an unidentified or fictional character. Du Zichun belongs to this second category. The Tang *chuanqi* recurrently used supplementary poems, set the stories in the national capital Chang'an, finished with an instructive moral, and always have been shown to have been narrated by someone who claims to have seen the events himself. The testimonial quality in the *chuanqi* tales is a very significant literary element. Apart from Du Zichun, other most widely read stories are *Yingying Zhuan* 《鶯鶯傳》 (the Story of Yingying), *Zhenzhongji* 《枕中記》 (A Dream in a Pillow), *Nanke Taishou Zhuan* (《南柯太守傳》 “The Governor of Southern Tributary State”) and *Liwa Zhuan* (《李娃傳》 Biography of Liwa). Among them Yuan Zhen's Story of Yingying records the romance of a young scholar and a charming young lady. This story helped to establish the genre of *caizi jiaren* 才子佳人 (the scholar and the beautiful lady). Many *chuanqi* took the opera form in the later dynasties and became especially popular in the Ming dynasty. As for the later adaptation of Tang dynasty tales we can mention tales like *Baishhe Zhuan*

(《白蛇傳》, the Legend of the White Snake). This also has an adapted version in Feng Menglong's *Stories to Caution the World* 《警世通言》, which was written during the Ming dynasty.

Storytelling has been a commercial entertainment since late Tang dynasty, catering to the taste of the new urban middle classes that arose together with the ongoing urbanization. The printed versions of the stories were meant for the literate shopkeeper and the like. Vernacular fiction has been held to be an expression of the ideas and the values of this new social class, as opposed to the orthodox literature on the classical idiom which propagated the Confucian ideology of the rulers. The fictional tales in China had seen remarkable growth through professional storytelling during the Song dynasties (960-1126, 1127-1278 AD). The professional storytelling continued to grow from Ming dynasty onwards.

Now we will discuss about the “The Extensive Records of the Taiping Era” or Taiping Guangji 《太平廣記》 that I have taken up as my primary text for this thematic comparative research. It is a collection of strange stories compiled under the editorship of Li Fang, first published in 978 AD. The book is divided into 500 chapters (*juan* 卷). It is a collection of about seven thousand stories that were selected from over three hundred books and *xiaoshuo* 小說 from the Han Dynasty to the early Song Dynasty. Many of the *chuanqi* were preserved in the 10th century anthology *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era (Taiping Guangji)*. Many of the original books have long been lost. Some stories are historical or naturalistic anecdotes, each replete with a historical element in the beginning and

a testimonial element at the end. They qualify as fiction. The topics are mostly supernatural, mainly about Buddhist and Daoist priests, immortals, ghosts, and various deities.

The Chinese and the Indian traditions are placed together parallelly in this chapter along with their variations in the narrative genre. This is an attempt to understand their reciprocal and mutual influences on each other, the outcome of which is the birth of a narrative tradition called *bianwen* in China. The Indian and the Chinese narrative traditions, their characteristics and nature are introduced here to facilitate the discussion of the analogous stories in the next chapter. The literary transactions between China and India started around the first century A.D. The Buddhist *Jatakas* were the most powerful oral tradition in India and they were carried over to China by the Buddhist clergies and monks. Buddhism also helped in nourishing the existing native traditional Chinese narrative tradition *chuanqi*. However, there is yet no conclusive decision regarding to which category the tales that have been introduced here for discussion, actually belong. However Buddhism in China is responsible for initiating the tradition based on supernaturalism that allowed imagination or fanciful ideas. *Bianwen* signifies a movement. It is a rebellion against the established Confucian order and all that refers to change or transformation of the existing system of rationality. The non-Buddhist tradition was amalgamated within it as well.

Zhiguai 志怪 and *chuanqi* 傳奇, in Tang dynasty these genres belonged to *xiaoshuo* 小說 narrative tradition. A new prose style supposed to be based on ‘real people and real events’ 真人真事. Using the official historian’s rhetoric, it

represents a fundamentally non-historical, supernatural world. It also possessed a visible, ‘recognized’ imagination or fabrication element. *Zhiguai* 志怪, *chuanqi* 傳奇 narratives explore and articulate realities that the official historian does not talk about. These are tales which talk about the relationship between the human and supernatural world. They represent a delicate and complicated way of handling human affairs, life and express the emotions in a sensitive and poetic manner—never having a common development or ending. All of them have a testimonial quality - to prove the involvement of the ‘real people and real events’ 真人真事 (leaving some memento behind to prove the originality of the story). The Sanskrit text *Kathasaritsagara* by Somedevabhata (11th century) that I have taken up as my primary text was written as a court literature and epitomizes the ‘story within story’ tradition in India. The next chapter will discuss the idea of the strange and the fantastic in both these traditions and then a thematic study of the stories taken from the genres discussed here will be executed.

Chapter Three

Definition of the ‘Strange’ in the Chinese and the Indian Traditions

In this chapter I shall define the ‘fantastic’ and the ‘strange’ as concepts and themes widely used in literature. Both Chinese and Indian literatures have strange and miracle tales present in the literary traditions. The difference lies in the treatment of the strange elements by the court and their reception among the readers. Usually it has been seen that the strange and the miracle tales are extremely popular among the common people. Following the popularity of these tales among the common folks who are also the majority of the audience or readers, the authors also enjoyed writing these supernatural stories. This chapter will discuss the notion of the fantastic and the strange in Indian and Chinese literary traditions. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the intriguing complexity of the cultural and ideological differences between these two countries manifested through the handling of the concept of the strange in the Chinese and the Indian literary traditions. As we have discussed earlier, the Confucian tradition had mostly refused to accept a literary piece having unexplained and strange elements. Therefore the Chinese literary tradition also dealt with the idea of the strange with caution and had always tried to integrate such elements in such a way, that it gets a historical dimension and also gets accepted in the mainstream literature. The Buddhist motifs which traversed to China through the Buddhist sutras or through the oral tradition carried by the monks or the merchants essentially contained supernatural and strange elements in them. But over the centuries they got infused with the mainstream and folk

Chinese literary sources. With the demand of the contemporary time, the idea of the strange and the fantastic gradually became an intrinsic part of the literature. Tracing this amalgamation, the influence and the reception, bit by bit, might lead us to the risk of over-simplification. But a comparative study of the concept of the strange in the two traditions will help us to look at the phenomenon at a glance. Thereafter understanding this complexity will help us recognize and appreciate the deviation in the development and the treatment of the idea of the strange as expressed in the strange and the fantastic tales across these two civilizational literary evolutions.

According to Indian aesthetic theory no meaning proceeds from speech without any kind of sentiment or *rasa*. The *rasa* is an essential psychological condition and is the dominant emotional theme for any work of art. It is the primary feeling that is evoked in the person who observes, reads or hears an aesthetic work. Now *rasa nispatih* or sentiment is produced from a *samyoga* (combination) of *vibhaba* (determinants), *anubhava* (consequents) and *vyabhicari-bhava* (complementary psychological states). When the *sthayi-bhava* (durable psychological states) comes together with other psychological states, then they attain the quality of a *rasa*. *Rasa* is capable of being tasted (*asvadyate*) by a connoisseur and that is why it is called *rasa*. In *rasa* theory it is said that the cultured and intelligent people taste the *sthayi-bhava* (durable psychological states) by their heart while they see them represented by an expression of the various psychological states with words, gestures and *sattva*. Thus they derive pleasure and satisfaction. These are also known as *natya rasa* or dramatic sentiments. The concept of *rasa* is fundamental to many forms of Indian art including literature (Devy 3-14).

In Indian Aesthetics, Bharata Muni enunciated the eight *rasas* in his seminal text the *Nāṭyasāstra*, an ancient work of dramatic theory. A version of this text had been in existence even before the 3rd century. But from the references of later critics it can be seen that by the 3rd century it had taken a definitive shape. It was written during the period between 200 BC and 200 AD. Bharata talks about eight *rasas*. These eight rhetorical *rasas* (sentiments) are named as, *Śṛṅgāram* (erotic), *Hāsyam* (comic), *Kārunyam* (pathetic), *Raudram* (furious), *Vīram* (heroic), *Bhayānakam* (terrible), *Bībhatsam* (odious) and *Adbhutam* (marvellous). According to *Nāṭyasāstra*, each *rasa* has a presiding deity and a specific colour. The relation between the *rasa* (sentiments) and the *bhava* (psychological or emotional states) is also interesting to explore. According to Bharata Muni's *Rasa* Theory, the *rasa* arises from the *bhava* and not vice-versa. In the Indian aesthetics, the *bhavas* along with different kinds of historic representation will cause the *rasas* to be felt. There cannot be any *rasa* prior to or without *bhava*. There are no *bhavas* without *rasas* following it.

The emotional states [*bhavas*] are so known by the designers of dramatic art because they (the *bhavas*) bring to the spectators (*iman*) an emotional awareness (*bhavayanti*) of the sentiments [*rasas*] as connected with various modes of acting or dramatic representation. (Devy 7)

During representation, *bhavas* result from their interaction. Therefore it is clear that *bhava* and *rasa* cause one another to manifest themselves and this is called *bhavayanti*. The *bhavas* bring the *rasas* to the level of *bhavayanti* (actual experience) through different kinds of *abhinaya* (acting) or theatrical representation of words, physical gestures, colour or emotional expression of the face. The experience of the *rasa* is not possible without

the previous presentation of a *bhava*. There is no *bhava* which does not lead to the experience of a *rasa*. Thereafter we can say that the *rati bhava* (Love) gives rise to the *śrngāram rasa* (erotic), the *hāsyam rasa* (comic) proceeds from the *bhava* of *hasya*, the *soka bhava* (Sorrow) gives rise to the *kārunyam rasa* (pathetic), the *krodha bhava* (Anger) gives rise to the *raudram rasa* (furious), the *utsaha bhava* (energy) gives rise to the *vīram* (heroic), the *bhaya bhava* (terror) gives rise to the *bhayānaka rasa* (terrible), the *jugupsa bhava* (disgust) gives rise to the *bībhatsam rasa* (odious) and the *vismaya bhava* (astonishment) gives rise to the *adbhuta rasa* (marvellous). During a historic representation of the *bhavas* and the *rasas* accomplish their status and function by dual interaction. The sources of origin of these *rasas* are the four basic *rasas*. These *rasas* are as follows: the erotic, the furious, the heroic and the odious. According to these basic *rasas*, the comic *rasa* arises from the erotic *rasa*, the pathetic emerges from the furious, and the origin of the marvellous is from the heroic and of the terrible from the odious. The *bhavas* bring about poetic contents (*kavyārtha*) through words, physical gestures and movements and psycho-physical representations (Devy 9). The content of the text or the performance is brought forth by the *vibhavas* (stimulants), which have the meaning of a specific knowledge. Therefore it becomes an awareness (*gamyate*) to the spectators by the manifestation of the *anubhava* (physical impacts produced or consequents) and by the *sattva-abhinava* (concentrated acting modes) of words and physical gestures. These kinds of content are given the name *bhava*. The *bhava* brings about and reveals the inner idea of the poet and makes it pervade (*bhavayan*) the minds of the spectators through *abhinaya* and this is the result of complete *sattva* (concentration and absorption). By the particular *abhinaya* absolute *sattva* is made to be felt (*anu-bhavyate*) as an after-effect

(*anu*) of the impact of the *bhava*. A spectator is a pure and honest person who can watch the dramatic performance or read the text with all his senses undistracted. Thus he exhibits his expertise in judging the advantages and disadvantages and thereafter can ignore slips and errors and lovingly appreciate its merit. All these conditions are highly difficult to find in a single spectator (Devy 14).

The principal *rasa* or the *angin* is to be developed by the *anubhava* (consequents) and consequently the *vibhava* (determinants), the *sthayin* (permanent state) and the *vyabhicarin* (transitory states) are also combined. The author or the performer has to be careful that the content might become extremely disconnected by excessive use of sentiment. The *rasa* also should not be overwhelmed with matters relating to the subject-matter or its embellishment. According to the *Rasa Theory* by Bharata Muni, the *rasa* is produced and *rasa-nispattih* occurs when the *sthyayi bhava* come together with various other *bhavas*. In this chapter while discussing the strange we will only deal with the *adbhuta rasa* or the wondrous sentiment. The stories discussed in this thesis mostly deal with the *adbhuta rasa*. I have translated strange and fantastic tales as predominantly having the *adbhuta rasa*. I have consciously avoided using stories having the *bībhatsa* (terrible) and *bhayānaka* (odious) *rasas*. The *adbhuta rasa* (marvellous) has as its basis the *bhava* of *vismaya* (astonishment). It is created by *vibhabas* (determinants) such as sight of heavenly mansion, temple, audience hall (*sabha*) and seven storied palace and (seeing) illusory and magical acts. The *adbhuta rasa* is that which arises from words, character, deed and personal beauty. The *adbhuta rasa* is of two kinds, celestial and joyous. Among all these the celestial is produced due to seeing heavenly sights and the

joyous is produced due to joyful happenings. All the stories here mostly describes situation like these and therefore marvellous is the sentiment which is our primary focus in this chapter. The marvellous sentiment is also the essential quality of all the stories that we will be discussing in the following chapters of the thesis. Therefore it becomes a prerequisite that we attempt to understand the nature of the marvelous sentiment as it is manifested through the literature of India and China.

The *adbhuta rasa* (marvellous or wonderful sentiment)¹ has the *vismaya bhava* or astonishment as its basis. According to Bharata Muni *adbhuta rasa* is created by *vibhabas* and its ‘essential excitant²’ is held to be any supernatural thing. The greatness of the qualities of those supernatural things is the ‘enhancers’ of the sentiment. The excitants includes the sight of heavenly beings or events and seeing illusory and magical acts, attainment of desired objects, entrance into a superior mansion, temple, a seven storied palace, audience hall (*sabha*). This sentiment of *vismaya* arises from words, characters, deeds, and personal beauty (Ghosh 187). Dhananjaya says, the marvellous sentiment should be employed only in the conclusion. Visvanath Kaviraj in *Sahitya Darpana* says that the “wonder” or surprise is a kind of expanding of the mind. It is said that the life of all the *rasas* is *adbhuta rasa*. Dharmadatta says:

¹ A.K Coomaraswamy translated the word *Rasa* as ‘flavor’. P. Mitra while translating the *Sahitya Darpana* used the words favour and sentiment for *Rasa*. For *Bhava* he used the word mood. I will stick to *rasa* as sentiment and *bhava* as state.

² *Sahitya Darpana* by Visvanath Kaviraj– p-39

In flavor (sentiment), even in every case, Wonder is felt as its essence. Since Wonder is its essence, it follows that flavor (sentiment), even in every case, is that Sentiment or Flavour, called the ‘Marvellous’ (*adbhuta*) – hence the learned Narayana (the intelligent chief of learned poets) has acknowledged only one Flavour (sentiment), the Marvellous, and no other. (Kaviraj, Röer, Ballantyne and Mitra 41)

So basically Indian Sanskrit literary critics had always sung the praises of the sentiment of marvelous or the *adbhuta*. As a sentiment *adbhuta* is created in most of the Kavyas and wonder is celebrated in all the narratives. So it is evident that, wonder was not only enjoyed but it is also an intrinsic part of the mainstream Sanskrit literature. This was obviously not the case with the Chinese literary tradition. Strange accounts are always a part of the folk literature and always ignored by the Confucian literary tradition. The strange tales overlap the borders between fictional and historical discourse (Zeitlin 2).

In China, the creation of fiction was inspired by the private forms of historiography. These were *waishi* 外史 - unofficial history and *yishi* (逸史) - left over history. They contained substance normally absent from the official historical writing. Authors of these *waishi* were often named as *Waishi shi*– historian of the unofficial history. Authors of these unofficial history also called themselves the historians of love (*qingshi shi*), the historians of irregular (*Jishi Shi*) or the historians of illusion (*huanshi shi*). The concept of history as a category was free and flexible. As Zeitlin says, this approach may somewhat be compared to the Greek meaning of ‘historian’ which means an ‘inquiry into’ or ‘an investigation of’ (Zeitlin 2). The desire to record the strange played a great role in the development of fiction in China. Even before *zhiguai* 志怪 (Brief Accounts of

Anomalies) in the Six Dynasties (六朝 220 or 222–589 AD), strange tales were produced in great numbers. During the Tang dynasty, the strange narratives expressed themselves in a much more literary and artful manner through *chuanqi* 傳奇. *Chuanqi* (Tales of the Marvellous) became a longer narrative in comparison with the *zhiguai*. In modern times, *chuanqi* and *zhiguai* are called *Wenyan Xiaoshuo* (文言小說).

In order to understand the idea of the ‘strange’ as expressed in the Chinese literary tradition, we will look at the terms that express the idea of the strange, the marvellous and the fantastic. First we will see how the critics have already looked at them. Then we will move on to the dictionary meanings of each term related to the concept and then we will study and discuss the idea of strange as expressed in different classics over the centuries. The concept of the strange has not been explored much. Judith Zeitlin made a thorough study of the concept of strange in her book *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*.

As Zeitlin discussed, the term ‘strange’ has three counterparts in the Chinese characters, *yi* 異, *guai* 怪, *qi* 奇. *Qiguai* 奇怪, *guaiyi* 怪異, *qiyi* 奇異 are developed from these characters. They all are related to the idea of strange. I will take a look at the dictionary meanings of *yi* 異, *guai* 怪, *qi* 奇 first and thereafter will cite examples from classical texts displaying their meanings and use. The semantic ranges and connotations of all these terms and characters are not identical at all. Generally the use of 異 ‘Yi’ is flexible and broad. For example, according to the dictionary of Buddhist terms, *Dazheng Xinxiu Dazheng Canjing* (大正新脩大正藏經) *yisheng* 異生 means someone ignorant, stupid or dim-witted. Previously it also meant someone who is crazy or also refers to something

which is far from truth or does not have meaning. In the chapter “Zhexi” 《著希》 in the Daoist text *Heguanzi* 《鶡冠子》 (written sometime in between 475BC – 221BC) it is said,

故賢者之於亂世也，絕豫而無由通，異類而無以告。(《著希》)³.

Therefore the Sage in the troubled times, does not relax but he remains silent. He will not talk about the *yilei* 異類 or different or heterogeneous kinds! (Translated by the author)

But this same text of Dao religion again talks about ‘yi’ or difference in a unique way. In order to denote the meaning of ‘difference’ the chapter “Huanliu” 《環流》 from the *Heguanzi* 《鶡冠子》, says that similarity or homogeneity leads to singularity but the difference leads to Dao or the Way – 故同之謂一，異之謂道. This statement again accepts the existence of the strange in Chinese literature. Homogeneity which is also advocated by Confucianism is again undermined by the emphasis on the difference or heterogeneity. The Daoist classic *Wenzi* 《文子》 - the *Book of Master Wen* (also called *Tongxuan Zhenjing* 《通玄真經》), supposedly written by a disciple of Laozi⁴. In the “Fuyan” 符言 section of the *Jiu Shou* 九守 volume, the Daoist scholar, Laozi, talks about the sages and thus makes a difference between the different and the strange,

老子曰：聖人無屈奇之服，詭異之行，...異而不怪，...，是謂大通.

The sages don’t wear strange clothes, they don’t cultivate strange ... [they

³ For the work *He Guan Zi* 《鶡冠子》 in original Chinese I have consulted this website of *Chinese Text Project* and have followed this link - <<http://ctext.org/he-guan-zi>>

⁴ For the work *Wenzi* 《文子》 in original Chinese I have consulted this website of *Chinese Text Project* and have followed this link - <<http://ctext.org/wenzi>>

cultivate] difference but not strange ... they are known to have attained the Dao. (sec.18). (Translated by the author)

So it is clear that the primary meaning of *yi* 異 is difference or to differentiate. It also has implications of extraordinary, outstanding, heterodox, eccentric and anything that differs from the accepted norms.

In Confucius, Mengzi and also in the *Book of Rites*, *yi* 異 is mostly used in the sense of “difference”. But sometimes it is also used in the sense of strange. When it referred to the ‘strange’, then mostly it is used in a pejorative sense. *Qi* 奇 was often recognized as odd, perverse⁵. For example, the 20th stanza of the “*Xiabenzi*” 《夏本紀》 from the *Records of the Grand Historian* 《史記》⁶ finished around 94 BC by Sima Qian talks about virtuous men, “翁受普施，九德咸事，俊乂在官，百吏肅謹。毋教邪淫奇謀。” This means, “When such men are received and found everywhere, the possessors of those nine virtues will all be employed, and men of eminence will hold office, and the various officers will be respectful and diligent, not teaching heretical, vicious, or strange doctrines” (Watson). Here *Qi* 奇 is used in a negative sense. This again emphasizes on the polarity of the orthodox and the unorthodox, the ordinary and the extraordinary, such binary parameters with which Confucian philosophers had always defined their society.

⁵ 合此五者，以治天下之禮也，雖有奇邪，而不治者則微矣。-And though there may be some extravagant and perverse who are not kept in order, they will be few. <<http://ctext.org/liji/ji-yi>>

⁶ For the work *Records of the Grand Historian* 《史記》 in original Chinese I have consulted this website of *Chinese Text Project* and have followed this link - <<http://ctext.org/shiji>>

Yi 異 usually referred to difference. We find these examples in *Liji* 《禮記》 (*Book of Rites*)⁷. In the *Quli* part II (曲禮下), it is said, “朝言不及犬馬。輟朝而顧，不有異事，必有異慮。” (sec.125). Legge had translated it this way, “At court there should be no speaking about dogs and horses. When the audience is over, and one looks about him, if he be not attracted by some strange thing, he must have strange thoughts in his mind.” (Legge, *Li Ki* 1:III:8.17)⁸. In this passage *yi* 異 is used in the sense of different or heterogeneous. This refers to something which is not at harmony with the majority or the established trend. In the “Wang Zhi” 《王制》 from the *Liji* 《禮記》 it is said, “作淫聲、異服、奇技、奇器以疑眾，殺。” which means “Using licentious music, strange garments, wonderful contrivances and extraordinary implements, thus raising doubts among the multitudes: all who used or formed such things were put to death.” (Legge, *Li Ki* 1:III:4.16). Again *Yueji* 《樂記》 section 10 explains the meaning of *yi* 異 this way, “樂者為同，禮者為異。同則相親，異則相敬”. This means, “Similarity and union are the aim of music, while difference and distinction are that of ceremony. From union comes mutual affection; from difference, mutual respect.” (Legge, *Li Ki* 2:XVII:I-15). Again *Yueji* 《樂記》 section 38 says “樂統同，禮辨異” which means “Music embraces what all equally share; ceremony distinguishes the things in which men differ.” (Legge, *Li Ki* 2:XVII:III-1). In all these quotes *yi* 異 is used expressing the sense of the different or the heterogeneous.

⁷ For the work *Liji* 《禮記》 (*Book of Rites*) in original Chinese I have consulted this website of *Chinese Text Project* and have followed this link - <<http://ctext.org/liji>>

⁸ In order to consult the translation of *Liji* by James Legge, I have followed the translation provided in the *Sacred Books of the East* volume 27 and 28. For the translation I have consulted this weblink - <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki/index.htm> , <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki2/index.htm>>

Now we will look at the definition of *guai* 怪. A definition of *guai* 怪 from Tang dynasty dictionary illustrates the interchangeability of these terms. *Guai* 怪 has the narrowest span of meaning. According to *Dazheng Xinxiu Dazheng Canjing* (大正新脩大正藏經), the meaning of *guai* is explained in these ways. It means weird, uncanny, freakish, abnormal, unfathomable and the meanings are somewhat pejorative. For example, it is said that anything which is *qiyi* 奇異 (strange or singular) and out of the ordinary is called *guai* - 怪之-上古壞反怪異也驚怪也凡奇異非常皆曰怪字從左⁹. The Ming dynasty writer Feng Menglong in the “*Guaidan*” section 怪誕部第二 of the *Gujin Tan'gai* 《古今談概》 says, “...然究竟怪非美事。” which means “All in all *Guai* is not a pretty thing.”(Zeitlin 6). Here we can draw parallels between *guai* and the *bibhatsa rasa* or sentiment of terrible from the Indian aesthetics of *Rasa Theory*. Both ideas are related to the demonic spirit of the animals, plants, and non-living objects. We will be discussing in the next chapters many of the Indian stories which mostly incite *adbhuta rasa* and produce the psychological state of *vismaya* (amazement) in the minds of the readers.

Qi 奇 has the most consistent history as a term of aesthetic appraisal and covers the notions of the rare, the original, the fantastic, the amazing and the odd. It is an index of high praise and is sometimes potentially negative which marks a deviation from the norm. A Ming writer Xu Ruhan in the “Preface to The Extraordinary Adventures of Heroes Banding Together” (*Yunhe Qizong Xu*) in *Zhongguo Lidai Xiaoshuo Lun- I:212* by

⁹可怪 (this term for ‘strange’ is classical Chinese dictionary term. according to hisorian Gù Yěwáng it is said that anything 奇異 *qiyi* and extremely out of the ordinary is towards writing strange or fantastic; 怪其 this ancient term is also refers to similar meanings.

Huang Lin and Han Tongwen, defends the heroic adventures recounted in a vernacular work of fictionalized history,

Now what I mean by *qi* is not the deviant, queer, bizarre, outlandish sort of *qi* I mean nothing like the type of thing that shocks the common people and makes them bite their fingers in astonishment because it is unfathomable. (Zeitlin 6)

He says that *qi* 奇 is murky and he marks a divergence by defining *qi* 奇 as the opposite to *zheng* 正. *Zheng* 正 means correct or the orthodox. *Qi* 奇 and *zheng* 正 give rise to one another.

As Zeitling says, if we think of these terms with its frequently used polar opposites it would be : *yi* 異 and *tong* 同. This refers to the different and the same. The polar opposite of *guai* 怪 would be *chang* 常 where *guai* 怪 refers to the aberrant and *chang* 常 refers to the normative. The binary of *qi* 奇 refers to *zheng* 正. *Qi* 奇 means the exceptional and *zheng* 正 means the canonical (Zeitlin 6). In all these cases we see that *yi* 異, *guai* 怪, *qi* 奇 refer to something which is not normal as per the standard decided by the society at that time.

There are several examples from classics which display how the concept of the strange was derived by the ancient scholars. The attitude towards strange accounts also changed over the years. I have tried to see how the Chinese scholars have tried to look at the concept of 'strange'. To begin with Confucius (551-479 BC), if we have a look at his *Book of Analects*, we will find that he never used the word 'strange' but had used the word *yi* 異 and *guai* 怪 in order to express his ideas about strange accounts. Confucius in

the “Weizheng” 為政 section of the *Analects* says, “攻乎異端，斯害也已。” (sec.16) James Legge translates this as “The study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed!” (Legge, *Analects* 87). But here the dictionary meaning of ‘異端’ refers to ‘heresy’. It also refers to the ways which a sage like Confucius will always reject. So here Confucius says that studying heresy is injurious indeed¹⁰. A similar kind of response is found again in the “Shu’er” 述而 section of the *Analects*, “子不語怪，力，亂，神。” (sec.21). Legge translated it this way, “The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were,—prodigious things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings.” (Legge, *Analects* 103). From this statement by Confucius, it becomes evident that the Chinese literary tradition was dominated by the Confucian ideology and it hardly spared any space for the supernatural accounts. Confucius always emphasized on the integrity of the society. He thought that the documentation of the unreal, bizarre and chaotic events will create disorder in the society. The Confucian ideologists believed in the documentation of history as reality. Therefore the tales of supernatural grew as a subversive tradition. The scholars incorporated the strange accounts into the Chinese mainstream court literature by documenting them in the form of a history of the other world. Confucian principles focused on the human relations and virtues. Therefore it rejected all which rose out of the ontological details and talked about the supernatural. During the reign of the Han dynasty emperor Wu (140-87 BC) upheld a political unity by accepting all the schools of philosophy and chose Confucian principles to offer it preeminence as the state-orthodoxy,

¹⁰ Yi ‘異’ refers to something different and extraordinary. Confucius used this word in his analects several times denoting the meaning ‘different’ or ‘extraordinary’. For example, when Ji Zi Ran 季子然 asked whether Zhong You 仲由 and Ran Qiu 冉求 could be called great ministers then Confucius answered 子曰：「吾以子為異之問，曾由與求之問 -- 」 "I thought you would ask about some extraordinary individuals, and you only ask about You and Qiu!" (Legge). I have followed this link for the original text and the translation < <http://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=1379>> .

Confucianism was threatened by the rise and the popularity of some rival schools like Daoism. The political chaos which followed the collapse of the Han dynasty led the populace towards questioning the absolute reign of the Heaven through the king. This was the circumstance under which Buddhism and Daoism took their hold over the psyche of the God-fearing people and people were exposed to the transcendental nature of life and the world.

During the 1st century AD in China, the peasant resentment found its expression in the mounting power of the Daoist and Buddhist religious fraternities. In a troubled age which was in search of an ideal, it provided people with religious solace. In the thoughts of Laozi and other philosophers, people found about individual and social dissatisfaction. These socio-political upheavals destroyed the established norms by giving birth to new ideas, innovative endeavours and new institutions. In the interim period, Buddhism underwent acclimatization through the process of being adapted and translated in the Chinese society.

Daoism had always talked about the 'strange' in a differently significant way. The Daoist Master Zhuangzi (370-287 BC) should always be mentioned in this context. Zhuang Zi in his classic mentions a dialogue in which the North Sea tells the Yellow River:

You can't discuss the ocean with a frog from the well– he's limited by the space he lives in. you cant discuss ice with a summer insect – he's bound to a single season. You can't discuss the Way [Dao] with a cramped [shallow-minded] scholar – he's shackled by his doctrines. Now you have come out beyond your banks and borders and have seen the great sea – so you realize your own pettiness. From now on it will be possible to talk to you about the Great Principle. (Watson, *Zhuangzi* 127).

So Zhuang Zi's words basically point out the shallowness and the strict doctrine-bound ways of life advocated by the Confucian scholars. For Zhuang Zi, discussing the Great Way of Dao requires a generous view of life. The journey beyond the borders that he talked about, refers to the expansion of the imagination. This imagination will only help to realize the triviality of our knowledge about the hitherto unknown. To refer to them as disorderly and strange will only lock our wisdom into the shackles of ignorance. This extension of imagination in order to understand the supernatural events will only help any literary tradition to grow and create new parameters for the new generation of audience. The paradigmatic changes are initiated with this acceptance of the change in the ideology related to strange and the fantastic events. Hereby another text that announces this changing of paradigm would be the *Shanhai Jing* or the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*. Versions of the text have existed since the 4th century BC. The exact authorship cannot be determined, but over the years this book has been edited by several scholars from different dynasties. The final editorship was done by Guo Pu (郭璞-276 – 324 AD), a scholar from the western Jin dynasty (265 AD and 420 AD). Guo Pu in the new-Daoist preface to the mysterious *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (《山海經》 *Shanhai Jing*) talks about the strange. Guo Pu thinks that the extensive and fabricated events of the strange and the extraordinary should begin with Zhuang Zi. Zhuang Zi says, 「人之所知，莫若其所不知。」¹¹(郭璞). This can be translated as – “Human knowledge, does not know what it is unaware about.” Here Zhuang Zi acknowledged the unknown and unconscious existence of the elements that the human knowledge with its worldly limitations cannot

¹¹ In order to access the original document written in Chinese I have consulted the wiki source 维基文库 and have followed this link - <https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E5%B1%B1%E6%B5%B7%E7%B6%93/%E9%83%AD%E7%92%9E%E5%BA%8F> >

understand. Guo Pu further discussed in his preface that the universe is boundless. The variety of living creatures have spirits and intelligence and all of them are subject to change. Therefore, the barbarians see simple clothes and are suspicious about it. The people from far away land see woolen rugs and are astonished. Guo Pu says that the concealing nature of human beings always exists. Hereby some cases are selected to prove this point. The fire of the sun comes from the cold river, the Yin rat is born in the Mountain of Flame. But the common people are not surprised with all these. But when they talk about *Shanhai Jing* they think that this is uncannily strange (怪 *guai*). This is like considering the strange things as not strange and not considering the things which deserve to be strange (or have the qualities of strangeness) as not strange. They can acknowledge what the world cannot accept, but do not acknowledge what they themselves cannot accept. This does not make much sense¹². He again says,

世之所謂異，未知其所以異；世之所謂不異，未知其所以不異。何者？物不自異，待我而後異，異果在我，非物異也。（《山海經·郭璞序》）

Zeitlin has used the translation from the *Shanhai Jing Jiaozhu* 《山海經校注》 by Chen Hsiao-chie and others,

We know not why what the world calls strange is strange; we know not why what the world does not call strange is not strange. How is this? Things are not strange in and of themselves – they must wait for me before they can be

¹²是不怪所可怪而怪所不可怪也。不怪所可怪，則幾於無怪矣；怪所不可怪，則未始有可怪也。They do not wonder at what is strange, and then a few do not wonder. They wonder at what is not strange, but that might possess strange. Those who can promise it with certainty should not. 夫能然所不可，不可所不可然，則理無不然矣。I have followed this link to consult the original work by Guo Pu <<https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E5%B1%B1%E6%B5%B7%E7%B6%93/%E9%83%AD%E7%92%9E%E5%BA%8F>>

strange. This the strange lies within me – it is not that things are strange. (Zeitlin 18)

He says, in the world the strange accounts narrated by human beings are different. The subjective idealism is expressed here through the words of Guo Pu. Here we can draw reference to Bharata Muni's *Rasa* Theory. The *rasa* arises from the *bhava* and not vice-versa. In the Indian aesthetics, the *bhavas* with the help of several theatrical representations causes the *rasas* to be felt. *Rasas* reside within the minds of the audience. Only a *sahridaya* (sympathetic) audience can feel the *rasas* at its best. There cannot be any *rasa* prior to or without *bhava*. There are no *bhavas* without *rasas* following it. The *bhavas* carry an emotional awareness of the *rasas* to the spectators through various dramatic representations.

This is similar to what Guo Pu also says. According to him the strange events do not contain strangeness within them. But the spectator's mind recognizes it to be strange. The emotional awareness about the strangeness lies within the spectator/reader. The strange *bhava* arouses that emotional awareness of the strange and makes it possible to be felt. Actually the strange is a problem having epistemological dimensions. Chinese literature becomes coconsciously aware of it only after the intervention of the Daoist philosophy and the Daoist parables. That is why Guo Pu also started his preface with Zhuang Zi. This conscious criticism about the presence of the strange in the literature was held in India between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD. In China it was around 3rd-4th century AD. If we look synchronically at them, then both of them marks a paradigm shift in the literary traditions. Recognition of the strange as a literary category started around the same time. After this phenomenon, the development of new genres like *zhiguai* in and

chuanqi in China and the growth of novel in India were noticed. The connection between the strange and the human imagination is further strengthened by the presence of the enlightened readers. As discussed by Bharata and Guo Pu, strangeness is always a subjective perception. The morality and ethics of the strangeness depend on the readers's subjective view and his interpretation. The imaginative license that the authors take with the description of the strange events actually opens the horizon of expectations for the readers and makes them recognize the illusions of the human sphere.

Now we will see who else has explored the strange as a literary category in the Chinese tradition. This is an attempt to understand the process of acknowledgement of the strange tales and its effect on Chinese literature. One of the seminal texts of Strange tale is *Liaozhai Zhiyi* 《聊齋誌異》 a Qing dynasty book by Pu Songling. As it happened for *Liaozhai Zhiyi* 《聊齋誌異》 *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, the author had to legitimize the strange in the Chinese tradition. The authors of the prefaces to *Liaozhai*, redefined an interest in the strange in morally and intellectually acceptable terms with the aid of instances from the Confucian classics. They made an effort to incorporate the more marginal tradition of recording the strange into the mainstream literary traditions. The *Classic of Mountains and Seas* 《山海經》 which was probably compiled between 500 BC and 200 BC, contains geography, witchcraft, popular customs etc. The writer of the preface of this text, Guo Pu 郭璞 made a neo-Daoist argument in which he was arguing for the authenticity of the places and creatures depicted in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* and for establishing its position as the encyclopedia of knowledge (Zeitlin 23).

Zeitlin in her chapter on “The Discourse on the Strange” elaborately discusses the concept of the strange as expressed in the prefaces of *Liaozhai* and also in the Ming dynasty vernacular tales. It gives us a fair idea of how the strange was seen and relocated in the literary discourses in the Ming and the Qing dynasties. The *Liaozhai Zhiyi*’s preface writer, Gao talks about the strange in a defensive way. He sounded apologetic when he says that Confucius was also the author of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* which is a repository of the strange events that the Master supposedly avoided discussing. The strange talks, which Confucius was not willing to speak about, actually could help to understand what the Confucian teaching failed to convey. In that sense the strange tale collections like the *Youyang Zazu* 《酉陽雜俎》 (The Librarian’s Miscellany), written by Duan Chengshi in the 9th century and the *Yijian Zhi* 《夷堅志》 (*Records of the Listener*) written around 1162-1202 AD also can be considered to be the same as the Six Classics (Zeitlin 23).

Confucius had always emphasized on the importance of history because it authentically describes the real people and the real events. Zeitlin has shown how the authenticity of history is questioned by several authors over centuries. The Neo-Confucian philosophers Cheng Hao (1032-1085AD) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107 AD) from the Northern Song dynasty questioned the authenticity of the events described in the *Zuo Zhuan*¹³. The critic Hu Yinglin (1551-1602) also said that everything that is recorded are not reliable histories¹⁴. Zeitlin mentioned that Gao, the writer of the preface of *Liaozhai*, cited textual instances for indulging in the imagination in Sima Qian’s biographies of court jesters and

¹³ Zeitlin in her note number 37 on page number 228 mentioned it. This has originally been taken from the *Er Chengji*, 1:20.266

¹⁴ Zeitlin in her note number 37 of chapter I, on page number 228 mentioned it. This has originally been taken from the *Shaoshi Shanfang Bicong*, p – 483

fanciful parables of Zhuangzi. Gao also writes “And is every record in the twenty four histories solid [*shi*]?” (Zeitlin 24). So the point was this, if this point mentioned by Gao is granted and is given importance, then it can be argued that “since we tolerate fictions in the histories, we ought also to tolerate fictions in other works” (Zeitlin 24). Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (1211-49 AD) in his book the *Records From the Straightforward Studio* 《直齋書錄解題》 talks about the strange and afterwards these comments were reprinted in *Yijian Zhi*. This voluminous *zhiguai* collection *Records of the Listener* says,

Now it is only because things that run counter to the norm and counter to nature are rare that we say they're amazing. If, however they're too numerous to record, then we can no longer find them strange. (Zeitlin 32)

按之理勢。率多荒唐。沿其流者。王嘉之拾遺。干寶之搜神。敬叔之異苑。徐鉉之稽神。成式之雜俎。最行於時。然多者不過數百事。少者或僅十餘事。未有捲帙浩汗。(《序》 sec.6)

So here again the subjective perception of the readers is emphasized. Taking the intervention of the readers into account also establishes the justification about the creation of the imaginative space in the literary texts. So the ‘strange’ as a category not only establishes itself into the people’s psyche, but also finds a place in mainstream literature.

There are more instances of the use of the strange in classical texts. The strange tales mostly narrated the bizzare actions of the spirits. Usually the spirit is called *guaiwu* 怪物. In the book the “Doctrines of Mean” 《中庸》 from the *Liji* 《禮記》, we find examples like this in which it is mentioned that “素隱行怪，後世有述焉，吾弗為之矣” which means “To search for what is mysterious, and practise marvellous (arts), in order to be

mentioned with honour in future ages:--this is what I do not do.” (Legge, *Li Ki* 2:XXVIII:20). The word *xingguai* 行怪 refers to practicing wonderful tricks. Here the Master clearly reprimanded those who live in obscurity and practice wonders. This is said in reference to the Daoist priests who are known to have lived a life like this. In the “Xu Wu-gui: 11.2” of the *Miscellaneous Chapters* 《雜篇》, Zhuang Zi (during Warring States Period 350 BC-250 BC) makes a dialogue with his disciple,

Zi-Qi said, 'Yin ... I do not mix myself up with him in the affairs (of the world); nor in forming plans (for his advantage); nor in the practice of what is strange. I pursue with him the perfect virtue of Heaven and Earth, and do not allow ourselves to be troubled by outward things. I seek to be with him in a state of undisturbed indifference, and not to practice what affairs might indicate as likely to be advantageous. And now there is to come to us this vulgar recompense. Whenever there is a strange realization, there must have been strange conduct. Danger threatens - not through any sin of me or of my son, but as brought about, I apprehend, by Heaven. It is this which makes me weep! (Legge, *Kwang-dze* 107)

子綦曰：「歎！... 吾不與之為事，不與之為謀，不與之為怪；吾與之乘天地之誠而不以物與之相撓，吾與之一委蛇而不與之為事所宜。今也然有世俗之償焉！凡有怪徵者，必有怪行。殆乎！非我與吾子之罪，幾天與之也！吾是以泣也。」 (Sec.11)

Again Zhuang Zi, in “The Adjustment of Controversies” 《齊物論》 part, in his book *Inner Chapters* 《內篇》 mentions this,

Does a thing seem so to me? (I say that) it is so. Does it seem not so to me? (I say that) it is not so. A path is formed by (constant) treading on the ground. A thing is called by its name through the (constant) application of the name to it.

How is it so? It is so because it is so. How is it not so? It is not so, because it is not so. Everything has its inherent character and its proper capability. There is nothing which has not these. Therefore, this being so, if we take a stalk of grain and a (large) pillar, a loathsome (leper) and (a beauty like) Xi Shi, things large and things insecure, things crafty and things strange; they may in the light of the Dao all be reduced to the same category (of opinion about them). (Legge, *Kwang-dze* 183)

可乎可，不可乎不可。道行之而成，物謂之而然。惡乎然？然於然。惡乎不然？不然於不然。物固有所然，物固有所可。無物不然，無物不可。故為是舉莛與楹，厲與西施，恢恠憭怪，道通為一。(Zhuang Zi Sec.6)

Here we can mention the Six Dynasties and the Tang Dynasty strange stories which had received deep Daoist influence. The stories like, “Hu Gong”, “Du Zichun”, “Wei Ziding”, “Xiao Dongxuan”, “Gu Xuanzi”, and “Zhang Ding” have Daoist Masters, who had extraordinary knowledge of alchemy and could prepare the elixir of Immortality. In the stories the Masters also asked their followers to perform *xiuxing* 修行 or self-cultivation in which they have to keep themselves away from the outward distractions and have to live with an undisturbed indifference. According to Zhuang Zi, everything has its inherent character and its suitable capability. They exist as whatever they are worthy of. Even if they are strange, they can be reduced to the same category with all the other (so called normal phenomenon) through the light of the Dao. So even the strange events are explainable with the philosophy of the Dao. Dao basically accepts the limitation of our knowledge and believes in the existence of incidents as they actually are. Even if they are incomprehensible by the human beings, it is because of the existence of the infinite possibilities that the Dao indicates. But even after practicing the undisturbed indifference if a strange indication (unexplained by the Dao) comes because of a strange event, then it

is a menace that comes from the heaven. In most of the *Zhiguai* strange stories we have seen that the strange event like, the transformation of a human being into an animal, or the haunting of a spirit etc, was mostly induced by the heaven as a means of retribution.

The 10th stanza of the 10th chapter - “Zhong and Li” 《重黎卷第十》 taken from the *Yangzi Fayan* 《揚子法言》 {completed around 9 AD by Yang Xiong (53 BC- 18 AD)}, the author mentions,

或問：「趙世多神，何也？」曰：「神怪茫茫，若存若亡，聖人曼雲。」 (Xiong 10.10)

Jeffrey S. Bullock translated it this way,

Someone asked: Why were the rulers of Qin so preoccupied with spirits? Yangzi said: Spirits are strange and unintelligible, now seeming to be here, now not. The sage does not speak about them. (Bullock 10.10)¹⁵

In the 13th chapter “The Priority of Filial Devotion” 《孝至卷第十三》 from the *Yangzi Fayan* 《揚子法言》, it is mentioned,

或曰：「聖人事異乎？」曰：「聖人德之為事，異亞之。故常修德者，本也；見異而修德者，末也。本末不修而存者，未之有也。」 (Xiong sec.15)

Someone asked: Does the sage give attention to strange phenomena? Yangzi said: The sage attends to morality or good deeds; strange phenomena are secondary. Thus, constantly cultivating good deeds or morality -this is to grasp the root. Waiting to see strange phenomena and only then cultivating good deeds

¹⁵ For consulting the translation of *Yangzi Fayan* 《揚子法言》 by Jeffrey S. Bullock, I have followed this link of the Chinese Text project Website <<http://ctext.org/yangzi-fayan>>.

—this is to grasp the tip of the branch. To cultivate neither the root nor the tip of the branch and yet survive—there has yet to be a case of this. (Bullock sec.15)

Yang Zi (Yang Xiong) never disregarded the presence of the strange phenomenon. He just said that it comes secondary. The sages should practice good deeds (self-cultivation) and then only can grasp the meaning of the strange phenomenon. He can acquire that profound knowledge of the unknown. But if he first encounters the strange and then practices good deeds, then he will only be able to grasp the superficial knowledge.

The strange is often seen to be the key which the author provides the readers with so that they can enter their literary world. Li Shizhen (1516-1593) pleases to the world – ‘Men of learning investigate “human changes that fall outside the constant principle” and not simply reject as preposterous the boundless transformations of the universe past and present’ (Zeitlin 4). Zeitlin also questions whether the strange is definable. She also raises the question of the essential quality of the strange. She asks if the elasticity, elusiveness and changeability are all embedded in the concept of the strange. Zeitlin says that she follows Freud’s idea of the uncanny to some extent and she thinks that the strange is a cultural construct created and renewed through writing in the literary or the artistic fashion. Therefore the concept is different from the notions of the supernatural, the fantastic or the marvellous. All these are predicated on the impossibility of a narrated event in the lived world outside the text. But in this thesis we will try to look at the strange as it is seen by various classical literature critics and will see how the stories I will be discussing have celebrated the concept of the strange over the centuries. The idea of strange had encountered all the restrictions set by the Confucian scholars but finally the imaginative faculty of the popular psyche had accepted it and had established it in the

mainstream Chinese literature. In the Indian literary tradition, the fantastic and the strange became the major emotional state that had primarily intrigued the imaginative faculty of the readers and made the reading experience a celebration. Thereafter we will consider all the stories, irrespective of their genres, like *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* or *Gadya Kavya* or *Akhyayika*, as the strange and the fantastic tales. But before moving on to the next chapter we will also discuss the western concept of the strange and their ways of situating the strange narratives according to the generic categorization.

According to the Todorovian concept of opposition between the possible and the impossible, the three basic genres are, the marvellous, the fantastic and the uncanny (Todorov 41-42). He denotes, if the narrated events are harmonious to the laws of post enlightenment scientific common sense, then we are in the realm of the uncanny and if they contradict the laws then we have entered the realm of the marvellous. But only when the reader hesitates between these two alternatives are we in a realm of the fantastic. But the same laws of common sense reality are not operative in other cultures or other historical periods. Li Shizhen's chapter of human anomalies and his view of the boundless transformations of the natural world reveal a standard which is very different from that which modern science would accept as possible or from what a 19th century European novella would represent as 'supernatural'. The Todorovian model always says that at the end of a story the readers must opt for one solution or the other (Todorov 25). But usually in the Chinese strange tales the ghosts can be accepted as both psychologically induced and materially present, just as a sequence can be cast simultaneously as a dream and as a real event. This ambiguity, the elasticity of the illusion into reality and vice-versa and also the volatility are all an intrinsic part of the

concept of the strange. Therefore Zeitlin previously had questioned the definability of the strange. The strange results when things are paradoxically affirmed and denied at the same time. The boundary between the strange and the normal is never fixed but is constantly altered, blurred, erased, multiplied, or redefined (Zeitlin 7). The readers hesitate between two mutually exclusive interpretations. The power of the strange is sustained only because such boundaries can be endlessly manipulated. Many of the stories I have taken into consideration cross the fundamental boundaries in human experience. I have focussed on the theme of 'illusion and reality', the theme of 'transformation' and the theme of 'world(s) within world(s)/multiple world'.

This section of the chapter will define the 'fantastic' as an idea and a recurrent theme in western literature. 'The fantastic' is a literary genre which is representative of the other world beyond this human world. The readers and the protagonists of the stories hesitate and wonder when faced with a particular marvellous phenomenon. Todorov says that the fantastic is the hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. As Todorov says,

The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of senses, of a product of the imagination – and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality – but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us. (Todorov 25)

Todorov differentiated between these sub-genres of the fantastic, the marvellous or the uncanny. He specified very clearly that the fantastic is the hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. The fantastic is defined in relation to the real and the imaginary. Vladimir Solovyov

thinks that in what is genuinely fantastic, there is always the external and formal possibility of a simple explanation of phenomena but at the same time this explanation is completely stripped of internal probability. The explanations for the uncanny phenomena can have two aspects, the natural causes and the supernatural causes. The possibility of a hesitation between these two creates the fantastic effect (Todorov 26). For example, in the *chuanqi* story “Li Zheng” from *Taiping Guangji* (discussed in the chapter on the “Transformation Motif”), it should not be considered to be strange that the government official Li Zheng has been turned into a tiger. But the strange part that intrigued the readers was Li Zheng’s friend, the official named Can (慘) who is an assistant minister in the Department of War granted the wishes requested by Li Zheng in his tiger form. Thus it was proved that whatever the tiger Li Zheng had told was truth only and Can had no other way to know about it. So for the Chinese readers, when Li Zheng was transformed into a tiger, they considered it to be the product of the imagination of the author. Or they can also consider it to be an illusion that occurred to the officer Can. As they witness everyday nature to be ordinary and law-abiding, they will always remain suspicious about the authenticity of the story. But when it was proved that Can really existed as a historical character and he found out the wife and the son of Li Zheng, then the reader is compelled to believe in the supernatural act of nature which goes against the laws of nature. This hesitation between their belief and disbelief created the strange and the fantastic effect.

Todorov emphasizes again that the logic of the fantastic lies in this acceptance that the experienced event was either an illusion or the other supernatural world actually exists parallel to this known world but only with certain reservations and conditions for which human beings do not experience the other world frequently. This duration of uncertainty

is occupied by the fantastic. This uncertainty is not answerable and the moment we are able to answer it, it shifts its genre from the fantastic to a neighbouring genre like the uncanny or the marvellous. As Todorov has mentioned, the fantastic is always a break in the acknowledged order. It is an 'interruption of the inadmissible within the changeless everyday legality' (Todorov 26). French criticism also talks about the fantastic. Castex in *Le Conte Fantastique en France* says that the fantastic is characterized by a brutal intrusion of mystery into the context of real life. So the events of two orders, natural world and supernatural world were mentioned (Todorov 26).

Sometimes a series of events is initially inter-related and none of them in isolation contradicts the laws of nature. Human beings can identify them with their own experiences. But sometimes their accumulation creates a problem. Even though the events do not transcend the laws of nature still they create a space for uncertainty and suspicion about the unnatural events. The protagonists fail to find the relevant explanations for their conditions. This uncertainty continues and the incidents eventually incline towards a supernatural solution. The hesitation on the part of the reader is the first condition of the fantastic (Todorov 31). The reader is integrated with the world of the characters and this world is defined by the reader's own ambiguous perception of the events narrated. When the reader emerges from the world of the characters and returns to his own praxis, a new danger threatens the fantastic. This is a danger that occurs at the level of the interpretation of the text. The three conditions set by Todorov are: the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to vacillate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Secondly this dilemma may also be experienced by a character and thus the reader's role

is so to speak entrusted to a character and at the same time when the dilemma is represented, it becomes one of the motifs in the work. In the case of naïve reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Thirdly, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text. The reader should reject allegorical as well as 'poetic' interpretations. The first one refers to the verbal aspect of the text, an ambiguous vision. The sentiment of fear or perplexity is often invoked by theoreticians of the fantastic. For example, in the Indian aesthetics, the *bhaya bhava* (psychological state of terror) gives rise to the *bhayānaka rasa* (sentiment of terrible) in the characters and this offers a better opportunity to delimit the genre. In the Indian tradition of *rasa* theory, the sentiment of the terrible is associated with the *bhayānaka* or terror. The fantastic is greatly associated with the amazed state of mind in the audience which is usually aroused when the text describes something marvellous. The readers wonder about its credibility and thereafter a space for suspicion and dilemma is created. The readers marvel at the act of supernatural but are not afraid of it.

The book *Fantastic Literature: A Critical Reader*, edited by David Sandner discusses the concept of the fantastic literature. The present day concept was very different from what it used to be in the ancient times. The fantastic literature is a kind of skeptical literature based on the primary suspicion about the existence of the supernatural. The literary texts bring the readers closer to the experience of the fantastic. The indefinable fantastic always includes an opaqueness and suggestiveness in it. Tolkien notes a tension between 'the good catastrophe' and 'dyscatastrophe' of sorrow and failure (Sandner 5). He says that the tension between them is productive of the energy that might bring transcendence through the fantasy.

The fantasy is usually determined by the ideas of its author, its means of production and its politics and prejudices. It is evident that a specific context gives rise to it and it has a necessary connection to its time and place. The specific arguments and gestures of the fantastic towards the irreality and estrangement always arise in that context (Sandner 5). Hereby, we can always mention the rise and development of the genre of the strange tales within the Chinese tradition. The folk literature and the arrival of Buddhism in China had facilitated the growth of the strange tales tradition. Tang dynasty patronized Buddhism and it attained recognition in the court. Therefore strange tale traditions also received much acclamation during that time. The Tang dynasty was a period of cultural progress and stability. The dynasty maintained a civil service system of standardized Imperial Examinations for recruiting the scholar-officials. The strange tales or the *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* writers mostly were scholars who used to appear for the Imperial Examinations. The heroes in most of the strange tales were such scholar officials. They share aspirations of obtaining official posts through the Imperial Examinations. The prolonged and frustrating procedure of passing the Examination often tempted them to indulge in fiction writing. This is not necessarily always an 'escapist' stand on their part but it is an effort to use their imaginative faculties in a creative way. The scholars attempted to draw a picture of their society and system from their experience. Thereafter the fantastic or the strange literature they wrote, is somewhat bound by a certain time and place. This paradox of being out of the world and being limited by the time and space at the same time is the primary structure of the strange tales. Sandner mentioned, fantasy has a way of offering everything and nothing, new worlds and old, openings and closings, glimpses beyond the world and only the abyss (Sandner 5). As we can see in the Chinese strange

tales, the understanding of the events can never be made in binaries but a tension at the core of the fantastic always remains. Perhaps this is what the literature wants to produce. The readers question the strange and the fantastic and eventually arrive at a meaning that situates the entire strange event in an acceptable structure. If we follow Sandner's theory of the fantastic, we can say that the imagination on the part of the author and the reader works as an important agency and eventually this agency reaches beyond the imagination to apprehend not only what cannot be 'actually' experienced but also what cannot be imagined. The fantastic images of the strange encounters and wild impossibilities of fantastic literature mostly leave unfilled signifiers. These signifiers are extremely suggestive and indefinite. These images create the space where the readers can get bewildered and think deeply. The displacement of the naturally anticipated events in the fantastic literature makes the readers experience a certain disruption of thought. Therefore these events invite an interpretation. It always provides the readers with ample scope to wonder and think about the possible reasons behind the event. The readers are automatically prompted to do so as they are living within an uncomfortable experience of disjunction, an ill-fitting conception of the presence of the impossible.

The western literary world usually considers myths, folktales and fairy tales as the comprehensive supernatural narratives. In all these the supernatural beings are gods, goddesses, fairies, demons, goblins and ghosts. Several events in the fantastic narratives often include manifestations of the unreasonable and the strange which evoke an uncanny sense and often inspire horror. The fantastic is a mode of representation associated with works ranging from the gothic novel to the horror story. Karl S. Y. Kao in the introduction to his book *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*

discusses the distinction between the supernatural and the fantastic as they have their own particular areas of reference. According to him, first and foremost the supernatural and the fantastic are to be understood as referring to the types of reality represented rather than to the mode of representation employed. So he says that in the Chinese context the opposite orientations are assumed. For example, the Six Dynasties *zhiguai* 志怪 are considered to be ‘records’ of facts and observable natural phenomena. The distinction between the fantastic and the supernatural is not always obvious. Both of them are present in the Six Dynasties *zhiguai*. Then the belief in the marvellous participation of gods and goddesses in human affairs and man’s communication with nature were still intact. In the western literary tradition, the fantastic and the strange developed as a part of a differentiation of the self and the other. It was a part of a new conception of the self and its connection with the outside world. In the west Enlightenment brought in disbelief in animism and magic. The fantastic literary tradition was a product of a troubled, pulverized consciousness resulting from the loss of faith in the unity of man and nature with the advent of the Enlightenment. In the Chinese literary tradition also, the Fall of the Han dynasty, the loss of faith on the supreme power of the king, the advent of Buddhism and its miraculous tales had led to such schism of consciousness. However in the Tang dynasty, a change in literary awareness and in the attitude towards the processing of the represented reality¹⁶, the Chinese supernatural and the fantastic, never caught in the experience of alienation from nature and had inspired several emotions in the readers.

¹⁶ In spite of the Chinese conception of the reality as obvious and unalterable, the dichotomy of fact and fantasy eventually became a problem that called for a resolution, and early *zhiguai* 志怪 existed primarily as records of supernatural and fantastic phenomena.

In the Chinese literary tradition the distinction between the fantastic and the supernatural is based on the nature of all these records of facts. Some strange tales belong to the supernatural and in that they represent certain phenomena that exist beyond the observable world or occurrences that apparently transcend the laws of nature (Kao 2). The other tales are fantastic because these stories involve what is beyond the range of the normal or scientifically explainable or highly extraordinary as to become unnatural, though not necessarily supernatural. Karl Kao again explains that in the Chinese tradition, the reason behind recording the supernatural stories lies in the belief in supernaturalism and magic. The recording is also an acceptance of the unnatural and the supranormal as factual at their face value. Karl Kao clarifies that these events were recorded because of their testimonial value. Since the belief in the supernaturalism was never discredited in traditional Chinese culture, especially the popular strand of that culture, both the supernatural and the fantastic phenomena were accepted by the reader or the author as real, due to their 'origin' in the natural world. Karl Kao also says in the context of the Chinese literature that the supernatural and the fantastic are separable in literary history but they both belong to the category of the literary fantasies and share the same notion of otherness by providing an alternative to the experiences of the common sense of the mundane world. The fantastic overlaps the supernatural. But in terms of the nature of the events presented and of the reader's perception of the events, it is important to reflect on whether the protagonist accepts these events as happening in real life or rejects them as illusory or leaves them suspended in indeterminacy. In the Chinese literary tradition the readers mostly suffer from indeterminacy. With the testimonial quality at the end of each story, that strengthens the claim of the authenticity, the readers are left undecided

whether to accept it as a real event or to consider it as an illusion. The Indian story traditions had always enjoyed the presence of supernaturalism in the narratives. It celebrates the *Vismaya bhava* as an integrated part of the story tradition. The *vismaya bhava* (wonder) that arouses the *adbhuta rasa* in the audience is a feeling of wonderful happiness. Like the Chinese strange stories, the Indian stories do not contain characters that are tormented by indeterminacy. The difference in the attitude of the readers towards the supernatural manifestation in the human world is something that characterizes these two traditions.

After defining strange we will now move on to the discussion of four particular themes in the next chapters. All the stories discussed there belong to the strange tale genres – *zhiguai* and *chuanqi*. The Indian stories from the *Kathasaritsagara* also will be taken up to execute a comparative thematic study. The comparative study will not only reveal the resemblances of the two traditions but also will help us in understanding the causality behind the transmission and the absorption of certain particular Buddhist motifs.

Chapter Four

Motif of the ‘Illusion’ and the ‘Reality’

This chapter attempts to examine a cross-cultural and cross-literary exchange of the Hindu and Buddhist motif of the ‘Illusion’ and ‘Reality’ between India and China. It will explore the merging of these two important Daoist and Buddhist philosophy and thereafter will move on to the discussion of the major philosophical thoughts that worked behind the stories that fell under the motif of “Illusion and Reality”. In this chapter, I will discuss the survival and continuous existence of a common motif and a recurrent theme of ‘Illusion and Reality (or Earthliness)’ (幻境 and 塵世) as expressed in the Chinese strange stories and Indian stories from the *Kathasaritsagara*. These stories will exhibit the merging of the Daoism and Buddhism in China. This set of stories will discuss the illusory nature of worldly affairs and the perseverance of the protagonists in accomplishing a rationally impossible mission. In most of the stories the venture fails, because the magical fabrication is conditioned by a certain degree of temporality. All these stories will be discussed by keeping the Buddhist motifs mostly from the *Jatakas* at the center. This will also show how this Buddhist motif would put on a garb of Daoist elements and how the Buddhist vocabulary and ideas will be expressed through Daoist ideas. A thorough thematological survey of the stories will also be conducted. I would like to discuss these topics elaborately with reference to the Chinese strange tales translated from *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》 (978 AD) and Sanskrit text *Kathasaritsagara* by Somadevabhata from the Indian tradition, thus focusing mainly on the influence and reception of Buddhism in both the traditions. The chapter will examine each

specific common trait present in all the stories and will discuss the idea or philosophy that shaped that particular trait. Thus this chapter is going to provide an idea about, how the Hindu and the Buddhist philosophy and ideas influenced the strange tale tradition in Chinese and Indian literature and contributed to the growth of literary and narrative tradition.

The advent of Buddhism to China during the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) in the 1st century AD was the most opportune as it was the time when the intellectuals were hungry for novel ideas. The Buddhist metaphysical idea of illusion and reality, the concepts of 'truth', experience and mind, knowledge, and belief intrigued the Chinese intellectuals. The Neo-Daoist (3rd-6th century AD) discourse of “abstruse learning” (*xuanxue* 玄學¹) could accommodate this foreign system of thought. Daoism focused mainly on the metaphysical notions of being (有) and non being (無). This is expressed in the 2nd book of the *Dao de Jing* 《道德經》 by Laozi 老子 written during the Warring States (475 BC - 221 BC). There it is said that being and the non-being is born of one another - 故有無相生 (Laozi Book.2). This is where it could also relate to the Buddhist concept of the *Samsara* and *Nirvana*. According to Buddhism, rebirth is caused by desire and Nirvana could be achieved only by the cessation of this desire. Therefore, in order to achieve Nirvana, one had to control the craving for it. So they are interrelated and complementary. The Mahayana notion of a Bodhisattva shows that although Bodhisattva qualifies for Nirvana yet he stayed back willingly in the cycle of rebirth to help others. Because of this inherent sense of equality, the Mahayana school of Buddhism was successful in China.

¹The subject matter of *Xuanxue* in this formal sense seems to have centered on the *Yijing*, *Laozi*, and *Zhuangzi*, and selected commentaries to them. I have consulted Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy for this information and have followed this link- <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/neo-daoism/>> last accessed on 12.08.16.

Daoism in its early form was a mixture of early mythology, folk religion, and philosophy. The arrival of Buddhism was influential in such a way that Daoism had to renew and restructure itself into a more organized religion, while addressing existential queries similar to those raised by Buddhism. Early Buddhism was sometimes seen as a kind of foreign relative of Daoism and its scriptures were often translated into Chinese with Daoist vocabulary. So one could be a Buddhist, a Daoist and a Confucian Sage at one time. This marks the confluence of the Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

The first set of stories containing the motif of ‘Illusion and Reality/Earthliness’ are several in numbers. The Tang dynasty (618–907) chuanqi tale “Du Zichun” is one famous and major example. There are more such similar Chinese stories analogous with this story. The oldest extant of “Du Zichun” and such series of similar stories like actually can be found in a Sanskrit collection called the *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavata Purāna* written in 550 A.D.² (Vijnanananda 582). The *Puranic* version of the story corresponds to the climactic scene in the Chinese stories. The basic elements of this story go like this: Narada, the great follower of Vishnu, boasts that he conquered the *maya* (illusory reality), “I have conquered my passions and am become an ascetic; I have conquered even *Maya*.” Vishnu tells him,

It is very hard to conquer *Maya*; ...Brahma, I, S’iva, and the other Munis, none of us has been able as yet to conquer that Unborn *Maya*; how, then, can it be possible that you or any other man can conquer that *Maya*! Any

²In the *Sacred Books of the East* – Vol- 26, *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavata Purāna*-Book – 6, chapter -28, p-582 this story about Narada can be found. As Reed, Carrie in his article titled *Parallel Worlds, Stretched Time, and Illusory Reality: The Tang Tale “Du Zichun”* published in the Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, Volume 69, Number 2, pp. 309-342, published by Harvard- Yenching Institute, in the December 2009 mentioned this story and discussed it elaborately with reference to the story “Du Zichun”.

embodied being, be he a Deva, a human being, or a bird, no one is able to conquer that *Maya* Unborn. (Vijnanananda 583)

He further explains,

The Great Time (*Kala*) though formless, is one form of *Maya* and fashions this universe. All the Jīvas are subservient to this *Kala* ... This *Kala* sometimes makes even a religious man that knows Dharma confounded and deluded; so you know the nature of *Maya* is very incomprehensible and Her ways mysterious. (Vijnanananda 583)

Here time is considered to be one form of the *Maya* that keeps everyone deluded and immersed into the fanciful reality. Vishnu explains to Narada that *Maya* resides everywhere throughout this whole Universe. She is omniscient, acknowledged by all, invisible and of diverse forms. To make Narada understand the nature of *maya*, Vishnu takes him to a pond situated in a place close to Kanauj and asks him to bathe. When Narada immerses himself in the waters, he took the form of a woman and his memory of the previous male form vanished at once. He was so enchanted that he even forgot about Vishnu. Narada eventually gets married to king Taladhvaja and started being called as Saubhagya Sundari. They engaged in various amorous sports and failed to notice the long time that passed away in the interval. Eventually they had twenty sons in due course of time. Then in a sinister battle all her sons and grandsons were killed and she cries out in agony. As Vishnu deceived him with *Maya*, so not even for a moment did it occur to him that he had been Narada. Then Vishnu appears and tells her that all this is simply illusion caused by Moha. Then he asks her to go to the heavenly pool. When she enters the water, she immediately gets transformed into Narada. He realizes that all that he had so far experienced was *maya*. This story is ascribed to the legendary Veda Vyasa. This story seems to be analogous to the story in *Da Tang Xiyuji* written by Xuanzong. This is where “Du Zichun” and other stories

found their inspiration from. This series of stories mark almost a clear trace of where the original story came from and how it evolved in China.

The Indian *puranic* story of Narada and Vishnu, and other similar stories, as a part of the oral tradition, might be the source of “Lieshi Chi” 《烈士池》 (“Pool of the Hero”) in the *Datang Xiyuji* (《大唐西域記》) in a section of the 7th chapter named the “The Vigil of the Champion”. Samuel Beal (1884) in the book named *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World, by Hiuen Tsiang* translated the entire work by Xuanzang. The story in Xuanzang’s record is collected from a place near Sarnath. It talks about a solitary sage who is in pursuit of a talented person having the potential for helping him to attain immortality. But for this, the person must undergo a test which would make him experience extreme torment without uttering a sound. Just like most tales dealing with illusion and earthliness, this story ends with the protagonist failing to pass the test. The description mostly highlights the significance of becoming an Immortal and the ultimate failure in seeking Immortality. The story ends on a sad note as the ascetic took the responsibility of this failure on him, quite unlike the Chinese story “Du Zichun” 《杜子春》. In “Lieshi Chi” 《烈士池》 the “solitary master” said, “All was my fault; 'twas the fascination of the devil.” The champion, moved with gratitude, and sad because the thing had failed, fretted and finally died. Because he escaped the calamity of fire, the lake is called “Saving the Life,” and because he died overpowered by gratitude, it has its other name, “The Champion's Lake.” (Beal 2:59)

In Xuanzang’s story, the focus is mostly on immortality and the repaying of the kindness. This story is known to be the earliest version of the Chinese chuanqi story “Du Zichun”. In this story the protagonist Du Zichun was a spendthrift and was

abandoned by all. Then an old man appeared and eventually he helped Du Zichun thrice financially. After failing twice, Du Zichun succeeds in his attempt to be an economical person. In return to the old man's favour, he agrees to sit for the test of "illusion and reality". In this Chinese version, Du Zichun was not told the reason for such a test or the old man also did not tell him what the probable outcome would be, if he finally succeeds. This is analogous to the *Puranic* version of the story. Then exactly like other stories Du Zichun undergoes suffering which usually a mortal being has to go through while living in this world of impermanence. Finally, he was able to overcome all the emotions, but could not sever intense affection for his child and ended up uttering a sound "yi". The entire set up was destroyed. The old man put all the blame on Du Zichun's inability to control his emotion. The story ends with Du Zichun's lamentation. There are quite a number of stories which have a similar motif but the development of the plot might differ sometimes. According to the basic model of this one story, a series of stories possessing the same motif emerged gradually. Apart from "Du Zichun," from *Xuxuan Guailu* 《續玄怪錄》 by Li Fuyan (780–830 A.D)³, similar stories containing this motif are "Xiao Dongxuan" 《蕭洞玄》 by Xue Yusi from *Hedongji* 《河東記》 (*Taiping Guangji*, 44: *Shenxian* 44 series), "Hu Gong" 《壺公》 (*Taiping Guangji*, 12: *Shenxian* 12 series) by Ge Hong, "Gu Xuanji" 《顧玄績》 by Duan Chengshi from *Youyang Zazu* 《酉陽雜俎》 and "Wei Zidong" 《韋自東》 from *Chuanqi* 《傳奇》 by Pei Xing (*Taiping Guangji*, 356: *Yaksha*-1 series). In this chapter we will talk about all these stories with reference to the Indian Sanskrit stories from the *Kathasaritsagara* and will also discuss the Buddhist and Hindu philosophy behind it. The stories "Xiao Dongxuan" and "Wei Zidong" have

³ We can find another version of "Du Zichun" in the *Xuanguailu* 《玄怪錄》 written by Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (780–848).

been taken from the book *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* by Karl Kao. In the book “Xiao Dongxuan” is titled as “Hsiao Tung-hsuan” (Kao 315-319) and is translated by Paula Varsano. The story “Wei Zidong” is titled “Wei Tzu-tung” (Kao 335-339) and is translated by Simon Schuchat. The translation of the story “Du Zichun” has been taken from the book *Tellings and Retellings: Strange Tales from Medieval China* by Suchorita Chattopadhyay and Barnali Chanda (Chattopadhyay and Chanda 31-41). The stories “Hu Gong” 《壺公》 and “Gu Xuanji” 《顧玄績》 have been translated by me and are given in the Appendix-I. The test of perseverance and the difficulty of attaining Immortality are the professed intentions of these xiaoshuo⁴ tales. This rarity made the significance of Immortality extremely precious (for example, the Daoist priest or the old man’s lifelong aspiration was to attain Immortality). In all the stories the protagonist enters an illusory trance during the test. That illusory world makes them experience the suffering of human life throughout many births. The implied meaning lies in this trance as it points out towards the Buddhist thought that life is impermanent, empty, and full of suffering. It is a journey and each event is just like a dream.

In the Indian tradition we can simultaneously mention the renowned story of Chandrasvamin from the 18th story of Ksemendra and Somedeva (17th story in Sivadasa) (Warder, *storytelling* 6:143). This story named “The Brahman’s Son who failed to acquire the Magic Power” is found in *Kathasaritsagara* (Somedeva VII:71). The tale number 17 in the Hindi version and number 13 in the Tamil version of *Vetala Panchabhinshati* describe similar stories. Apart from the ‘vice of gambling’ section in

⁴The oral versions might have contributed to form the primary motif of the stretched time within an illusory realm. We find similar stories dealing with illusion and reality in Chinese tales as “Yang Lin” 楊林 in *Youminglu* 《幽明錄》, “Zhenzhongji” 《枕中記》 and “Nanke Taishouzhuan” 《南柯太守傳》.

the *Kathasaritsagara*, the creation of illusion is also an intriguingly noticeable part. The young learned Brahmin Chandrasvamin in Ujjayini, becomes a gambler and lost everything he possessed. He was insulted by the manager of the hall who dumped him in a forlorn wood. Chandrasvamin somehow revived and went onto a deserted temple of Siva. A Pashupata (*Shaivait*) ascetic took pity on him. The ascetic called up a 'science' (*Vidya*) to provide hospitality to the Brahmin. He also granted him all kinds of sensual pleasures. Then the Brahmin persuaded him to bestow the knowledge of the science on him but was denied several times. The teacher tried to discourage him saying,

You cannot attain this science; for it is attained under the water, and while the aspirant is uttering spells under the water, the science creates delusions to bewilder him, so that he does not attain success. For there he sees himself born again, and a boy, and then a youth, and then a young man, and married, and then he supposes that he has a son. And he is falsely deluded, supposing that one person is his friend and another his enemy, and he does not remember this birth, nor that he is engaged in a magic rite for acquiring science. But whoever, when he seems to have reached twenty-four years, is recalled to consciousness by the science of his instructor, and, being firm of soul, remembers his real life, and knows that all he supposes himself to experience is the effect of illusion, and though he is under the influence of it enters the fire, attains the science, and rising from the water sees the real truth. But if the science is not attained by the pupil on whom it is bestowed, it is lost to the teacher also, on account of its having been communicated to an unfit person. You can attain all the results you desire by my possession of the science; why do you show this persistence? Take care that my power is not lost, and that your enjoyment is not lost also. (Somedeva VII:71)

In this story we can notice that unlike the Chinese stories like "Du Zichun", "Xiao Dongxuan" etc, the ascetic describes almost everything that is supposed to occur while trying to attain the 'science' or the *vidya*. Finally he agreed but warned

Chandrasvamin not to be deluded by the snare of illusions that might entrap him during the mutterings of the *mantras* and if it so happens then the teacher would lose his power:

My son, when, in repeating this charm, you behold that illusion, I will recall you to consciousness by my magic power, and you must enter the fire which you will see in your illusion. For I shall remain here all the time on the bank of the river to help you. (Somedeva VII:71)

While the ascetic was chanting the charm in the water Chandrasvamin was at once bewildered by its deluding power, and was deceived to forget the whole of that birth. He imagined himself to be born in his own person, as the son of a certain Brahman. He slowly grew up, studied the prescribed sciences and eventually he was married and was absorbed in the joys and sorrows of married life with his wife, in such a way as if it were real. In course of time a son was born to him. He remained enslaved by the love for his son and also remained devoted to his wife, with his parents and relations. While he was living this illusory life, the ascetic, employed the charm to awaken him at the proper time. He was suddenly awakened from the trance by the ascetic's charm. He recollected himself and that hermit, and became aware that what he was apparently going through was actually magical illusion. This realization that he got was induced by the teacher only. In his heart he was completely merged in the pleasing ties of life. Now in order to gain the fruit of his meditation, he was eager to enter the fire. But he was surrounded by his elders, friends, superiors and relations, who all tried to prevent him. Still, though they used all kinds of arguments to dissuade him, being desirous of heavenly enjoyment, he went with his relations to the bank of the river, on which a pyre was prepared. There he saw his aged parents and his wife

ready to die with grief, and his young children crying; and in his bewilderment he said to himself:

Alas ! My relations will all die if I enter the fire, and I do not know if that promise of my teacher's is true or not. So shall I enter the fire? Or shall I not enter it? After all, how can that promise of my teacher's be false, as it is so precisely in accordance with all that has taken place? So, I will gladly enter the fire. (Somedeva VII:71)

This is exactly what Du Zichun also thought when his wife was being chopped up by the Army General. He also doubted the truth in the Daoist Master's injunction. Just like the Brahman Chandrasvamin, Du Zichun also had gone through these reflections and thereafter decided to stay silent. Chandrasvamin entered the fire. And to his astonishment the fire felt as cool to him as snow. Then the delusion having come to an end, he rose up from the river and reached the bank. There he saw his teacher and he prostrated himself at his feet. When his teacher questioned him, he described all his experiences and finally exclaimed as how the fire felt cool to him. At this, his teacher asked him if he had made some mistake in this incantation. Because it is not usual that the fire would appear to be cool to him. He said that this phenomenon in the process of acquiring this science was totally unprecedented. But Chandrasvamin did not remember making any mistake. Then the teacher, in order to know the cause, called the science to his mind but it did not appear before him or his pupil. So, finally both of them had lost the science. Chandrasvamin was deluded and could not stand firm forgetting his own identity and he became distraught by seeming to experience the loss of his family. Thus he failed in his mission and the ascetic lost his power as well. This story mostly points towards the intention of attaining immortality and the benefit of perseverance and self-restraint. The story depicts that Chandrasvamin could not overcome the grief of losing family. In the "Story of Chandrasvamin", the king

Trivikramsena said that Chandrasvamin failed because his mind was not firm and the teacher lost his power as he was bestowing it on an undeserving student. However Ksemendra describes that the ascetic was angry within, and that is why the charm failed (Warder, *Storytelling* 6:143).

In the appendix of the *Kathasaritsagara* Book-VII (C.H. Tawney's translation) the commentator discussed other adaptations of the same story. In the section titled "The Brahman's Son who failed to acquire the Magic Power" he discussed the Hindi version of the tale no. 17 (Somedeva VII:244). This tale is significantly abbreviated. No details of the gambling can be found. The Brahman's son, here called Gunakar, was quite willing to eat any kind food that the ascetic had to offer. But when he saw it being prepared in a human skull, he felt aversion. In this story it was a *Yakshini* who produces the illusion of the palace. She stayed with him during the night, and in the morning he wanted to acquire possession of the *Vidya* or Science. He was told that in order to do that he must sit at midnight in the middle of the water for forty days. Gunakar accomplished this successfully. Then he was told to do the same in fire. Before doing so he visited his family. But on returning from home he accomplished the ordeal successfully.

The protagonist visiting his family and then again coming back for the test in order to acquire the *vidya* reminds us of the Chinese story "Hu Gong". In this story as well, before acquiring the wisdom of the Immortals, Fang visited his family and in order to deceive them about Fang's absence at home, the Daoist priest asked him to keep a magic stick on the bed. The stick had appeared like Fang's dead body for the entire duration of time while he was absent. This was executed probably to console Fang's mind, so that he is not worried about his family who would be looking forward to his

homecoming. So when they know that Fang is no more, they will also give up the hope of him ever coming back home and thus Fang too will not feel any kind of filial or parental attachment and responsibility towards them. This would keep his mind composed and away from the worldly attachments. So for Fang even before the test started, he could prove his ability to sever the filial sentiment. As Gunakar was successful in passing the test, perhaps this is the reason that Fang could also overcome two difficult tests given to him. But he failed to overcome the third test of consuming faeces⁵. The probable reason behind this is Fang's inability to overcome his egoist nature. This egoist nature made him aware of the self and the preference of food he would be taking. The emotion of disgust prevented him to go on with the feces the Daoist priest had offered. This refusal or inability to consume that kept him attached to the cycle of rebirth. In the *Kathasaritsagara*, the final object was not attained owing to the instability of mind and intention. Chandrasvamin's fear of losing his family stopped him from succeeding in his mission. Similarly in the Chinese stories the mission of attaining immortality failed each time because the protagonists could not sever the worldly emotions or *qiqing* 七情. There is one probable reason behind the failure. In order to attain the immortality, or enlightenment or the heavenly science, the protagonists needed to realize the truth about the illusory nature of the visions. But none of them could acquire it. All of them were just following the instruction of their teachers in order to achieve immortality or the science of immortality. Thereafter obviously they failed. The responsibility of this failure goes to the teacher or the Daoist Master also. All of them just tried to perform this elixir-making instantly without wasting much time. But they never tried to teach the

⁵ According to Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, before attaining Nirvana practice severe austerities and went with no food or eating feces. - From Excerpt from the forthcoming book *India's Sages Source Book: Hindus, Buddhists, Jainas, Tantrics, Sants, Sikhs and Sufis*, by Timothy Conway, © Copyright 2009 http://www.enlightened-spirituality.org/Buddha_and_Buddhism.html

protagonists (who were already possessed with the *xiancai* 仙才) the ways of attaining immortality and enlightenment, which would automatically lead them towards the learning of the heavenly magical art. Thereafter we find that at the end of the stories the master loses their ability to create magic. In one of the stories like “Xiao Dongxuan” the Master and the pupil both started rigorous self-cultivation to attain Dao. In “Du Zichun”, Du Zichun was determined to practice Dao and went back to the Hua Mountain, but he did not find the Master. In the other stories, the master and the pupil lose each other’s trace after the failed attempt. Thus the way to attain Dao remained incomplete in all the Chinese stories. The test is a way to examine their indifference towards worldly pleasures. It is the inability of the protagonists to realize the profound significance of the test, which ultimately led towards the failure.

The commentator of the *Kathasaritsagara* also discussed the other versions of stories with similar themes from around the world. He said “Lane heard a similar tale in Cairo” (Somedeva VII:245). This tale is about a Sultan, who laughed at the story of the Ascension of Muhammed but finally the Sultan was converted to the Faith. This story was an abbreviated account of the widely circulated tale which found its way into the *Forty Vazirs*. The story of the first Vazir from the Gibb's translation of the *Forty Vazirs* somewhat depicts a similar story (Gibb 16). According to this story the King of Egypt was discussing the details of the Ascension in the council. The doctors of the law said that the Most Noble Apostle made the Ascension, and God Most High showed him the Seven Heavens, the Eight Paradises, and the Seven Hells, and spoke with him ninety thousand words. When he returned to his place he found his bed still warm and the water had not wholly run out of the container. So he straightway raised the container from the ground. The King of Egypt did not believe them. This news of

his disbelief reached Sheykh Shihab-ud-Din. So he reached at the King's place and through the power of illusion, by merely opening and shutting the windows, he displayed an army, the city in flames, the Nile overflowing its banks and a garden that looked like Paradise. The Sheykh arranged a tub filled with water and asked the king to plunge once into this water, then come out and sit down. When the king did it he was made to experience the sufferings of an illusory world. And then one day he went into the water and plunged in it, and when he put his head out he saw himself in his own palace, and the sheykh was sitting looking at him (Gibb 22). At this point of the story, Gibb makes an interesting comment. He states that the trick of making one imagine that he has in a few seconds experienced adventures that seem to have lasted over a long period appears to have been a favourite theme with the *dervishes*. Several instances of it had occurred in the tales of "Ali'Aziz" that he has published under the title of *The Story of Jewad* (Gibb 22). So we see that the basic features of this kind of stories are the significance of the breaking of the silence, the time span and the images of water and fire. As Reed (Reed 212) says, water is the locus for the entrance into the illusory experience, and heavenly fire is the sign that the experiment in silence has failed. In all the Chinese stories water is used to enter and exit the illusory realm. In the Indian story fire is mentioned but it seemed as cool as snow. All these stories mention the meeting of two men: the one who is seeking help and the other is the helper. This trait can also be termed as the search for *xiancai* by the teacher or the Daoist Master. In the Indian tradition the same can be called the "deserving quality in an aspirant". The emphasis on the silence, the temptations and the effects of the seven emotions or parental love are significantly noticeable.

Illusion and Seven Emotions:

Several common Buddhist elements are scattered in all the Chinese and the Indian stories. This section of the chapter will discuss the concept of the “Illusion” as expressed through the Buddhist philosophy and will connect it with the idea of the Daoist idea of the world as an ‘illusion’. The Buddhist school that proposed the idea that the phenomenal world had only a qualified reality and that all beings are under the constant illusion of perceiving things but in reality there is only emptiness, was the Madhyamaka (Doctrine of the Middle Position) school. The founder, Nagarjuna (1st to 2nd century A.D.) taught that the Emptiness or Void (*Sunyata*) is all that is permanent, absolute truth and absolute being. The phenomenal world is composed of a series of transitory events and has qualified reality for practical purposes. This is comparable to Nirvana and the Body of Essence of the Buddha (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 158). According to the Vijnavada School the whole universe exists only in the mind of the perceiver. The fact of illusion was considered an evidence to show that all normal human experience was ultimately illusory and unreal and it could be experienced by meditation. The Madhyamikas say that the ultimate emptiness is eternal, omnipresent, all-encompassing and there is no difference between the great void and the phenomenal world. From this logic it can be deduced that all beings are already participating in the Emptiness, the realization of which would be Nirvana. So according to this philosophy, all beings have the potential to become Buddha if only they would realize it. The Chinese Buddhists found especially this aspect of Madhyamaka philosophy hospitable. This idea was merged with the doctrine of the Dao and this new form had immense influence in the development of the special forms of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism.

The story, recorded by Xuanzang has the man who was under the spell of *Mara*⁶ and could not sever his emotional bonding with his family. In the *Puranic* story Narada is overpowered with *maya* and he was also unable to overcome it. The main point of the *Puranic* story is the illusory yet compelling nature of reality. Someone existing in the universe of time is essentially subjected to the manifestation of the affect of *maya*, the illusory nature of life. The Tang stories, such as “Du Zichun,” “Wei Zidong,” “Xiao Dongxuan,” “Hu Gong” and “Gu Xuanji” echo the *Puranic* story in its emphasis on time and the illusory nature of the reality and they are focusing on someone who seeks supernatural powers and immortality. In description of the vision in the “Lieshi Chi” is certainly similar to the vision that Du Zichun, Wei Zidong, Zhong Wuwei or Chandrasvamin faced.

In the test of illusion the protagonist was expected to sever seven kinds of emotions. While talking about the illusory nature of the human experiences we also have to touch upon the Buddhist perception of human emotions and its connection to the illusory nature of the world. Joy is one of the cardinal virtues of Buddhism. The Bodhisattva has to train his mind in such a way that even in the most painful and unhappy situations it is still full of calm inner joy. The following passage is from *die Compendium of Doctrine*. The first paragraph is the work of the author, Shantideva, while the second is quoted from a lost sutra, the “Meeting of Father and Son” (*Pitrputrasamagama*), from the *Siksamuccaya*, 181f. It goes like this,

... So the Bodhisattva ... is happy even when subjected to the tortures of hell... When he is being beaten with canes or whips, when he is thrown into prison, he still feels happy ... For ... this was the resolve of the Great Being, the Bodhisattva: "May those who feed me win the joy of tranquility and peace,

⁶ A term that means “demons” and is also a name for the powerful deity of death and desire.

with those who protect me, honor me, respect me, and revere me. And those who revile me, afflict me, beat me, cut me in pieces with their swords, or take my life may they all obtain the joy of complete enlightenment, may they be awakened to perfect and sublime enlightenment." With such thoughts and actions and resolves he cultivates...and develops the consciousness of joy in his relations with all beings, and so he acquires a contemplative spirit filled with joy in all things ... and becomes imperturbable not to be shaken by all the deeds of *Mara*. (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 168)

This is exactly what the protagonists of the Chinese stories who sit for the test of perseverance in order to attain Immortality, are expected to perform. The hellish tortures afflicted them mercilessly, had beaten them up cruelly, had cut them into pieces with swords but still they remained silent remembering the instruction of the Daoist master. But in the end the protagonist fails to pass the test. In all the stories, similar incidents happen. The protagonists could overcome many illusory hurdles by keeping in mind the instruction of the Master. But finally their paternal sentiment of affection makes them oblivious to the illusory nature of their experience and they broke their silence, thus ruining their way to the attainment of immortality. The opportunity of attaining immortality was lost not only for the protagonist but also for the teacher. They protagonists could not finally sever all their emotions. Severing of emotions is not an overnight procedure. It needs training of Dao or Buddhism. It needs awakening of the realization that all the human experiences are ultimately illusory. According to the Daoist doctrines, in order to acquire the realization one needs self-cultivation (*xiuxing* 修行) and according to the Buddhist doctrine this self-awakening could be experienced by meditation (as described in the page 5 of this chapter). As *Pitrputrasamagama*, from the *Siksamuccaya*, 181f.says,

Indeed nothing is difficult after practice... Consciousness of sorrow and joy comes by habit; so, if whenever sorrow arises we make a habit of associating with it a feeling of joy, consciousness of joy will indeed arise. The fruit of this is a contemplative spirit full of joy in all things. (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 168)

Therefore, the mission of attaining immortality would have only been possible if the protagonists would have realized the illusory nature of all these worldly experiences from within by practicing self-cultivation and through meditation.

The *Sikṣasamuccaya* from the *Dharmasangiti Sutra*, professes the belief in the *Sunyavada*, the doctrine of Emptiness. This doctrine encourages a stoical and noble equanimity. According to this doctrine,

He who maintains the doctrine of Emptiness is not allured by the things of the world, because they have no basis. He is not excited by gain or dejected by loss... Pleasure does not please him, pain does not trouble him. He who is not allured by the things of the world knows Emptiness. (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 178)

The *Ratnamegha Sutra*, *Sikṣasamuccaya*, p. 121-22 says that all phenomena originate in the mind, and when the mind is completely aware then all the phenomena everywhere can be considered to be fully known. If he fails to do so then he has not yet reached the state of a Bodhisattva. So we can notice that in the Indian and Chinese aesthetics, the literary content and the human emotions are closely related. In the Chinese Buddhist and Confucian traditions to be able to sever the seven kinds of emotions (*Qiqing*-七情) from human life was one of the professed intentions of such tests. In the “Liyun” 禮運 of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 《禮記》)⁷ it is said,

⁷ For the original Chinese text I have consulted the online text from the website *Chinese Text Project* (<<http://ctext.org/zh>>). For *Liji* 《禮記》 I have consulted this link -<<http://ctext.org/liji>>. For the translation of *Liji* 《禮記》 by James Legge, I have consulted *Internet Sacred Texts Archive* (<<http://www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm>>). For the Part-I, I have consulted <[146](http://www.sacred-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

何謂人情？喜怒哀懼愛惡欲七者，弗學而能。(禮記 9:18)

What are the feelings of men? They are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, and liking. (Legge, *Li Ki*, Book 1:VII. Sec. 2:19)

Passages taken from the 《禮運 - Li Yun》 of 《禮記 - Liji》 written in the Warring States (475 BC - 221 BC) states about the “Seven Emotions” elaborately:

故聖人所以治人七情，修十義，講信修睦，尚辭讓，去爭奪，舍禮何以治之？(禮記 9:18)

Hence, when a sage (ruler) would regulate the seven feelings of men, cultivate the ten virtues that are right; promote truthfulness of speech, and the maintenance of harmony; show his value for kindly consideration and complaisant courtesy; and put away quarrelling and plundering, if he neglect the rules of propriety, how shall he succeed? (Legge, *Li Ki* 1:VII:2:19)

This passage refers to the controlling of the “Seven Emotions” or *Qiqing* 七情. Even in the 5th century text on the Chinese aesthetics, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wenxin Diaolong* 《文心雕龍》) we find mention of the seven emotions where its influence on the literary creation is mentioned. In this text we find that the emotions are indicated as being unnatural to human beings. They are considered to be an aberration of nature in the Chinese Confucian and Daoist tradition. In the Daoist tradition also *Wu Xing* 五行 or the Five Elements theory, represents emotions of anger, happiness, love, grief and fear. Regulating the emotions is one of the ways to attain the Dao. Again in the Buddhist *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* (《大智度論》 *Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom*) (Buswell and Lopez 691) it is said that the

[texts.com/cfu/lik1/index.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/lik1/index.htm)> and for Part-II, I have consulted <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/lik2/index.htm>>.

qiqing 七情- joy (喜 *xǐ*), anger (怒 *nù*), anxiety (憂 *yōu*), fear (懼 *jù*), love (愛 *ài*), hatred (惡 *e*), desire (欲 *yù*) are directed to the *Liuyu* 六欲 Six Desires of physical body (色欲 *se*), appearance (形貌欲 *xingmao*), comportment (威儀欲 *weiyi*), voice (言語音聲欲 *Yanyuyinsheng*), delicateness or smoothness (細滑欲 *xihua*), physical features (人相欲 *renxiang*). Similarly in Hinduism *shadaripu* or the six emotional enemies determine the destiny of a soul. These six emotions are lust (*kama*), greed (*lobha*), anger (*krodha*), arrogance (*mada*), attachment (*moha*), jealousy (*matsarya*). In all the traditions regulating or controlling these emotions are important if one wants to attain the enlightenment or awakening or immortality. All these emotions are thought to bind the soul to the process of birth and death and keep it in the confines of *maya* or illusion, the material world. The heroes in the stories who protected the cauldron of elixir, always failed to sever these emotions and desires. Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism talked about human emotions and this is the point the confluence between them happened. Therefore the seven human emotions *Qiqing* became an essential part of the supernatural strange stories.

The idea of illusion or the illusory nature of human emotions can also be associated with the Hindu idea of the ‘*maya*’ in the Indian tradition. The illusion or the ‘*maya*’ is an integrated part of Hindu philosophy. The word ‘*maya*’ also is equivalent to the Buddhist term ‘*Mara*’ - the Evil One in Buddhism. *Mara* signifies temptation and sensuality which distract the aspirants who want to attain immortality or enlightenment from the path to liberation and trapping them in the cycle of endless birth and death. The protagonists of the stories also face similar occasions which impede their journey towards enlightenment. This situation can be compared to Buddha’s renouncement of the worldly pleasures. *Mara* appeared and tempted him by

offering a universal monarchy in seven days if he changes his mind. Siddhattha Gautama disregarded the temptation and continued his journey by saying that he is free from all the snares, both celestial and human. It was possible for him because he realized the emptiness and illusory nature of the worldly pleasures and emotional ties from within. So *Mara*'s attempts failed.

This description of *Mara* trying to tempt Buddha finds its Chinese analogous versions in the stories of *Tai ping Guangji*. The protagonists in the stories also face similar situations and try to overcome them by keeping the injunction of their teachers in the mind. The protagonists of the stories go through several tests in which they experience numerous enticing, or fearful incidents. This phenomenon is comparable to the situation when *Mara* came to entice Buddha to stop him from continuing his struggles for enlightenment and tempted and encouraged him to die before attaining Nirvana. Hereby we will narrate the story of Goutama and will see how these Buddhist elements are merged with the Chinese elements by putting on the garb of Daoist expressions.

The origin of the legend of *Mara* is first noticeable in the *Padhana Sutta* (Ireland para.5)⁸. The Pali word *Mara* means 'death' or 'bringing death'. His ten-fold army is Lust, Aversion, Hunger, Thirst, Craving, Sloth and Torpor, Cowardice, Doubt, Hypocrisy and Stupidity, False Glory and Conceit. The Buddhavamsa Commentary and *Nidanakatha* of the *Jataka* commentary, particularly in the Singhalese versions (Malalasekera 614), unfold a very lively and detailed account of the *Mara*'s visit to the Buddha just before his Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. *Mara* summoned all his forces to attack Shakyamuni. The forces of *Mara* extended twelve leagues in front

⁸ For the *Padhana Sutta* I have consulted the website *Access to Insight: Readings in Theravada Buddhism* <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/index.html>. It includes the translation of *Padhana Sutta: The Great Struggle* translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland. Here is the link - <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.3.02.irel.html>

and back; and nine leagues on right and left. *Mara* himself with thousand arms riding on his elephant Girimekhala, attacked Goutama Buddha. His followers armed with deadly weapons and assuming various frightening forms joined him in his attack. The *Devas*, *Nagas*, and others who had gathered round Goutama Buddha to pay him homage and sing his praises then fled at the sight of the frightening army of *Mara*. This description of a huge army reminds us of similar situation during the test of illusion in the story “Du Zichun”. Du Zichun also, like Buddha defeated the army’s all endeavours to tempt him. A similar description of the King’s attendant or the army attacking the protagonist can also be found in the stories like “Gu Xuanji” and “Xiao Dongxuan”.

Again in the 449 verse of the *Marasamyutta* from the *Samyutta Nikaya*, the *Mara* wishing to arouse fear, trepidation and terror in the Blessed One, took the shape of a giant king elephant and approached the Blessed One. But Buddha recognized him and says,

You have wandered on through the long course/
Creating beautiful and hideous shapes. /
Enough, Evil One, with that trick of yours :/
You’re defeated, End-maker! (Bodhi 196)

In “Du Zichun”, “Hu Gong” and “Xiao Dongxuan”, we can see similar situation where ferocious beasts like tigers appear in order to terrorize the protagonist.

In a flash there appeared tigers and wolves, and a dozen kinds of other wild, ferocious beasts, baying and screeching, running and leaping. They bared their teeth and opened their jaws, but Wu Wei did not move. (Kao 317)

But Du Zichun, Chang Fang or Zhong Wuwei only remembered the words of their Master about the illusory nature of what they will see. So they understood the vision as illusion and remained silent. Even if the tigers, grinding their teeth wanted to chew

on them, they remained calm and composed. Thereafter they were able to overcome the sentiment of trepidation and succeeded in overcoming this hurdle. Eventually they disappeared just like the way it happened with Buddha.

Mara also manifested himself in the form of a giant king serpent and approached Buddha. Its tongue darting out from its mouth, like flashes of lightening emitted when the sky thunders; the sound of its breathing in and out, like the sound of a smith's bellows filling with air. Then *Mara* also had approached Buddha in the form of sleep, confusion, delight, with six bases of contact. *Mara* tries to break the equanimity of the Blessed One by alluring him into various worldly powers - snares of *Mara*. The reference to the serpents can be found in the stories like "Du Zichun", "Wei Zidong, and "Hu Gong". In all these stories a huge serpent appears to terrify the protagonists. But they remembered the instruction by the Master and understood the illusory nature of the vision. This way such fears could not intimidate the protagonists and break their equanimity by making them fall into the snares of worldly emotions.

In all these stories the emphasis on keeping the silence and going through several trials to break the silence had been always stressed. Actually this is a trial to break the composure and the silence of the protagonist in order to involve him in the act of earthly pleasures and affairs. The breaking of silence immediately leads to a plunge into the pool of earthly pleasures and pain. According to Buddhist philosophy, all the earthly pleasures lead to immense suffering in the afterlife and stop the soul from achieving heaven. In all these stories the similarity in the phases of the trial also are significantly noticeable. In the *Jatakas* too similar references can be seen. In the 538 number Buddhist *Jataka* titled *Mukapangu Jataka* (Ghose Vol.6) story we have already mentioned the tests he was put to. In all the stories the trial mostly starts with

a person coming up to the protagonist and asking him about his identity and other details. In the *Mukapangu Jataka*, Prince Temiya Kumar's grieving parents said that they knew it surely that the prince is not deaf, dumb or crippled and requested Temiya Kumar to speak up. But thinking of the karma and hell, he remained silent. In the story "Lieshi Chi" 《烈士池》, the protagonist's master came and with consolatory words he addressed the protagonist. He was overcome with gratitude, but did not speak up. The Chinese adaptations of this theme also included this specific feature of maintaining the composure and silence. In "Du Zichun" the Military General asked him several questions and when he did not answer the General and his cavalry threatened him with his life. In the story "Xiao Dongxuan" two Daoist priests asked Zhong Wuwei several questions saying that the God had sent us to ask you, do you want to attain the Dao?" Zhong Wuwei did not reply. But in a moment a group of Immortals came to him. Their names were Wang Qiao, An Qi etc. They told Zhong Wuwei,

Just now our lord sent two of his servants to demand that you explain what you are doing. Why did you not reply? (Kao 317)

Zhong Wuwei still remained silent. In the story "Wei Zidong", nothing like this appears initially. But at the end of the trial a Daoist priest came to deceive him and successfully convinced him that he is the master of the Daoist Priest who was concocting the elixir inside the cave. In the story "Gu Xuanji" 《顧玄績》 from the *Bianwu* 《貶誤》 or the "Deadly Mistake" from the sequel of *Youyang Zazu* (《酉陽雜俎》) volume four, a cavalry appeared and scolding him asked the protagonist to move away. But he did not move. In a short while someone like a king arrived. His guard of honor looked extremely vigorous. He asked "Why aren't you moving away?" He asked his attendants to slay him. But even then he remained still and did not speak

up. Such scene does not appear in the story “Hu Gong” though, but the control over the emotions and silence was constantly emphasized. In the Indian story from the *Kathasaritsagara* similar theme was described. But in this Indian tradition influenced mostly by the Hindu myth of Narada and Vishnu, the emphasis on silence was not emphasized. But keeping the composure of mind was emphasized. The overwhelming emotions were stressed. So while Chandrasvamin’s parents tried to stop him with heartrending words, for a while overcoming with grief he became indecisive. Therefore the spell was lost because of his indecisiveness.

A similar event happened in the story “Gu Xuanji” taken from the *Bianwu* 《貶誤》 or the “Deadly Mistake” from the sequel of *Youyang Zazu* (《酉陽雜俎》) volume four. Here the protagonist had three children. One day his wife was in tears and told him,

Suddenly one day his wife was in tears and asked him, “O noble lord, since you don’t speak at all, then what is the use of having sons and daughters.” Thereupon one after another she killed all her sons and daughters. (Appendix I:268)

This made him choke with tears and the spell was broken. In “Wei Zidong” the Daoist Master talked about the intrusion of a goblin which made his sincere efforts to refine the elixir of immortality fail. The goblin would come inside the cave to disturb him. It would smash the cauldron of elixir and throw it away. This description of the Daoist Master contains similarity with the events described in the Hindu *Puranic* stories. In the *Brahma Purana*, the *Bamana Purana* and in few others several such occasions are described in which the demons intentionally desecrate the sacred place of *yagna* or worship. In the Chinese story “Wei Zidong”, the Daoist Master told him that he was looking for a brave and fiery hero who would protect the place holding a sword while

he prepares the elixir. He also promised to share the elixir with him if it could be prepared successfully. When Wei Zidong agreed, the Master asked him to stand in front of the cave on the Peak of Taibai Mountain in the morning at the fifth hour. He asked him to brandish the sword when he sees a monster coming and then also instructed him to attack the monster and kill him. This was to destroy the illusion that would appear before him. Then the Master started refining the elixir inside the cave while Zidong was protecting the cave. The events that happened after this, remind us of the severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence during meditation that the sages in the *puranic* stories and Gautama Buddha before attaining Nirvana performed. As it is described in the *puranic* stories, just before reaching the ultimate state of attaining the wish, the meditation (*tapasya*) is broken by certain illusory visions or temptations. Those visions are a different kind of temptations including beguiling dancing by *apsaras* sent by the King of Gods. We will discuss this elaborately in the following sections.

While we are discussing the philosophy behind the concept of ‘illusion’ and ‘reality’ as it is expressed in several Buddhist sutras, it becomes necessary to look at all the traits that are essentially Buddhist or Daoist. Alongside discussing the philosophy of the “Illusion and Reality”, this section will also discuss one of the major traits named *xiancai* found mostly in the Chinese stories. This concept is equivalent to the concept of the “deserving quality in an aspirant” expressed in the Indian stories from the *Kathasaritsagara*.

The Mahayana scriptures are considered to be the representative of the final doctrines of the Buddha. It was revealed only to his spiritually advanced followers. Mahayana

Buddhism has its pantheon of heavenly Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and its idealistic metaphysics (Bary and Bloom, *Chinese Tradition* 418). In this section the concept of the Bodhisattva will be discussed and we can see that this same idea was adapted in Chinese Buddhism. In Buddhism, Buddha in meditation, could far transcend the transient heavens of Hindu gods and enter the world of formlessness, and pass to the Nirvana itself. The Buddha is omniscient. So the formula of the "Three Jewels" - "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Doctrine, I take refuge in the Order" (Bary *Indian Tradition* 155) became the Buddhist expression of faith at the earliest and was used widely by Buddhist followers. This theistic tendency came with the development of the concept of the Bodhisattva. Bodhisattva literally means "Being of Wisdom". It was used in the sense of a previous incarnation of the Buddha. Stories of the Bodhisattva, known as Birth Stories (*Jataka*) are often adapted from popular legends and fables. These stories depict Bodhisattva's many lives before his final birth as Siddhartha Gautama. The stories reveal his great actions of compassion. According to Buddhist teachings, there are three types of perfected beings. The first category includes the Buddha, who perceived the truth for himself and taught it to others. Then comes *Pratyeka-buddhas* or the "Private Buddhas". They perceived the truth but kept it to themselves and did not teach it. Then comes the *Arhants* or the "Worthies" or the "perfect being" (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 156). This particular group of followers would learn the truth from others but realize it completely for themselves. According to earlier Buddhist schools the earnest believer should aspire to become an Arhant, a perfected being for whom there was no rebirth, who already enjoyed Nirvana, and who would finally enter that state after death, all vestiges of his personality dissolved (Bary and Bloom, *Chinese Tradition* 419). The road to Nirvana is hard and can only be achieved by journeying through many lives of virtue and self-

sacrifice. A Bodhisattva, after achieving such exalted compassion and altruism, could render help to other striving beings and would not strive for Nirvana. But according to the passages of Mahayana scriptures, Bodhisattva will do self-sacrifice for the welfare of all living things (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 156).

In the stories discussed here we can see that all the protagonists of the Chinese stories were special talents who the masters have searched for over the years. They are required to possess *xiancai* or the potential to become an immortal and then only they become the assistant of the master in order to prepare the elixir of immortality. To be able to ascend to the level of an immortal can be related to the attainment of nirvana by surpassing all kinds of emotional attachments. In the Mahayanist cosmology the heavenly Buddha who was primarily concerned with our world was Amitabha ("Immeasurable Radiance"), who dwelt in *Sukhavati*, "the Happy Land" the heaven of the West. The earthly Gautama Buddha and the compassionate Bodhisattva, Avalokiteshvara ("the Lord Who Looks Down") were associated with him (Bary and Bloom *Chinese Tradition* 420).

The *xiancai* whom the Daoist Masters in the stories were looking for, are equivalent to the Bodhisattvas, who are ready for a self-sacrifice for their master. In the stories having the motif of the "Illusion and Reality", the Daoist priests were struggling in the pursuit of attaining Immortality and for that they had to find someone having *xiancai*. In the stories discussed here the protagonist is normally a common man who has the potential of becoming a Buddha (or to attain Nirvana or Immortality). The Daoist master searches for a person who has the potential to assist him and to sit for the test of preparing the elixir. Primarily all the protagonists had proved their physical

ability and mental strength which had qualified them as a potential candidate to sit for the test of illusion and reality. Attaining immortality and attaining the *Sukhavati* is equivalent. The Buddhist idea of the world as illusion and attaining the nirvana or achieving the land of perpetual happiness (*Sukhavati*) is expressed through Daoist terms. This made the stories more intelligible, palatable and contextual to the Chinese audience. The readers, after reading the story, keep on wondering how an ordinary person has been selected by the Daoist master as his assistance. The answer is perhaps hidden in this merging of the two traditions of Daoist philosophy and Buddhist Madhyamaka philosophy.

In all the Chinese stories it is always mentioned by the Daoist priest that the person who is going to appear in the trial should possess *xiancai* 仙才 or supernatural talent. In the Buddhist *Jatakas* this talent mostly refers to the ability that only a Bodhisattva possesses. In the Indian stories this talent mostly refers to the deserving quality of the protagonist – whether he deserves to be taught the science or not. And that deserving quality depends on the person's behavioural traits. For example, whether he follows the instruction of his master or not, in a given situation whether he becomes indecisive or not. The selection of the assistant or the disciple is very important in Indian stories and the teacher and the disciple both are equally responsible. However, in order to understand this we will first talk about the 538 number *Mukapangu Jataka* story that contains a theme similar to the Chinese and Indian stories. As we know from the Buddhist philosophy regarding Bodhisattva, Bodhisattva or the "Being of Wisdom" qualifies for Nirvana. The Bodhisattva has to train his mind in such a way that even in the most painful and unhappy situations it is still full of calm inner joy.

So the Bodhisattva is resolved to be happy even when subjected to the atrocious torments of hell. He also clarifies the purpose of such calmness and tranquility:

And those who revile me, afflict me, beat me, cut me in pieces with their swords, or take my life may they all obtain the joy of complete enlightenment, may they be awakened to perfect and sublime enlightenment.
(Bary, *Indian Tradition* 171)

Awakening to the perfect enlightenment for Bodhisattva himself and for others is the professed intention of this doctrine. This contemplative spirit is imperturbable not to be shaken by all the deeds of *Mara*. Keeping his mind under control and not to be deluded by the materialistic pleasures of the world is what Bodhisattva does. So similarly in this story a Bodhisattva was sent to the earth to be born as the prince Temiya. In this story it was said that Shakra had chosen Bodhisattva to be born in the earth. This Bodhisattva previously had ruled for twenty years and then after his death he was again born in the *utsad* hell (Ghose 6:1). For thousands of years he was tormented in the hell and was reborn again. Thus passing through the phases of life and death he was now ready to set out for the higher *devaloka*. There are six *devalokas*. *Chaturmaharajik* is the lowest one. After that it is *Yaam*, then *Tushit*, then *Nirmaanrati* and then comes *Paranirmitabashabarti* (Ghose 6:1). This time Bodhisattva had wished to ascend to the *Yaamdevaloka*. Shakra told him that if he goes back to the earth then he will get a chance to attain *Paramita* or ‘perfection’ or ‘completeness’. As it is depicted in Buddhism, a Bodhisattva, after achieving exalted compassion and altruism, is able to render help to other striving beings and will not strive for Nirvana. Thereafter the prince Temiya was being nurtured by the king and the queens. When he was one month old, he was playing in the king’s lap. The king punished four thieves which expressed his cruelty. This scared the prince and he was afraid of his father’s *karma*. When the prince was sleeping under the white umbrella

symbolizing kingship, he woke up suddenly and saw great wealth around him and became extremely afraid. He was a god-fearing person by nature and eventually he remembered his earlier births and his previous life in the *devaloka*. He remembered his previous births as kings and his days in Hell. Thereafter he wanted to escape all this materialistic grandeur. Then he was instructed by the household goddess of the palace that he should not be afraid. He should only act as if he is crippled, lame, as if he is deaf and dumb. He should remain silent and he should not show his intelligence by any means. So Temiya Kumar remained silent and did not even cry. He did not cry, did not sleep, did not move his limbs and acted as if he cannot hear anything. Seeing him this way, suspecting his abnormality, his mother or wet nurse tried to lure him many ways. They tried to lure him by depriving him of delicious food, sweet fruits and toys but he was only thinking of the hell. They kept Temiya Kumar in a room made of palm leaves and set fire to it. When the others had all run away, he had stayed calm – *nirodhsamapanna* which means he stayed inactive in body, mind and consciousness. He stayed in a meditative state (Ghose 6:4). Thereafter an elephant was unleashed on him. Even then he stayed calm. Eventually as he grew up, his relatives tried many other tricks to make him speak out and move. They let a snake loose on him, but he remained unaffected thinking of hell. They tried to entertain him with various comic acts, but the fear of hell kept him silent. He was scared by a man with sword, but that also did not affect him. They also tried to test if the boy is deaf and abruptly blew conch in his ears. They also tried to shock him with a sudden flash of light, but nothing could elicit any response from him. Then they resorted to even more cruel tests like smearing molasses on him and letting him be stung by flies. He was kept in the excreta and he was kept dirty for days, but Temiya Kumar stayed motionless thinking of the *guthanaraka*. Fire was kept under his bed and his skin was

getting burnt but he thought of *abichinaraka* (Ghose 6:5) and remained calm. Seeing all these, his grieved parents said that they knew it surely that the prince is not deaf, dumb or crippled and requested Temiya Kumar to speak up. When the prince reached his puberty, they tried to lure him with beautiful women but Temiya Kumar held his breath and acted like a corpse. Seeing all these, the King now was impatient and the dishonest soothsayers told him that the prince is an ominous person and should be banished from the kingdom and killed. Seeing his mother crying bitterly for once he thought of speaking out. But then he resisted thinking of his sixteen years' strife to avoid *karma* and hell. So when he was taken to the burning *ghat* and when his death was almost ensured, then Temiya Kumar moved his limbs and wished for embellishment and dressing. The heavenly king Shakra was aware of the reason behind his wish and understood that Temiya Kumar had achieved what he wished for. So as per Shakra's wish, Visvakarma embellished Temiya Kumar with ten thousand heavenly clothes and divine and human ornaments. He appeared like Shakra. Eventually Temiya Kumar would inspire his parents to adopt a monastic life of asceticism. Eventually the entire kingdom would adopt it. So everyone attained *brahmaloka*.

In this story Mahasattva or Temiya Kumar is a Bodhisattva who possessed all the required qualities and had gone through several trials successfully that tested his perseverance. He did not only achieve *nirvana* but also helped others to achieve so. In all the Chinese stories it is always said by the Daoist priest that the person who is going to appear in the trial has *xiancai*. According to Daoist philosophy, this refers to a person with natural endowments and intelligence of turning himself into an Immortal by practicing Dao. This refers to the potential of superseding worldliness

(Chan, “Neo-Daoism”⁹). What is *xiancai* in the Daoist philosophy is similar to the ability of a Bodhisattva to attain nirvana in the Buddhist philosophy. So the protagonists have the ability of that of a Bodhisattva.

The story “Lieshi Chi” 《烈士池》 also describes a protagonist who was a spendthrift. In the Tang dynasty story “Du Zichun” the protagonist Du Zichun also was a spendthrift. The Daoist priest (*Laojun*) helped him thrice with abundant money. Eventually he was able to turn himself into an economical person. After this long strife when he finally could control his desire to spend money lavishly, then only he was considered to be ready for the trial. The flaw in his character could be rectified to some extent and the rectification process proved his ability and the strength of his character. Then only his *xiancai* was recognized completely. Similarly, in the story “Xiao Dongxuan” we can see that when the Daoist priest asked Xiao Dongxuan to find a like-minded person who will appear for the trial, he found Zhong Wuwei. Zhong Wuwei had the extraordinary power to resist physical pain. He could bear with the excruciating pain of a broken hand. In a similar way in the story “Wei Zidong” also depicts a similar theme in which the hero showed his physical and mental prowess and strength by killing two *Yakshas*. This heroic deed performed by him proved his eligibility for appearing in the test of perseverance with the old Daoist Master. Seeing his prowess and fearless ventures, this is where the Daoist master found him suitable for the task. He met Wei Zidong and said, “I have a sincere request and wish to speak openly to the Venerable One, May I?” (Kao 337). Here Wei Zidong revealed his philanthropic nature saying, “My entire life is spent in relieving people’s anxieties. Certainly you may speak.” (Kao 337). In this context we can again draw a

⁹ To consult this entry titled ‘Neo-Daoism’ by Alan Chan, I have followed the *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. I have followed this link to get access to this entry <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/neo-daoism/>>.

reference to the similarity between the nature of a Bodhisattva and the protagonist. In the story “Gu Xuanji” from the sequel of *Youyang Zazu* (《酉陽雜俎》) volume four, the protagonist had steady nerves and brave heart to face dangerous situation. This is why the alchemist Daoist Master Gu Xuanji had chosen him. Xuanzi said,

I will prepare the stone of alchemy in eight turns. I want someone to protect it and for that he has to stay silent for one night. All I require is this help only. I observed that your nerves are steady and you are a brave-heart. I pledge for your effort for a night. Moreover, when the elixir is ready, together we will ascend heaven. (Appendix I:267)

The chuanqi story “Xiao Dongxuan” 《萧洞玄》 from *Hedongji*¹⁰ 《河東記》 talks about a Daoist priest named Xiao Dongxuan (Kao 315). He was determined to prepare elixir. So he was searching for a right person, exactly like the Daoist priest who found Du Zichun as the proper talent to seek for immortality. Xiao Dongxuan was told the secret to success by a Daoist immortal who also had given him a book. The Daoist immortal also said,

This work contains complete instructions for concocting the pill of immortality. But you still must find another who is of the same mind as you, so that the inner and outer positions may complement each other in the concoction. Only then you can succeed. (Kao 315)

This secret to prepare the elixir was not a professed idea in “Du Zichun”. But here we found the reason, as in why a simple spendthrift like Du Zichun was chosen by the old man. Xiao Dongxuan also found Zhong Wuwei. They discussed Daoist doctrines, meticulously went through self-cultivation and planned to perform the final rituals. In all these stories the one person with a virtue would be eligible for the Daoist practice.

¹⁰In *Hedongji*, the time period for most of the stories encompasses a period of between 827–835AD.

Only that person can be recognized as Bodhisattva having that special quality. In the story named “Hu Gong”, Fang’s obedience to the Daoist master and his perseverance were the key virtue in him making him eligible to attain Immortality. In *Kathasaritsagara* Chandrasvamin was an avaricious person who was seeking for carnal pleasures but during the illusory test ultimately failed to control his emotions seeing his parents and ancestors. In this story he was chosen for the test, because he only insisted that the *Pashupata* ascetic should teach him the magic trick. Chandrasvamin was completely deluded by the illusions and could not stand firm forgetting even his own identity and became distraught by seeming to experience the loss of his family. Thus he failed and the ascetic lost his power and both of them left the place despondent. In this story the Vetala asked King Trivikramasena to resolve his doubt as to why the science was lost to both of them though the incantation was performed in the prescribed way. Then the king answered:

A man cannot obtain success, even by performing correctly a difficult ceremony, unless his mind is firm, and abides in spotless courage, unhesitating and pure from wavering. But in that business the mind of that spiritless young Brahman wavered, even when roused by his teacher, so his charm did not attain success, and his teacher lost his mastery over the charm, because he had bestowed it on an undeserving aspirant. (Somedeva Vol.7. 77)

These words sound like the immortal Daoist priest who had instructed Xiao Dongxuan. Here the Indian story focuses on the character traits of both the master and the disciple. In the Chinese stories the Daoist priests usually do not lose their power but the elixir of immortality (which is the hard-earned outcome of many years’ effort) is lost. In those stories the priests put all the blames on the feeble character of the protagonists. But actually they share the responsibility, the Master for choosing

someone not yet prepared for the test and the protagonist for not being able to realize the meaning of the instruction of the Master by heart. Both of them were unable to realize the profound ways of Dao and therefore failed to attain Immortality.

This is the basic concept of the Bodhisattva and the 'illusion and reality'. But since the protagonists in the story just followed the instructions of their teachers blindly without realizing the ultimate truth of the emptiness and illusion, they failed. They were not aware of the illusory nature of all beings and experiences. In every story it is repeatedly narrated that the protagonist's stream of thought was reminding the injunction of the master and thus he was resisting his urge to cry out. They could not use their *xiancai* or could not reach the state of Bodhisattva. Because according to the *Ratnamegha Sutra* of the *Sikhsasamuccaya*, the Bodhisattva, thoroughly examining the nature of things, dwells in ever-present mindfulness of the activity of the mind, and so he does not fall into the mind's power, but the mind comes under his control (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 180). Since the mind is under his control so all phenomena are under his control. A similar situation would be seen in the Indian *Kathasaritsagara* story. Here also Chandrasvamin will follow the instruction of the Pashupata ascetic and will plunge into the test of perseverance. But since he did not have any realization of the illusory nature of the world as *maya*, he failed in the test.

Temptation by Beautiful Women

In Buddhism the world is an illusory place. And therefore rebirth is also illusory. The desires of mankind are not real but just an empty dream. But still he desires and henceforth his illusory ego is reborn in a new but equally illusory body. Regarding

impending temptations that mankind faces, a dialogue between Buddha and his disciple, in the *Pitrputrasamagama*, of the *Sikhsasamuccaya*, has been made,

-The senses are as though illusions and their objects as dreams. For instance a sleeping man might dream that he had made love to a beautiful country girl, and he might remember her when he awoke. What do you think . . . does the beautiful girl he dreamed of really exist?"

-No, Lord.

-And would the man be wise to remember the girl of his dreams, or to believe that he had really made love to her?

-No, Lord, because she doesn't really exist at all, so how could he have made love to her though of course he might think he did under the influence of weakness or fatigue.

-In just the same way a foolish and ignorant man of the world sees pleasant forms and believes in their existence. Hence he is pleased, and so he feels passion and acts accordingly ... the karma that fell to his lot dwindles, and hence his previous actions form the object of the last thought of his mind as it disappears ... Then, just as the man on first waking from sleep thinks of the country girl about whom he dreamed, the first thought on rebirth arises from two causes the last thought of the previous life as its governing principle, and the actions of the previous life as its basis. (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 178-179)

In the Hindu scriptures also there are several evidences of one particular motif in which King Indra, the King of *devas* orders the heavenly *apsaras* to distract the sincere *Munis* and *Rishis* engaged in extreme ascetic practices and spoiling their *Tapasya* (meditation). For example, in chapter 178 of the *Brahma Purana* the story of "Pramlocha and Kandu Rishi" (Schreiner and Sohnen 286) narrates a story. In this story Kandu Rishi is seen praying so sincerely that Indra became terrified thinking that he might invade heaven and dethrone Indra. Therefore he sent an *apsara* called – Pramlocha. She with her lustrous gestures and charming manners could distract the

Kandu Muni and won his attention. Kandu Rishi and Pramlocha spent days and nights and thus almost sixteen hundred years passed by. But for Kandu *Muni* it was only a day. So one day in the evening he suddenly woke up to the reality that it was already evening and he had to worship god. Then Pramlocha confessed that thousands of years already passed by and it was time for her to leave. In this story we find two motifs that are existent in the Chinese stories too. The first motif refers to the creation of illusion and distracting the protagonist from attaining the desired enlightenment or immortality. The second one refers to the complex, non-linear nature of time. In this story the time frame is undetermined because inside the illusory world time is non-linear and Kandu Muni's one day is equal to the sixteen hundred years of the mortal world. In this story the heavenly world is merged into the human world bringing eternity and creating a different time layer for a while. A similar storyline can be found in the "Adi Parva" of the *Mahabharata*. This depicts the story of Menaka and Vishwamitra. She was sent by the King of God Indra, to spoil the severe penance undertaken by Vishwamitra. Indra was afraid of Vishwamitra's powers and considered him to be a threat to his throne. So he sent a beautiful celestial nymph named Menaka from heaven to earth to lure and distract Vishwamitra and spoil his penance. Menaka's beauty incited Vishwamitra's lust and he broke his austerity. Another similar thematic pattern can be found in a story from the *Brahma purana*. The chapter 86 of this book has this story about Yama and Ganika (Schreiner and Sohnen 150). In this story Yama, the lord of death, being upset, stopped his work and soon the world was overcrowded. Then a celestial lady named Ganika was sent by the heaven to distract him from his sad thoughtfulness. She allured the great Yama and brought back his sense of duty towards the world. Thus the stability in the world was restored.

These kind of dreamlike situations are created for the protagonists who appear in the test of perseverance during the making of elixir. Similar things would happen to the protagonist Du Zichun of the story “Du Zichun”. Like Du Zichun, Zidong also went through several illusory events. Among them one event reminds us of the *Puranic* stories in which Lord Mahadeva or Visvamitra’s meditations (*Dhyana*) were disrupted by the illusory appearance of the beautiful heavenly maiden who tempted the protagonists and evoked ‘kamabhava’ or erotic emotions in them. In similar ways, in the story of Wei Zidong, a good looking woman came in front of the cave and holding a bunch of lotus she walked around Zidong. But she could not overpower Zidong with the erotic emotions and Zidong struck her with the sword. But in the end, Zidong forgot the injunction of his master and could not overcome the emotion of being flattered by the demon who came in the disguise of a Daoist Master. This story also displays the temptations put before *puranic* sages by the *Maya* of Indra or before Buddha by *Mara*. It also shows the failure of a wish impossible to attain for an earthly being who is completely bound by several emotions.

In the story “Xiao Dongxuan” from *Hedongji* similar events can be observed. Xiao Dongxuan was looking for a talented person who can appear for the test of perseverance. Xiao Dongxuan’s eyes caught Zhong Wuwei accidentally revealing his ability to bear with extreme physical pain silently. When they engaged in the preparation of elixir, different kinds of temptations appeared before Zhong Wuwei. These temptations are similar to the ones depicted in the stories of “Du Zichun” and “Wei Zidong”. Eventually Zhong Wuwei could overcome most of the temptations like greed, desire, grief, fear. A passage in the story again reminds us of the description of the *puranic* stories:

Presently he saw before him a woman of about sixteen years old, her face of unsurpassed beauty, the tones of her voice alluring and soft, her gauze robes many-colored and brilliant; the musk exuding from her body could have made the earth tremble. She lingered for a long time, teasing and toying with Wu-wei. But he paid her no heed. (Kao 317)

A Similar passage also can be found in “Wei Zidong”:

After about the time it takes for a meal, there appeared a young woman of matchless beauty who held lily blossoms in her hands and approached with leisurely steps. Again Tzu-tung drew his sword against her ; she disappeared like a cloud of vapor. (Kao 338)

Hereby we can also remember the passages from the *Samyukta Nikaya* where the description of Mara trying to hinder Buddha’s enlightenment is mentioned. The *Mara* took beautiful, lustrous and hideous forms. *Mara* approached Buddha through eyes, ears and mind but he could not distract the Blessed One. His daughters were also employed to tempt the Buddha and they could take numerous forms having different age groups and charm and thus they distract people from attaining enlightenment. We can see that how the Buddhist images of *Mara* attacking Buddha has been adopted by the Chinese literati and is given a completely sinicized context. This was possible because Daoism and Buddhism found many common traits in each other and this helped Buddhist images to be conveyed through Daoist vocabulary and images.

Next, the protagonist was almost always tempted by a beautiful woman, be it his wife or the beloved. In the *Mukapangu Jataka* the king and the queens arranged many beautiful girls and asked them to entice the prince with their charm. But the prince remained unaffected. In the Indian story from *Kathasaritsagara* and also in the story

of Narada from *Bhagabata Purana* the protagonists remained completely engaged in various pursuits, enslaved by love for his son, devoted to his wife, with his parents and relations. These relationships stopped the protagonists from achieving what their actual pursuit for Immortality used to be. In the Chinese stories a similar situation was created. In the story “Lieshi Chi” 《烈士池》 the protagonist’s parents tried to stop him from entering the fire and thus he became indecisive and lost the chance to achieve the realm of perpetual happiness. In the story “Du Zichun”, his wife was brought before him by the cavalry general and was tortured ruthlessly and finally she was slain. He heard her wife’s pitiful cry requesting him to speak up, but he remained silent. Here is the passage which depicts the event,

Truly I am ugly and dim-witted. I am a disgrace to a noble person like you. But I am fortunate enough to be able to serve you. As your wife I have been serving you for more than ten years. Now I am captured by these honorable spirits. I cannot bear it anymore. I don’t dare to expect that you will crawl on your knees to beg for me. But just hoping for that one word from you that can save my life. Who in this world is devoid of feelings? Gentleman, you are restraining yourself just in order to avoid uttering a sound. (Chattopadhyay and Chanda 38)

Thus his wife’s tears started falling like rain. She was cursing and scolding. But Du Zichun paid no attention all along. That warrior general said, “Can’t I have cruel ways to deal with your wife?” Having said so, he ordered to bring a *cuodui* 銼確, a device especially manufactured for chopping off her limbs. Starting from her leg they filed her body *cun*¹¹ by *cun*. His wife screamed and cried even more desperately. But Du Zichun did not even take a look at her.

¹¹ 寸-cun -One tenth of a Chinese foot which is one-third of a meter.

Du Zichun witnessed the cruelty happening to his wife. But he restrained himself from uttering a sound, thinking that this all might be an illusion. In “Xiao Dongxuan” also a beautiful young girl appeared before the protagonist and tried to entice him. But he remained calm. In “Wei Zidong”, a beautiful girl with lotus flowers in her hands came before Zidong and for a long time tried to tempt him. Zidong, being aware of the illusory nature of this event sustained his calmness and composure. In most stories the woman tries to tempt the protagonist but that does not work. Only the overwhelming affection for children breaks the spell. This is what we see in most of the stories. Apart from “Wei Zidong” and “Hu Gong” all the Chinese stories have the similar climax to break the spell. In the story “Wei Zidong” it was the eloquent convincing words of the Daoist priest that aroused illogical trust in him and made him forget about the illusory nature of the event. In the “Hu Gong” it was the protagonist’s inability to consume feces as directed by the Daoist priest. The disgust aroused in him made him forget about the illusory nature of the event occurring to him.

The appearance and the disappearance of the beautiful girl or the wife of the protagonist represent the illusory nature of the worldly temptations. The erotic sense or the feeling of love is illusory. The protagonists are like that sleeping man who dreamt of a pleasing time with an unreal girl. It is implied that the reference to one night is just a metaphor for the entire human life. Human life bound to the circle of death and birth is actually an illusion and the protagonists of the stories were supposed to realize it and needed to awaken to this ultimate truth. The existence of the beautiful woman was not only unreal for that one night, but for the entire human life. Since the protagonists were ignorant at heart, so they saw the world in its pleasant

forms and also believed in their existence. This way they were bound by the circle of death and life and could not attain immortality or enlightenment.

In the *Jataka* story and all the Chinese stories, beasts and snakes were seen to have attacked the protagonists and also hurt them often badly. But this could not take away their composure and they remained resolute. In the *Jataka* story Shakra, the king of heaven (king of judgment) made Mahasattva reincarnated in the world. In the Purana story, Vishnu made Narada reincarnated in the world as a woman. In the story from the *Kathasaritsagara* the illusory trial starts with the reincarnation of the protagonist Chandrasvamin. In the Chinese stories similar events are seen. In the story “Du Zichun”, the King of Hell punished him and made him visit hell. He also said that he deserves to be born as a woman on the earth. Similar event occurred in the stories “Xiao Dongxuan” and “Gu Xuanji” 《顧玄績》 from the *Sequel of Youyang Zazu* 《酉陽雜俎》 volume four. “Wei Zidong” and “Hu Gong” do not have such an illusory trial phase of reincarnation. But in “Hu Gong” apathy towards family members have been portrayed. In “Hu Gong” all the protagonist wanted was to attain Immortality and he did not hesitate to deceive his family members by lying to them. This was not a professed intention of the Daoist priest, but the protagonist had done it following the instructions of the Daoist priest. “Wei Zidong” does not contain any trial phase related to family members.

In all the stories, Indian or Chinese, the protagonist ultimately fails to attain Immortality or the Science of attaining perpetual happiness. This failure is caused because none of them could successfully sever the emotions attached to their family members. Even the sage Narada could not overcome the *maya* of worldly attachments. This was the professed intention of Vishnu who wanted to make Narada realize that none can overcome the illusory nature of this world and everyone has to plunge in this

pool of sorrow and happiness. The *Mukapangu Jataka* also portrays a very different aspect. It says that every human being has the ability to become Bodhisattva. A true Bodhisattva will only be able to overcome such emotions. So we find that Temiya Kumar, the Mahasattva was able to do so and almost could achieve Nirvana. Buddhism also shows that Buddha himself could overcome such temptations. Just before attaining *Nirvana* many such illusions appeared before him. But he remained calm and maintained his composure knowing that everything happening around him is nothing but illusion – the influence of *Mara*. The Chinese stories and the story from the *Kathasaritsagara* emphasize on the overpowering influence of worldly emotions. In the Chinese stories, Daoism stresses on the severing of the *qiqing* or seven emotions. In the Indian tradition the six kinds of carnal and emotional enemies (*Shadaripu*) are supposed to be eliminated from mind to reach a perfectly happy realm. Finally nobody can achieve the state of Immortality or the realm of perpetual happiness successfully, thus establishing the overwhelming power of human emotions and human inability to come out of its nexus.

Stretched time is another main focus of these stories. Unlike Xuanzang's record, the illusory 'stretched time' in the otherworldly experience is significant to the *Puranic* version and in the Tang dynasty strange stories. In all the stories be it Indian or Chinese, the protagonists go through the test and in that illusory state time takes a complex structure. The protagonists spend his whole life while living the illusory world. Apart from "Xiao Dongxuan" all the other Chinese stories have this trait of stretched time. Hereby I would like to discuss the philosophy behind the stretched time as expressed in the Hindu scriptures and the Buddhist scriptures. In the *Vishnu Purana* it is said,

I have already declared to you, oh sinless Brahman, that Time is a form of Vishnu: hear now how it is applied to measure the duration of Brahma, and of all other sentient beings, as well as of those which are unconscious, as the mountains, oceans, and the like. Seven Rishis, certain (secondary) divinities, Indra, Manu, and the kings his sons, are created and perish at one period; and the interval, called a *Manwantara*, is equal to seventy-one times the number of years contained in the four *Yugas*, with some additional years: this is the duration of the Manu, the (attendant) divinities, and the rest, which is equal to 852.000 divine years, or to 306.720.000 years of mortals, independent of the additional period Fourteen times this period constitutes a Brahma day, that is, a day of Brahma; the term (Brahma) being the derivative form. At the end of this day dissolution of the universe occurs, when all the three worlds, earth, and the regions of space, are consumed with fire. (Wilson 24-25)¹²

This myth shows the relativity of time. The experience of the time span is different in the mortal world and the world of *brahma*. Eternity is defined by the time and this difference in the time span in these worlds defines the immortality or the longevity as expressed in the stories discussed here. Time is representative of the nature of the worlds – one is mortal and decaying and the other is immortal where time is slowed down and so is decaying. The story of such relativity of time is found in the *Mahabharata* (400 BC). The King Kakudmi went to the Brahmaloaka in search of a groom for his beautiful daughter Revati. When they arrived, Brahma was listening to a musical performance and they waited patiently until the performance was over. Then hearing about the reason of his coming to Brahmaloaka Brahma laughed loudly and explained that time runs differently on different level of existence. During the short time they had waited in Brahmaloaka, 27 *catur-yugas* (a cycle of four *yugas*, totaling 108 *yugas*, or Ages of Man) had passed on earth. Therefore when Kakudmi

¹² In order to discuss *The Vishnu Purana* translated by Horace Hayman Wilson (1840) I have consulted the Internet Sacred Text Archive and in this particular context have followed this link - <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/vp/vp037.htm>

and Revati returned to earth they were shocked by the changes that had taken place and mankind was at a lower level of development. In the Harvard Oriental Series, Volume 1; Volume 28, in the chapter titled “Introduction to the Stories of Dhammapada Commentary” it is said that according to the Buddhist Sutras a hundred years of our existence is equal to one day and one night in the world of the thirty-three gods (1:40).

In the Chinese and Indian strange stories discussed here, the protagonists had to live in the illusory world for a specific time period. The time of his life in the illusory world is stretched. The protagonists are completely merged into it without much of their realization that it was all unreal and illusory. When the protagonist comes back to the real world, he finds that he only has spent a night or so. So as per the Hindu and Buddhist philosophy of the idea of time, the illusory world in which the protagonists lived, represent this real, earthly, mortal world. The omnipotence of the human emotions makes the illusive world appear real to the human being and the ability to discern between the reality and illusion is often lost. This motif also reveals the knowledge about the fragility of overpowering human emotions and the effort of getting rid of it are only hypothetically possible task for human beings in the mortal world. As Zeitlin says that Chinese strange tales depict “The crossing of fundamental boundaries in human experience” (Zeitlin 12) and mostly deal with themes of obsession, dislocation and dreams. The motif of ‘illusion and reality’ elaborates on the merging of the two worlds – human being and supernatural or mortal and immortal. It talks about the dislocation from the reality and the restoration of the mortal world order. The world that human beings are living in is completely sunk into the emotional bindings of several relations. And this is only like a bubble - a transient part

of a greater truth. Life is transient and full of illusions that hinder the Great Way of achieving Dao or the Nirvana¹³.

The testimonial quality in the Chinese stories is a significant element that is present in order to situate the plot historically. This will help the story to get acknowledged by the Chinese Confucian literati who only acknowledged literary pieces having some historical base. In the stories like “Wei Zidong”, and “Hu Gong” certain testimonial elements are mentioned. In the “Hu Gong”, Chang Fang changed a big piece of land into a small one and it is said to have been kept the same way even after a long time. In Wei Zidong it is mentioned that the heads of the *Yakshas* that Zidong killed are kept in the garden which people could see. But in some of the stories belonging to the motif of the “Illusion and Reality”, testimonial elements are not evidently visible. Though all the stories have been situated within a particular historical time period, but the testimonial quality is missing. For example, in the stories “Du Zichun”, “Gu Xuanji” and “Xiao Dongxuan” no such testimonial elements to prove the historical truth of the stories have been mentioned. These three stories exactly follow the pattern in which “Lieshi Chi” by Xuanzong was written. This also proves that they are essentially Buddhist and Daoist by nature and the origin lies somewhere else. This particular theme was still undergoing a transformation and amalgamation. Through this long way of transformation the Buddhist elements like its images, vocabulary, and ideas underwent a change in order to adapt itself to the Chinese soil. With the help of the Daoist terminology the Buddhist intellectual quest found its ground and established its position in the psyche of the readers.

The supernatural and miracle tales were popular literature and the spreading of the Hinayana Buddhism also brought with it many discussions about the supernatural and

¹³ To the Buddhists, life seems to be transcendental and it is like a dream, a bubble, a shadow, dew, lightning and anything that is transient.

the spirits. During the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries a number of works dealing with supernaturalism came out and the scholars now only allowed themselves to believe that the ways of the mortals were not necessarily those of the supernatural beings. Nonetheless the spirits existed for them, but in a different world in the form of illusory beings. The Daoist immortals acted as a bridge between these two worlds. Buddhism and Daoism made the existence of the other world possible and more real to the Chinese psyche. This other world did not only have the identity of the supernatural realm but it was also the place where the immortals live and someone who follows the great way of Dao, can aspire for this. The scary, bizarre other world was transformed into a place which can be called *Sukhavati*. Thus the philosophy of life as illusion and human beings as a part of the greater illusory realms entered China through Buddhism and flourished together with Daoism. Any kind of major transition in life is just an integrated part of the illusory nature of life. The change or the transition in life is the most evident and obvious fact. The next chapter will talk about the motif of the ‘transformation’ or ‘change’ and its thematic variations. In the next chapter we will see how this idea of transitoriness of life and its impermanence is reflected through the idea of reincarnation and transformation.

Chapter Five

Motif of ‘Change’ or ‘Transformation’

This chapter will discuss the idea of ‘transformation’ or ‘change’ through shape-shifting or ‘therianthropy’ as seen in the stories of Chinese and Indian literary tradition in medieval China and medieval India with respect to Buddhist stories. In order to conduct this study we need to understand the notion of ‘transformation’ or ‘change’ as expressed in these two traditions. We will also discuss the philosophy that might have worked as a significant force behind the development of this specific motif in China. Transformation sometimes can be related to the idea of reincarnation, sometimes it is merely an act of heavenly retribution and sometimes it is an act of succumbing to the heavenly will on the part of the protagonist. The motif of ‘Transformation’ or *bianhua* (變化) is one of the most recurrent motifs connecting the Indian and Chinese strange tale tradition through Buddhism. The ‘transformation’ through shape-shifting or ‘therianthropy’ was an already existing theme in the Chinese strange tale tradition. The Buddhist influence had helped it grow in such a way that strange stories having the theme of ‘transformation’ became one of the most popular themes of medieval China. Both Indian and Chinese narrative traditions portray how wonderfully the Buddhist motif of retribution and reincarnation has found its supreme expression being conditioned by cultural and civilizational difference.

So first, we will discuss the literary development pivoting the word ‘change’ in the Chinese tradition. Then we will move on to a discussion of the stories. For this chapter I have translated five full length stories. I have also referred to a few more stories from the *Taiping Guangji* which I have not translated myself. The translated stories are included in the Appendix - II. Here in this chapter we have only drawn references from the stories.

Stories of strange events and experience with the supernatural beings had a long indigenous tradition in China. The transmigrated Buddhist tales merged with them and nearly turned indistinguishable. Since these stories deal with the retribution for evil deeds, they are considered to be the examples of the teaching of *karma*. These Buddhist tales of the supernatural are mainly of three kinds: accounts of supernatural powers, usually wielded by *avalokitesvara* to help those who call out in difficult situations (Mair 161); then there are also examples of piety and sincere belief; and the third one is the remarkable deeds of monks and laymen indicating specific spiritual powers.

When we begin discussing the word ‘transformation’, we have to touch upon one of the major literary tradition *bianwen* that had expressed the profound Buddhist influence on the Chinese storytelling tradition. The *bianwen* 變文 tradition or the Tang ‘transformation texts’ is a remarkable literary tradition that has defined the Sino-Indian relationship for centuries¹. After the advent of Buddhism to China, the character *bian*² 變

¹The term originally appeared in the *Bianwen* texts themselves. The body of prosemetric narrative materials was discovered at the Dunhuang cave. One of the major researchers in this field is Professor Victor H. Mair, his book the *Tang Transformation Texts* (1989), tries to determine the definition of the term *Bianwen*. The term *bian* has much to do with a sense of *change* from the prose to the prosemetric form. It is also said that it was changed from the oral to the written tradition and hence it can be called ‘changed text’ (*Bianwen*). Another version says that *Bianwen* refers to the ‘oralization’ of a written tale. It can also be said that *Bianwen* refers to the change from one literary form (for example, Buddhist *sutras* or historical records) to another (the prosemetric). The original Buddhist *sutras* have been changed into popular lectures at the same

(Mair, *Transformation Text* 44) acquired the meaning of “(supernatural) transformation” and hence the derived meaning arrived as the idea of ‘strange event’. The tales that we are going to discuss in this chapter include the motifs of Buddhist precepts. This chapter introduces and discusses several ‘miracle tales’ which are influenced by the *Jataka* or the *Avadana* stories. These stories also signify a movement or action which can be referred to as a rebellion against the existing system, the Confucian order. While discussing the literary genre called *bianwen*, Victor Mair says in his essays repeatedly that the Indian (Mair, *Transformation Text* 57, 68, 79) concept of *Maya* is highly responsible for contributing an essentially supernatural meaning to the word ‘*bian*’. This tradition possesses a fundamental affinity and resemblance between illusion, transformation, and the power of creative imagination. These strange tales often indicate the transformation of the living creature. In the Chinese literary tradition, shape-shifting was a type of story which manifested idea of the retribution of heaven. Initially all the stories depicted the sudden transformation of human beings into animals thus displaying the mandate of heaven. Transformation of other animals into human beings in order to take revenge or to establish connection with the human world was seen as the action of the demonic souls and spirits. After the advent of Buddhism in China, these transformation stories found

time. *Bianwen* is a means that can popularize the Buddhist doctrines and *sutras* thus changing them to popular lectures (俗講 *sujiang*). *Bianwen* is also said to have derived from the fact that they are made up of alternating verse and prose like Indian *Kavya*. *Bian* deals with the *Jatakas*- stories from Buddha’s former lives. The term has a reference to ‘strange’ and *Bianwen* means the prosemetric recitation of a strange story. At the beginning of the Tang period the Chinese were becoming familiar with *bian* in the sense of ‘strange incident’ or to be more precise ‘supernatural transformation’. It is quite evident from all these that the Chinese were growing more and more familiar with such terms like supernatural, strange, transformations and transmutations. These are quite interesting as this indicated the intervention of fanciful ideas in the corpus of fact-based Confucian literary tradition.

² The word in the Chinese classical language meant ‘change’, ‘evolution’, ‘movement’, ‘modification’, ‘alteration’, ‘variation’, and as derivatives of these aforesaid meanings as ‘incident’, ‘disturbance, rebellion’, ‘eclipse’, and so on.

new dimensions and the philosophy of reincarnation and *karma* bridged the gap between the two traditions depicting similar kind of transformation stories. These new Chinese strange tales manifest a deep influence of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. In order to understand the philosophy behind the stories we need to touch upon the Hindu and Buddhist concepts of *karma* and reincarnation. When we think of transformation as an act of reincarnation then we also need to understand the relation between them. According to the 5-6 hymns of the 4th *Brahmana* of the 4th *Adhyaya* of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishada* (7th Century BCE):

Now as a man is like this or like that, according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he be; A man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad; He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds; And here they say that a person consists of desires, and as is his desire, so is his will; And as is his will, so is his deed; And whatever deed he does, that he will reap. (Muller, *Upanishads* 176)

This passage from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* actually talks about the basic laws of karma. The desire or the intention of a person denotes his determination. His determination to perform a good or bad work determines his karma. So the action of human beings decides how they will be. Hinduism says that the soul is eternal but is bound by the law of *karma* ("action") to the world of matter. It is possible to escape *karma* and attain *moksha* (release) from transmigration only after spiritual progress through an endless series of births. It also advocates that all distinctions, including the entire phenomenal world, have only a relative reality but are ultimately false and the result of the creative illusion (*maya*) of the *Brahman* (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 201). The *Bhagavad Gita* proposes three basic mutually exclusive paths: those of knowledge,

selfless action, and devotion to God. Again this concept of *karma* is analogous to the Chinese concept of predestination or 緣分 *Yuanfen*. It is an old theme from the Six Dynasties and was a common theme in the Tang dynasty.

Then again according to the Prologue of the *Surangama Sutra*, the soul that wanders in the *samsāra* may be reborn in any one of the *trailokya* or three realms - the desire realm or the *kāmadhātu*, the form (*rūpadhātu*) and the formless (*ārūpadhātu*) (Hua). In the Chinese or the Indian traditions transformation is not reincarnation. It is more like shifting into one realm from the other. According to Hindu and Buddhist philosophy there are five or six domains or *gati* within this desire realm³. Daoism also has featured five realms. Previous actions and thoughts or *karma* determine which of the six domains a sentient life-form will be reborn into. According to the part IX “Levels of Being” of the *Surangama Sutra* Buddha explains to Ananda the sixty stages through which a Bodhisattva has to pass in order to achieve the full awakening of the Buddha. In the Mahayana Buddhism, there are ten kinds of *xian* 仙 which are considered to be separate Immortal realms between the deva and human realms (Hua). To be reborn as a human being is considered to be advantageous because a human rebirth in the *samsaric* realm can ensure enlightenment in the present or in the subsequent rebirths. So the realm of human being is the supreme state of being.

³The six domains of the desire realm are the god (*devaloka*) domain, the jealous god (*asuraloka*) domain, the human (*manusyaloka*) domain, the animal (*tiryagyoni*) domain, the hungry ghost (*pretaloka*) domain, the hell (*naraka*) domain. God Realm or *Devaloka* (in Buddhism and Hinduism) is the realm of bliss. In this realm the beings stop neglecting their work towards enlightenment and they subsequently fall to a rebirth at a lower level. The *Asura realm* or the realm of the demigods has beings having egoist jealousy, insincerity, struggle, combat or rationalization of the world. The *Human realm* is mostly based on human emotions like passion, desire, doubt, and pride. So being reborn in the *Hungry Ghost* realm or the *Pretarealm* is based on strong desire cultivated in a previous life or lives. And the *Naraka* or hell realm is a rebirth based on strong states of hatred cultivated in a previous life or lives.

In this chapter the protagonists of the ‘transformation’ stories are shown to be belonging to that supreme advantageous realm of human world which is closer to *nirvana* or *moksha*. In the stories they are shown to be shifted to the animal realm or the *Tiryag-yoni*. Moving on to this realm is based on strong mental states of idiocy and prejudice cultivated in a previous life or lives. The intriguing part is that the Buddhists believe that this realm is the realm of existence of the nonhuman animals on Earth. The stories from the *Taiping Guangji* and also from the *Kathasaritsagara* depicted that the human beings are getting transformed into animals suddenly. This transformation from an advantageous realm of human state to the derogatory *tiryag-yoni* state or animal realm only shows that the protagonists have fallen from their supreme state to a beastly state because of the strong mental states of idiocy and prejudice.

So now we will move on to the discussion of the stories depicting the act of transformation. According to the Chinese Daoist literary tradition, the first reference to the act of transformation can be found in the *Book of Lie Zi* 《列子》 attributed to Lie Yukou⁴, written during the Warring States Period (475 BC - 221 BC). He was a Hundred Schools of Thought philosopher, but the Chinese and the Western scholars believe the book was compiled around the 4th century AD. The chapter 《周穆王》 “Zhou Mu Wang” has a story that talks about ‘Dreams’ and says,

In the time of King Mu of Chou, there was a magician⁵ who came from a kingdom in the far west. He could pass through fire and water, penetrate metal and stone, overturn mountains and make rivers flow backwards, transplant whole

⁴Said to have been written in the 5th century BC. But the Chinese and the Western scholars believe the book was compiled around the 4th century AD since the advent of Buddhism can be traced back to the 1st century AD.

⁵化人 *huaren* -according to ancient meaning, it refers to someone who knows Daoist magic and alchemy.

towns and cities, ride on thin air without falling, encounter solid bodies without being obstructed. There was no end to the countless variety of changes and transformations which he could affect; and, besides changing the external form, he could also spirit away men's internal cares. (Liezi and Giles III:58)

The magician came from far west, most probably India as it was called the Western Region. The advent of Buddhism can be traced back to the 1st century AD. If the book was written in 4th century BC then the reference to the transformation is somewhat illogical. This can only be found to be rational if it is written after 1st century AD. Surprisingly most of the stories written after the 1st century A.D. containing such transformation themes have an Indian connection.

The stories of the *Taiping Guangji* starting from volume 418 dragon 龍 series to volume 479 insect 昆蟲 series include stories about different kinds of animals, both imaginary and real. These stories deal with about eight kinds of animals. This list of animals includes, dragon 龍, tiger 虎, livestock or cattle 畜獸, fox 狐, snake 蛇, bird 禽鳥, aquatic animal 水族 and insect 昆蟲. The 'supernatural' 神仙 series also contains some stories of 'transformation'. Many of the stories are about transformation of a human being into an animal or vice versa and many of them manifest Buddhist and Daoist influence which seems to have their origin in the Buddhist *sutras*. The entire canon of the Buddhist *sutras* contains 'metamorphoses' or 'transformation' motif. In Indian *Jataka* tales the principle idea of the entire canon is based on the doctrine of transformation. This transformation mostly refers to 'reincarnation' – transformation of consciousness from one birth to another. The *Jatakas* talk about Buddha's previous birth, his transformation in several births as he was born in different forms in different places.

The Chinese scholar-critic Karl S.Y. Kao mainly highlighted about three kinds of transformation of human beings in Chinese literature (Kao 1-51). These transformations include self-induced transformation of the Daoist and Buddhist saints, the metamorphosis of man into beast or other creatures without any clear reason, and the transformation of human beings into bestial forms caused by a third party, usually through the use of black magic. The third one was a new introduction in the Tang dynasty⁶ (Kao 12). The entire canon of *Taiping Guangji* can be seen in this light. Since my chapter does not encompass such a large area, so I cannot stick to the categories mentioned by him. Rather in this chapter I have discussed three categories of stories from *Taiping Guangji* with reference to the *Kathasaritsagara*. The first category incorporates stories where a human being is transformed into any kind of animal and this happened either due to a heavenly act or through the magic tricks performed by other human beings on them. The second category points towards stories which illustrated human beings getting transformed into tigers. The third category includes stories in which human beings are transformed into a dragon or vice-versa.

In *Taiping Guangji* there are many stories that deal with tiger, dragon and many other kinds of animals. In *Taiping Guangji*, great numbers of stories deal with the motif of metamorphoses. In this chapter, I have taken stories from *Taiping Guangji* volumes 426, 429, 432, 436, 439 that contain stories about the transformation of human beings into animals. Sometimes the transformation or reincarnation occurs without any professed reason. Many of the stories in the *Shenxian* volume are like these. We notice that in some

⁶ But this tradition can be traced back to the black magic 五蠱 wǔgǔ sorcery in the shamanistic tradition.

of the stories the transformation is portrayed as permanent or irreversible and in some it is temporary or reversible. In most of the stories from the *Taiping Guangji*, once the protagonist is transformed, they cannot go back to their original form. Several times these transformations are analogous to the different phases of human life. And this is where they also refer to the different Buddhist or Hindu cosmological realms. Sometimes these transformations occur through reincarnation, and sometimes through retribution of heaven. In the second case, the being is punished by the heaven through transformation. Transformation is only a way to relive the phase of life that had provoked the cause of retribution. But in Indian stories the transformations mostly happen because of a curse or magic. These transformations are temporary. After going through sufferings of the transformed entities, the person can retain his/her former state of existence. This mostly happens because the Indian philosophical system believes in the reincarnation of soul. According to this no state is permanent and it is always under flux. According to Hinduism, the human beings are bound by the law of *karma* ("action"). In order to release himself from the laws of *karma* he needs to go through an endless series of births. This is why the Indian concept professes that the transformation is always reversible. It is only a shift from one state to the other. A single form is never permanent. This philosophy of impermanence naturally leads us to the idea that all distinctions, including the entire phenomenal world, have only a relative reality but are ultimately false and the result of the creative illusion (*maya*) of the Brahman (Bary, *Indian Tradition* 201). Therefore, according to both Buddhism and Hinduism all kinds of changes are only an illusion and it is only a shifting of the forms or shapes. The Chinese indigenous story tradition of shape-shifting found this Buddhist idea extremely intriguing. The Chinese Confucian system

had always emphasized on the cultivation of higher moral virtues and spiritual communion with time and space. It had always stressed on the honesty, and unselfish attitude towards the outside world. Society is placed on the highest level. It is said that *Li* 利 (personal profit) should be avoided and the noble person should adopt the virtue of *Yi* 義 (righteousness) (Legge, *Analects* 93). This is how the person can express his or her responsibility towards the world. So when there is an aberration and a deviation from the established moral structure, the person's mental health is considered to be degraded. This is why the simple idea of shape-shifting was eventually connected to the Buddhist idea of degradation of soul through shape-shifting. In all the stories from *Taiping Guangji*, this is what we will get to see. The stories portray the transformation of a human being into an animal. The transformation mostly represents the moral and intellectual degradation of the person whose form is changed. In the next sections we will discuss various such stories taken from *Taiping Guangji*.

As for the first category of stories dealing with transformation of human being into any kind of animals due to a heavenly act or due to some magic tricks performed by other human being on them, we find several such stories from *Taiping Guangji* in the Chinese literary tradition and in the *Kathasaritsagara* from the Indian tradition. In the *Taiping Guangji* volume no. 286 the story named *Banqiao San Niangji* 《板橋三娘子》 is one of the most famous stories containing the motif of transformation. This story is taken from *Hedongji* 《河東記》 written in the Tang dynasty. This book was written by Xue Yusi during the Tang dynasty. In the book there are stories that mention dates in between the years of 827—835 AD. *Banqiao San Niangji* 《板橋三娘子》 or the “Third Lady of the

Wooden Bridge Inn” (Kao 307) depicts the adventure of a traveler named Chao Chi-ho during Yuan-he reign period (806-820) who went to this ‘Wooden Bridge Inn’ for shelter. At night when everyone was sleeping after drinking wine, he saw the innkeeper named the Third Lady doing magic tricks behind the closed doors. He saw that she drew six-seven inches tall wooden ox and wooden man. Then after sprinkling magic water when they became alive, they started plowing and then buckwheat seeds were sown. Instantly the wheat was produced and ripened. Then with the grain she made flour and with the flour she prepared some cakes. Next day apart from Chi-ho everyone ate that cake and even before they could finish eating they were transformed into donkeys. The third lady drove them behind the inn so that she could use them. Chi-ho left the place secretly envying the magical powers of the woman. Next time he again arrived and secretly replaced fresh non-magical cakes with magical cakes. Then eating those cakes, the innkeeper was transformed into a donkey. But he also failed to restore what this lady had done. However, after four years, he again came to the place to set the donkey free as an old man had requested him to do so.

This story is analogous to the “Story of Mrigankadatta” from the *Kathasaritsagara*, Vol-VI (Somedeva VI:55-56). In this story the story-teller Bhimaparakrama talks about his adventures. He said that he went to the city of Ujjayini and he entered the house of a certain woman seeking for shelter. After paying for the food he went to bed. But out of curiosity he remained quiet, and watched her. He saw that the woman took a handful of barley, and sowed it all inside the house. While doing this she was uttering spells continuously. Soon enough those grains of barley sprang up and produced grains and also

ripened. Then she cut them down, parched and ground them. Thus she made a kind of barley-meal and sprinkled the barley-meal with water and put it in a brass pot. As the protagonist assumed her to be a witch, he replaced the charmed barley meal with a normal one. Then the woman served him that meal from the brass pot, and she ate some herself, taking from the meal-bin. So actually she ate the charmed meal, unknowingly. The moment she had the meal, she became a she-goat. Then Bhimaparakrama took her and sold her to a butcher. But the butcher's wife, a friend of the innkeeper, came up to him and angrily expressed her determination to take revenge on him. At night being weary while he was sleeping under a banyan-tree that wicked witch, the butcher's wife, fastened a thread on his neck and turned him into a peacock, though he still retained his intelligence. Eventually Mrigankadatta, the protagonist of the main story, arrived and loosened the thread round his neck. Thus he recovered his human shape⁷. This particular story has been used as a meta-story in the *Kathasaritsagara* and mostly establishes the hypothesis of the migration of tales. Both these stories might have a common source that could not be found. Many critics say that this story has a foreign origin. In both these stories we find a lady having the knowledge of supernatural magic with which she produces enchanted grains overnight. These enchanted grains are the medium through which the magical transformation happens in both stories.

Many such similar stories can be found in the *Nights* as well. In the Arabic tradition the story of "Julnar the Sea-born and her Son" in the *Nights* (Burton, vol.VII:302, 330)

⁷ In the *Kathasaritsagara*, Vol-VI, p- 55-56, C.H. Tawney's translation refers to the story "The Soldier's Midnight Watch" in Ralston's Russian Folk-Tales, p. 274. It also refers to the *The Golden Ass of Apuleius* in which Pamphile turns herself into an owl. Reference to animal metamorphoses in folk stories across civilizations are numerous and impossible to exhaust in a single note. Alongside his own such references Tawney also mentions that interested scholars can have a look at the references given by Chauvin, op. cit., vi, p. 199, and especially P. Saintyves, *Les Conies de Perrault*, pp. 408-416.

depicts a story like this. In this story the King Badr Basim feigned to sleep and saw that Queen Lab (the sorceress) took out something red from her red bag and planted it in the middle of the chamber. A stream started flowing immediately. Then she took a handful of barley and keeping it on the ground, she watered it with water from the stream. Those seeds were turned into full grown wheat. She gathered and then ground them into flour. So when she gave him the parched grain to eat, he pretended to eat them and made her eat the corns given to him by his uncle, with instructions. As soon as she finished eating, Basim, following his uncle's instructions threw water on her face and with a simple command changed her into a dapple mule. Then again the aged mother of the queen managed to restore her original shape. In revenge she turned Basim into a fowl and had put him in a cage and kept it in the palace. He remained there until the final triumph was achieved by the hero.

As Tawney also mentioned, Dr D. B. Macdonald (1863–1943), one of the best critics on the *Nights* told that similar tales appeared in several Arabic works dating from about 850 to 1200 AD⁸. According to Dr Macdonald the starting-place of the Arabic stories was undoubtedly India. Curiously the Chinese story is also written during the 8th century Tang dynasty in which the basic elements like the traveller seeking shelter, the woman sorceress and the magic grains and the transformation into an animal remained the same. The exact origin of the story is still missing. But the Chinese scholars also have always maintained that the kind of *guai* 怪 this Chinese story contains, mostly points towards a

⁸The notes on the 'magic seeds' in the volume number VI of the book *Kathasaritsagara* p- 62 elaborately describes all the other Arab analogues found in *Fakhir*. Dr Macdonald found analogous stories in five places and has translated them for using as a note to the translation of *Kathasaritsagara* by C.H Tawney. The Quran, ii, 96 refers to the story connected with Harut and Marut of Babil (Babel), the two angels who teach magic to mankind. Then the note goes on to make a list of the five places in which Dr Macdonald found the story in question in the Arab tradition (Somedeva VI:62).. Karl Kao in his book *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* also refers to the Circe episodes in the *Odyssey* (chapter 10) and some of the *Apuleius' Tales* (p-12).

foreign origin to it (Kao 309). In the Chinese story Karl Kao mentions that the use of food in casting a spell and the mode of imagination shown in the imitative ritual of ‘farming’ are found in the native tradition of Wu-Gu magic. In the introduction to the book *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* Karl Kao also refers to the criticism by Yang Xianyi 楊憲益 (1915-2009). From the similarity of the transformation motif in this story with that of the Circe episodes in *The Odyssey* (chapter 10) and some of the Apuleius’ Tales (Yang 62), Yang Xianyi 楊憲益 considers that it has its source in the northeastern Africa and suggests that the story came to China with merchants from the Middle East. Yang Xianyi in his book *Yiyu Oushi* 《譯餘偶拾》 says that *Banqiao* 板橋, the locale of the story is an important landmark representing the connection between China and the West during the Tang dynasty. This was a seaport where foreign traders congregated in Tang times. He also suggested that the story reached China through the Tazikh 大食 merchants (Merchants of the Arabian empire - 632-1258 AD) from the Middle East. He ends his essay on *Banqiao San Niangzi* 《板橋三娘子》 saying that *Banqiao* 板橋, the locale in the story was a port where foreign traders used to gather during the Tang dynasty (Yang, 《譯餘偶拾》 63). Several such stories also can be found in the *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. But there in the ‘Zaochu’ 造畜 ‘Animal Husbandry’ it is said that this kind of sorcery could be found in certain parts of southern China (Kao 13).

Similar stories of transformation of a human being into an ape can be found in the *Kathasaritsagara*. The story “51a.Somasvamin and Bandhudatta” from *Kathasaritsagara* Book-III, narrates another story about transformation. In this story a witch helps a

promiscuous woman who wants to take her beloved along with her to her husband's place. The witch who knew many tricks of transformation said to her "I know two spells: by reciting one of them a man can be in a moment made an ape, if a string is fastened round his neck, and by the second, if the string is loosed, he will immediately become a man again." (Somedeva III: 190-191). She also mentions that while he would be an ape his intelligence would not be diminished. So she turned the beloved into an ape on the spot so that the woman can carry him to Mathura as a pet animal. She also showed her how to use those two spells. Thus she could turn him into the shape of a monkey and when they were in a secret place, she could transform him into a human being again by magic spells. In this story this transformation is reversible. He was transformed into a human being and rescued by a female hermit named Mokshada who knew the counter spell to revert the form. In the same book a similar story "51b. Bhavasarman and the Two Witches" was told (Somedeva III: 193-195).

This story also has an analogous version in the *Arabian Nights*. In this story "51b. Bhavasarman and the Two Witches" Nischayadatta, the protagonist was in love with a witch whom he willfully struck in a fit of jealousy. Next day as an act of retribution she fastened a string round his neck and transformed him into a domesticated ox. Then she also sold him. But another witch having supernatural knowledge rescued him by loosening the string from his neck. These stories mostly display reversible transformation. Several such stories narrating the power of a magic string can be seen in *Nights* also. As Tawney said, the string is a magical round object that possesses the power of confining a person in a certain prescribed state or condition until it is removed. The person when released from the enthralling properties of the string immediately

returns to his former condition (Somedeva VI: 59-62). Such magic objects are found less in the Chinese stories. But several stories about turning human beings into cattle can be found in *Taiping Guangji* also.

In the volume number 432 there are stories about retribution performed by the heaven. In one story called “Nanyang Shiren” 《南陽士人》 the heaven asks a scholar to transform himself into a tiger, and so he does. Later in the story it is revealed that the heaven asked him to do so just in order to punish an official. Just after executing the task, he regains his human form. The story ends in pathos because the scholar’s son commits suicide after hearing the story of his father. “Zhang Feng” 《張逢》 from the *Xuxuan Guailu* also depicts a similar story. Only the intervention of heaven is different. These kinds of stories cannot be found in the Indian tradition. The story “Zhang Quan” 《張全》 (originally taken from 《瀟湘記》 probably written in Tang dynasty) from volume number 436 belonging to the “Livestock-3” 《畜獸三》 section describes a woman who had a fascination for horse. In her next birth she was born as a horse. The story from the volume number 436 narrates a story “Weiyou Rou” 《韋有柔》 (originally taken from the Tang dynasty book *Guangyiji* 《廣異記》) in which the protagonist who was turned into a horse says that he was transformed because the hellish people asked him to do so, so that he can serve others. These are many such stories that describe the protagonists having been transformed into either a horse or a donkey mostly in order to serve others or to repay the debt they had taken. These stories exhibit the instances where the mandate of heaven is displayed. The vulnerability and the powerlessness of human beings are the professed intentions of the stories. These stories also show that the world is a mysterious

place where many otherworldly incidents take place. The storyteller has documented them in order to pass them down to posterity.

Then again Volume number 436 describes this story “Wu Zongsi” 《吳宗嗣》 (taken from the *Jishenlu* 《稽神錄》 from the Northern Song dynasty 北宋-955AD) in which the protagonist is transformed into a horse as he did not return the money he took as a debt. Again in the same volume we find this story “Zhang Gao” 《張高》 (taken from the northern Song dynasty composition *Xuxuan Guailu* 《續玄怪錄》) that narrates a man reborn as a donkey as he did not pay off his debt in his previous birth. This same volume again refers to a story “The Man from Eastern City” 《東市人》 (originally taken from the Tang dynasty composition *Youyang Zazu* 《酉陽雜俎》) in which the protagonist is transformed into a donkey and working for the creditor. Again in the volume number 436, a story (originally taken from a Buddhist text *Fayuan Zhulin* 《法苑珠林》 written in 659 AD) the mother who helped her daughter in her son’s absence, is reincarnated as a donkey who would be serving the son for its life. Several such stories like “Geng Fusheng” 《耿伏生》 and “Li Xiaoyu” 《李校尉》 taken from the same Buddhist text *Fayuan Zhulin* 《法苑珠林》 narrate the idea of repaying debt and reincarnation⁹. In these stories, the mothers who helped the married daughter financially in the absence of either her husband or her son, were reincarnated as domestic animals (a donkey or a pig) in order to serve the husband or the son financially. This kind of transformation mostly has animals with exchange values. It reinforces the Hindu idea of

⁹Intriguingly these stories express the Indian Buddhist idea of patriarchal society where the woman does not have the right to do something without the consent of the master of the house, be it her son or her husband. Moreover secretly helping the married daughter financially also is regarded as a crime against the social, parochial order.

attaining a *tiryak yoni* realm after the reincarnation. It is like shifting from one sphere to the other. The supreme state of human rebirth in the *samsaric* realm is considered to be closer to the enlightenment. But the wrong *karma* leads the protagonists of the stories to the derogatory animal realm or the *tiryag-yoni* state that represents strong mental states of insensitivity cultivated in a previous life or lives. The Buddhists think that this realm exists on earth and the nonhuman animals belong to this. All the stories from the Chinese and the Indian traditions showed that the human beings are transformed into animals because they expressed their arrogance or beastly nature when they were living in the supreme state of human birth. The transformation mostly occurs because of a socially degradable and unacceptable act that might be a threat for the integrity of the social order. Thereafter the human beings are justly degraded to an animal of certain value, so that the creditor can profit from them. So in the Tang dynasty the idea of reincarnation had already gained prominence and the stories influenced by Buddhism expressed those ideas clearly, although they kept the Chinese pattern intact. These stories are the best examples of the cultural amalgamation that happened between the Chinese and the Indian traditions.

In this second category in which transformation of human being into the tiger is depicted (the 'Tiger' volumes), we can mostly see two kinds of stories. One is where the heaven is somehow responsible for the transformation of the human being into tiger. The second kind includes stories in which there is a certain fault in the character of the human protagonists and thereafter they are turned into tigers. The second kind of stories is representative of the act of transformation related to the temperament of the protagonist. We can mention stories like "Hsueh Tao-Hsun, The Tiger Man", "Huang Miao

Transformed into a Tiger”, “Wu Daozong” 《吳道宗》 from the *Qixieji* 《齊諧記》 belonging to the “Tiger” section of the volume 426, “Xiakou Daoshi” 《峽口道士》 from the *Huichang Jieyilu* 《會昌解頤錄》 and “Li Zheng” 《李徵》 from volume number 427. In the next section we will discuss these stories and will see what kind of Hindu and Buddhist or Chinese Daoist influence affected them.

First we will discuss stories written during the Six Dynasties (222–589 AD). A story named “Wu Daozong” 《吳道宗》 is taken from Dongyang Wuyi's (東陽無疑) *Qixieji* 《齊諧記》. Dongyang Wuyi (420-479) was a Liu-Song period 劉宋 (420-479 AD) cavalier attendant. The story also belonged to the “Tiger” section of the volume 426 of *Taiping Guangji*. This story can be considered to be a *Zhiguai Xiaoshuo*. It describes a story about Wu Daozong's mother who was turned into a tiger. Here the transformation is irreversible. In the story the mother said “My faults are to be blamed for the change that is happening to me.”(Appendix II:269-270). This refers to certain kind of flaw in the character of the protagonist. This flaw or the unknown fault that she committed is a deviation from the established Confucian moral system. Therefore this ethical degradation is depicted through the transformation.

Another story “Hsueh Tao-Hsun, The Tiger Man” (Kao 135-36) taken from the *Taiping Guangji* from the 426 volume {originally was taken from the *Qixieji* 《齊諧記》 written by Dongyang Wuyi (420-479 AD)} narrates the life-story of a man named Hsueh Tao-hsun. He succumbed to an epidemic disease and therefore went mad. After he had taken some powdered drugs he began to rush around wildly and eventually vanished. He was subsequently transformed into tiger and devoured countless people. After a year when he was turned into a man again, he returned home. One day he was talking about the

mysterious metamorphosis in the universe. He disclosed his secrets about turning into a tiger. He was punished for his guilt by the local government. This story of transformation was written during the Six Dynasties. The influence of Buddhism on the transformation stories was not clearly evident. Therefore we can see that the story has still retained its indigenous essence where the transformation is an aberration in the universe and happened suddenly without any specific reason.

We can see more stories like this. The *Taiping Guangji* 296 volume has this story named “Huang Miao Transformed into a Tiger” (Kao 156-58) {originally taken from the *Shuyiji* 《述異記》 attributed to Zu Chongzhi 祖沖之 (429-500AD)} translated by Michael Broschat. This story describes how a human being can be transformed into a tiger by the spirit official. He was changed into an animal in ten days. Daily he was fed with raw flesh. Thereafter he started killing people under instructions of the official. After eating thirty people he was fed with salted rice and thus he was again returned to his human form.

The retribution of heaven is an old indigenous theme having its long history in China. The cruelty of heaven can be seen in all these stories. The characters are conversing in order to create sympathy in the other characters as well as in the readers. In these stories the conscious transformation of the human being has started already. The transformation is beyond the protagonist’s control and s/he is destined to face the consequences. But as the knowledge of his/her other existence is clear, the emotional activities are similar to that of a human being. This process of humanizing the transformation started with Buddhism. With the influence of Buddhism the stories started having a dimension that points out towards the ethical or moral aspect of the protagonist. The degradation of the

intellectual health of a human being is thus represented through the act of transformation. So when we analyze the stories from the Tang dynasty or later, we will see a fully developed story tradition celebrating the existence of human conscience in an animal's (mostly a tiger) body. Animals are considered to be creatures having the lowest intellectual worth. They are instinctively cruel and imbecile. As per intelligence their rank is lower than the human beings. The co-existence of these two utterly different conditions of human being and an animal in a single body marks the struggle to bridge the gap between the self and the other, the known and the unknown, the mortal and the other worldly. Previously the human being and the transformed tiger were linked by the continuity of the mental cruelty or stupidity of the protagonist. But now we will see that the continuity changes and the stories mostly portray the helplessness of a transformed human being who has greater intelligence and conscience but is confined within the degraded physical state of an animal.

The story titled "Xiakou Daoshi" 《峡口道士》 from the *Huichang Jieyilu* 《會昌解頤錄》 written during the Tang dynasty describes a Daoist priest who was turned into a tiger as a punishment from Heaven. But in this story after completion of the punishment tenure when the protagonist fulfills the condition rendered by the heaven he is again turned into a human being. In this story the transformation is reversible. In this story, the priest told the poor man who went to kill the tiger in the mountain, "I am guilty in the eyes of the heaven. I am demoted to a tiger here. I was supposed to eat one thousand people." (Appendix II:272). In all these stories reference to a certain guilt or a flaw in the character has been repeatedly emphasized. The transformation is only an offshoot of that fault. Heaven's retribution has frequently been stressed. Here the concepts of the *karma*

and reincarnation are also expressed clearly. But it is merged with the indigenous Chinese story tradition where the human being is transformed into a tiger by the mandate of heaven without showing any professed reason. In the “Xiakou Daoshi” the Daoist priest was guilty in the eyes of heaven. His mental degradation points towards an aberration that threatens the integrity of the established social order. Therefore his transformation is an indication that the integrity is restored. His imbecile state creates a situation for him where he practices his beastly instincts hidden within him when he was a human being and thus his conscious human psyche suffers in the process.

Similar dehumanizing treatment finds its supreme expression in the story of “Li Zheng” 《李徵》 originally taken from *Xuanshizhi* 《宣室志》 by Zhang Du (“Li Zheng” – written in 834/835-post 882) and compiled in scroll number 427 of *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》. *Xuanshizhi* 《宣室志》 is written by Tang dynasty’s Zhang Du 張讀 and it is about the Han Emperor’s queries about otherworldly matters. This book recorded many Buddhist supernatural events. Stories are deeply influenced by Buddhism and often promote the concept of *karma* and so on. In the story “Li Zheng” the proud and angry government official Li Zheng, all of a sudden is transformed into a tiger and starts living in the forest. Li Zheng later narrated his experiences to his friend Yuan Can, a travelling official, who brought Li’s writings back to the human world and supported Li’s family. The story takes a different turn when one day, his friend who is also an official, belonging to the same rank as Li Zheng, meets Li Zheng in his tiger *avatar* and he talks to him using the language of human beings. He asks the official to carry a message to his home and help his son and wife in his absence. He asks for this because he will never be able to get back to his earlier human form. The story becomes extremely poignant here.

The strange incident that inspired awe and fear in the audience's mind, suddenly changes its tone. The hesitation and the conflict of a human heart whose identity changes overnight is portrayed vividly through this story. The narrator with his elaborate narration of Li Zheng's soliloquy, portrays his experience of the difference between the human world and the strange, non-human world through the human psyche of a transformed tiger,

I will never ever experience the human world. I jumped and cried out my grievances looking at the heaven. I stooped and wept on the ground. When the body is destroyed then there is no use of it. Ah! Is this really my life? ... Now my appearance has changed but my mind is still awakened... My wife and children are still in Guolue. How would they know that I am turned into a strange kind?
(Appendix II:277-278)

This kind of conscious psychological activity often was missing before the Tang dynasty. In the Chinese stories we can see that the transformations are mostly irreversible. "Li Zheng" also portrays Li's dreadful bodily changes and intensively emotive process without any intentionality or cognitive process. This story also represents Tang chuanqi literature that unravels the inner workings of "Li Zheng" through the portrayal of Li's unexplained bodily change and Yuan's untroubled acceptance of it and generosity toward Li Zheng and his family (Wang 1-16). Initial stories had vengeance clearly stated. In Li Zheng it is more humanized and not really portrayed as vengeance, but a psychological process invariably starts.

There is another story from *Youyang Zazu* 《酉陽雜俎》 named "Wang Yong" 《王用》 written by Duan Chengshi in the Tang dynasty (9th century). The story talks about a man named Wang Yong of Guozhou during Zhen Yuan period. Wang Yong used to go to

the snakehead valley to cut trees. Inside that gorge in a small river more than one chi long two black fishes were seen to be swimming which were considered to be the spirits of the valley. One day Wang Yong, tired and hungry caught one fish and ate. Eventually Wang Yong's features had some changes and suddenly Wang Yong left his clothes, roared, jumped and got transformed into a tiger and straightaway he ran towards the mountains and disappeared. For his food he often caught river deer and such animals and ate. After three years on one evening, Wang Yong came back to his home knocked on the doors of his house. But his younger brother did not believe that it was him and thought him to be a *guichang* (the ghost of one devoured by a tiger, who helps the tiger to devour others) who was using his name. Wang Yong tried to convince his brother saying that he was punished by the nether world for killing the black fish and was transformed into a tiger. Then again the nether world had beaten him up badly for killing people. Now his previous form had returned but his brother saw a strange creature having tiger's head and human body. The brother instantly died of shock. Then the villagers killed the strange creature and it was found that he really was Wang Yong. Just his head did not return to its original form. During the time of Yuan He, when the recluse Zhaoqi reached the snakehead gorge then he heard this story. This story also reveals that Wang Yong displayed his cruelty of nature by killing the fish which is considered to be sacred; therefore he was turned into a tiger. But his request and explanation to his brother about the heavenly mandate reveals the existence of human conscience in an animalized body. The crime that he committed expressed his beastly instinct. Here we find a reference to the food. The protagonist craved for food and that is why he ate the auspicious black fish from the gorge. This was considered to be an unlawful deviation from the established

order. His arrogant and beastly nature was manifested through his transformation. This transformation is a way of punishment and rectification for the protagonist. This is a way to make him aware of his own self within the body of a beast. After the advent of Buddhism, the stories depicting the heavenly mandate evolved and a conscious psychological activity within the protagonist started being expressed gradually. The human beings started making dialogues in their beastly forms and expressed their helplessness. The story of Wang Yong and the story of Li Zheng are the examples that display the bridging of the literary cultural difference between these two countries.

For understanding the humanized tiger, first we can have a look at what Zhuang Zi (370-287 BC) says. The realization of the difference between various kinds of animals and man is evident in some of the words delivered by Zhuang Zi. In the section 4 of the chapter named “Man in the World, Associated with other Men” 《人間世》 from the *Inner Chapters* 《內篇》 of the *Zhuangzi* 《莊子》 it is said,

虎之與人異類而媚養己者，順也；故其殺者，逆也¹⁰

Tigers are different from men, but they fawn on those who feed them, and do so in accordance with their nature. When any of these are killed by them, it is because they have gone against that nature. (Legge, *Texts of Taoism* I:216)

We find this quote to be very relevant to all the stories of transformation related to tigers. Again we should notice that what was written during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC – 9 AD). Significant instances can be found in the “Chu Zhenxun” 《俶真訓》 of the

¹⁰For the Chinese text I have consulted the website of *Chinese Text Project* and had followed this link <<http://ctext.org/zhuangzi>>

Huainanzi 《淮南子》¹¹. The translation of this book is *Tao, The Great Luminant, Essays from the Huai Nan Tzu* done by Evan S. Morgan. In the second chapter “Beginning and Reality” “Chu Zhenxun” 《俶真训》 we can see this evidence of human being changing into a tiger. The heading of this section says “A Certain Continuity Persists When Form Changes” (Morgan)¹². The story is about Kung Niu-ai, a mythical character, who had a feat of raving madness and, in seven days, he was changed into a tiger. His will and mind had changed. His spirit and body were also transformed. He killed his brother and his human limbs had changed into the claws and teeth of the wild beast. It is further described that in this state he was ignorant that he had been a human being previously. Just when he was a man, he was totally unaware that he would be a tiger as well. Each of these two alternations had its own numerous pleasures according to the form. The text also talks about the conscience of the transformed creature. It says that the creature, in the one form, was wholly unconscious of his existence in the other form. The change of state by the transformation was immense. But there was a continuity of pleasure in both the assumed forms - the cunning nature and the blunt stupidity. The passage ends with raising a question about the source of all these incidents. The Daoists believe that the world is a mystery and all the events are just a riddle beyond human solution. This is because man himself is a part of the created things. The Daoist believes that there is a purpose in the cosmos, but only known to the Unknown One (Morgan II:58). So this is clear that the idea of the transformation initially came from the

¹¹This is a collection of essays that resulted from a series of scholarly debates held at the court of Liu An, King of Huainan, sometime before 139 BC. The *Huainanzi* blends Daoist, Confucianist, and Legalist concepts, including theories such as Yin-Yang and the Five Phases. – Wikipedia <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huainanzi>> (last accessed on 12.8.16)

¹²Apart from the printed book *Tao, The Great Luminant, Essays from the Huai Nan Tzu* by Evan S. Morgan, I have also consulted this weblink from the Internet Sacred Text Archive <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/tgl/index.htm>>. last accessed on 12.8.16

indigenous religion like Daoism in China. Here the text clarifies that the transformed creature, while experiencing one state of existence, was wholly unconscious of his existence in the other form. We can notice that this trend of this unconscious existence will continue for long till the Tang dynasty. But with the advent of the Buddhist idea of reincarnation and its immense influence on the stories actually change this unconscious existence. In the “Li Zheng” we find the transformed tiger that is aware of his previous existence. As Prof. Li Jianguo mentioned, there were many evidences in the classical stories where the author dehumanizes the human beings and therianthropizes them into different kinds of real and mythical animals including tiger and dragon. Someone is turned into a tiger mainly because of two reasons, illness “疾病” and unethical character “無德”. In the stories human beings are transformed into tigers either naturally or the ordeal had been inflicted by the heaven. The tigers inflicted by god are mostly the cases where the man is either non-virtuous or has committed heinous crime. These people are turning into tigers because of certain ancient beliefs. The tiger is the king of beasts and people are usually afraid of tigers. Thereafter if one has to choose a cannibal beast then it is only the tiger with which violence, cruelty and fear can be associated. Tiger is symbolic of violence and tyranny. In this story we can see that the transformation of a human being into a tiger is mainly an act of justice by the heaven. But this story maintains a more human approach to the transformation as it deals with human emotions and the sense of helplessness and anxiety at the same time.

In the Indian Sanskrit story tradition the “Story of Vamadatta and his Wicked Wife” (Somedeva VI: 4), the promiscuous wife turns the husband, who discovers her

licentiousness, into a buffalo. But he could recover from the magic by a 'white witch'¹³. The chapter LIX of *Kathasaritsagara* describes a parrot, cursed in his former birth and after remaining a parrot for a period of time, its earlier form was restored. In the *Kathasaritsagara* we can find some stories of transformation that are closely related to Buddhism. For example, "The Lion's Story" (Somedeva V: 159) narrates the story of a Vidyadhara named Padmavesa whose son was Vajravega. Vajravega, being a vainly glorious person, quarreled with all, confiding in his courage. When his father ordered him to desist, he did not pay any attention and then his father cursed him, saying: "Fall into the world of mortals." After Vajravega's arrogance was extinguished his knowledge left him, and smitten with the curse he wept, and asked his father to name a time when it should end. Then his father Padmavesa said that he would become a Brahman's son on the earth and display this arrogance once more. Then by his father's curse he would become a lion and fall into a well. When a man of noble character, out of compassion, would draw him out and when he would have recompensed him in his calamity, he would be delivered from this curse. Then Vajravega was born in Malava as Devaghosha in a Brahman family. Since his birth he showed arrogance and his father warned him several times. So his father cursed him: "Become immediately a foolish lion, over-confident in its strength." In consequence of this speech of his father's, Devaghosha, that incarnation of a Vidyadhara, was again born as a lion in this forest. He promised that he would do him a good turn and so get released from the curse. This is again an example of transformation happening because of lack of noble virtues. The arrogance in the protagonist was reflected through his transformation into a lion.

¹³The story resembles few stories from *Arabian Nights* (Burton, Vol. I, III, p -69-80 and 325); it also has several extant in Kalmuck tales, Votyak tales, Mordvin tales. For this I have consulted the Note on the 'Story of Vamadatta' by Tawney, in the *Ocean of Story*, Vol-VI, page - 8.

In the same section “The Golden-Crested Bird's Story” is also intriguing. It was also told to Bodhisattva. In the story Rajatadamshttra showed disobedience to his sister. So he was cursed by his sister that he would become a bird with a golden crest. The golden crest was the object for which he had shown his disobedience. Therefore, his desire for the object made him fallen from the superior state of human realm and imprisoned him inside the same object for which he showed his disrespect. Later Bodhisattva released him from this fallen state of a bird. In the same chapter a snake also tells his story where he was cursed to become a great snake with three crests. He, as a human being, disrespected an ascetic by terrorizing him with a snake. Thereafter he was turned into one. He was also rescued by Bodhisattva from the fallen serpent condition (Somedeva V:162).

The entire classic *Kathasaritsagara* tells the story of Naravahanadatta who was the king of *Vidyadharas* in his earlier birth and because of a curse he was born in this human world. After achieving glory and triumph in this human world, he, along with his other cursed wives, returned to the *Gandharvaloka*. These stories primarily focus on the telling of a story. The intriguing part in the *Kathasaritsagara* is that in the stories supernatural creatures are transformed into human beings and human beings are transformed into animals. Such transformation clearly portrays the design of the divisions of different realms.

In the *Kathasaritsagara*, we find that the bird, the lion, the snake or the human being, in their metamorphosed *avatar* communicates with the audience, and the narrator creates a situation to perceive the human world from an animal's perspective. In his animal form he is made to suffer in the world the animals belonged to. This also established the fact that a human being is what his mental health represents. In Book 3, the amusing story of

the secret lover depicts how he was transformed into a monkey by a woman and thus was fooled to remain so for a long time till an ascetic came and rescued him. All the Indian stories have reversible transformation. The protagonist is tied to the cycle of pleasure and cannot avoid reincarnation. The audience is made to go through the suffering that the protagonist experiences. This is what the Chinese stories of transformation also do. In both the traditions, the audience feels amused, enchanted and often scared listening to such stories. The sufferings of the other world become evident and for a short while they forget their mundane reality. The restoration of the original form relieves the audience and only leaves behind a pleasing experience along with some lessons of life. We can find that mostly all the Indian stories and some of the Chinese strange stories acknowledge the transformation as an act of heavenly curse or retribution. The protagonist and also the audience are ready to accept it because this phase of transformation will have an end to it and the former shape of the protagonist will return. But in the Chinese stories, the storytellers mostly create an ambience of suspense and terror with the irreversible transformation of the protagonist. The storyteller, in order to establish the story in the social system, primarily stays busy with the testimonial quality at the end of the story. Situating the story within a historical milieu, the storytellers make the stories believable.

In all the Chinese stories it can be noticed that the transformation of a human being into a tiger is considered to be a demotion. Evidently the fault in the character has led the human to be demoted to a lesser kind – from a supreme realm to an animal realm. The stories also depict the good or the bad actions performed in the previous births that had

led towards the next birth and tied him to the circle of endless births and deaths. The concept of *karma* in the Buddhist tradition and the idea of retribution in the Chinese tradition are similar with some variations. The idea of retribution by heaven is not as complicated as the Buddhist idea of *karma* and reincarnation. Retribution is often unpredictable and is somewhat related to destiny. The Buddhist view of hell is significantly similar to that of Hinduism in which the souls remain in hell until their negative *karma* is used up, at which point they are reborn into another realm. The soul keeps on getting reincarnated until it gets *nirvana* or *moksha* (as per Hinduism). In the Chinese tradition, the spirit or the soul is related to the concept of ghosts. Therefore the stories from 2nd century AD till 5th century AD always remained confused about the concept of soul as ghosts and the transmigration of soul or reincarnation. Some stories were directly related to reincarnation and some were in between the transformation of the human being as a supernatural act and reincarnation as a natural act of human world. The consequences that Wu Daozong's mother, the Xiakou Daoist priest and Li Zheng had to face can only be considered as the mandate of heaven. But the psychological and humanizing aspects can be explained by the Buddhist influence. In the Indian tradition the co-existence of the human realm and the animal realm is portrayed and this transformation is reversible most of the time. In the Chinese stories these two realms coexist. But more than any other emotions like disgrace or abomination, it arouses fear and a melancholy estrangement from the human world.

In the third category we are going to talk about dragons. When we mention dragon and tiger in Chinese literature it reminds us of the saying by Confucius: 風從虎，雲從龍 – which refers to the spiritual interaction among things. As for the dragon, even the *Book of*

Changes has sections about the habits and nature of the Dragon, like ‘soaring dragon’ 飛龍在天, ‘the hidden dragon has no use’ 潛龍勿用 etc. According to the indigenous concept, the dragons in China usually helped to bring rain. After the advent of Buddhism and Buddhist stories, the indigenous concept of dragon got assimilated within the foreign Buddhist idea of *nagas* or serpent. The dragon then started getting personified and they derived certain typical characteristics. For example, they were said to live in the underworld which is analogous to the *patala* where *nagas* are said to be living (according to the Hindu and Buddhist myth). In Indian Buddhist classics *Naga* is shown as living in the underworld and having supernatural power. In many stories they are also shown as following *Dharma*. The Buddhist *Jatakas* often had depicted themes in which the *nagas* show their gratitude to the Bodhisattva. Similar themes of dragons showing their gratitude have been adopted in the Chinese stories as well. The dragon of China thus acquired new imagery and significance. When we discuss the transformation of the dragon, we find stories of dragons that show three kinds of transformations: objects (Stone) getting changed into dragons, human beings are transformed into dragons because of beastly temperament, and the dragons changing into human beings in order to repay kindness.

As for the first category depicting ‘the object (Stone) changing into a dragon’ – the example from the *Taiping Guangji* is “Wuseshi” 《五色石》 or the coloured stone. In this story a Daoist priest identified a coloured stone which is actually a dragon transformed into a stone. The second categorization is comprised of stories where a human being turns into a dragon. In this categorization there are stories like “Liang Wuhou” 《梁武后》. In this story the Empress named Liang Wuxi was a jealous

woman. The Emperor Wu had just ascended the throne and somehow he became a little late in conferring the title upon the Empress. The angry Empress hurled herself into a well situated at the palace courtyard and immediately she was transformed into a poisonous dragon and started exhaling smoke. This story, the story of Li Zheng and the story “Wang Yong” 《王用》 are similar in its approach towards the connection between human temperament and the miraculous act of transformation. They refer to the degradation of human beings from a realm of superior being to the realm of beastly beings.

The third category is about the transformation of a Dragon into a human being through magic in order to fulfill certain purpose. Such stories would be “Song Yun” 《宋雲》 from the *Luoyang Qielanji* 《洛陽伽藍記》 (written during the time of Eastern Wei dynasty 534-550 AD emperor Xiaojing), “Liu Yi” 《柳毅》 or “Dragon King's Daughter” taken from the Tang dynasty compilation *Yiwenji* 《異聞集》 written by Li Chaowei.

Professor Li Jianguo in his series class lectures delivered in the Chinese Language and Literature department of the National Taiwan University in 2012, February-July, discussed the transformation dragon stories elaborately. In the Chinese Buddhist classics, the stories of the Dragon maiden's gratitude first appeared in the translation *Jiuza Piyu Jing* 《舊雜譬喻經》 volume 21 by the monk named Wu Kang (*Taisho Tripitaka* 《舊雜譬喻經》 T04:206)¹⁴. This is a story where the Dragon maiden went on a trip and was

¹⁴For discussing the stories from the *Taisho Tripitaka* I have consulted the electronic sources from the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) (本資料庫由中華電子佛典協會). For discussing 《舊雜譬喻經》 I have followed this link - <<http://www.cbeta.org/result/T04/T04n0206.htm>>

tied down and tortured. The king saved her. So she taught the King the language of birds as a return for his kindness. In the 386 – *Kharsaputra Jataka* and number 543 *Bhuridatta Jatakas* exactly similar themes have been narrated by Bodhisattva. This kind of narration of the dragon maiden's kindness can also be found in the Buddhist Sutra translated by Gunabhadra (求那跋陀羅) and Faxian (法顯) during the Eastern Jin dynasty in 418 AD. The volume number 33 describes this story. Again volume number 43 of the sutra *Jinglu Yixiang* 《經律異相》 describes the same story under the title: “The Businessmen Drove the Cattle and Used it as Ransom to Dragon Maiden and Received Gold for His Relatives” 《商人驅牛以贖龍女得金奉親》. The story goes like this:

In Sravasti where Buddha lived, there was a big forest. A merchant was driving 8 cows. He was going to the northern country. On his way he saw a Lichhabi man carrying a dragon maiden by piercing its nose with a rope taking her away. He wished to kill and eat it. The merchant felt compassionate towards the dragon. He exchanged the dragon for his eight cows. The dragon maiden transformed herself into human being. She expressed her gratitude by recompensing his kindness. In the Palace of the Dragons, she gave the merchant eight cake-shaped gold chunks and said, “This is called dragon gold. This is enough for you, your parents and your family members' lifelong use.” When he cut off a section from the gold cake that the dragon maiden bestowed on him, it used to grow again and would restore to its original state. It was an inexhaustible treasure. (Translated by the author)

Stories having similar themes are recorded in the books like *Fayuan Zhulin* 《法苑珠林》 volume number 91, *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》 volume number 420, and “Zhujiang Yaoji” 《諸經要集》 volume number 6. In the *Taiping Guangji* this similar

story is titled, “Jumingguo” 《俱名国》 and it is clearly mentioned that this story has been taken from the *Fayuan Zhulin* 《法苑珠林》. So we can find that a specific theme is being adopted by the authors repeatedly and in several editions the theme had found its place. This also established the popularity of this theme. This particular image of dragon only represents the physical form of a dragon but it had adopted the characteristics of the *nagas* who cultivate noble virtues. The *nagas* were seen to have receiving *sila* from Bodhisattva in the *Jataka* stories. The *nagas* are also seen to cultivate the virtues of kindness, integrity and the knowledge of supernatural power. This was hugely appreciated by the Chinese authors and they merged the image with that of the indigenous dragon.

The Buddhist *sutras* also narrate the theme of love relation between the dragon maiden and the ordinary worldly human being. This theme was also greatly appreciated and adopted by the Chinese authors. The earliest document in which this story can be found is the *Jinglu Yixiang* 《經律異相》. The volume number 22 of this book has a story “The Novice Buddhist Monk Fell in Love with the Dragon Maiden and Was Born as a Dragon” 《沙彌於龍女生愛遂生龍中》. This narrates a tragic love relation between a monk and a dragon maiden. The dragon maiden fell in love with the monk by seeing his beautiful appearance. She invited him every day to have food at her home. The *arhat* teacher of the monk says,

She is not an honourable human lady. She has beastly origin. You are a young *arhat*. You have not yet attained enlightenment. You must be born in the *Daolitian* 忉利天 or the *Trāyastriṃśa* paradise. Or else will surpass that a hundred times. Don't take the means of any filthy thought. (Translated by the author)

The monk says that this dragon abode could rarely be found. The teacher said that this way he would go through three kinds of sufferings and would not obtain enlightenment. Thus when he scared him then the Monk thought about it all day and night and thereafter he died and his soul was reborn as a dragon. The marriage or for that matter the bridging of these two worlds is shown to be impossible.

All these dragon stories surprisingly echo the *naga-kings* or *naga-kanya* stories of the *Jatakas*. The connection between the *Jatakas* and the Chinese dragon stories can be traced back to the text *Da Tang Xi Yu Ji* 《大唐西域記》 by Xuan Zang (602-664). This text includes numerous references to the *Naga-king* or the *Longwang* 龍王 (can be translated into Chinese as the Dragon-king). This source text can link up the two traditions and can help to trace the transmission of the theme of the dragon maiden. Glen Dudbridge has translated the story (Hung, and Lau 69) and it narrates the marital alliance of *naga* maiden and a human being. There are also many more stories where *naga-kings* or the dragon kings 龍王 are pacified by the Buddhist monks. In the *Datang Xiyuji* 《大唐西域記》 volume one Book three, there is a story related to Luonan Gongzi and the dragon maiden who loved each other and also got married. This also has a theme of repaying kindness and showing gratitude in it.

This particular theme of showing gratitude can be traced back to the 524 number *Jataka* titled *Shankhapal Jataka* and 543 number *Bhuridatta Jataka*. In the *Shankhapal Jataka*, Shankhapal, the king of *Nagas*, started practicing *Śīla*. One day he was captured by the villagers who wanted to hunt him for his meat. He was brutally tied down. But then a person from Mithila, named Aalar saw this miserable situation and he rescued Shankhapala. Therefore the king of the *nagas* wanted to repay his kindness and took him

to the *nagaloka* and asked him to live there in abundant prosperity. But after a year Aalar wanted to follow Buddhism and live the life of renunciation. So he left for the Himalayas. This story represents the stories having the similar theme of paying gratitude. The *Jataka* number 154 *Uraga Jataka* describes similar theme. The *Bhuridatta Jataka* is thematically closer to the “Dragon King’s Daughter”. It narrates the story of a prince, Brahmadata kumar, who was practicing asceticism and eventually got married to a *naga*-maiden. They had two children, one son named Sagar Brahmadata and a daughter named Samudraja. They spent many years happily. Eventually the prince had to return to his kingdom to take the position of the king. The *Naga*-maiden could not follow him because they belonged to different worlds. According to the *Naga*-woman her temperament would be very different than that of human being and her anger can create problems in his life. So the *naga*-maiden decided to return to her own *naga*-world. In due course Samudraja also eventually got married to a *Naga*-King and Bhuridatta was born to her. The *Jataka* story narrates how Bhuridatta performed asceticism and followed Buddhist ways and in the long run he helped the *naga* race to adopt *Shila* and thus the entire race attained the supreme realm of heaven.

A similar theme of paying off gratitude and the bestowing of treasure can be found in the 8th century Tang dynasty chuanqi titled “Dragon King’s Daughter” (“Liuyi” 《柳毅》 is taken from the *Yiwenji* 《異聞集》). This is included in the *Taiping Guangji*. A story titled “The Imperial Guardsman” 《三衛》 taken from the volume number- 300 - ‘Supernatural – 10’ series (神十) of the compilation *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》 can be regarded as analogous to the story “Dragon King’s Daughter”. Actually taken from the now lost book *Guangyiji* 《廣異記》 this story is considered to have been assembled

during a period ending around 780 AD by Dai Fu (戴孚) (Hung, and Lau 64). The story narrates the story of a Dragon maiden who is the tormented wife of Mount Hua. She wished to inform her family about her condition. Therefore she took the help of this imperial guardsman and sent a letter to the Dragon King. However, after receiving the news from his daughter through the guardsman, the dragon king offered him two rolls of silk (worth 20,000 strings of cash each) as a token of gratitude. The Dragon King was able to punish Mount Hua and as a result the Dragon maiden was treated more affectionately and warmly by her husband. But Mount Hua was angry on the Imperial Guardsman for delivering the letter to the Dragon King. Therefore the Dragon maiden came to him to warn him about her husband's wrath and thus saved his life from him. Another analogous story is "A Man of Ruyin" 《汝陰人》 taken from the 'The Supernatural-11' 《神十一》 series of the compilation *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》. The translation of the story is done by Glen Dudbridge (Hung, and Lau 75). This story also talks about the contact between the dragon and the human world. This story particularly talks about marital alliance between a dragon maiden and a human being. The *Taiping Guangji* volume number 418 (Dragon-1) incorporates a story named "Zhenze Dong" 《震澤洞》 (originally taken from Tang dynasty collection of stories *Liangsi Gongji* 《梁四公記》). This story narrates the journey of the Luo Zichun brothers to the world of the dragons. The dragon women were protecting the pearls there. They were able to convince the dragon maidens and eventually got to know about the dragon world, their fears, strength and the ways to tame them. While coming back to the human world he was given abundant gifts of pearls by the dragon women. In the Hindu and Buddhist literature Pearls are one of the most sacred five jewels ruby, sapphire, pearl,

emerald and topaz. The gift of pearls reminds us of the *Jataka* stories where the kings are rewarded with treasure while coming back from the underworld. In the Hindu and Buddhist tradition, underworld is also considered to be the place of abundant treasure. We also get such references in the *Mahabharata*. While Bheema was returning from the *patala* the *Naga*-King Vasuki had gifted him with rich treasures.

According to the indigenous Chinese tradition the dragons are possessed with supernatural power and they belong to the other non-human world. They definitely help bring rain but human beings had always maintained a terrified distance from the world of the dragons. In some of the stories we can also find that the dragon maidens are drinking human blood. They can often afflict harm on them. After the advent of Buddhism in China when the influence of Buddhist *sutras* started affecting the Chinese strange tale traditions, then the indigenous dragon image of China got infused with the concept of *nagas* from the Chinese Buddhist tradition and received a new form of dragon. In the Buddhist tradition the *nagas* are shown to cultivate noble virtues. The Chinese Confucian social system had always placed emphasis on cultivating noble human virtues and showing responsibility and selfless intention towards the society. The world of the dragon seemed to be an aberration as they were completely different from human beings and never had cultivated human virtues. But the new concept of dragon was acknowledged because they had cultivated human virtues, had shown gratitude, had been respectful and responsive towards the human world. From the Tang dynasty onwards we will see that the difference between the dragon and the human worlds are accepted but an attempt to bridge the gap through communication had been established. Therefore the Dragon Maiden can approach Liu Yi for help and Liu Yi also had made a journey into the

dragon world. In the story “Zhenze Dong” also Luo Zichun brothers made a journey into the dragon world and had collected precious gifts from them. So in the beginning of the Six Dynasties, the dragons were portrayed to be strange and distant creatures having the power of inflicting people. But by the end of the Tang dynasty the dragon was represented to be a repository of the other worldly knowledge. After the advent of Buddhism and the circulation of Buddhist *sutras* an attempt to know, so far terrorizing, the other supernatural world of the dragon was made and this is where the Indian literary traditions were seen to have been influential to the Chinese literary tradition. Thus the Buddhist intellectual quest into the Chinese literary world had given rise to the spontaneous development of a rich and interesting theme of dragons.

Even in the Indian literary tradition we can find categorizations depicting different kinds of worlds. There are many stories regarding *nagas* in the Indian literary tradition¹⁵. In the *Kathasaritsagara* many mythical beings are mentioned. They are: Apsaras, Gana, *Naga*, Asura, Gandharva, Pisacha, Bhuta, Guhyaka, Rakshasa, Daitya, Kinnara, Siddha, Danava, Kumbhanda, Vetala, Dasyus, Kushmanda, Vidyadhara, Yaksha. All these supernatural beings can transform themselves into human beings. Sometimes they are also shown to be cursed by someone which resulted in their reincarnation as human

¹⁵ There are many stories about the origin of *nagas* and its enmity with Gadura. By pleasing Vishnu Gadura received a boon “May the snakes become my food” and the Gadura and the *Nagas* became enemies. The snakes also said to have been cheated about the nectar of immortality. The snakes in Patala were almost dead with fear of Gadura. The whole serpent race was almost destroyed. The story of Vasuki, Gadura, Jimutabahana, Sankhachuda all talk about the kingdom of *nagas* (snakes). It is interesting to note that in the well-known story of "Sindbad the Sailor" the roc is represented as attacking gigantic snakes. In the *Jatakas* collection there are many stories regarding the rivalry between *nagas* and Garuda (suparno). For example: *Uraga Jataka*. This *Jataka* addresses the age-old enmity between *nagas* and Suparno and tries to mitigate the rivalry by talking about the precious value of friendship. This particular motif of the enmity between the *nagas* and the Suparno can be traced back to the stories of Puranas. *Jatakas* have framed it in a new way to advocate friendship among all living animals.

being. After their due tenure for living on earth is over, they are again transformed back to the supernatural being. This mostly happens to *vidyadharas*. The translator and commentators have classified those under four headings. The world of the *nagas* falls under the category of the independent superhuman beings. They often mingle with mortals. In our discussion we have only talked about the Independent superhuman beings. *Nagas* or snake-gods dwelling in *Patala*, the underworld, in a city called Bhogavati. *Nagas* as Snake-gods attain recognition in the *Mahabharata*. The origin of the *Nagas* can be traced back to the story of Kadru and Kasyapa and their destruction through the sacrifice of Janamejaya. Some stories depict their reptilian character throughout. But in others the *nagas* retain human heads or torso.

Tawney elaborately discussed the serpent stories found in the *Arabian Nights*. We also find serpent story in the *Arabian Nights* (Burton V: 298) titled "The Queen of the Serpents" whose head alone is that of a human being, and the sub-story, "The Adventures of Bulukiya," where Solomon and his ring are guarded by fiery serpents (Somedeva I:204). It is also said that the origin of the *nagas* was probably a primitive hill tribe of Northern India (Somedeva I: 204). The story of Gunadhya, the writer of the *Brhatkatha*, also talks about the *Nagas* (Somedeva I: 61). Gunadhya, the author of the *Brhatkatha*, was thus said to be a *Naga-Brahman* half-breed by birth. So C. H. Tawney, the editor-translator of *Kathasaritsagara* says about Gunadhya, "If so [that he is a *Naga-Brahman* half-breed], he could imbibe quite as many non-Aryan as Aryan folk-tales and ideas in his childhood." It is possible that the story in the *Kathasaritsagara* had arisen as it was inconvenient for the Brahmans of Somadeva's date to allow that anyone but one of themselves had originally collected the Great Tale. We also see that in *Kathasaritsagara*

the queen Vasavadatta, out of regard to the princess, made for her unfading garlands and forehead-streaks, as the King of Vatsa had previously taught her; and King of Vatsa, had acquired the art from the snake Vasunemi, whom he had rescued from a Savara (Somedeva I:100).

We notice that the transformation into an animal is a common motif in classical Sanskrit and Buddhist literature. Interestingly a basic difference between these two kinds of stories is the reversibility and the irreversibility of the transformations. The Chinese stories mostly have irreversible transformation. But in Indian stories the transformations are hardly irreversible. The protagonist always finds a way to free himself from the magic spell. This is how these stories mostly have a happy ending and churn the fantasy and imagination of the readers. We can also see the intimate connection between the temperament of the protagonist and the animal he is turned into. The arrogant quarrelsome *vidyadhara* was transformed into a lion. Lion is an animal that symbolizes pride and aggressiveness. Similarly we see such examples also in Chinese strange tales like “Li Zheng”, “Wang Yong” and the story of Huang Miao etc. We also see the connection between the object craved for ardently and the animal the protagonist is transformed into. For example, the *vidyadhara* was craving for a bird and he was transformed into one. We also find that the ascetic who scared the friend with the snake was turned into a snake himself. This kind of transformation we also find in the Chinese strange tales. The woman who loved horse was reincarnated as one (“Zhang Quan” 《張全》 from the *Cattle series* III from the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》). It was like realizing the significance of the crime by turning the protagonist into one such animal. This is how retribution by heaven or by the supernatural forces is framed in both the

Chinese and the Indian traditions. All these transformations mostly humanize the animals by setting up a means to connect with each other's conscience at some point. Hereby I will also like to refer to the Buddhist's idea of the omnipresent existence of Buddha in all living creatures. Thereafter importance is placed on all.

When we look at all the categories of transformation stories together, we find that these transformation stories basically represent a historical narrative of contact and influence between two civilizational countries. Their spontaneous contact and affinity contributed to the rise of this theme of 'transformation'. The Indian intellectual and spiritual journey to China was perpetuated by the confluence of Indian and Chinese literary traditions. Through the transformation stories we can see that although the animal has retained its non-human, beastly body as depicted in the Chinese indigenous story traditions, but its spirit has obtained an Indian form. Its psychological and emotional activities are essentially Indian. The Buddhist ideas had always asked to cultivate *sila* or noble virtues. Hinduism also depicted a similar idea, that human beings should always cultivate noble deeds or good *karma* in order to escape rebirth and attain *moksha*. The Confucian moral system also advocated such thought where selfless activities were emphasized and cultivating humanly virtues were encouraged. The inanimate, non virtuous world of the animal kingdom was completely segregated from the human world. But with the advent of Buddhist ideas where animals are also shown to have complicated psychological activities, the strange story tradition reformed the stories. The transmission of the Buddhist idea helped to awaken the conscience of the self within the dehumanized forms in the Chinese stories. This way the transformation of human beings into animals or vice

versa also represented an extremely important evolution of a literary theme that will eventually find its best expressions in the Song and the Ming dynasty literature.

The Indian literary tradition was much more flexible with regard to the human existence, the survival and the ways of life of the people. The transformation of the form and the transition from one life to the other or from one state to another state were a never-ending process. This transition had vividly professed the idea that the human life is essentially illusory and the transition or the transformation is a constant process. This idea migrated to China through Buddhism and the merging of the indigenous strange tale tradition. The Buddhist ideas not only created these new genres but several new themes were also introduced. One such theme- the motif of 'devouring' will be discussed in the next chapter. With the idea of life as illusory and the notion of impermanence as the only truth Buddhism entered China in order to advocate the strength of the Dharma. The next chapter defines this omnipresence of the Dharma in all the spheres of human life. The next chapter will also elaborate how the all-engulfing Dharma became an integrated part of the Chinese literary tradition.

Chapter Six

Motif of ‘Devouring’

In this chapter I am going to discuss the motif of ‘Devouring’ as described in some of the Chinese stories and which can be found in the Indian story tradition as well. ‘Devouring’ is an uncommon motif found in the strange stories from China. China already had a very strong strange tale tradition. The strange motif of devouring, therefore, matched the taste of the popular psyche and their aesthetic demand. Studying the intricate complexity of the assimilation of these two cultures around this motif of ‘Devouring’, is a rather difficult task and over-simplification should always be consciously avoided. Confucian ideology had always emphasized on history and factual incidents. The evolution of strange tales therefore was not an easy task in China. The testimonial element at the end of each story attempts to prove the truth or the reality of the event and this particular trait merged the separating borders of history and fiction and this is where the Indian Buddhist stories are different from the Chinese strange tales. With these twelve stories taken from Buddhist sutras, the Chinese literature and the Indian literature, we will conduct a comparative thematic study that will reveal the equivalent literary phenomena of these two civilizations and their spontaneous interliterary contacts. Through this study we can trace the aesthetic and intellectual intentions that originally had transmitted to China from India and became an integrated part of the Chinese literary tradition.

In order to execute this study I will be discussing the original *Jataka* story (*Samugga Jataka*-3rd century BC approximately) in which the earliest trace of this motif can be found. Then I will see how this specific motif had been carried over to the major Buddhist texts like *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* 《舊雜譬喻經》, *Samadhi Sagara Sutra* 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》. We will also examine the analogous stories in the *Taisho Tripitaka* and will see how they still retained their Indian flavor but eventually in the course of time the theme was sinicized. In the *Taiping Guangji* stories – “The Scholar from Yang-hsien” 《陽羨書生》, “Zhang Ding” 《張定》, “Hu Meier” 《胡媚兒》, “The Head of Ju Yan Tribe” 《居延部落主》, “Pan, the Old Man” 《潘老人》, “Hou Yu” 《侯適》, “The Master of The Kettle” 《壺公》, the plots get a realistic and convincing Chinese environment. In these stories the protagonist is no more a Buddhist monk, but s/he is turned into a scholar or a Daoist priest or a magician. After discussing these stories we will also discuss a 10th Century Sanskrit story of two Brahmin brothers, taken from the *Kathasaritsagara*. In the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* 《舊雜譬喻經》 (from the Taisho Tripitaka), the story of the Brahmin was a sub-plot. But in the *Kathasaritsagara* the sub-plot took the form of the main story. In the story, the Buddhist essence is missing but the motif from the *Jataka* story and the sub-plot from the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* 《舊雜譬喻經》 survived.

I will start this discussion with a Chinese story that had always drawn serious attention from the scholars working on the India-China literary and cultural relations. Lu Xun in his book *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* discussed this particular story in great detail (Hsun 52-53). The story is titled 《陽羨書生》 - The Scholar of Yang Xian. This story

has been translated by many and one of them is Chris Connery. This translation titled “The Scholar from Yang-hsien” is included in the book *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* by Karl Kao. “The Scholar from Yang-hsien” taken from the *Sequel to the Book of Continuous Harmony* 《續齊諧記》 (Taiping Guangji series number 284) is written by Wu Jun 吳均 (469-520 A.D.). Wu Jun 吳均 was the historian and literati of the Southern Liang dynasty (502–587 AD) and he wrote a *Sequel to the Book of Continuous Harmony* 《續齊諧記》¹ which still exists but has been re-edited repeatedly. From Lu Xun’s *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* we come to know that Wu Jun was a native of Gu Zhang country 故鄣 of Wu Xing 吳興 province. During the first quarter of the 6th century he became the secretary of Wu Xing. Wu Jun was a great poet with a distinctive style and he had many imitators. His tales and anecdotes have a distinct literary flavour and were widely used as allusions by the Tang and the Song dynasty scholars. The story ‘The Scholar from Yang-hsien’ 《陽羨書生》 that is discussed here is claimed to be one of his best stories. This particular story mostly received its main theme from important Buddhists sutras and their adaptations.

The intervention of the supernatural elements is to be noticed in this story. The story named ‘The Scholar from Yang-hsien’ 《陽羨書生》 taken from the *Sequel to the Book of Continuous Harmony* (《續齊諧記》) reveals the journey of Xu Yan of Yangxian country during Eastern Jin dynasty (東晉, 317–420 AD). On his way he met a scholar lying by the roadside. The scholar requested Xu Yan to take him inside the goose cage he was carrying and he entered the cage. Neither the cage nor the scholar changed

¹*Book of Continuous Harmony* 《齊諧記》 in seven books is written by Dōngyáng Wúyí 東陽無疑, a court officer of the kingdom of Song

their shape. Yan carried the cage and never even felt that it was heavy. On the way, while taking rest under the tree, the scholar came out of the cage. They wished to have food together. So from his mouth, the scholar spat out one copper plate inside a box. Inside the box there were several heavenly, rare and delicious food, brought from all kinds of places like different seas and lands. Then the scholar revealed that he had already been carrying one woman with him and he spat out a beautiful young woman from his mouth. She joined the banquet with them. Very soon the scholar was drunk and fell asleep. Then the woman said to Yan that she harboured unfaithful intentions in her mind and all along she had also been carrying one man with her stealthily. Then she also spat out one man from her mouth. When the scholar was about to wake up, the woman spat out one embroidered screen to guard the man from the scholar. In the absence of the woman the man disclosed to Yan that he had also been carrying one woman with him stealthily. Then the man also spat out one woman from his mouth. After a while, hearing the sound of the scholar's movements, the man caught hold of his secret beloved and kept her back inside his mouth. As the scholar was about to wake up, the woman came out from the scholar's side and immediately swallowed the man and sat with Yan alone. Then the scholar came out and swallowed the woman. He also kept all the copper utensils inside the mouth. Only one he left with Yan as a token of gratitude.

Till here the story mostly followed the Buddhist theme. The testimonial quality of the story begins here with the token of gratitude and it attempts to prove the reality and the authenticity of the event. The authors of the strange tales used to do this in order to accommodate the stories into the Confucian tradition. So here too, it is said that the historical documents say that during the Taiyuan period (太元 376-396 A.D.), Xu Yan

served as an adviser in the Imperial Library and he showed the copper plate to Minister Zhang San. Zhang San discovered from the inscription that the plate was designed in the 3rd year of Yong Ping 永平 (A.D. 60) of the Eastern Han dynasty. Yan was a person belonging to the Taiyuan period of the Eastern Jin Dynasty. He was a government official holding high post in the Han dynasty Imperial Library of Lan Tai. This information historically proves the existence of the event as it happened during the 1st century A.D. – the historically remarkable period when the Han dynasty was falling apart and the Buddhist ideas were invading the Chinese homogenous minds. “The Scholar from Yang-hsien” is an iconic story containing the motif of devouring and swallowing at its center. In his book Karl Kao said termed this motif as “The container as the contained.” (Kao 162-163). He also said that the souvenir motif actually represents the indigenous Chinese story pattern where each story contains a testimonial quality. The similarity of this story and the Buddhist stories described in the Buddhist sutras are remarkable. The Chinese story or the series of stories on the same theme, parallel to these two, are found in *Tai-Ping Imperial Encyclopedia (Taiping Guangji)*.

The story “The Scholar from Yang-hsien” is an adaptation of a Buddhist parable that could be found in the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* 《舊雜譬喻經》. The basic motif of this story of course can be traced back to the *Jatakas*. In the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* 《舊雜譬喻經》, the Brahmin conjures up a pot and a girl came out of the pot and again when the Brahmin was asleep she spat out another man from her mouth. As the Brahmin woke up, the people disappeared into each other’s mouths the same way as they had appeared. The Chinese scholar critic Tuan Chen-Shih said that Wu Jun (The author of “The Scholar from Yang-hsien”) read this story somewhere and adopted it in his own

way. Lu Xun also mentions (Hsun 53-54) this story and says that the Buddhist parable which the author has in mind, can be found in the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* 《舊雜譬喻經》, translated by Kang Seng-hui in the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 A.D.). With reference to this particular story, he again mentions the description of Buddha in the *Samadhi Sagara Sutra* 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》. In both these Buddhist scriptures we get reference to this particular motif of ‘Devouring’. In the following paragraphs I will discuss the stories from the Buddhist scriptures and eventually will analyse their adaptation in the Chinese stories.

The *Samadhi Sagara Sutra* 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》 volume number 7 (卷第七) has this passage titled 《東晉天竺三藏佛陀跋陀羅譯》 –“The Tripitaka of the Indian Subcontinent Translated by Buddhahadra² in the Eastern Jin (317 AD-420 AD)”. Here it is said that Buddha changed himself into five hundred Vehicles of Jewels (寶車). In each Buddhist Vehicle, Buddha divided his body into five hundred parts. Each center of each wheel emits a hundred thousand rays. It is described this way –“One by one each of the countless rays is turning into Buddha... Each of Buddha’s pores of hair is emitting the image of Buddha.”(*Taisho Tripitaka* 15:643)³. It is further narrated that the image of Buddha was again returning to his pores. This way, by entering and exiting, the images of Buddha filled the air. Countless transformed Buddhas were sitting in the lotus position. Here it is said that each of the myriad rays of light that was emitting from Buddha’s hair, had contained an image of Buddha practicing Truth and each of the images was identical

²Buddhabhadra (359-429 AD) was an Indian Buddhist monk. He translated many Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese. He is said to be translator of the first Chinese translation of the Avatamsaka Sūtra (Flower Ornament Scripture) in the 5th century.

³ For the work 《東晉天竺三藏佛陀跋陀羅譯》 in original Chinese I have consulted this website of CBETA and have followed this link - <http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T15/0643_007.htm>

with Buddha himself. In all this Buddha's hair grows neither shorter nor longer (Hsun 53-54). We must not ignore the basic idea depicted through this imagery. It refers to the infinite space within a limited space - the accumulation of enormous power and infinite possibility in a microcosmic world.

With the advent of Buddhism in China during 1st century AD, several scriptures were being translated. This particular ability to store people or other objects is a Buddhist element mostly found in the Buddhist sutras. During the Wei and Qin dynasty, Buddhist scriptures were being translated and it continued till the Indian miraculous tales spread throughout China. Scholars enjoyed these stories so much, that they adopted them consciously or unconsciously until the tales underwent complete sinification. The eminent scholar, Kenneth Ch'en (Mair, *Transformation Texts* 50) provided the Chinese equivalent and the English explanations of the Sanskrit terms that pervade the whole body of the Buddhist sutras to define the kind of 'changes' or the 'transformations' taking place. Some interesting equivalents are provided here and these are relevant to our discussion of the selected stories. A list of different kinds of ability is provided here. In the following discussion, the relevant stories will be described in this respect to show the nature of the transformation.

Sanskrit	English
<i>Vidarsana</i>	Ability to cause beings in all the <i>gatis</i> [state of sentient existence], Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Devas, to be seen

<i>Sarva-rupa-kaya-pravesana</i>	Ability to store up swarms of people, mountains or earth within the body
<i>Vastiva-karana</i>	Ability to cause living creatures to become subject to his will

In this chapter, I will be using the second category *Sarva-rupa-kaya-pravesana* as a literary category to study the stories thematically. The motif we are discussing, highlights the *Sarva-rupa-kaya-pravesana* transformation which indicates the ability to store swarms of people, mountains or earth within the human body. This theme depicts the transformation of this nature as the scholar or the Brahmins were able to store food and women in their bodies.

The 436 no. Buddhist *Jataka* named *Samugga Jataka* (Ghose 3:299) and the Chinese Buddhist story *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* 《舊雜譬喻經》 (translated into Chinese from the Buddhist scriptures by Kang Senghui⁴ and here I have taken it from the *Taisho Tripitaka*⁵) contain this specific motif. After discussing these stories, we will see that some of the Chinese stories from the *Taiping Guangji* and *Taiping Yulan* also possess the

⁴Kang contributed to the diffusion and translation of Buddhist sutras into the Chinese language

⁵ The *Taishō Tripitaka* (大正新脩大藏經 *Dàzhèng Xīnyīu Dàzàngjīng*) is a classic edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon edited by Takakusu Junjiro and others. It has Japanese commentaries used by scholars in the 20th century. Volumes 1–85 incorporate the literature. Volumes 86–97 include Buddhism related drawings. Drawings of many Buddhas and bodhisattvas can be seen in it. The 85 volumes of literature contains 5,320 individual texts like Āgamas - 阿含部 *Āhán bù*, *Jatakas* or 本緣部 *Běnyuán bù*, Prajñāpāramitā sutra (般若部), SadDharma Pundarika or The Lotus Sutra (法華部), Avatamsaka (華嚴部), Ratnakuta (寶積部), Nirvana (涅槃部), Mahasannipata (大集部), Sutrassannipata (經集部), Tantra (密教部), Vinaya (律部), AbhiDharma (毗曇部), Madhyamaka (中觀部類), Yogacara (瑜伽部類), Sastra (論集部) and so on. The Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) edition contains volumes 1–55 and 85.

motif of 'devouring or swallowing objects and human beings' but with time as their search for equivalence was stretched, the stories gradually took proper Chinese form. They will be mentioned and discussed following the chronology of their composition. Thereafter, an Indian story from the *Kathasaritsagara* by Somedevabhata will be discussed on the one hand, and on the other hand the Chinese stories possessing this motif of devouring or swallowing along with a few variations will be analyzed. It will be shown how the theme of a Buddhist strange or miracle tale is received with a deferential hospitality in China and thereafter changes its Indian characteristics according to the changing cultural atmosphere. The basic structure or the motif however, remains the same.

The *Jataka* story is 436 no. *Jataka* named *Samugga Jataka*. The tale is about an *asura* (demon) who used to come to Bodhisattva - the Great Being (who after forgoing sinful pleasures entered the Himalayas and embraced religious life) to listen to the Buddhist laws and teachings. But actually this demon used to expose his demonic nature by devouring the passersby in the forest. Once he abducted a noble lady and married her. In order to safeguard her from the public eye, he locked her up in a box and hid the box in his stomach. One day before taking his bath, he spat out the box from his stomach and kept it for a while in the open air. Meanwhile the lady in the box managed to seduce the son of *Vayu* and hid him in the box with her. While the demon visited Bodhisattva he discovered the truth. He understood that as soon as the demon would open the box the son of *Vayu* would try to kill the demon. Bodhisattva revealed this truth and endowed him with the knowledge of impermanence of everything. The demon realized his futile effort to protect the women. He left his past demonic life and Bodhisattva initiated him to

the five moral precepts. The story mainly proposes to teach about women. The stereotypical portrayal of women is not new in the religious scriptures. But hereby we will only look at the particular motif of ‘swallowing’ human beings and in the next stories we shall only focus on that aspect. This is even more so because before Wu Jun 吳均 (469-520 A.D.), a motif like this was never seen in the Chinese literary domain. This particular incident makes the tracing of the motif throughout the literary body even more significant.

One of the major sources having the theme of protecting women and the act swallowing and spitting out in order to safeguard women, can be traced back to the *Samyukta-Avadana Sutra - Jiuza Piyu Jing* 《舊雜譬喻經》 taken from the *Taisho Tripitaka* Vol. 4, No. 206⁶. This story has been translated into Chinese by Kang Senghui (康僧會 died 280 AD). In this collection the story number eighteen has been translated by me and is presented in the appendix (Appendix III: 282-284). The story is about a King who was strongly protective about his women. But the queen, who had never seen the kingdom well, wished to go out. At the repeated request of the queen, the crown prince conveyed her wish to the king. On the king’s approval, the crown prince himself drove the chariot. But when a flock of officials on the road welcomed her bowing, the queen stretched out her hand to pull back the curtain, thus allowing people to observe her. The crown prince was extremely disappointed at the behaviour of his queen-mother and wondered about the morality of the other women in the world. He abandoned the state and went into the mountains to travel and see the world. There he saw a solitary Brahmin who after taking

⁶ For the 18th story of the work 《舊雜譬喻經 1:206》 in original Chinese I have consulted this website of CBETA and have followed this link : <http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T04/0206_001.htm>

bath in a pool ate food and then performed a trick. He spewed a pot out. Inside the pot there was a woman with a screen so that they have a place to be in. Thereafter when the Brahmin went to sleep, the women also repeated the trick. She spat out a pot. There was a young man inside it. They slept together. Once they woke up, she swallowed the young man along with the pot. In a jiffy the Brahmin arose. Once again, he put the woman in the pot. After swallowing it, he picked up his staff and walked off. Observing all this the crown prince returned to the state and informed the King. The King invited the Brahmin and ministers to come before him. The Brahmin (here addressed as 道人 – the Daoist priest) was exposed before all and then the Brahmin’s wife was also exposed (Appendix III:283). It was all executed in order to prove that the women were adulterous and untrustworthy without an exception and the utter futility of trying to protect women. Like most of the Indian Buddhist stories, this story also illustrates the fragility of women’s morality and her unfaithfulness. In order to establish this moral aspect of women, the sub-plot - ‘swallowing human beings and objects’ has been added to the main story. Miraculous events and supernatural intervention is an integrated part of Buddhist sutras. The stories are narrated in such a way that makes the audience feel that the supernatural intervention is a mundane and regular aspect of human life. This sub-plot illustrates our focus on the ‘swallowing’ motif and echoes the Chinese story “The Scholar from Yanghsien”. Both of these stories can be explained with reference to the literary category of *Sarva-rupa-kaya-pravesana*. The ability to store people and objects has been depicted here, thus introducing a thematically new trend within the strange tale tradition.

This particular motif of the ability to store people or other objects is an inseparable part of Buddhist sutras. Again the *Za Piyu Jing* 《雜譬喻經》 - Volume no. 1, story number 7

(taken from the *Taisho Tripitaka* Vol. 4, No. 205) includes this story which illustrates a novice young monk's ability to swallow food⁷. This story describes the endeavour of the other religions to defeat Buddhism from the kingdom of Ashoka. In order to do so, one Brahmin who was adept in transforming things with magic tricks took the shape of the scariest ghost Maheshwara. He met the king. And then he wanted to eat the Buddhist *sramanas* because they don't benefit the king by working in the field, or in the army or by serving in the court as officials. Then a thirteen year old *bhikshu* named Duanzheng – 'The Rectified One' came to confront the king and the ghost. But before being eaten up by the ghost (supernatural being) the novice monk asked the king for a full meal to satisfy his stomach. The king prepared one huge dining hall for him and the Buddhist monk ate a meal meant for twenty thousand people all by himself. He put all the food inside his mouth. Still he was not full. Then he swallowed those twenty thousand Brahmins. The Brahmins were defeated and became his disciples (Appendix III:284-286). This story was to prove the omnipresence of the Maha (great)-overflowing ocean of Dharma. This all-engulfing existence of the Dharma is the focus of this story. In this context, we can also refer to Hindu mythology. In one of the thousands of mythical stories it is said that Lord Krishna's mother Yashoda could see the entire universe inside the child Krishna's mouth. The significance of this event is to prove that all creatures of the universe are part of Krishna. He is the infinite universe, without a beginning or an end. In this Buddhist story also, the novice monk devours everything. This signifies that everything he devours is a part of him or the Dharma only. This supernatural act of devouring and storing enormous food inside a mortal body is the motif we are dealing with.

⁷ For the story of the work 《雜譬喻經 1:205》 in original Chinese I have consulted this website of CBETA and have followed this link : <http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T04/0205_001.htm>

In these three Buddhist stories we find a similarity depicting the literary category *Sarva-rupa-kaya-pravesana* that they use the same motif of swallowing and storing human beings and objects inside the stomach. Curiously, in any of the stories the shapes and the forms of the human beings or objects are never noticed to have changed and it is rather strongly emphasized that they don't change the shapes and the forms. This nature of 'no-transformation' is indeed interesting.

In this context we can bring the philosophy that works behind the motif of devouring. In order to analyze this kind of supernatural acts, we can refer to the *Lotus Sutra*. In a strange tale, the space of supernaturalism reinforces the idea of liberation. In the *Lotus Sutra* Chapter 12, the Bodhisattva Accumulated Wisdom says, "I have observed that in the [whole] world there is not even a spot as small as a mustard seed where [the Buddha] has not laid down body and life as a bodhisattva for the sake of the living." (Reeves Introduction). So we find, the Buddhist doctrine has given the freedom to feel infinity in a little mustard seed. That sense of liberation can also be related to supernaturalism as it is the point where the mundane becomes extraordinary and it can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. The Buddhist doctrines and the supernatural stories are not meant for a radical transformation of the hearer or reader of the Sutra. Chapter 19 of the Lotus sutra talks about supernatural powers which anyone who is taught the *Dharma-Flower-Sutra*, can embrace. These powers include the power of the senses as well as powers of the mind⁸(Kumārajīva, Kubo, and Yuyama 252). These fantastic powers have provided the

⁸"In short, although they do not have the divine faculty of hearing, they will always hear and know everything both within and beyond the great manifold cosmos, through the purified, natural bodily ears given by their parents. They distinguish all these various sounds and yet their faculty of hearing remains unharmed." *The Lotus Sutra*, (Taishō Volume 9, Number 262), Translated from the Chinese of Kumārajīva, by Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama.

readers with that space where they find liberation, liberation from mundane and ordinary events. The doctrine of the “Universal Buddha-nature” depicts metaphysical doctrine which is also called the doctrine of universal liberation, and it is the core teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*. The Sutra is comprised of many fantastic and supernatural stories about the holy or supernatural power of Buddha and various bodhisattvas. These stories in the *Lotus Sutra* are greatly imaginative and they cannot be regarded as history or descriptions of factual matters, or stories about actual historical events. The readers are completely aware that they are casting away the ordinary and are entering a realm of imaginary world. This philosophical aspect only can explain the omnipresent existence of the smaller worlds into the bigger ones. The devouring motif expresses the idea of the ‘container as contained’. It refers to the existence of a greater world inside smaller worlds. In a similar way the greatness and the immense potentiality of Buddha also resides in the ordinary human being and even in the speck of a dust. This is how the idea of devouring can be explained.

Now we will examine some more Chinese stories having similar motifs in the Chinese literary tradition. We will look at them following the chronology of when they were composed. In these stories similar plots are built up but they all undergo some transmutations. The first story that we will discuss can be found in the book *Taiping Yulan*⁹. Volume 737 of the *Taiping Yulan* incorporates a story named “The Foreign Master” from the book *Ling Gui Zhi* 《靈鬼志》 (written during the Six Dynasties)

⁹ The *Taiping Yulan* (太平御覽), translated as the Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era, is a leishu encyclopedia compiled by a number of officers commissioned by the imperial court of the Song dynasty. The lead editor was Li Fang from 977 to 983 during the era of Taiping Xingguo. It is divided into 1,000 volumes and 55 sections, which consisted of about 4.7 millions Chinese characters. –source : Wikipedia

which describes a foreign man, an “Enlightened One” in the 12th year of Tai Yuan reign (376-397). He could swallow knives, belch fire and spit pearls, jade, gold and silver. Lu Xun also mentioned this story in his book. He says that perhaps this is the original story that Wu Jun may have read and the famous “The Scholar of Yang–hsien” is an adaptation of this story. This story “A Foreign Master” translated by Michael Broschat was included in the book *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* (Kao 122-123). He also said that he had learned the skills from laymen but not from any Buddhist priest (*Sramana*). The story describes a man who was carrying a load over his shoulders balanced on a carrying pole. A small basket having the capacity of one litre was there on top of it. To everyone’s surprise, the foreign man could fit himself into the basket easily. The basket became neither bigger, nor heavier, nor did the foreign man turn any smaller. The bearer, thereafter, invited the foreign man to eat with him. But the foreign man said that he had his own food and there was enough space for the utensils, food and drink inside the basket. He did not wish to come out. Then he coughed and a beautiful young girl of about twenty years came out and they began to eat together. The foreign man thereafter fell asleep. Then the girl turned to the bearer and said that she had a lover with her who she would like to invite to have food together. She also requested the bearer not to disclose this secret to the magician husband when he woke up. Then she produced a young man from her mouth and ate food together. The bearer saw that even when there are three people inside it, the basket was no wider than it was before. As soon as the magician was waking up, the girl swallowed her secret lover instantly. Then the magician also swallowed the girl and the utensils as well. This part of the story is analogous to the *Samugga Jataka* and the sub-plot of the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra - Jiuza Piyu Jing* 《舊

雜譬喻經》 which describes the story of the Brahmin and his unlawful wife. Now if the above-mentioned tales are observed chronologically, it can be seen that the original *Jataka* story can be traced back to the 3rd century BC (which is the date of all the *Jataka* stories discussed). Then the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* stories can be traced back to the 2nd-3rd century AD. This is the time when the Buddhist scriptures and doctrines were flowing into the mainland in the form of the translated texts and also through orature along with the Buddhists monks, the pilgrims and the court messengers. The story of the Brahmin in the first story is assumed to have its origin in the 1st century. In the earliest versions of *Jataka* or *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra* story, the protagonist is a Brahmin, but in the course of time and during its journey over the century, the Brahmin evidently began to lose his Indian identity. Earlier I had discussed two marvel tales (*Zhiguai*) “The Scholar from Yang-hsien” and “The Foreign Master” from the Six Dynasties (222-589 AD) Chinese marvel tale tradition. It can be noticed that over the centuries, the Brahmin character (from the *Samyukta–Avadana Sutra*) has been transformed. In the Tai Yuan reign (376-397) the character was recognized in the Chinese phenomenon as a foreign master with strange skills. And just afterwards during Wu Jun’s 吳均 (469-520 A.D.) time this same character was transformed into a scholar from the Tai Yuan Period. The scholar in the Chinese society and the Brahmin in the Indian society used to share similar hierarchic situations. The Chinese psyche automatically transferred the strange and unfamiliar identity of a Brahmin and a foreign Master to a Confucian scholar. This story is a good example of the procedure of how an Indian story belonging to the Buddhist tradition loses its native identity and gets adapted to the Chinese culture. In the search of equivalence the identity of the protagonist is transformed. The strange motif of

“devouring” found its ground in the Chinese soil through the character of a Confucian scholar. The details of the first story described above are provided with the consecutive steps in which it got transformed from an Indian story into a Chinese tale over the centuries.

In the *Taiping Guangji* several such stories are incorporated in which this particular motif of *Sarva-rupa-kaya-pravesana*— the swallowing and storing up of huge objects or people in a miniscule container, is described. The container who/which contains the human beings/objects can be either a human body or an inanimate object. So far I have selected six stories having this particular motif of “devouring”. I will be discussing these stories and will point out a similar motif present in all of them. Examining these stories will reveal how over the centuries this Buddhist motif took various forms and expressed itself in the most extraordinary and diversified ways imaginable. These stories are all taken from the *Taiping Guangji* (TPGJ). The Volume 12 incorporates a story named “Hu Gong- The Master of the Kettle” 《壺公》 originally taken from the book *Shenxian Zhuan* 《神仙傳》 written by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-363 AD) of the Jin dynasty. Then we have already discussed the story from the volume number 284 named “The Scholar from Yang Hsien” 《陽羨書生》, taken from - the *Book of Continuous Harmony* 《續齊諧記》 written by Wu Jun (469-520 AD). Volume number 286 contains a story named “Hu Mei'er” 《胡媚兒》 originally taken from the *Hedongji* 《河東記》 (written during the Tang dynasty) (Appendix III:295). Volume number 368 contains the story named “The Head of the Juyan Tribe” 《居延部落主》 originally taken from the Tang dynasty book *Xuanguailu* 《玄怪錄》 (Appendix III:289), Volume number 75 has the story named

“Pan, the Old Man” 《潘老人》 (Appendix III:286), originally taken from the ancient Han dynasty legendary collection of stories *Yuanhua ji* 《原化記》 (written during the Tang dynasty). Volume number 400 has the story named “Hou Yu” 《侯適》 (Appendix III:288) originally taken from the Tang dynasty book *Xuanguailu* 《玄怪錄》. The volume number 74 belonging to the Daoist-Magic series (《道術四》) contains a story named “Zhang Ding” 《張定》 (Appendix III:292). This story is taken from *Xianchuan Shiyi* 《仙傳拾遺》 written during the Five Dynasties (907-979 AD). We will be discussing these stories following their chronology and will see how diverse their pattern might become after journeying through centuries of social and political changes. These changes in the stories will exhibit how without any external oppressive force, the gradual sinification of the motif occurred spontaneously. The authors of the strange tales found this motif intriguing and made this motif an integrated part of their story which might have existed earlier also. For example, in the stories “Hu Gong- The Master of the Kettle” 《壺公》 and the “Hou Yu” 《侯適》, the “container as contained” (or devouring) motif is used just as a sub-plot. The interpolation of the new sub-plot of ‘devouring’ just helped to expand the imagination of the readers. In the other stories the author used the basic idea of the motif of ‘devouring’ and used them in the story in the best way possible.

According to chronology, we will discuss the story titled “Hu Gong” (The Master of the Kettle) taken from the *Shenxianzhuan* 《神仙傳》 (Biography of the Immortals) by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-363 AD). This is also a story that contains the motif of fitting in huge objects in a small container. The story has been translated by me and is included in the

appendix (Appendix I:262-267). In this story the Daoist priest Hu Gong Fu (The master of the kettle who knows Daoist magic) could summon all kinds of heavenly soldiers¹⁰, ghost gods, immortals, and also could cure illness. While Gong was selling medicines that cure all disease then Runan country's man Fei Chang Fang (費長房) saw Gong and also found that he often hung one empty kettle from the roof of the room. After the sun had gone down, Gong used to leap inside the kettle. Only Chang Fang staying on the upper floor could see that. Knowing that Gong is not an ordinary person, Chang Fang served him sincerely every day. Upon proving himself, Fang was told by the Daoist master that he can follow him inside the kettle – “The moment I leap inside the kettle, you watch and learn from me, and you will naturally be able to enter inside.”(Appendix I:263). Chang Fang did accordingly and as a result he did not even realize when he entered the kettle. Then Fang saw that it did not look like a kettle. He only saw the world of the underground palace of ghouls. In the magnificent palace, there were a number of gates and corridors. Everywhere around Gong there were tens of servants. Finally Gong also revealed to Fang that he was a Daoist Immortal. Formerly he used to work as an official in heaven. He was penalized as he did not do his work diligently. Therefore he was banished from the court and was placed among human beings.

In all the other stories the world inside the small container (be it a cage or human stomach or bottle gourd or colored glass bottle) was brought outside and became an integrated part of the real world and when the time came the world again merged into the container. The Daoist priest made Fang feel that entire infinity within a little kettle. Parallely in other stories also we will see a similar situation. In this story we see that the

¹⁰As depicted by Daoism, the Daoist masters can call supernatural heavenly soldiers in order to assist in the battle

world hidden inside the kettle could not be brought outside. But the protagonists went inside the kettle to live in that world of the kettle. This motif of containing a huge object or human being into an apparently small space alludes to the Buddhist motif of containing everything and all in a speck of dust.

This question is further addressed when we find similar kinds of stories written over centuries in the forms of *Zhiguai* and *Chuanqi* fictions. These stories illustrate the same motif of fitting a huge object effortlessly in a smaller space. For example, the story “Pan, the Old Man” taken from *Yuanhuaqi* 《原化記》 by Liu Zongyuan (773–819 AD) written during Tang Dynasty also illustrates the same motif. In this story the old man named Pan takes shelter in an empty and wrecked small house adjacent to a Shaolin Temple at night. He was seen by the monks of the monastery to enjoy a sumptuous meal and nice drink. The room was magnificently decorated with emerald green curtains and he was sitting on gorgeous mattress. None was there around him. In the morning he took out a bottle gourd and put everything inside the bottle gourd which is not even bigger than a fist. In the Tang dynasty the theme of ‘container as contained’ has a protagonist who looks like a Buddhist or Daoist Master having control over supernatural powers. The gourd that he had is usually used by the Daoist priests. In Daoism the gourd represents heaven and earth with an extended meaning representing the entire universe¹¹. Because of its emptiness, it is said that within the gourd a mystical zone exists in the form of an alternate universe or the entrance to another world, and the Daoist immortals use this to travel between these two worlds. It harbours the sacred power of hibernation and longevity (Girardot 226). This is also a place where the elixir of immortality is created.

¹¹The information about the symbolic use of gourd in Daoism has been taken from the following website - <<http://primaltrek.com/gourd.html>> - accessed on 12.08.16

So this space also represents the creation of life. Finding out a utopian land by going through a small opening in a forlorn place, is also a theme that many Chinese folk tales narrated and these stories date back to the time prior to the arrival of Buddhism in China. This story “Pan, The Old Man” exhibits the conglomeration of the indigenous Chinese folk elements, the Daoist elements and the Buddhist motif of ‘container as contained’ together.

The story “Pan, The Old Man” has the Daoist priest as the protagonist and the theme of ‘devouring’ is narrated through his magical powers, thus making it convincing to the readers. The next story describes a bizarre incident that reminds the readers of the *Zhiguai* ghost stories in which several creepy and eccentric incidents take place and make the readers wonder about their truthfulness. This story having the similar motif is named “The Head of the Juyan Tribe” 《居延部落主》. This is included in the *Taiping Guangji* book number- 368, and is originally taken from the *Xuanguailu* 《玄怪錄》 by Niu Sengru (780 –849 AD) written during Tang dynasty. This story again portrays the motif of ‘devouring’ very vividly. The story is about the head of the Juyan tribe was named Bodu Gudi (勃都骨低) and it happened at the beginning of the Zhou dynasty during Jing emperor’s time. Gudi was a very cruel and pleasure seeking person dwelling in a magnificent palace. Once ten people belonging to different tribes arrived at his door. They looked like (伶官) jesters. They knew acrobatics and were not fond of common things. Gudi, being intrigued wanted to see their performance. But the jesters first wished to have food. After they consumed food satisfactorily, one of them said,

I request you, please let me perform something named –‘the small and the big things are complimentary to each other; the beginning and the end gives rise to one another’. (Appendix III:290)

Hereby this particular performance actually referred to the consummation of human beings/objects and storing them up inside the stomach. The Chinese story described this act eloquently in eight characters -大小相成，终始相生. Then the story goes on to describe the entire performance. The tall person gulped the smaller one. The fat one gulped the thinner one. This way they swallowed each other and only two persons were left. This was called ‘大小相成’- small and big things are complimentary to each other. Then the tall person told again that he wants to perform the opposite 终始相生, “Now please let me perform the opposite - the beginning and the end gives rise to one another.” (Appendix III:290-91). Thereupon he spat out one person. The person who came out also spat out another person. One after another they continued like this. The number of the persons returned to the actual number. Then for the next few days they performed the same kind of show. One day Gudi refused to provide them with food. All the jesters angrily grasped Gudi’s son, daughter, sister, nephews, wives and concubines and then swallowed them all and stored them inside their stomach. They all cried out and begged for their lives from inside the stomach. Gudi kowtowed and the jesters laughed and at once spat them out. All the relatives were the same as before. Later on Gudi found out their unnatural origin. The jesters revealed that they work as the jesters for the mountain god of Juyan and pleaded with him not to destroy them. But Gudi burnt all the sacks and the next year Gudi’s whole family died of illness. This story is the best example of an amalgamation of the Chinese *Zhiguai* strange stories where bizarre incidents of ghosts

and demons and the Buddhist theme of devouring are completely integrated and took a form of a Tang dynasty *chuanqi* story.

The next story “Zhang Ding” is written during the Five Dynasties (907-979 AD). This actually talks about a man named Zhang Ding who wanted to acquire the knowledge of immortality and transformation. A Daoist priest bestowed him with the knowledge and asked him to keep this a secret. While following Dao, Zhang Ding also helped his parents see a magnificent original performance of Qingzhou City. Zhang Ding took up an empty water bottle that could hold two deciliters of water. He placed it in the middle of the room. Then he walked limping around the bottle thirty two times. Thereupon he held the bottle inclined and innumerable people appeared from inside the bottle and filled up the room with their noise. Everyone was 6-7 inches tall and they were from all walks of life. Immediately they found an incomparably beautiful place for performance, ideal for a banquet. There was music and hundreds of drums were being beaten. There were perfect rooms and car sheds. Then when the evening arrived, Zhang Ding slanted the bottle again in the middle of the hall. Human beings and cars and horses, thousands of the crowds, millions of groups, all entered the bottle meandering. Thereafter when his parents picked up the bottle and saw inside they could see not even a single soul inside it. This section of the story accurately refers to the Buddhist motif of storing up human beings or inanimate objects or even other beings in a small place. This motif is similar to those described in the *Jataka* story where the demon conjures up a woman. This also echoes the story from the *Samyukta Avadana Sutra* in which the Brahmin swallows and spits up a woman and the woman also performs similar act. All these stories wonderfully portray the

transmigration of the motif of devouring, its amalgamation with the Chinese literary tradition and its eventual sinification.

This same story then goes on to describe Zhang Ding's magic tricks. By using knife and scissors he cut his hands and legs into pieces. He also scooped out his five viscera, heart, liver, spleen, lungs and kidneys. He divided them and hung them on the four walls. After sometimes he restored those organs in his own body by himself. While all these were happening, he was calm and composed without any pain. Moreover, whenever he saw a painted screen having the images of human beings, musicians, he pointed his finger at them - thus making them fly, walk, sing and dance. They could talk, laugh, speed up and work diligently. They were totally similar to the real human beings. This refers to the particular section of *the Samyukta Avadana Sutra* story where Buddha is able to create his hundred thousand images that fills up the air. Incidents like taking out body parts and enduring the pain, are referring to the disseminating of the self. This disseminating of self is also an integrated part of Buddhist philosophy where suffering is unreal and rising above it only paves the way towards immortality or nirvana. The intriguing part is that Zhang Ding met a Daoist priest who conferred upon him all these supernatural sciences. The amalgamation of Buddhism and the indigenous religion Daoism contributed to the creation of such a motif which we will find in several other stories as well. Zhang Ding also learns the science of prolonging the life-span from the Daoist priest. This is one of the recurrent motifs which already has been discussed in the chapter on "illusion and reality".

We can see that by undergoing the centuries of adaptation and sinicization, the Tang dynasty stories started getting the form of *chuanqi* story and they are now longer with the

accumulation of several characters who specifically participate in the plot. The characters are no more a Foreign Master or a Daoist or Buddhist priest but they are characters taken out from the Chinese phenomenon. The adaptation of the theme in the Chinese soil over the centuries has brought upon the new characters like the head of an indigenous tribe or the female shaman sorceress belonging to the Wu 巫 tradition. The final story taken from the *Hedongji* titled “Hu Mei’er” by Liu Kai 柳開 (948 AD—1001 AD) of the Song dynasty is a story like this which narrates the participation of all the native Chinese characters in the story. This story illustrates an incident that happened in the Tang dynasty Zhenyuan period (785–805 AD). It talks about a woman sorceress named Hu Mei’er who appeared in the market place of the Yang province. She excelled in supernatural science and performed extremely strange magic tricks. One day when the audience gathered, she took out a bright coloured but transparent glass bottle which seemed to be able to hold only half a litre. Then she put the bottle on a mat and asked the audience to fill up the bottle with money. The mouth of the bottle was just as small as the tube of the reed. People kept on pouring money, cattle and other valuables into the bottle but everything looked just like small grains in the bottle. Finally a revenue collector put his collection along with the horses and chariots into the bottle. Then Mei’er herself jumped inside the bottle immediately and vanished. The Tax collectors hurriedly took up the bottle, struck it lightly and broke it. But he found nothing in it. The truth of this story has been established by Lishi Dao who was the commander in chief of Dongping. In this story also we find the motif of a non-linear space. The microcosmic world can contain several macrocosms. Eventually the readers start questioning the existence of the real world. These incidents raise the question, as in which world would be considered to be

real- the world that the audience of the magical performance had been living in or the world inside the bottle which can contain everything irrespective of their sizes and forms.

This particular motif also refers to the thousand Buddha images. In the images myriad rays of light shine from Buddha's hair, each ray containing an image of Buddha practicing Truth, each identical with Buddha himself yet intriguingly enough his hair grows neither shorter nor longer. Similarly it also refers to the story of the Brahmin who consumed his wife and the utensils and stored up inside his stomach. The idea of the 'container as contained' remained the same but the plot kept on changing and created a beautiful narrative around the motif. In this story another intriguing part is the presence of a woman sorceress. In the other strange tales like *zhiguai* or *chuanqi* we find woman spirits, ghosts and witches. These characters do not appear in the public most often. The scholar protagonists of the stories encounter them either on their way to the Imperial court or while returning home after a long time. But the presence of a woman magician displaying supernatural tricks in the public is an unusual phenomenon. Hereby we can also draw references to the indigenous Chinese tradition *Wu* 巫 or Shamanism which was performed by the woman sorceress. This story shows a great integration of the Buddhist theme with the indigenous characters like the woman sorceress. The presence of the imperial revenue officer makes the story even more convincing to the readers. In this single story the Chinese indigenous elements and a strong testimonial quality have been infused within a Buddhist theme. By the end of the Tang dynasty, the popular Buddhist themes adopted prominent Chinese characters. This chapter shows the essential integration of the Chinese and Buddhist elements which was entirely based on the contactual relation.

The interminable source of food or wine is also another interesting part of the story. In the story “Hu Gong”, Gong met Chang Fang on the roof top and said, “I have little wine left. Let’s drink it. The wine is kept downstairs.”(Appendix III:264). He ordered Chang Fang to bring it. He could not lift the wine pot. More than ten people came and none could lift it up. They only asked Gong and Gong came down and using only one finger he lifted it up. Then he drank it together with Chang Fang. The wine cup was as big as one fist, but however much they drank, they could not finish it. Finally Fang also tried to bestow the science of immortality to Fang, but he failed in the illusion and reality test. He only bestowed him with some knowledge of the Immortal beings with which he could live longer on the earth and attained a life span of hundred years. He could also cure diseases and also helped to avoid calamities. In all these stories the mortal who met an Immortal and went through the test of attaining Immortality was always bestowed with some kind of supernatural power. Such stories (for example: “Du Zichun”, “Xiao Dongxuan”, “Wei Zidong” etc) have been discussed in the chapter that discusses the motif of “Illusion and Reality”.

If we study these stories together, the strong presence of the testimonial quality can be seen at the end of each story. This is the point which separates the Chinese strange stories from the Indian fantastic tales. The Chinese tradition believes in strong historical data and the documentation of events as history. So in order to transform the magical, illusive stories into real fact (a trend nurtured by the mainstream Confucian ethics) they documented them as the encounter of the mortal and the supernatural worlds and thus made them reliable to the native common folks. This is why in the former story we find the scholar Hsu possessing the Copper plate on which some historical information has

been inscribed. Many people could see Pan, the Old man later. The Jian Gate of the Guang City still exists. The existence of the military officer whose name was mentioned the “The Head of the Juyan Tribe” can historically be proven. The parents of Zhang Ding who lived in Haizhou, were still alive even in the time of Gan Fu 乾符 (The Year-name 年號 of Tang Xuanzong 874-879). All the testimonial qualities make these stories realistic to the readers and they are made to believe in it.

On the other hand, the Indian stories completely believe in a different reality – a reality that does not depend on historical documentation. The stories are available sans any historical data or characters. They enjoy more freedom than the adapted Chinese ones. They are different in the sense that these tales can be used to describe any situation at any time in history. These tales contain in them a universal truth which is valid and applicable as long as the stories exist. These stories were intended to edify and at the same time to entertain the royal people. This is why it is impossible to discover the historical existence of the two Brahmin brothers, Yashadhara and Laxmidhara and also it is not evidently possible to find out the real existence of the King Udayana and Narabahandatta. They are fictitious characters. But with time they have gained great popularity and reached the soul of the people. Common people use their examples extensively in the relevant context.

The *Jatakas* and the *Avadanas* consist of mainly didactic stories that repeatedly harp on the obedience of students towards their *Gurus* or teachers. They also deal with Bodhisattva’s advices regarding the self-control and restraining of emotions and passions and the disdaining of the personal love and primarily the filial piety for the sake of

greater achievement. In the *Jataka* stories (Ghose vol.3) like the *Karandik Jataka*(356 no.), *Shabak Jataka*(309 no.), *Kakaru Jataka* (326 no.), *Abarya Jataka* (376 no.), *Amra Jataka* (474 no.) and many other stories partly or entirely imply analogous themes and the Buddhist edification.

This story has a parallel in the Indian literary panorama and seems to be a metamorphosed or adapted form of this original *Jataka* story. *Jataka* dates much earlier than this story and was actually written down. In the Indian adaptation, that is, in Somedevabhata's the *Kathasaritsagara* (Somedeva V: 120-125) there is the story of Yashodhara and Laksmidhara – the two Brahmin scholars. This story contains a theme similar to that of the *Samugga Jataka*.

The 5th book narrates how the two Brahmin brothers, son of a religious Brahmin set out for the purpose of learning. In the evening they reached a dense forest. They decided to take rest beside a pond under a tree. At night many men came out of the pond and after clearing the place brought out food and drinks. Then a handsome man arose out of the water and he brought out his two beautiful wives from his mouth. The two brothers saw that the man took care of his second wife more and the first wife incessantly served them. At night while the husband was sleeping, the second wife tried to seduce Yashodhara, one of the Brahmin scholars and being refused by him she woke up his husband saying that the man was trying to molest her. Her enraged husband was about to kill him and at that moment the first wife came out with the truth that the second wife very often flirted

with men unnoticed by the husband. The second wife was punished and the man and his first wife suddenly got back their former divine forms.

This story is completely analogous to the *Samugga Jataka*. Many stories that Somedeva wrote in the *Kathasaritsagara* have been influenced by the Buddhist stories, this particular story also is not an exception. In the *Jataka* story the focus was on the Buddhist teaching. *Kathasaritsagara* was written primarily with an intention to entertain the queen of Kashmir. The didactic aspects of the stories become secondary. Thereafter the changes are more intriguing. We see that the story from the *Kathasaritsagara* is actually analogous to the stories found in the Chinese *Tripitaka*. Somedeva was most probably influenced by the original Pali version found in several Buddhist scriptures during that time. The creation of the non-linear space inside the container is also noticeable. This is a space where the readers along with the spectators in the story leave behind the ordinary world and enter a realm of a fantastic microcosmic world.

In the Chinese literary tradition the closest analogous story would be “The Foreign Master” from the book *Ling Gui Zhi* 《靈鬼志》 written during the Six Dynasties. In this story the containing of the bigger objects/human beings in a smaller space has been depicted. This initiated the introduction of this motif to the Chinese minds and this obviously happened through the translation of Buddhist sutras and its influence on the indigenous narrative forms. Thereafter we see that in the primary literary pieces this trick has been performed by a foreign master. He is assumed to have come there from the western regions (India). Then in the story “The Scholar from Yang-hsien” taken from the

Taiping Guangji, the motif found its first sinicized form. The foreign master was replaced by a Chinese scholar whose presence in every strange tale is remarkably important. Chinese scholars are recognized for their imaginative encounters with the supernatural beings. Thereafter the magical events of storing up objects and human beings from the mortal world can easily be justified in the rationalist Confucian Chinese tradition. Then the 10th century *chuanqi* “Zhang Ding” represents the sinification of the motif and the amalgamation of the Chinese and the Indian Buddhist elements at its best. By this time, after going through a process of sinicization, major changes happened and most of the Buddhist elements were completely transformed into Daoist aspects. This acclimatization of the Buddhist aspects occurred in order to make it hospitable to the popular psyche. The structure, the length of the story and the vivid descriptions of the events are interestingly different and they show the evolution of narrative forms from the *zhiguai* to the *chuanqi*¹².

The integration of the Indian Buddhist motif of ‘devouring’ into the Chinese strange tales was not an uncomplicated task. But this was made possible because India-China contact was always based on an intellectual quest. The Chinese Buddhist monks, who travelled to India in search of Buddhist scriptures in order to acquire knowledge of Buddhism, came back with a mind that started understanding the significance of the Indian literary values and fictive literature. The appreciative understanding of the Indian oral tradition contributed to the formation and the development of the new trends in the recipient Chinese literature. This contact between India and China has always been important because Chinese literature is enriched by Indian literature not only as a consequence of

¹² The act of swallowing often is related to consummation. Here we can also draw a fanciful sexual allusion in this act of swallowing. But this would be indeed far-fetched and misleading.

direct contacts but also because of the immense inner potentialities of the source that is Indian literature. This happened in spite of the existence of a strong and powerful cultural heritage within China. The interliterary reciprocity of these two cultures pivoted around a specific Buddhist motif or theme and formed a concrete literary and cultural relation through its creative manifestation in the recipient narrative tradition. The creative manifestation of the strange narrative tradition was only possible because China already had a strong indigenous storytelling tradition and written literary tradition which made it a willing receptacle for Indian components.

CONCLUSION

In the Chinese literary tradition there was hardly any space for supernatural accounts. The Confucian ideologists believed in the written documents and the documentation of history was the main component in their literary tradition. Although the tales of supernatural grew as a subversive tradition, we find that the scholars, in order to incorporate these strange accounts into the Chinese mainstream court literature, documented them in the form of a history of the other world. It was the phase when Buddhism had not yet entered the Chinese pantheon with its all influences. But after the 1st century A.D., Buddhism facilitated the growth of the Chinese supernatural literary tradition and it gradually turned out to be one of the most powerful expressions of popular literature. During the Warring states dynasty, when small states were marked with shifting balance and power, the literati faced a different world. The political disunion produced in them some kind of insecurity. But this period happened to be an era of great intellectual ferment and growth. Buddhist parables and its profound influence on the Confucian autocratic intellectual tradition challenged the idea of uniform and homogenous society. People now started to have an opportunity to express their out-of-the track ideas unequivocally. The revolutionary thoughts were sometimes camouflaged in these strange tales as they discussed the ordinary and commonplace experiences of the populace. The common folks found their place in literature as a subject for the first time in the Chinese literary corpus. This is true even for the anecdotes and parables. The ‘talks of the marvelous’- *chuanqi*, *zhiguai* the anecdotes on marvelous events, such kind of

short stories and the other kinds of fiction were composed by the scholars of the classical language across the span of about two thousand years. These above-mentioned genres were only a part of the Chinese fiction. The rest of the literary tradition was based on the oral tradition and these were being addressed to a motley audience such as the peasants, artisans and so on. They listened to the storytellers in the market places and teahouses. Chinese oral literature included songs, proverbs while many other forms are peculiar to their own province or district. There was a constant exchange of themes and techniques among the provinces. There are even documents which have been quite enduring and successful for more than thousands years with minor changes in their forms. Many texts have been discovered later that prove the existence of a huge number of popular literatures besides the mainstream Confucian literary tradition during the pre-Tang dynasty and Tang dynasty. It of course establishes the constant existence of the rebellious undercurrent led by the populace in the society. Dozens of chantefables (*bianwen*), several such narrative forms and hundreds of short stories *xiaoshuo* have been found. Anything containing strange or fictional elements became a challenge to the Confucian orthodoxy. Some authors or literati usually held important official posts. They very often wrote under pseudonyms. These pseudonyms were used primarily for wider circulation. These tales were very popular. These tales eventually took the form of novel over centuries and we find its birth and evolution.

My thesis deals with the strange stories of the Chinese and the Indian narrative traditions. The thesis has emphasized on the strange and the imaginative (regarded as opposite to 'rationality' in Chinese tradition) elements found in the stories. These stories often had

themes which were brought into Chinese tradition with the circulation of *Jataka* and *Avadana* tales among the populace. This strange tale tradition was ultimately responsible for giving birth to the popular fictional narratives as a separate genre. The strange tales which the storytellers used to tell were interspersed with entertaining elements along with subversive satire on the upper class of the society. The images of sins were represented vividly and with warm human understanding. It harped more upon the consciousness than upon the moral exhortation. This was considered to be a threat to the integrity of the society. Because of this indifference to the moralizing behaviours, the Confucian scholars hardly acknowledged the importance or the existence of such fanciful popular literature. The a-historical part in writing the fiction used to come from the author's personal experience and knowledge, his own viewpoints about the society and it hugely depended on his understanding of the mass-psychology and his empathizing with the people. It is therefore quite evident that this popular literary tradition was rather realistic in comparison to the Confucian historiography. They expressed a closer and realistic view of the society by taking the provincial differences into account. The Chinese narrative revolution which includes the intervention of the supernaturalism in the popular narrative tradition in the Chinese literary corpus can be primarily responsible for the development of the fictional narrative tradition. The strange tales by the storytellers gradually flourished and were being compiled into full-fledged fiction in the later ages. The faculty of 'imagination' which circulates in these narratives primarily is an element that was contributed by Buddhist narrative literatures. In this thesis the motifs I discussed are inspired from the Buddhist narrative tradition which had attached a lot of significance to the psychological aspects of human being and their faculty of imagination by

emphasizing on the concepts like reincarnation and transmigration of soul. The travelling of this 'imagination' faculty is reflected in the narrative tradition in the best way. Henceforth I have looked at the thematic variations of a similar motif across the Indian and Chinese strange tale traditions.

In this thesis firstly my purpose is to understand the varied treatment of the concept of the strange and the fantastic in both these traditions. In Chinese tradition the term strange has three counterparts in the Chinese characters, *yi* 異, *guai* 怪, *qi* 奇. *Qiguai* 奇怪, *guaiyi* 怪異, *qiyi* 奇異 are developed from these characters. In the Indian tradition the *adbhuta rasa* (sentiment of wonder) arises from the *vismaya* (amazement) *bhava* (psychological states). Via the translations of several Buddhist scriptures like the *adbhutadharma* tales in the *Lotus Sutra* certain specific themes related to the miracle or the strange and the fantastic (*adbhuta*) traversed to China. In the Tang dynasty (618 CE - 907 CE) these strange tales created a deep impression on the evolution of Chinese fiction (虛構小說 *xugou xiaoshuo*). Several literary forms of strange tales which also include *chuanqi* fiction (傳奇小說) carry numerous motifs related to Buddhism. Similarly the Indian classical narrative tradition had seen the rise of narrative awareness with the advent of Buddhism and it found its finest expression in several texts like *Kathasaritsagara* by Somedevabhata and *Brihatkathamanjari* by Ksemendra. But the treatment of the element of the strange and the fantastic (*adbhuta*) was different in both these traditions. Indian *kavya* literature celebrated the *adbhuta rasa* (emotion of wonder incited by the occurrence of strange incidents). The Chinese story tradition especially the *zhiguai* and

chuanqi stories mostly focused on the arousal of emotions like disgust, amazement and awe. According to Bharata Muni's *Rasa* Theory, sentiments (*rasa*) arise from psychological states (*bhava*) and not vice versa. Similarly Guo Pu in the preface to *Shanhai Jing* (山海經) says, 物不自异, 待我而后异, 异果在我, 非物异也 - "Things are not strange in and of themselves— they must wait for me before they can be strange. This the strange lies within me – it is not that things are strange."¹ In the Indian literary tradition the arousal of the particular emotions is the professed intentions of the storytellers. But in the Chinese literary tradition it was not an expressed idea. This understanding had allowed me to look at the varied treatments of similar themes in both the traditions. In the Indian tradition the 'prose' part called *kavya* deals with the strange and the fantastic tales to a great extent. The *adbhutadharma* stories of the Indian classical narrative tradition act as a kind of literary device to provoke wonder or *adbhuta* sentiment in the audience. The *adbhuta rasa* or the strange or supernatural factor in the stories evoke amazement and awe in the audience about the supernatural and miraculous ways of the world in our day to day life. But I feel that I still have spaces to work on. I still plan to look into this aesthetic part of the use of several *rasas* in the strange tales of Chinese and Indian tradition in my post doctoral research work. The Indian *sahridaya* (empathetic) audience is supposed to look at a literary piece from a particular viewpoint. I would like to know how the Chinese aesthetics create a provision for the readers to enjoy the stories with empathy and how the readers' response is also taken into consideration. I would like to study how these stories finally appeal to the listeners

¹Zeitlin has used the translation from the *Shanhai Jing Jiaozhu* 《山海經校注》 by Chen Hsiao-chie and others (Zeitlin 18).

helping them to escape from the everyday anxiety and in the process preparing them for accepting an atmosphere of extraordinary and unexpected. At the same time I will also take into consideration the perspectives of the writers and the psychology of the audience and the nature of readership as well. In all these stories the parallel existence of the fact and the fantasy is always evident. The fictional discourse always represents the weaving of two worlds. One world consists of ordinary facts governed by the logic of human rationality and made familiar by historical discourse. The other world is something that transgresses the logical coherence of the first world and traverses the supernatural. Both Chinese and Indian strange stories surpass these two worlds and actually create a third narrative world 'that mediates the contradictoriness of these two orders of reality within the restrictions of an essentially historiographical form' (Lu, Sheldon 115). This third narrative world is a space where the Indian and Chinese narrative traditions can find their relevance. I would like to establish that these two traditions actually require this special space of the third narrative world and I would like to build upon this theory.

All the stories in my thesis deal with the supernatural. The intervention of the supernatural and the unnatural is a kind of dislocation from the worldly affairs. This dislocation is a kind of alienation transmitted to the readers by the storytellers. This intervention gives way to an alternative world away from this material world which is full of suffering and sorrows. People would like to indulge in this other world. Therefore the storytellers create the unnatural out of the natural. These two worlds are separated only by just a fine line and at any moment that line can fade away. At any moment, with the

consent of their imaginative faculty, the readers can enter in this world voluntarily or involuntarily.

There are several ways to handle the arrangements on the basis of the themes. We could have looked at the themes with respect to the characters, be it human being or supernatural entity. But I have arranged the themes by taking up the Buddhist idea that the stories have expressed. This is the least complicated process of all because the themes are commonly shared by stories of various lengths and degrees of complexity across time. I have also tried to arrange the stories chronologically so that the narrative evolution can be noticed. Sometimes the themes also overlap. For example, the stories included in the “Devouring” motif can also be placed under the “Illusion and Reality” motif section. The classification is a point of departure. But it will be wrong to simplify the stories according to the classification and look at it from a single dimension. Thematic categorization also helps us examine the variations of a certain prototype historically in the hands of different authors and storytellers. The main purpose of categorizing the stories thematically is to explain the substance of a given story and to see it in the light of contactual influence and its reception in the Chinese and the Indian narrative traditions.

Several queries in my thesis remained incomplete. In this thesis I had described four themes. I have examined their evolution till the Tang dynasty. But even after the Tang dynasty these themes flourished to a great extent and created wonderful narratives. In the following dynasties that is from the Song dynasty onwards, we can see that the stories

with similar themes and often with similar subject matter are expressed through different languages and forms. From this time onwards we can see the emergence of two kinds of *xiaoshuo* fiction, - the classical and the vernacular. *Chuanqi* stories fall under the classical *xiaoshuo* and the newly emerged *xiaoshuo* is called *huaben xiaoshuo* or the vernacular fiction. These two kinds of style have their own special features. The classical style of writing is mostly used for writing fictions. The origin of the vernacular style is oral tradition and the language used by the storytellers. This language was more intelligible to the common people. The succinct and elegant writing style of the classical fiction was very different from the colloquial style vernacular fiction. All the themes I studied here have been adopted by the *huaben xiaoshuo* writers and they created longer and intriguing vernacular *xiaoshuo*. In the *xiaoshuo* of the Ming dynasty the themes will remain the same but the subject matter will develop to a great extent. For example, as for the theme of “Illusion and Reality”, the pursuit of immortality remains unattained during the Tang and Song dynasty. But in the Ming dynasty the quest is fulfilled and the protagonist would be able to attain the Dao and immortality and will ascend the heaven. Such an example can also be found in the story “Du Zichun San Ru Chang’an” (Du Zichun Entered Chang’an Thrice). Further the stories related to the themes of the ‘Change or Transformation’ can find their supreme expression in the Ming dynasty stories. The “Legend of the White Snake” is such an example. Examining this story would show us its journey from the oral literature to the written *huaben xiaoshuo*. In this thesis I had to limit my study till the Tang dynasty. I wish to conduct further studies on them in my post-doctoral research work. In the Indian literary tradition, new genres

developed after the 11th century and the *charita* tradition became a major generic trend. Movements like *bhakti* tradition contributed immensely.

I feel that my work is greatly relevant because of the emerging interest in the India and China cultural relation. Looking at the significance of the research and educational demands arising from China's emergence and the relation between India and China it is a mandate to develop a vision for India's connections with China. While an increasing emphasis on the international relations, economic growth and policy making has become a prerequisite for any institution in India, the studies and research in the field of literature are decreasing significantly. As a student belonging to the discipline of Comparative Literature, my prime concern is to bridge this gap, to initiate a dialogue across the disciplines and to develop a discourse in India-China comparative literary studies.

Appendix – I

Stories Related to the Motif of “Illusion” and “Reality”

“Hu Gong” 《壺公》 or “The Master of the Kettle”

This story is originally taken from the *Shenxianchuan* 《神仙傳》 - the *Book of Immortals* written. Then it was compiled in the *Shenxian* series 12 (神仙十二) of the *Taiping Guangji*. . It was written by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283 -363 AD).

Hu Gong was a Daoist priest. He was called Hu Gong (The Master of the Kettle). No one knew about his worldly surname or name. During that time he could summon all kinds of heavenly soldiers¹. He could also summon ghost gods, immortals, could cure illness, he could do all these incantations. He had more than twenty scrolls. Everything was written by him only. This is why his complete name was Hu Gong Fu (The master of the pot who knows Daoist magic). About the same time in the Runan country there was a person called Fei Chang Fang (費長房). Suddenly he saw that Hu Gong came from far away land and was selling medicines on the roads. People did not know him. The price was not subjected to any change or bargaining. It had no second option. His medicines could cure all the diseases completely. He said to the people buying, “After taking this medicine, you definitely will spit out some kind of thing. The same day the disease should be cured. It is impossible not to have any effect.”

¹ As depicted by Daoism, the Daoist masters can call supernatural heavenly soldiers in order to assist in the battle

The money which he used to get every day was in thousands. On the other hand he gave it away to the needy and hunger-stricken people of the city. He only used to keep thirty or fifty coins. He often hung one empty kettle from the roof of the room. After the sun has gone down, Gong used to leap inside the kettle. People could not find this. Only the person named Chang Fang staying on the upper floor could see it. He knew that Gong was not a common person. Every day Chang Fang cleaned up the place where Gong used to sit. He even provided him with food. Gong accepted all these and never refused it. Like this it kept on repeating for a long time. Chang Fang was remarkably determined. He also did not ask for anything. Gong knew that Chang Fang was extremely trustworthy. He told to Fang, "When it is evening, when there will be no one, then you come again to look for me." Chang Fang did accordingly and reached there. Gong told Fang, "The moment I leap inside the kettle, you watch and learn from me, and you will naturally be able to enter inside." Chang Fang did as he said. As a result he did not even realize when he entered the kettle already. After he entered, it did not look like a kettle. He only saw the world of the underground palace of ghouls. In the magnificent palace there were numbers of gates, also had corridors. On the left and right of Gong there were tens of servants. Gong said to Fang, "I am an immortal. Formerly I used to work as an official in the heaven. Since I did not do my work diligently I was penalized. Therefore I was banished from the court and was placed among human beings. You deserve the teachings. That's why you could feel my power." Chang Fang sat down and kowtowed and said, "This man of flesh is ignorant. I have accumulated lot of sins. I, who do not deserve your sympathy, am very fortunate to receive it. It is like my coffin has been split open and life is again poured into me². I was withered and almost dead. I am afraid that I am a soiled

² It was believed that the immortals could give life to the dead by blowing air into them

and unruly person. It might not be possible for me to do it. If you feel compassion for me, I will think that it is the great fortune of my hundred births.” Gong said, “I saw you as a great man. Do not say this to other people.”

After that Gong met Chang Fang on the roof top and said, “I have little wine left. Let’s drink it. The wine is kept downstairs.” He ordered Chang Fang to bring it. He could not lift the wine pot. More than ten people came and none could lift it up. They only asked Gong and Gong came down and using only one finger he lifted it up. Then he drank it together with Chang Fang. The wine cup was as big as one fist, but how much they drank, they could not finish it. He said to Chang Fang, “Today I should leave. Can you come?” Fang said, “My heart desires to come. I cannot take my words back. I do not desire my parents, wife and children to know where I am going. How should I plan that?” Gong answered, “Very simple.” He immediately took one bamboo made crutch and giving it to Fang warned him, “With this stick you return home. Pretend as if you are sick. Then take this bamboo stick and place it where you lie down. Then come back silently.” Fang did what Gong asked him to do. After he came, the family members found Fang as already dead lying on the bed in the place of the stick. They kept his dead body on the cot. But in reality it was the bamboo crutch only. They wept and buried him.

So Fang met Gong. Ecstatic, Fang had no idea what happened back at home. Then Gong left Fang among a bunch of tigers. The tigers, grinding their teeth, opening their mouth wide open wanted to eat him. Fang was not afraid. The next day, he was put inside a stone room. A huge chunk of stone was kept above his head. With the help of a reed string it was hung over his head. Moreover various kinds of snakes were biting the string. The string was about to break, but Chang Fang remained composed. Then Gong arrived.

And after seeing the situation he said, “You deserve to be taught.” And then he asked Chang Fang to eat stool. The stool was also filled with lots of long maggots. It was exceptionally stinky. Fang was unable to eat it. Gong sighed. He thanked him and sending him off said, “Son you could not achieve the path of the immortals. But I am blessing you, that you will be living long on the earth and will attain a life span of hundred years.” He passed him on one written charm scripture. Giving it to him he said, “By carrying this you will be able to master all the ghost gods. You are fit to become an (heavenly) envoy. You can cure diseases and also can help people to avoid calamities.” Fang was worried that he would not be able to reach home. Gong gave him one bamboo crutch and said, “You ride this, and you will be able to reach your home.” Fang rode the bamboo crutch and took his leave. Then suddenly he felt as if he was awakened from a dream. And he was already at home. The family members thought he was a ghost. He described the previous incidents in details. Then they opened the coffin only to see that there was a bamboo crutch lying. Then only it was believable to them. Fang rode the bamboo crutch and went far away. There he took the bamboo crutch and threw it in the hillside weeds. And he found that it was a green dragon only. The time when he left and then came back, it seemed one day only. His family members calculated and they said it was one year.

Therefore he started offering the charms as a profession. He could call ghosts in order to cure illness. There was nothing that he could not cure. There was no one who he could not cure. Sometimes he sat together with his patients. Then suddenly he used to scold someone angrily. When people asked him about this strange incident, then he said that he was scolding the ghosts.

That time Runan County had one ghost. In a year it used to visit the County several times. While coming back, it used to follow the attendants who rode horses and it used to take the form of a prefect. Then it used to enter the prefect's mansion and play drums. It also wandered around and out of the palace and then left. The prefect was extremely unhappy about it but there was no way out. It was about that time when Chang Fang came to this palace. Then the ghost also came up to the entrance of the palace. The prefect ran inside and taking Chang Fang, kept him inside the Hall. When the ghost got to know this, it did not dare to go inside. Chang Fang shouted and said, "Grab that ghost and bring it." The ghost became scared and quickly came down from the vehicle and came in front of the Hall. It kowtowed and begged constantly ensuring its own rehabilitation. Fang scolded it and said, "You are a dead old ghost. You did not stay in the underworld honestly. You acted offensively even with the government officials. You accept it or not, you should be killed this way. Now hurriedly return to your real appearance." Within a short while the ghost turned himself into a huge tortoise. It looked like a wheel. Its head was ten feet long. Fang again ordered it to return to the human form. Fang took one written charm and gave it to him. He ordered the ghost to give it to the god Gepi Jun. The ghost kowtowed and cried. Then took the written charm and went away. Fang's people followed it. They only they saw that the charm on the note was lying on the grass and the ghost had hanged itself on the tree.

Later on Fang went to Dong Hai County. In Dong Hai there was no rain for three years. On being requested he asked the Rain-Bringing-God the reason behind it. Then the Bringer of Rain told him, "The Eastern Sea god was involved in adultery with the wife of Gepi Jun. I took him in custody. But there was no such evidence or statement. So I was

very busy and forgot to shower rain. Thereupon such a long termed drought occurred. Today I should place the order to liberate the villagers from drought. And also will command him to bring rain.” Eventually there was huge rainfall. Fang had godly skills. He changed a big piece of land into small one. It was stretched for thousand kilometers. It is the same even now.

Gu Xuanji 《顧玄績》

The 22nd section of the 4th sequel (titled “Bianwu” 《貶誤》 Or “Deadly Mistake”) of the book named *Youyang Zazu* 《酉陽雜俎》 depicts this story. It was written by Duan Chengshi during the 9th century.

Legend is, during the reign of Tianbao, the Daoist Master Gu Xuanji who was carrying a gold seal once went to the city. After few years, all of a sudden he met one person who by force was trying to ascend a building in the city. He was drunk and was carrying a kettle on his shoulder. After getting acquainted with him fairly well he said that it was possible to acquire countless gold within a year. The man doubted his promise. Then he requested him to reveal the way to attain his desire. Xuanzi said with a smile, “I will prepare the stone of alchemy in eight turns. I want someone to protect it and for that he has to stay silent for one night. All I require is this help only. I observed that your nerves are steady and you are a brave-heart. I pledge for your effort for a night. Moreover, when the elixir is ready, together we will ascend heaven.” Then that man said, “Amen!”

When it was the fifth hour of the night, suddenly a cavalry appeared and scolding him asked him to move away. But he did not move. In a short while someone like a king

arrived. His guard of honor looked extremely vigorous. He asked "Why aren't you moving away?" He asked his attendants to slay him. For the person it was like a dream and thereupon he was born in a Merchant's home and grew up in time. He thought deeply but never uttered a word and always had put on a guard against it. His parents gave him to marriage. He had three children. Suddenly one day his wife was in tears and asked him, "O noble lord, since you don't speak at all, then what is the use of having sons and daughters." Thereupon one after another she killed all her sons and daughters. Eventually the man was choked and tears had burst out. Suddenly the dream was broken. The vessel broke down in a great tremour. The elixir also flew away. In Xuanzang's "Xiyuji" as well, it is depicted the same way.

Appendix –II

Stories Related to the Motif of “Transformation”

“Wu Daozong” 《吴道宗》

This story is taken from Dongyang Wuyi's 東陽無疑 work *Qixieji* 《齊諧記》 written in the Southern Song Dynasty (南朝宋) 420 AD-479AD. This story is also incorporated in the “Tiger I” series of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》.

During the reign of Yixi 義熙 (405–419 AD) in 4th year of the Jin dynasty 晉朝, there was a man named Wu Daozong in the Taimo town of the Dongyang County. He lost his father when he was a child. He lived with his mother. He has not yet got married. One day, Wu Daozong went somewhere else. Someone in the neighbourhood heard that some kind of noise was coming from his house. Slowly the man looked into the house and he could not see Wu Daozong’s mother. He could only see a black spotted tiger in the room. The neighbor was afraid and thought that the tiger has eaten Wu Daozong’s mother. So he immediately started beating up drums to summon the villagers so that they can rescue his mother. They surrounded the house. Then they entered the house suddenly but did not find any tiger. But they saw Wu Daozong’s mother in the room. His mother’s manners and style of speaking was just usual, as if she did not know why all came inside. After Wu Daozong returned, mother told him, “My faults are to be blamed for the change

that is happening to me.” After a month, suddenly his mother was missing. Then all over country, the news of a tiger killing people could be heard. Everyone told that it is a black spotted tiger and all the country was afraid of it. Many people went to make a surprise attack. But in turn it attacked many of them. Then someone shot it with an arrow. He shot it in the chest. Then using a crescent blade, he pierced its stomach. But the tiger did not die immediately. After few days, this tiger returned to Wu Daozong’s home. It was unable to resume its human form. Then lying on the bed it died. Wu Daozong wailed of grief. He treated it just like his mother and buried it with proper rites.

“Xiakou Daoshi” 《峡口道士》

This story is taken from the *Jieyilu* 《解頤錄》 or *Huichang Jieyilu* 《會昌解頤錄》 in the Tang dynasty written by Bao Xu 包潛. This story is also incorporated in the “Tiger I” series of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》.

During Kaiyuan time, there were many tigers in the gorges. People who used to come there in vessels often were attacked by tigers. Since then it was like only if you have a vessel you have to pass the gorge. Then it was necessary to prepare someone who can feed the tigers. This is the only way though which risks can be avoided. Otherwise the people with vessels had to suffer even more. So this practice was there. Each ship left two persons on the shore to feed the tigers. After a few days, a boat came in which a despotic Daoist priest was sitting. Only two were poor men among them. So they left these two persons on the shore. One of the poor men, seeing an unavoidable death approaching ran towards the shore and told people, “I am very poor. I should go and die

on behalf of all of you. But each man has their own destiny. If I am not eaten by a tiger then I have a request to make. I do not know if you can promise me.” When people heard him talking very sincerely, they all felt sad. Then they asked him: “What do you want?” The man said: “I will now go ashore and take all the initiatives to find that tiger. After finding it, naturally some stratagem is required. I can only wish you to stay in the boat at the beach and wait for me. If I am not back by noon, then you can surely walk away.” Then everyone said, “We are stopping here on the beach. We, not only will wait for you till the midday. But we will wait for you for a night too. Even then if you don't come back, we'll leave this place.” When they finished saying this, the vessel was stopped by the river bank. Then, the man taking an axe with a long handle, got down from the vessel and went towards the mountains to look for the tiger.

There were no foot prints of human being. Only the foot prints of the tiger were seen. The forest was very dense. That man found out a narrow road. That road had the most number of signs of tiger's feet. He straight away followed those footprints and walked. He reached a mountain pass. The mud was very deep. The signs of the tiger paws were also numerous. He walked for another half *li*, and then he found one stone house. Inside the stone house there was a stone bed. On the stone bed a Daoist priest was sleeping. A tiger skin was kept on the shelf. The man thought, “This place actually is the place where the tiger changes its form.” Therefore he, by walking on his tiptoes, took the tiger skin and wrapped it up on his body. Holding the axe he stood there. Suddenly the Daoist priest woke up startled. He saw that the tiger skin on the shelf had disappeared. Then he told to the man, "I will surely eat you. How come you stole my skin away?" The man said, “I will surely eat you. How come you are telling me these kinds of words?"

Both of them refused to give in. The Daoist realized that he is on the wrong side. He said, "I am guilty in the eyes of the heaven. I am demoted to a tiger here. I was supposed to eat one thousand people. Already I had eaten 999. Only you are left to be eaten. I am extremely unfortunate. You stole my skin. If you don't return my skin, I again have to be a tiger and eat 1000 people. I have a plan. Both of us can satisfy our sides. Is it fine?" The man said, "Yes, fine!" the Daoist priest said, "You just take the tiger skin and return to the vessel. Cut some hair, mustache, nails and such things. Moreover smear the head, face, hand, feet and the entire body with drops of blood. Also use some old clothes to cover yourself. You wait till I reach the river bank. Then you can throw the skin to me. After I get the skin I will transform myself into a tiger. Then you again give me those bundle of things like hair, nails etc. I will eat it. It is equivalent to eating you."

That person draping the skin over his body and taking the axe returned to the river bank. The people on the vessel were extremely surprised. That person narrated the entire course in details. He prepared himself exactly like the Daoist priest had said. Almost at the daybreak, the Daoist priest came to the river bank. That person therefore taking the skin threw it to the Daoist priest. Taking the skin he wrapped it around and displayed its vigor. He was transformed into a tiger. He was howling and was about to jump. That man threw the old cloth towards the tiger and the tiger ate the old cloth. Then it moved its head and went back to the mountains. From that time onwards, none had heard of anyone who was attacked by the tiger. Everyone said that his share for eating men had been fulfilled. And he naturally returned to heaven.

“Li Zheng” 《李徵》

The story is originally taken from the *Xuan Shi Zhi* 《宣室志》 written by the Tang dynasty author Zhang Du. In the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》, the story belongs to the 427 segment of the Tiger-II 《虎二》.

In the Long xi country there was a man named Li Zheng. He belonged to the emperor's lineage. His home was in Guo Lue. From his childhood days Li Zheng was a person who was profoundly erudite. He was excellent in writing. When he was about twenty, he received recommendation from the Government official of the county. He was already a celebrated scholar with no such official post. In the spring of the tenth year of the Tian Bao {the title of the Tang emperor Xuan Zong (685-762)} under the scrutiny of the Prime Minister Yang Mo, he passed the entrance exam. In the later years, he was transferred to Jiangnan country and was appointed as a military officer. Zheng's nature was like a hermit. He lived estrangement from the society. He was inordinately stubborn and proud. He could not bend before the inferior colleagues. Very often he used to be melancholy. He often felt depressed and could not voice it. On every merry-making occasion with colleagues, he used to get drunk. Then whenever he saw an official, he used to say, "Isn't it surprising that I am associated with you?" His colleagues enviously hated him. So he was discharged from his responsibilities. He went back to his home and closing the doors he stopped contacting anybody. After more than a

year, when his clothes and food became insufficient, he prepared some clothing and had set out towards the East to make a journey between the middle and lower Yangtze valley (southern states of Wu and Chu). He wanted to seek financial aid from the prefecture officials in the county. The people living in the vicinity of the Wu and Chu country had been hearing about his reputation since long. So when he arrived, people were waiting for him keeping the doors of their halls wide open. They were especially solicitous to entertain him. He feasted and wandered around very joyously. Before leaving, they gave generous gifts that had filled his pockets. He lived in Wu and Chu countries for about a year. The total gifts he gained were really a lot. While returning, on the way to Guo Lue he lived in an inn in the graveyard of the county Ru. Then he suddenly got sick and mad. He whipped his servants and had beaten them up so hard that it was unbearable for them. This way about 10 days passed. The illness increased to a great extent. Very soon he became completely insane and walked away at night. No one knows where he went. He did not know which place would comfort him. The servants, following his footprints went to spy on him. It was about one month that Zheng did not come back. Therefore the servants riding his horses and also taking all his belongings and property ran far away.

Next year, the official of the Chen country having the surname of Can, in order to check the identity of the imperial censor and to carry out a diplomatic mission was heading towards the Lingnan. He was journeying and reached the trading area. It was about to be dawn. The officer riding behind him told him “There is a fierce tiger in this road which eats people. Because of this, the travelers in this road, apart from the day time, do not dare to enter it. Right now it is still too early. So please stop right here for a while. No way should we proceed anymore.’ Can angrily said, “I am the emperor’s messenger. We

have so many horses and people with us. How can the beast of mountains do any harm to us?” Then he ordered to drive forward. They did not travel even one *li* (1 kilometer), as it was expected one tiger from the bush jumped out suddenly. Can was extremely surprised. Suddenly the tiger hid its body inside the bush and in human voice it said, “So unusual. Oh ! I had nearly hurt my old friend.’ Can heard the voice and found it exactly similar to Li Zheng. In the former days, Can and Li Zheng were same ranked successful candidate in the highest imperial civil service examination. They used to share deep friendship.

They parted for some years. Suddenly on hearing his voice he was extremely surprised and moreover thought it to be uncanny. Furthermore it was very strange. He was even unable to speculate further about what was going on. Thereupon he asked, “Who are you? It must be my old friend from Long Xi, no?” The tiger moaned several times. It seems like the situation when someone sighs and sobs. Then it said to Can, ‘I am Li Zheng. I am very unfortunate. Talk to me.’ Can promptly came down from the horse, because he wanted to ask him questions. He asked, “Oh, My brother Li, oh! How come you ended up this way?” The tiger answered, “Ever since we parted, we have no news about the whereabouts of the other. You didn’t change much, no? Now where are you going? Just when I saw you, I saw two officials riding before you came. The responsible official held the symbol and was leading the road. I wondered if they are carrying the imperial mission in order to check the identity of the imperial censor and going to some other places. Yuan Can said, “Censor have recently been included in the list. Now the envoy is being sent to Lingnan.” Then the tiger said, “You are someone who had sustained through literature. Thus you established yourself in the imperial court. It could be said that your prosperity and growth is great. Moreover you are always noble and honest, responsible and diligent,

wise and prudent, especially outstanding. I am so happy that my old friend has attained such a high post. You deserve to be congratulated.” Yuan Can said, “In earlier days, you and me together became famous at the same time. Our friendship was very deep. It was very different than common friendship. Since we separated, time passed by like a stream. I was longing for your elegant demeanour and appearance. Indeed. I was anxiously waiting for you. Never expected that today here I will be able to hear you and cherish old friendship. Since it happened, then why aren’t you showing up before me? Why are you hiding yourself in the wilderness? We share the mutual affection of an old friendship. Don’t tell me that it should occur like this now. The tiger said, “Today I am no more a human. How is it possible that I will come in front of you?” Can started interrogating him in details to know about what happened to him. The tiger said, “Previously I lived in the southern states of Wu and Chu. Last year I returned. En route to the Wu and Chu, all of a sudden I fell ill, went mad, and ran into the mountain valley. Very soon with my left and right hand I started touching the ground and walked on four legs. Since then I felt that my heart became fiercer. My strength was multiplied. I can see my upper arms and thighs. Hundreds of hair grew on them. I also saw that the people having imperial crowns and dresses going through this way. There are people carrying burden on their back and running. I saw birds soaring extending their wings, animals having fine hair and then galloping. I saw them all and felt like catching them and feed on them. By then I already reached the south of Hanyin country. Since I was extremely hungry, I came upon a fat man and satisfied my hunger his flesh. Since then I got accustomed to it. It is not that I never remembered my wife and children and thought over my friends. Only because my behavior carried strangeness, so one day I changed into a strange animal. I was still left

with the shame that human beings usually have. So I disappeared. Oh! Heavens!” saying this he sighed. “Both of us were enrolled for the Imperial examinations the same year. Our friendship was always deep and profound. Today you are executing the laws of the king. Glorious friendship! But I am hiding my body in the woods and marshes. I will never ever experience the human world. I jumped and cried out my grievances looking at the heaven. I stooped and wept on the ground. When the body is destroyed then there is no use of it. Ah! Is this really my life?” Thereupon the tiger was crying and heaving sighs. He could not at all keep control over his emotions. So it kept on sobbing. Therefore Can asked, ‘Now that your Excellency has suddenly turned into a strange animal. How can he still speak human speech?’ The tiger replied, “Now my appearance has changed but my mind is still awakened. Therefore I am treated irreverently by some. They are afraid of me and also treat me hatefully. It is very difficult to express myself completely. Fortunately my old friend still remembers me, deeply understand my indescribable offence. In a way, this is also my hope. When you return from south I shall meet you again. At that time, your might appear to me as an object of prey. You should guard yourself rigorously. Do not facilitate my crime and make people laugh at you.” He continued again, “We both are genuine friends. I will request you to manage one of my tasks. I don’t know if you can do it.” Yuan Can said, “We are old friends! Is there something that I cannot do? What is it? Without any hesitation you reveal it to me.” The tiger said, “Earlier I did not get your promise. How dare I say it? Now as I have already got your promise, how could it be possible that I will still hide it from you? Earlier when I was staying in the inn, I became sick and went crazy. I promptly entered a desolated mountain. Two servants drove my horses and ran away with the cloth made sacks which

had all my property. My wife and children are still in Guolue. How would they know that I am turned into a strange kind? When you come back from south, please carry this letter to my wife and tell her that I already have died. Do not mention the incident happened today. I hope you will remember this.” Again he said, “In the human world I do not possess material property anymore. My son is still young. Undoubtedly it is very hard for him to earn livelihood. You are such a high ranked official. You are always in charge of justice. Our year-old friendship cannot be compared to others. I hope you will remember how lonely and feeble my young son is now. Provide him with some financial help, so that he does not die of hunger on the street. If you can do this, it will display your great kindness and morality.” After he finished, again he burst into tears. Yuan Can also started crying and said, “We both were always together. Your son is my son. I will do everything with all of my strength. How come you are still so anxious thinking that I will not be able to do this?” The tiger said, “I have about ten essays written long back. They are not yet published in the world. Although they are the bequeathed draft, but they all are squandered. Gentlemen, you, on behalf of me, pass on the records. Indeed I don’t want to enter my name in the list of the high-ranked renowned experts. I just wish to pass it on to my grandchildren.” Then Yuan Can called his servants and asked them to bring his pen and ink. Then he, following the words told by the tiger, recorded it. Altogether it was approximately twenty chapters. What a high quality of writing! The meaning was very profound. Can read it and exclaimed over and over again. The tiger said, “This is the essence of my entire life. How dare I hope to pass this on?” He said again, “Gentleman, you carry out the order of the king and riding horses deliver it from one post to the other. You must be extremely busy. Now you are delayed as you stayed here so long, because

of your reverential awe. With this, you gentleman, I bid farewell to you forever. How can I finish speaking of this sorrow which is so different in nature?”

Yuan Can came back from the south. Thereupon he especially sent off men to dispatch the letter to Li Zheng’s wife and he also arranged for his funeral. He prepared gifts and sent to his son. After more than a month, Li Zheng’s son came to the capital from Guo Lue County to meet Yuan Can. He wanted to search for his father’s coffin that carried the corpse. Yuan Can did not have any way left. He had to tell the incident of his meeting with Li Zheng in details. Afterwards, Yuan Can took out a part of his official salary and gave it to Li Zheng’s wife and children so that they can escape from the sufferings of the hunger and cold. In the later days, Can became an assistant minister in the department of War.

“Wang Yong” 《王用》

This story is originally taken from the *Youyang Zazu* 《酉陽雜俎》 written in the Tang dynasty written by Duang Chengshi in the 9th century. This story is also incorporated in the “Tiger IV” series 《虎四》 of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》.

During Zhenyuan period, the ruler Wang Yong of Guozhou, who was also the ruler of the people of Chengxian country committed suicide in the snakehead valley. Inside the gorge there was a small river which was hardly few meters wide. Very often two, more than one chi long black fishes were seen to be swimming in the river.

One day Wang Yong was cutting tree. He was tired and hungry. He then caught one fish and ate. Wang Yong's brother said with surprise, "Perhaps this is the fish which is the spiritual beings of this gorge. How can you kill it?" After sometime Wang Yong's wife came to give him food. Brandishing his axe and without stopping, Wang Yong kept on cutting trees. After a long time, he came back. The wife found that his features had some changes. Immediately she cried out to call his brother. But Wang Yong left his clothes, roared and jumped and was transformed into a tiger. Straightaway he ran towards the mountains and disappeared.

From this time onwards, for his food, he often caught river deer and such animals and used to eat. Three years passed by this way. One day evening, he reached his home and standing before his home he knocked on the doors. He introduced himself by telling his name - "I am Wang Yong!" his younger brother said, "It is almost three years now that my brother had been transformed into a tiger. What kind of *guichang*¹ are you that you are using his name?" Wang Yong said, "In the former years, I killed one black fish. In the nether world I was punished and was transformed into a tiger. Since I killed people, so again in the nether world I was beaten up badly with a stick. Now my previous form has returned. My entire body is full of wounds. By all means you come out and see me. Do not doubt me." His brother was very happy. He opened the door at once. He saw a strange creature having tiger's head and human body. The brother instantly died of shock. His family made a big fuss around and ran away towards whichever directions possible. The strange creature was actually beaten up to death by the villagers. When the body was examined, there was a black mole. He really was Wang Yong. Just the head did not

¹ The ghost of one devoured by a tiger, who helps the tiger to devour others

return to its original form. During the time of Yuanhe, when the recluse Zhaoqi reached the snakehead gorge then he heard this story.

Stories from the Dragon Section :

“Liang Wu Hou” 《梁武后》

This story is originally taken from the *Liangjingji* 《兩京記》 written in the Kaiyuan 10th year of during the time of Tang Emperor Xuanzong in the 722 AD. This story is also incorporated in the “Dragon I” series 《龍一》 of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》.

The empress named Liang Wuxi was a jealous woman. The emperor Wu had just ascended the throne and was yet to confer a title upon the empress but it was already late to handle the matter. Thereupon she was extremely angry. Suddenly she hurled herself into a well situated at the courtyard of the palace. When everyone ran to save her she already was transformed into a poisonous dragon and started exhale smoke. None dared to get close. Emperor Wu grieved for a long time. Then he conferred her with a title in the name of heavenly dragon king. He built a memorial hall on the well to enshrine and worship her.

Appendix III

Stories Related to the Motif of “Devouring”

Jiu Za Piyu Jing 《舊雜譬喻經》 Part I : Story Number 18

The *Jiu Za Piyu Jing* 《舊雜譬喻經》 of the *Taisho Tripitaka* Vol. 4 section number 206 contains a story which has been translated into Chinese from Pali by Kang Senghui (康僧會 died 280 AD). In this collection the story number 18¹ goes like this:

In ancient times there was a King who was strongly protective about his women. Once the queen addressed the crown prince, saying, “I am your mother. Since my birth I have never seen this kingdom thoroughly. I wish to go out. Now you can explain this to the King.” Three times she told it like this. So the crown prince informed the King. Therefore the king approved her wish. The crown prince himself drove the chariot. A flock of officials on the road welcomed her bowing. The queen stretched out her hand to pull back the curtain, thus allowing people to observe her. The crown prince, seeing a woman behaving this way, pretended as if his stomach was hurting and thereafter returned home. The Queen said, “My beautiful look is indeed lost.” The crown prince thought to himself: “Even my mother is like this! Then don’t know how the other women would be?” That very night, he abandoned the state and went away.

¹I have accessed the story from the CBETA website (Last accessed on 6.8.2016). For reading the story I have followed this link - < http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T04/0206_001.htm>

He went into the mountains to travel and see the world. At that time, he saw a tree by the side of the road. Below the tree there was a nice spring. The crown prince ascended the tree. Then suddenly he saw that a Brahmin walked solitarily into the pool and bathed. After taking bath he ate food and then he performed a trick. He spewed a pot out. Inside the pot there was a woman who made a place with a screen so that they can be there privately. Thereafter when the Brahmin went to sleep, the women also repeated the trick. She spat out a pot. There was a very young man in it. They slept together. Once they finished sleeping, she swallowed the pot. In a jiffy the Brahmin arose. Once again, he put the woman in the pot. After swallowing it, he picked up his staff and walked off. Observing all the crown prince returned to the state and informed the King. The King invited the Brahmin and ministers to come before him. They made food for three people. It was kept on one side. The Brahmin soon arrived, saying “I am alone.” The crown prince then said, “Brahmin², you should bring out your wife and eat together.” The Brahmin could not help it but produced his wife. Then the crown prince asked the woman, “You should bring out the man and eat together.” He repeated this three times. She also could not but bring forth the man to eat together. After eating, they left. The King asked the crown prince, “How did you know this?” He replied, saying, “My mother wish to travel around the kingdom. I was her chariot driver. Mother opened and stretched out her hand to let people see. I thought how much women can desire for. Then I pretended as if I have a belly-ache. I returned into the mountains. I saw the Brahmin concealing his wife in his stomach like this but even then she was adulterous. Thus women are adulterous without any exception. I wish that you, Great King, should let the

² Here the Brahmin is addressed by the crown prince as a Daoist priest 道人. This is the best example of the implementation of the Daoist vocabulary to express Buddhist Sanskrit terms.

palace women to come and go by themselves.” The King ordered to the private quarters that those who wanted to walk around could follow their desires. The master said, “Under the heaven if anyone is not trustworthy, it is only women!”

Za Piyu Jing 《雜譬喻經》 Part I: Story Number 8

The *Taisho Tripitaka*³ Vol. 4, No. 205 *Za Piyu Jing* 《雜譬喻經》 (Part I) story number 8 has this story which illustrates a novice young monk’s power of engulfing food. The story goes like this,

Ashoka ruled after 100 years of Buddha’s nirvana. He used to follow Buddhism. In his kingdom there were 20,000 *bhikshus*, who he permanently revered. All the 96 kinds of other religions became jealous. In order to defeat Buddha dharma, they thought of a plan. They assembled and thought of something. Among them one was adept in transforming things with magic tricks. He said to everyone, "I will create an illusion and will transform myself into an evil spirit and will search for *sramanas*. When they will see they will be scattered and lost. When they will realize what happened, they will certainly come over and pledge allegiance with our religion."

The other religions revere gods. Thereafter he took the shape of Maheshwara whose one head has eight mouths and also he has eight arms on all sides. He is the scariest of all the ghosts. Thus transforming his body, he took more than two hundred ugly ghosts with him. Thereafter walking in an impressive manner he entered the kingdom. Slowly he reached in front of the gate of the Imperial Palace. Every man and

³I have accessed the story from the CBETA website (Last accessed on 6.8.2016). For reading the story I have followed this link - <http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T04/0205_001.htm>

woman in that kingdom was afraid. The king went out to meet and saw this huge scary ghost. Seeing him he bowed his head and asked, "I don't know what order you, the Great God, have wished to carry to me?" The ghostly god said, "I want to eat people". The King said that it was completely impossible. The ghostly god said, "It seems that the king is sympathetic towards his subjects. In this kingdom there must be someone from whom the king does not reap any benefit and therefore can hand him over to me for my eating." The king said, "There is none". Then the ghostly god said, "The *sramanas* don't benefit you by working in the field. They don't benefit you by serving in the army. They also don't benefit you by serving in your court as official. These people are of no good. Hand them over to me for my consummation." The king was sad in his heart. But the situation was thus that he had to work against his will. So against his will he sent an envoy to call in the *sramanas*.

Everyone heard this news. Among twenty thousand *bhikshu*, the one having the lowest rank was just thirteen years old. His name was Duanzheng which means the Rectified One. Even though he heard of what all were saying about the spirit, he told to the *bhikshus* - "According to the rank I should be going." Then the novice Buddhist monk using a foreign language performed a special Buddhist ritual and told "That Brahmin is a fallen earthly spirit only. Whatever we do, we cannot escape his grudge." So he went to the place where the evil person was waiting. Then he told that supernatural being, "I know you wish to eat us. I am the youngest one in the *sangha*. Henceforth first I came to examine. Rest of the *bhikshus* will be arriving slowly." The novice monk said again, "But since morning, I have not taken any food. Please wait, let me have a stomach full of meal.

Once I am satisfied, you can eat me.” The supernatural being was with him only. Then those twenty thousand people were also following this evil Brahmin.

The king arranged the meal in one huge kitchen and he was waiting there. Then the novice Buddhist monk ate a meal meant for twenty thousand people all by himself. He kept all the food inside his mouth in one go. Seeing this, the evil god flew towards the *Jetavana* (祇桓). Even after having that meal the monk was not satisfied. He swallowed those twenty thousand Brahmins. With the help of the *rddhipāda*⁴, he sent them all to Jetavana. Then the Brahmin who performed those magic tricks walked in. It seemed that he was greatly afraid and then looking at the *bhikshus*, he bowed his head and thanked them. Thereafter he wanted to become a follower. The *bhikshus* shaved the head of the Brahmin. They also taught him Buddhist sutras, and he was turned into an *arhat*. The people of the kingdom without any exception delightfully obtained happiness. Tolerance prevailed again. The king thought and said, “A young monk moved my heart this way. Where does the Maha (great)-overflowing ocean of dharma not exist?” From then on the Buddha dharma flourished and till now it could not be defeated.

“Pan, the Old Man” 《潘老人》

This story has originally been taken from *Yuanhuaqi* 《原化記》. This is a *chuanqi* collection written by Tang dynasty author Huang Fushi 皇甫氏. This story is also a part of the 5th Series of the “Daoist Magic Series” 道术五 of the 75th volume of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》.

⁴ One of the four constituent part of supernatural power

During the Yuanhe era (806-820 AD) there was a Shaolin temple in the Song Mountain. One day the storm outside had just stopped. An old man leaning on a walking stick arrived there and knocked on the door. He begged for a temporary lodging. Since the monks in the temple already had closed the door, they were no more willing to open it. Therefore they showed the old man an empty house outside the temple which had two rooms in it. They requested him to put up there for the night. Not even a bed or any mat was there in it but the old man entered the room.

At night, after 11'0 clock, since the monks in the temple stay up at night, they suddenly saw that the outside of the temple was very bright. It appeared to be very strange for them and they went to have a look at it. They looked into the room where the old man was staying. The room had soft mattress and emerald green curtains. The room is especially gorgeous and magnificent. They also saw that various kinds of meat and vegetable dishes were displayed. The old man was eating and drinking comfortably. There was no servant anywhere. The monks were very surprised and were thinking how this kind of an incident could take place. But they also did not dare to open the door and ask questions. All of them were waiting and watching. Thus it became morning five'0 clock. The old man woke up. He finished washing his face. From his clothes he took out a bottle gourd. The size was as small as a fist. Thereupon he took all the mattresses, seats, curtains and all the other things he used and then put everything inside the gourd. There was nothing that he could not keep inside it. He finished putting all inside. Then he kept the gourd back inside his clothes. The empty room looked exactly like it was before. The monks were extremely surprised. Opening the door they went to show respect to him and to ask him questions. Very politely, the old man only said good bye. The monks persuaded him to

He spoke about the place where he stayed and also asked his name. He answered that his surname was Pan. He was coming from the Southern Mountains and was heading towards the Northern Mountains, to a place called Taiyuan. Later some people had seen him only occasionally.

“Hou Yu” 《侯通》

“Hou Yu” 《侯通》 has originally been taken from the Book *Xuan Guai Lu* 《玄怪錄》 by Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (779 AD—848 AD) . It is also included in the “Gold Treasure I” section 《寶一金上》 of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》 .

In the beginning of Sui dynasty (581-618AD), in the time of Kaihuang (581-600 AD), a successful second degree candidate named Hou Yu, entered the Guang city. He arrived outside the Jian gate. All of a sudden he found four very big stones. All of them were as big as a *dou* (measurement). Hou liked them a lot. He took them and hid them away inside his book trunk. Then he made the donkey carry it.

While he stopped in the midway to give rest to his donkey, then he took them out to have a look at them. All had turned into gold. Hou reached the city and sold them. He got hundred thousand coins. Then from the city he bought more than ten beautiful concubines. After he returned he expanded his residence and courtyard. He also bought fertile farmlands and a villa in the nearby suburb. Afterwards one beautiful spring day, riding horse he went travelling. All the concubines followed him on the chariots. He got down from the car. Then one after another he drank wine while preparing hot fish. All of a sudden an old man appeared. He reached there, carrying a big trunk. He sat on the corner of the seat. Hou was angry and abused him. He asked his servants to help the old

man to leave the place. The old man did not move. He did not also rebuke Hou. He did not even get angry. But rather he satisfactorily drank a full cup of warm wine and then said smiling, “I came here to ask the gentleman to repay the debt only. In the past the gentleman took my gold and went away. Have you forgotten?” after he finished talking, he took all of the Hou’s concubines and kept them inside the book trunk. The book box did not even seem to be small for all these. He carried it and went away. He walked in a way that it seems like a bird flew away. Hou ordered the servants to gallop and follow him. In a short while they lost all his traces. Since then Hou’s family again turned poor like before. However his livelihood was same like before. More than ten years passed by. Again he went back to the Shu Country for work and then arrived at the Jian gate. Again he met the old man there, in front of the gate. He was travelling and carrying all the concubines with him. They were walking leisurely in a carefree mood. Lots of visitors were following him. Seeing Hou all laughed out loud. He asked them the reason for their laugh but they did not speak. He tried to come near to them but again he lost their traces. He investigated near and around the Jian Gate. But he never saw him. In the end he also could not even guess what the actual matter was.

“The Head of Juyan Tribe” 《居延部落主》

The story has originally been taken from the *Xuan Guai Lu* by Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (779 AD–848 AD) . It was incorporated in the 368 series of “Jingguai I” 《精怪一》 of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》 .

In the beginning of the Zhou dynasty, during the time of the Jing emperor, the head of the Juyan tribe was named Bodu Gudi (勃都骨低). Gudi was a very cruel and pleasure seeking person. His palace was also very magnificent. All of a sudden about ten people arrived at his door. One of them first showed him his name card and said, he is the leader of the *Shengming* (省名) tribe, named Cheng Duoshou (成多受). Following this, he entered inside. Gudi replied, “Why your tribe is named *Shengming* 省名?”⁵ Duo Shou 多受 replied, “The people I brought have different surnames but their names are the same. One of their names is Shou 受. There is one whose surname is Ma. His surname is Pi 皮. He is another whose surname is Lu 鹿. His surname is Xiong 熊. Another’s surname is Zhang 麋. His title is Wei 衛 and his surname is Ban 班. But their names are all the same. Only me, the commander in chief - my name is Duo Shou 多受.” Gudi said: “You look like jesters (伶官). What do you know?” Duo Shou said, “I know acrobatics. I don’t like common things. All my words have the meaning of the classics.” Gudi being exalted answered, “I never saw such things.” One of the jesters then came in the front and said: “We are hungry. All of us are fat and happy. Our skin is so loose that it can coil us three times. If you don’t make us satisfied, we cannot open our mouth and perform for you.”

⁵ Because the meaning of *Shengming* 省名 is (省略名字) - leaving out one’s name

Gudi was very happy. He ordered to bring more food. One of them said, “I request you, please let me perform something named –the small and the big things are complimentary to each other; the beginning and the end gives rise to one another (大小相成，終始相生)”. Thereupon the tall person gulped the smaller one. The fat one gulped the thin one. They ate up each other and only two persons were left. The tall person told again, “Now please let me perform the opposite - 終始相生 - the beginning and the end gives rise to one another.” Thereupon he spitted out one person. The person who came out also spitted out another person. One after another they continued like this. The number of the persons returned to the actual number. Gudi was extremely surprised. Then he gave them a lot of money and sent them off.

The next day they again arrived at the place to perform the same kind of show as the day before. Like this they arrived there for half a month. Gudi thought it is very annoying and he did not want to arrange food for them. Then all the jesters said angrily: “The host must be thinking that we are playing tricks. Please bring your wife and let us try.” Therefore, on brining them, they grasped these people, the son, the daughter, sister, nephews, wives and concubines. And then the jesters gulped them and they went inside their stomach. After going to the stomach they cried out and begged for their life. Gudi felt extremely frightened and terrified and he fell on the stair started kowtow. Grievously he begged for all the relatives. All of them laughed and replied: “This will not hurt them. You should not worry.” They at once spitted them out. All the relatives are the same as before. Gudi was very angry. He wanted to kill the jesters. So he sent some people to investigate secretly.

These men found out a foundation of one old living place, and saw the jesters disappeared in that. Gudi asked the people to dig that place. They dug several feet. Beneath the roof tiles there they found a huge wooden door sill. Inside them there were thousands of leather bags. Beside the door sill there were some grains. On the touching it turned into ashes. Around the door sill they found bamboo writing slips and books. The characters are almost erased. What is written cannot be read. It indistinctly appeared that there are three words only. It seemed like the inscription on the tomb. Gudi got to know that all these sacks are monstrous. He wished to take them out and burn them. All the sacks around the door sill started crying. Calling out, they said, “We know that we are going to die. Soon we will be extinguished. It is because Military officer Li has left the mercury here. That’s why we are here. We are the sacks for agricultural tax paid in grain brought here by the military officer named Lishaoqing. The room collapsed under the pressure of the time. But we have passed long time. We already have a life. Now we work as the jesters for the mountain god of Juyan. We are sincerely begging you for the god’s sake. Please don’t destroy us. Hereafter we would not dare to disturb your house anymore.” Gudi wanted to take advantage of that mercury. He finished burning all the sacks. All, without any exception, were crying out in pain. There were rivers of blood. After all of them were burned out, Gudi’s house, corridor, room and windows, all started giving out a painful cry. It was the same like the time when he was burning the sacks. Even after several months passed, it didn’t stop. Next year Gudi’s whole family died of illness. None was left behind to bear the name. Later on the mercury also lost its existence.

“Zhang Ding” 《張定》

The story was originally taken from the *Xianchuan Shiyi* 《仙傳拾遺》 written during the Five Dynasties (907-960 AD) period by Master Chang He (长河上人). It is included in the “Daoshu IV” series 道術四 of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》.

Zhang ding was from Guangling district. When he was a kid he entered school and started learning. One day he got up very early. It was cold weather and the moon was still in the sky. The ring-shaped bright moon was hanging by the corner of the sky. Not a single person was there on the road. Alone he walked for more than hundred steps. And then he saw a Dao priest walking fast in a hurry. That Daoist priest turned his head and noticed him. He halted and told him, “Hey, you can be taught.” Then he asked “What is the most craved affair for you?” Zhang Ding answered, “I like long life and eternal youth. It is not difficult to confer. You have the bone of an immortal. If you follow the Great Way (Dao) you will definitely succeed. Moreover I will teach you the skill to transform yourself. Do not reveal it to anyone. After ten years, I myself will come to receive you.” Then he taught him via a mnemonic rhyme.

Zhang Ding was very prudent and cautious. He did not like to talk. He was extremely obedient at home. Also is very secretive about practicing his skill of summoning supernatural beings and changing human forms. There was nothing he could not change himself into. Once he and his parents went to a place named Lian Shui to pay a visit to the relatives. After they reached the place, they saw that there were music and drama performances. Everyone went to watch. Ding was the only person who did not want to go. His parents told him, “These performances are extremely magnificent. All your family and friends went to see. Why only you don’t want to go and see?” Ding answered,

“Perhaps because the elders want to go and watch, so as your child I cannot go.” His parents wanted to go. Ding said, “Here I have one. It is called the great performance of the Qingzhou city. It is also worth watching.” Then he took up a water bottle promptly. It could hold two deciliters of water. The empty bottle did not have anything in it. He placed it in the middle of the room. Then like a wizard Daoist priest he walked around the bottle for 2-3 times. Thus he held the bottle inclined in the courtyard. Innumerable people appeared. Everyone is 6-7 inches tall. There were feudal bureaucrats, military general, official historians, young men and women and also many other audience. The room filled up with their noise. Followed by this, they instantly also saw an incomparably well-organized place for holding the performance. The venue had place for keeping arms, chariot shed. It also held musical acrobatics. Everything was absolutely precise and accurately arranged. This way it was arranged pleasantly for an entire day. Zhang Ding and his parents saw these together. When it was getting dark, he slanted the bottle again at the middle of the courtyard. Human beings and the cars and the horses, the entire crowd entered the bottle windingly and endlessly. His parents picked up the bottle and looked inside. Again there was not a single being inside it. Now Ding used knife and scissors to cut his hands and legs into pieces. He also scooped out his five viscera, heart, liver, spleen, lungs and kidneys. He divided them and hung them on the four walls. After a long time he restored those organs into his own body by himself. He did all these and remained calm and composed without any pain throughout. Every time he saw a picture on the screen having human beings playing music, he used to point his fingers at them. And all of them could fly, walk, sing and dance. They could crack jokes and move around. They were totally similar to the real human beings.

Ding's parents asked him where from he learned these all. He answered, "The surname of my master is Yao (originally meant medicine). He is an Immortal being of the Hailing Mountain. He had already taught me the Great Way to ascend heaven. We have planned to meet after ten years. Right now it is seven years only." Thereafter he bid his family good bye and went to the deepest place of the Tian Zhu Mountains. While leaving home, he said to his parents, "If you remember, your son will return to you immediately. Never become deeply anxious." So whenever his parents remembered him, he immediately came back to home. After a while he flew back to his abode again. One day he said his parents, "After sixteen years Guangling country will turn into a heap of debris. Therefore you can migrate to Haizhou. There you can live in the land of happiness." Then he gave his parents two pills of elixir for immortals. Then he said, "Take this pill and it will keep you away from diseases for more than hundred years." As of himself he did not come back again. His parents had the medicines. They also had a relaxed and comfortable life. They took the food they liked. They were twice as much vigorous and youthful than younger people. They kept on living in Haizhou. In the time of Qianfu, his parents were still alive.

"Hu Mei'er" 《胡媚兒》

This story is taken from the *Hedongji* 《河東集》 written by Liu Kai 柳開 (948 AD—1001 AD). It is also included in the "Huanshu III" series (幻術三) of the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》.

In the Tang dynasty Zhenyuan period (779 – 805 AD), in the market place of the Yang province, all of a sudden came a woman performer who used to beg by displaying

her extraordinary magical power. Nobody knew from where she came. She called herself Mei'er. Her surname was Hu. Her wonderful performance was absolutely extraordinary. After ten days slowly more viewers gathered. Every day she could earn one thousand million. One morning she took out a glass bottle from her bosom. That bottle could hold half a litre. The bottle was well-illuminated and transparent. It seemed there was nothing inside it, as if there was no blockage. She kept the bottle on a carpet. In the beginning she asked the audience: "Is there anyone who can fill up this bottle with money, that way I will be satisfied." The mouth of the bottle was just as small as the tube of a reed. One person gave her one hundred coins. She threw the money inside and the tinkling sound was heard. But they only looked like small grains inside the bottle. All the audience was extremely surprised. Again someone gave in thousand coins. The same way she put them inside. Again there were people who gave ten thousand coins. But the same thing happened. Very soon some prying people came. This person gave ten thousand and that person gave twenty thousand coins. Every time the result was same. There was someone who drilled into the bottle along with his horses and donkeys inside the bottle. In the bottle all of them looked as small as houseflies. Their movements were similar as before inside the bottle.

In a while two revenue collectors arrived there from the tax office at the Yangzi River. They arrived there with ten carriages bearing light weighed goods. They halted there to have a look. They thought if on the way they can collect some more things and go forward. They said, "This is Government treasure. We need not fear to use it." Then they asked Mei'er: "Can you put all these carriages inside the bottle?" Mei'er told, "If you allow me, I can." The revenue collector said, "For the time being you can try." Then Hu

Mei'er inclined the mouth of the bottle a little. She shouted loudly towards the carriages. All the chariots, like ants, one after another in a row, crawled into the bottle. They could be counted very clearly. Shortly thereafter, gradually they could no more be seen. This time, Mei'er herself jumped into the bottle. Tax collectors were extremely shocked. Hurriedly they took up the bottle, dabbed and broke it. They searched inside. But nothing was there.

Since then they lost all traces of Mei'er. After more than one month, somebody staying at the north of the Qing River met Mei'er. She was commanding and leading carriages, going towards Dongping. That time Lishi Dao, this man, was the commander in chief of Dongping.

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