

Passions of the Cut Sleeve

The Male
Homosexual Tradition
in China

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Introduction

When Western travelers first described Chinese society to their fellow Europeans they lavished ecstatic praise on many aspects of Chinese culture, including efficient government administration, awe-inspiring public works, and the opulent and sophisticated life-styles of the upper classes. Early European commentators even added Chinese moral values to their idealistic panegyric. But one aspect of Chinese society received strident condemnation and scorn from these first adventurers: homosexuality. For them, the popularity of “the abominable vice of sodomy” was an unforgivable flaw in an otherwise admirable society.¹ The sixteenth-

century chronicler Galeote Pereira reported, "The greatest fault we do find [among the Chinese] is sodomy, a vice very common in the meaner sort, and nothing strange among the best."² The perceptive Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci related his disgust at the sights he witnessed in Beijing: "There are public streets full of boys got up like prostitutes. And there are people who buy these boys and teach them to play music, sing and dance. And then, gallantly dressed and made up with rouge like women these miserable men are initiated into this terrible vice."³ Friar Gaspar de Cruz was even more censorious, portraying China as a new Sodom. He composed an apocalyptic tract in which he described earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters imposed on China by God in retribution for the tolerance shown by the Chinese toward "a filthy abomination, which is that they are so given to the accursed sin of unnatural vice, which is in no wise reprov'd among them."⁴

These disapproving Westerners were shocked by the perceived ubiquity and deep roots of homosexuality within Chinese culture. They were correct in sensing the existence of a historical tradition of homosexuality in China that dates back to at least the Bronze Age. It gave rise to highly developed expressions, including well-patronized meeting places and an accumulation of literature catering to homosexual tastes. Many times homosexuality acted as an integral part of society, complete with same-sex marriages for both men and women. It spanned a range of social classes, from famed emperors and aristocrats to impoverished laborers. In all of these circumstances, homosexuality serves as a convenient mirror for viewing an intimate area of human experience.

Unfortunately, we are left only tantalizing fragments recording the homosexual experience in China. From one century a poem may survive, while the next yields only a terse biography or legal case. In all periods lacunae outnumber surviving records, making systematic social history almost impossible. Nevertheless, this dearth does not condemn us to ignorance of Chinese homosexuality. Rather than study people, I have been forced to concentrate on the homosexual tradition itself. Because Chinese society has

always held both literary pursuits and examples from the past in exceptionally high regard, it becomes possible to discern a homosexual tradition developing through time, with successive authors taking references from previous works and making them relevant to the collective experience of a writer's own time. Even the conceptions of "homosexuality" as a distinct realm of experience had roots in tradition. In general, homosexuality came to be described through reference to famous individuals of ancient times associated with same-sex love. The special nature of the Chinese experience and sources has therefore determined the approach I take to the subject. Rather than studying "homosexuals" or "homosexuality," this book concentrates on reconstructing the Chinese homosexual tradition.

Why should a modern Westerner be interested in understanding the sexual practices of a people far removed in both time and place? In Western-centric terms, this sort of investigation allows us to comprehend the sexual practices of our own culture by providing an alternate, sophisticated panorama of sexual behavior. Although contemporary Westerners are apt to regard our own sexual customs as normal and natural, in fact they often differ from the multitude of sexual views held by the bulk of humankind carelessly lumped together as "non-Western" peoples, as well as from many of the sexual practices considered normative in earlier periods of our history. By carefully examining the sexuality of a people divided from us by time and place, we can better understand and question the caprice implicit in our own social and sexual conventions. For a topic as controversial and misunderstood as homosexuality, this sort of cross-cultural comparison assumes particular importance.

The study of Chinese homosexuality also reveals striking new perspectives on the Chinese themselves. One stereotypical notion that this book should help to dispel is the conception that Chinese in dynastic times conformed to a narrow view of family-based sexuality. Because many scholars of China tend to emphasize the homogeneous aspects of the society, they often ignore the tolerance of diversity present among many peoples and in numerous

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places throughout Chinese history. The relative toleration of homosexuality by the upper classes, and perhaps among other less-documented social strata as well, stands as proof of this point.

The long duration of tolerance allowed the accumulation of a literature and sense of history that in turn enabled those with strong homosexual desires to arrive at a complex self-understanding. In many periods homosexuality was widely accepted and even respected, had its own formal history, and had a role in shaping Chinese political institutions, modifying social conventions, and spurring artistic creation. A sense of tradition lasted up until this century, when it fell victim to a growing sexual conservatism and the Westernization of morality.

Despite the denouement of the homosexual tradition in our own times, when viewed in a broad historical perspective the record is one of general tolerance toward homosexuality in China. We should note how the West has responded to this and similar examples of sexual tolerance. As Westerners made their way across Asia, they constantly found proof of their own moral excellence. The words of hostile Europeans such as Pereira and de Cruz reveal how travelers from the West were quick to divide the world into a morally virtuous Occident superior to what they saw as the exotic decadence of the Orient.⁵ Europeans exalted their own hostilities as examples of moral purity while viewing tolerance of homosexuality as evidence of Oriental moral degeneracy. Thus homosexuality became a focal point for division between China and the West.⁶

Most importantly, homosexuality provides us with a convenient entrée into one of the most intimate, hence central, aspects of existence for the peoples of dynastic China. For example, the influence of family life on all aspects of society acquires new depth when seen from the standpoint of homosexuality. Likewise, homosexuality allows us to view a spectrum of personalities and institutions from a novel perspective. Yet precisely because homosexuality gives us access to the most intimate areas of the Chinese identity, we must take care not to project too much of

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ourselves onto our subject matter. As recent revisionist historiography has shown, the field of Chinese history in the West has all too often involved an imposition of our own priorities and intellectual frameworks onto a different culture.⁷ This flawed approach has long been implicit in many Western studies of China, and occasionally even becomes explicit. For example, Max Weber, patron saint of social scientists, readily admitted that he undertook his monumental studies of Asian society according to a Western intellectual agenda: "These studies do not claim to be complete analyses of cultures, however brief. On the contrary, in every culture they quite deliberately emphasize the elements in which it differs from Western civilization. They are, hence, definitely oriented to the problems which seem important for the understanding of Western culture from *this* view-point."⁸

To avoid the methodological insensitivity of Weber and his intellectual heirs, we must deal carefully with our subject matter. For the topic of sexuality, which almost always evokes deeply held preconceptions while challenging even the most dispassionate reader's basic self-identity, culture-blind objectivity becomes a distant chimera. Nevertheless, we must strive for the difficult goal of understanding Chinese sexuality on its own terms if we are to understand it at all.

I have two main goals for this study: first, systematically to present translations of the most important original sources dealing with the history of the homosexual tradition in China; and second, to present an interpretive framework for understanding the Chinese homosexual tradition that is as free as possible from Western preconceptions. In structure, this book develops along both chronological and topical lines. Although I generally proceed chronologically, the nature of surviving records from each era determines the main points of focus for each period under discussion. Thus my description of ancient history, known primarily from a few official histories, deals with the sexual practices of the uppermost elite; the literature surviving from later periods provides insight into the lives of the literati; and late-imperial sources

describe in detail the lives of young male prostitutes and their patrons. By combining these differing perspectives I hope to forge a broad survey of the homosexual tradition.

I do not intend to present all surviving evidence of Chinese homosexuality; such an undertaking would be needlessly vast for an introductory survey and would fill many volumes. Instead I will merely delineate the major forms of sexuality reflected in the evolving homosexual tradition. The continuity of these various practices and concepts, as seen in the variety of historiography and literature that describe them, constitutes the homosexual tradition of China.

Male homosexuality, like all other forms of sexuality in China, inspired few writings relative to other topics, such as the opposing concerns of court intrigue and ethics. In this respect the Chinese case contrasts starkly with the enormous literature on homosexuality from other cultures, such as Greece and Japan. While this relative dearth may seem puzzling in light of the repeated indications that homosexuality was quite open among the upper classes in many periods, the very nature of Chinese literature accounts for this lack. Chinese biography remained tightly tied to the narrow concerns of politics and failed to develop an independent epic tradition centered on the individual apart from society; prose fiction emerged late in imperial history and remained weak and despised compared to other literary traditions; and philosophers discussing questions of human nature and morality dealt only with the public face of virtue. Biography and philosophy therefore generally ignored the world of private experience, such as sex. By discouraging discussion of sex, this overall orientation of Chinese literature complicates the reconstruction of the homosexual past. Fortunately, though, despite these forces working against the recording of homosexual history, enough material remains for us to speak of a homosexual tradition in China.

Indeed, instead of a "homosexual tradition," it might be more accurate to speak of the "male homosexual tradition." Unlike modern Western society, which sees male homosexuality and lesbianism as related, the Chinese viewed them as completely

separate forms of sexuality. A Chinese woman reading about the history of homosexual men would not have drawn a parallel with female sexuality. Consequently, what I say about the "homosexual" tradition in China applies only to men. Because Chinese literature was almost always written by men for men, very little documentation survives on lesbian life. I have gathered most of the scanty evidence I have found on the nature of lesbian relations into an appendix. I hope readers do not mistake my intentions in this "separate but unequal" treatment. This is not just a token section thrown in to appease a certain readership: it represents the results of my earnest efforts to uncover the Chinese lesbian past. I sincerely regret my limited success.

We must take care when discussing male homosexuality in the Chinese context, because classical Chinese lacked a medical or scientific term comparable to "homosexuality" or "homosexual." Instead, it was usually discussed using poetic metaphors referring to earlier men or incidents famed for association with homosexuality. Chinese terminology therefore did not emphasize an innate sexual essence, but concentrated rather on actions, tendencies, and preferences. In other words, instead of saying what someone "is," Chinese authors would usually say whom he "resembles" or what he "does" or "enjoys." Another popular way of describing homosexuality was in terms of social roles. Hence early records mentioning men who had sexual relationships with the emperors call them "favorites," a description of their political status, not of an innate sexual essence. Both abstract terminology and actual sexual practices differ between China and our own society, suggesting the need for great caution in dealing with the Chinese case.

Understanding the specific context of homosexuality in China requires us to decide on some specific theoretical tools. Most fundamental among the issues to be determined are the interrelated questions of what constitutes and "causes" homosexuality. On one side, "essentialists" like John Boswell argue that certain people have a predisposition to homosexual acts that transcends cultural conceptions of sexuality and therefore allows us to categorize them according to their sexual essence as homosexual. In the

opposing camp, "social constructionists" like Michel Foucault see homosexuality as an artificial construct created by a limited number of cultures, like those of the contemporary West, and therefore lacking objective validity and indiscriminate cross-cultural applicability.

These positions have been portrayed as opposites, with a resulting polarization of studies regarding homosexuality. As a partial remedy to this split we should recall that anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss often note how human beings tend to divide the organic whole of reality into what sometimes seems like arbitrary polarities. Academic culture is not immune to this love of bifurcation. In fact, these "opposite" conceptions of homosexuality can be reconciled as simply different aspects of a complex phenomenon. The two groups disagree about the etiology of homosexuality because they see the phenomenon of homosexuality differently. Essentialists define homosexuality psychologically, according to inner thoughts, desires, and predispositions. Social constructionists prefer a behavioral definition, viewing homosexuality primarily as an action. Essentialists therefore emphasize factors of biology or psychology that condition individual tendencies, while social constructionists concentrate on how society shapes the expression of individual sexuality. Rather than mutual contradiction, both points of view have heuristic value for the investigation of sexuality on the level both of individuals and of society as a whole.

Next, we must decide on specific models and approaches that can help us understand the particular nature of homosexuality in China. On a physical level, surviving literature depicts anal intercourse as the preferred form of homosexual intercourse. Even in heterosexual contexts, references to anal intercourse appear in early sex manuals,⁹ traditional sex jokes, erotic art, and vernacular literature. Among the references to homosexuality that mention explicit sexual positions, anal intercourse is most common by far; references to mutual masturbation, intercrural intercourse, fellatio, and other forms of intercourse are relatively rare.

Going beyond sexual intercourse, on examining social and sex-

ual practices specific to China we can draw two basic sets of complementary roles: dominant/submissive and active/passive. It becomes easier for us to understand the Chinese case when we recall that a similar taxonomy also became the standard convention in both ancient Greece and Rome. The Greeks referred to the active male as *erastēs* and the passive male as *erōmenos*,¹⁰ while the Latin language even contained separate words for male prostitutes, classifying them as active *exoleti* and passive *catamiti*.¹¹

The first of these pairs, dominance and submission, was derived from the social standing of each partner. Chinese of dynastic times were acutely sensitized to disparities in social standing. This consciousness conditioned even mundane daily encounters among individuals, and in a matter as important as sexuality it was difficult to ignore. The three main factors determining dominance were gender, age, and status. It is difficult to generalize about gender, since female roles have undergone numerous transformations through the course of Chinese history. Even so, the patriarchal elements usually referred to as "Confucian" or "feudal" by modern scholars generally forced women into social submission; this social inferiority of women affected the condition of men who became identified with female gender. Age provided a more easily evident grounds for hierarchization, with a younger male yielding to an older. As for status, education, employment, family background, wealth, talent, and a multitude of other factors all contributed to the general perception of a man's overall social status, making the term somewhat nebulous. At times age, gender, and status could conflict, a clash of values that might lead a poor elderly peasant to kowtow to a young noblewoman. Despite such complications, age, gender identity, and status were important for apportioning dominant and submissive roles in many social and sexual encounters.

Separate from dominance and submission, but often related to them, is the second division: active and passive sexual roles. Like social dominance, sexual activeness was often based on a sense of hierarchy, with the active partner usually engaging in the penile penetration of the submissive partner. The majority of documen-

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tation concerning homosexual intercourse depicts partners taking distinct sexual roles. References to mutual anal penetration and other instances of flexible sexual roles are rare, though this lack of visibility might be due simply to the bias of the original sources.

These two hierarchies, sexual and social, are important to the study of Chinese homosexuality because in many cases they were related: the dominant male was also often the active male. Superior wealth, age, employment, or education could result in domination not only of social intercourse, but of sexual intercourse as well. The institutionalization of male prostitution by boys and low-status actors, among others, helped to solidify sexual roles. In later imperial history, certain types of feminizing clothing and cosmetics became associated with passive sexuality, and wearing them could depress social status. But despite all that this active/passive dichotomy can demonstrate about the influence of sexuality on society, it remains of limited use owing to the coy silence in most Chinese sources as to specific sexual acts. Only with the rise of vernacular literature catering to indelicate popular fancies do we find sufficient explicit evidence to apply this theoretical tool.

Moving from the sexual act to the individual, we find that men often manifested sexuality differently depending on their stage in life. Some men even progressed through a sexual life cycle. Chinese literature shows a tendency for boys and adolescents to take the passive sexual role and for grown men to take an active role. Thus a man's sexual role might change as he grew older. This acceptance of changing sexual roles gave a certain fluidity to the sexual development of an individual male while still allowing a sense of hierarchy within each relationship when hierarchy was desired.

The most clear-cut example of a transformation of sexual roles through a sexual life cycle is provided by the Sambia of Papua New Guinea. As part of initiation rituals into the men's cult that every boy undergoes, a prepubescent boy must regularly fellate boys from the adolescent age group. When this boy passes into the adolescent group, he ceases fellating his elders and is instead

fellated by his prepubescent juniors. Finally, on achieving manhood he marries and enters a heterosexual stage that lasts his entire adult life.¹² Thus in Sambia society when we look at actions rather than essence we cannot speak of "homosexual" but must instead classify individuals according to their particular sexual role at a particular time in their life cycle.

Many Chinese men experienced similar, though less rigid, transformations in sexual roles. In addition to changes in homosexual roles assumed at different stages of a man's life, Chinese records also describe many men who experienced both heterosexuality and homosexuality during their lives. Subsequent chapters will explore the prevalence of bisexuality over exclusive homosexuality in China. In part, this blindness to gender is attributable to religious, social, and economic factors. Some men undoubtedly had sexual intercourse with women because they were expected to do so, not because they desired it. As with the Sambia, society's expectations often determined the ways in which Chinese men manifested their sexual desires.

The general social manifestations of homosexuality in China can be illuminated through the typology popularized by David Greenberg, who divides the social expressions of homosexuality outside of the modern West into four categories: "trans-generational homosexuality," "trans-genderal homosexuality," "class-structured homosexuality," and "egalitarian homosexuality."¹³ All four of these paradigms are present to varying degrees in the Chinese tradition.

Trans-generational homosexuality, a common form of relationship in many periods of Chinese history, involves the determination of social and often sexual roles according to relative age. In general, the older partner takes the active role, with the younger acting in the passive role. Trans-generational homosexuality often occurs in ritual contexts as part of coming-of-age ceremonies, with the Sambia providing a prime example of this practice. Sexual relationships between men and boys also take place outside of ritual contexts in many cultures, such as ancient Greece. Rulers in several societies, among them the Mamlukes of medieval

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Egypt and chiefs of the Big Namba, even included boys in their harems.¹⁴ We see the similar appearance of boys kept for sexual purposes in the households of Chinese rulers and other wealthy men. Since dealings between boys and older men in China usually involved a gap in economic standing as well as age, prostitution often resulted. Consequently, we must consider many aspects of trans-generational homosexuality in China in terms of class-structured homosexual relations as well.

In trans-genderal homosexuality, one partner acts and even dresses as a woman, thereby allowing the relationship to be structured according to masculine/feminine roles. The best-known example of this practice is represented by the Native American *berdache*, a man who would dress as a woman and take on a female identity, usually as part of a shamanistic cult.¹⁵ Most male *berdaches* limited themselves exclusively to passive homosexual intercourse, taking as partners men of a "masculine" gender identity rather than other "feminine" *berdaches*. Similar examples of trans-genderal homosexuality can be seen in other societies that include ritualized homosexuality as part of religion, from Mesopotamian male temple prostitutes to Paleo-Siberian shamans.¹⁶

Homosexuality in historic China was usually not ritualized or made a component of religion, as it was in many kinship-structured societies. Consequently, the Chinese lacked the basic impetus for institutionalized trans-genderal homosexuality, with only the stylized world of the theater promoting female identities for some men. As a result, trans-genderal homosexuality in China mainly occurred among some eunuchs who happened to favor other men, male actors who played female roles, and a small minority of men who simply preferred taking on a female gender identity.

Class-structured homosexuality is made possible by the division of society into unequal social classes, a condition that existed for most of Chinese history. Inequality of wealth allows members of one class to purchase the sexual services of another. Prostitution exemplifies class-structured homosexuality, and it functioned in China much as in the West. In addition, Chinese society experi-

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enced the rise of "favoritism," which resembled prostitution in that lower-status men accepted favors from those of higher status, and yet differed in that the favors were often more subtle in form than simple cash gifts. For example, many emperors lavished offices and titles on beloved courtiers.

The last category in this typology is egalitarian homosexuality. Under this form of sexual expression, active/passive roles do not exist, are unstable, or lack reference to social status. Egalitarian homosexuality is frequent among adolescents, as well as in societies with strict segregation based on gender or age. In other cases, sexual relationships among male equals are simply considered acceptable without any extraneous factors being necessary, such as among the Tapirape of Brazil and in the contemporary West.¹⁷ In China, egalitarian homosexuality appears in the account of adolescent love in *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng*) and in some literati friendships. Rulers also often rewarded their favorites profusely with high office and large amounts of land and money, with the side effect of lessening the social gap between them.

Other forces at work within society could encourage egalitarianism as well. The Chinese language is relatively egalitarian, especially compared with other Asian languages such as Javanese and Japanese, in which inflections and the very lexicon are continually adjusted according to the relative social positions of the speaker and the person addressed. Group organizations and communities often emphasized the equality of members through ritual and ideology. And friendship itself has long been treasured in China, often allowing for a breakdown of social barriers whether the friends were refined literati or coarse laborers. Perhaps among the silent masses outside of this study—two peasants in the same village, fellow sailors on a grain barge drifting down the Yangzi, two apprentices in the same guild—their love might have been expressed as the love of comrades.

Having put forward all of these theoretical tools, we find ourselves with an impressive array of useful models: the sexual life cycle, division of roles as active/passive and dominant/

submissive, and a four-part typology of the forms of homosexuality as trans-generational, trans-genderal, class-structured, and egalitarian. Of course, these models lack absolute applicability or value and are intended only as general paradigms for helping to categorize and understand the Chinese homosexual tradition in all its complexity. But by attempting to comprehend the spectrum of Chinese sexuality on its own terms, rather than simply forcing our own practices and preconceptions upon it, we can begin to appreciate an important dimension of Chinese civilization.

In the end, I hope that the reader will gain an impression of the enormous diversity of the forms of homosexual life in China. Romance and lewdness, tolerance and violence, power and poverty—all were part of the intricate tapestry of human lives and passions that came together because of homosexuality. The area I cover, geographic and temporal, is vast, the amount of surviving information about this enormous expanse, minuscule. At best I hope to recreate a few fleeting glimpses of the human lives hiding behind the yellowed pages that remain our tenuous links to earlier times. The incalculable diversity of China frustrates this task: an emperor and peasant who both experienced love for another man would have had little else in common. But it is precisely because the homosexual tradition cut across all barriers that it presents us with an invaluable way to comprehend the complexity of the Chinese past.



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Peaches, Pillows, and Politics

Zhou Dynasty (1122 to 256 B.C.)

Like so many aspects of Chinese culture, the origins of the homosexual tradition are both ancient and obscure. Mythology provides an aesthetically attractive if factually unreliable means of accounting for the genesis of homosexuality. Since ancient times scholars in need of a convenient etiology have “described the present and then traced back to the Yellow Emperor,” the fountain-head of Chinese civilization¹—a practice tantamount to denying true knowledge of actual beginnings of a phenomenon. It seems therefore almost inevitable that one tradition-minded scholar of

courts of earlier eras (known to us only through extremely fragmentary evidence), these court favorites and their aristocratic lovers of the Eastern Zhou were the first identifiable practitioners of homosexuality in China. They established a pattern of class-structured homosexuality that continued down to the end of imperial history.

It seems fitting to begin a description of Zhou homosexuality with the fickle love of Duke Ling of Wei (534–493 B.C.) for Mizi Xia, the most famous representative of homosexual love from the period. His story, recorded in the ancient philosophic work *Han Fei Zi*, had an enormous influence on later generations, such that the name Mizi Xia became a catchword for homosexuality in general. The exceptional hold of this tale marks it as an important beginning of the homosexual tradition as well as a significant contributor to the way all literate Chinese conceived of homosexuality.¹⁰

In ancient times Mizi Xia won favor [*chong*] with the ruler of Wei. According to the laws of the state of Wei, anyone who secretly made use of the ruler's carriage was punished by having his feet amputated. When Mizi Xia's mother fell ill, someone slipped into the palace at night to report this to Mizi Xia. Mizi Xia forged an order from the ruler, got into the ruler's carriage, and went off to see her, but when the ruler heard of it, he only praised him, saying, "How filial! For the sake of his mother he forgot all about the danger of having his feet cut off!" Another day Mizi Xia was strolling with the ruler in an orchard and, biting into a peach and finding it sweet, he stopped eating and gave the remaining half to the ruler to enjoy. "How sincere is your love for me!" exclaimed the ruler. "You forgot your own appetite and think only of giving me good things to eat!" Later, however, when Mizi Xia's looks had faded and the ruler's passion for him had cooled, he was accused of committing some crime against his lord. "After all," said the ruler, "he once stole my carriage, and another time he gave me a half-eaten peach to eat!" Mizi Xia was acting no differently from the way he always had; the fact that he was praised in the early days, and accused of a crime later on, was because the ruler's love had turned to hate.

If you gain the ruler's love, your wisdom will be appreciated and you will enjoy his favor as well; but if he hates you, not only will your wisdom be rejected, but you will be regarded as a criminal and thrust aside. . . . The beast called the dragon can be tamed and trained to the point where you may ride on its back. But on the underside of its throat it has scales a foot in diameter that curl back from the body, and anyone who chances to brush against them is sure to die. The ruler of men too has his bristling scales.¹¹

The author of this passage, Han Fei, did not intend to explore social values or attack homosexual activities. As a Legalist thinker, he simply wanted to address the threat to a ruler's powers posed by institutional favoritism. The Legalist ideal strove for impersonal government by laws instead of men. Favorites threatened this order by gaining personal influence through love of the ruler.

Han Fei strikingly described Mizi Xia and the duke not according to sexual orientation, as in the contemporary West, but according to social relationship. Confucius set forth the primacy of human relationships when he defined the essence of wisdom as lying in earnest devotion to the duties due to people.¹² As a result of this stress on relationships rather than psychological essence, neither Han Fei nor any other Zhou source mentions any term equivalent to "homosexual." Instead the term *chong* is used, denoting a hierarchical relationship of regular patronage, or favor, bestowed by a superior on a man who happened to be a sexual partner. *Chong*, then, is not even remotely equivalent to "homosexuality": it could also refer to heterosexual or nonsexual relationships; indeed, ancient texts even use *chong* in portraying "respect" for the spirits.¹³ This tendency to describe homosexual acts in terms of social relationships rather than erotic essence continued in China down to the twentieth century, when terminology derived from Western science gained predominance.

Han Fei's depiction of Mizi Xia in a sympathetic light emphasizes the story's generally favorable view of homosexuality. At first he risks horrible mutilation for the sake of filial piety, risking the duke's wrath by stealing the ducal chariot to see his ailing mother. Mizi Xia's actions in the peach orchard are seen as an

to justify one's own actions through reference to a historical precedent is a standard method of persuasion in Chinese rhetoric. According to Zhuang Xin's story, Lord E also had an official who loved him. When Lord E learned of his retainer's love through hearing the song of the oarsmen on his royal barge, he accepted the affections of that unnamed courtier. In a parallel ending, after hearing this story Lord Xiang Cheng was also moved to offer his love to his admirer. These tales of Lord Xiang Cheng and Lord E make quite a contrast to that of the official and Duke Jing. Apparently in some cases love could lead even a ruler to overlook the impropriety of a social inferior making sexual advances.

Another interesting suggestion emerges from the courtship of Zhuang Xin and Xiang Cheng. Central to the structure of the narrative is Zhuang Xin's quotation of a tale of unrequited love, that of the retainer of Lord E. Zhuang Xin did not see his plight in temporal isolation; instead he drew on a homosexual tradition that could comfort him by allowing him to place his situation in a broader social and historical context, and used a past example to justify present actions. Reliance on the past to shape the present marks one more beginning of a recorded, continuous homosexual tradition in China.

Another remarkable story from the state of Chu glorifies the love of Wang Zhongxian for a handsome and learned subject named Pan Zhang—surely the most positive and romantic account that survives from the Zhou period.

When Pan Zhang was young he had a beautiful [*mei*] appearance and bearing, and so people of that time were exceedingly fond of him. Wang Zhongxian of the state of Chu heard of his reputation and came to request his writings. Thereafter Wang Zhongxian wanted to study together with him. They fell in love at first sight and were as affectionate as husband and wife, sharing the same coverlet and pillow with unbounded intimacy for one another.

Afterwards they died together and everyone mourned them. When they were buried together at Lofu Mountain, on the peak a tree with long branches and leafy twigs suddenly grew. All of these

embraced one another! At the time people considered this a miracle. It was called the "Shared Pillow Tree."¹⁷

In this passage we find perhaps the earliest analogy made between homosexual love and heterosexual marriage. The Yuan-dynasty edition from which a Ming compiler seems to have taken this story states quite straightforwardly, "They . . . were as affectionate as husband and wife." Unfortunately, because an ancient edition of this tale has not survived, we cannot be certain of the original wording; but the overall intent of the story seems indisputable—two men created a sexual and emotional bond so strong that it survived even death. If this story had ancient origins, as seems probable, it presents the earliest example of the sort of pair-bonding that later evolved into same-sex marriage rituals.

From this tale it also seems certain that the two lovers considered their homosexual desires to be the center of their emotional and erotic lives. Yet the text gives no labels such as "homosexual" to the pair; instead it stresses their relationship (like husband and wife) and their feelings. Once again we see the Chinese tendency to develop a sexual taxonomy derived from social and emotional bonds rather than attempting to bring forth an innate, essential sexual identity, as is often the case in the contemporary West.

One word that stands out in the passage is *mei* (beautiful), used to describe the good looks of Pan Zhang. Modern Chinese readers usually associate this term exclusively with female beauty, and its use for men seems somewhat affected. As seen earlier in the case of the *Classic of Odes*, however, to the ancients *mei* was applicable to the beauty and goodness of both sexes. Considering the surviving records of bisexuality from the Zhou and Han, the existence of a gender-free means of expressing attractiveness seems consistent. The Greeks, even better known for bisexuality, had a similar concept of unisex beauty in the term *kalos*. But the Greek term, unlike the Chinese, lacked the additional connotation of internal beauty and instead applied only to physical appearance, whether of

men, women, animals, or objects.¹⁸ Through the centuries, *mei* gradually lost its general applicability and came in the male case to be used mainly for effeminate and sexually passive men and boys.

The tale of Pan Zhang and Wang Zhongxian supplements the elegant simplicity of its literary power by invoking a standard convention of heterosexual romance: the intertwining branches of a tree. The famed Han-dynasty poem "The Peacock Southeast Flew" ("Kongque dongnan fei") uses a similar image of two trees embracing over the graves of a pair of lovers. In the heterosexual version, the lovers have committed suicide because of their forced separation; their families bury them together and plant two trees above their tomb.

In the east and west they planted pine and cedar;
On the left and right they planted firmiana and paulownia.
Their branches covered one another;
Their leaves intertwined with one another.

By using a common heterosexual motif, the unknown author relating the love of Pan Zhang and Wang Zhongxian demonstrates the convergence of homosexual and heterosexual romantic ideals in ancient times. In addition, the symbol of intertwining trees was a common auspicious omen in Han-dynasty pictorial art.¹⁹ For it to be applied to a human relationship shows strong approval by supernatural forces.

While taking this tale into consideration, we must not exaggerate the extent of exclusive homosexuality in Zhou China. Most men of ancient times seem to have engaged in heterosexual intercourse, although whether out of desire or duty one cannot be sure. For the poor, procreation had vital economic significance. Without children to help in agricultural labor, the life of a peasant would have become increasingly difficult with old age. The thriving market for child slaves in early China attests to their high economic value.²⁰ Added to this economic incentive was the religious and social importance of continuing the family line—especially in royal courts, where children had particular value as dynastic heirs

and for use in uniting families through marriage ties. The indispensability of children to rulers and peasants alike helps account for the prevalence of bisexuality over exclusive homosexuality among the men of ancient China. Only a privileged few would even have had the option of homosexual monogamy.

With bisexuality practiced in the highest circles of ancient courts, the relationship between politics and sex became increasingly perplexing. The example of Song Chao illustrates the potential for confusion. Early records note that he had "a beautiful appearance, and served the state of Wei as a grandee official. There he was favored by Duke Ling of Wei."²¹ The mention of good looks and favored official position in tandem suggests the possibility of a link between the two. Antipathy to those who openly enjoyed homosexuality would no doubt have resulted in their exclusion from appointive office. Yet, as seen in numerous passages, some men not only held high official positions but also became sexual favorites of the rulers they served. Throughout ancient Chinese history the general attitude toward homosexual love seems to have been one of acceptance, which accounts for the portrayal of many such men as successful officials and rulers. The selfless love of King Wen of Chu for the Marquis Shen is one example of admirable virtue in a homosexual context. The dying king, who had favored Shen, ordered him to flee to the state of Zheng after the burial, where he was to find favor with that ruler as well. King Wen knew how vulnerable his favorite would be to jealous machinations after he was no longer under royal protection.²² By handing over his beloved to another monarch King Wen hoped to insure Shen's continued worldly success. Even as he lay dying, he had concern only for his favorite.

The security of a male favorite at court rested entirely with the fate of his noble lover. As the example of Marquis Shen illustrates, the death or political ruin of a patron forced the beloved to seek the attentions of some other powerful aristocrat. Lord Anling, however, contemplated a more permanent attachment to his lover's fate.

Jiang Yi persuaded Lord Anling, "Your excellency has not one particle of accomplishment and no close kin occupying honored positions, yet you receive the greatest wealth and all the citizens of the state pull back their sleeves to bow to you and adjust their clothing to kneel to you. Why? Because the king gives too much to those who give him pleasure. Were this not so you would not have such a high estate.

"But," continued Jiang Yi, "those who have a relationship based on wealth find that when wealth is exhausted the relationship ceases. Those who have a relationship based on attractiveness find that when their beauty fades love changes—which is why the favored woman seldom wears out her sleeping mat and the favored minister seldom remains long enough to wear out his carriages."²³

Jiang Yi's observations are borne out by the example of Mizi Xia. In this case, the only way to make the relationship permanent and thereby "be eternally honored in the state of Chu" was for Lord Anling to tell the king that he wished to share the royal grave with him. The same sentiments that led ancient rulers to include human sacrifice as a part of royal funerals determined Anling's decision. Rulers of the time were usually buried only with their consorts. Important officials might be interred nearby, but for a male favorite to share a ruler's grave would have been an extraordinary act, suggesting status comparable to that of a consort.

Lord Anling, with tears streaming down his face, came forward. "In the palace my mat lies beside the king's and abroad I share his chariot. A thousand autumns hence I intend to send my own body first to see the Yellow Springs [Hades] so that it may be a shield against the ants for my prince."²⁴

As a gesture of appreciation for such devotion, the king took this occasion as a justification for first enfeoffing his beloved Anling.

These stories emphasize an important fact: for men as well as women of ancient China, the judicious use of sex could be a means for attaining upward political and social mobility. As noted previously, the later Zhou was an age of increasing social change.

Because hereditary privilege lost importance, talent and ability became increasingly prominent keys to social success. One such talent was in the erotic arts. For women, success as a sex partner was one of the only ways to obtain prestige within the household or court—a path to success that holds true throughout dynastic history. As for men, some tried to capitalize on their good looks to attain office. The sensual and even sexual roles of men cannot be ignored in understanding ancient political mobility.

A tale of voyeurism confirms the popular opinion that officials of Zhou China sometimes rose to power through use of sexual charms. In the seventh century B.C. when Chonger of Jin took refuge with the ruler of Cao, that duke had heard that Chonger had double ribs. Wishing to see this unique anatomical condition, the duke and his wife drilled a hole in the wall so they might spy on Chonger in his bath chamber. The bevy of voyeurs witnessed the unexpected sight of Chonger engaging in sexual intercourse with two male retainers, a scene that prompted a grandee's wife to remark drolly that Prince Chonger's retainers seemed capable of becoming ministers of state.²⁵ Although intended as a humorous jibe at the self-serving motives of many favorites, this remark could not have had a humorous effect unless it was known that officials did occasionally sleep their way into power.

By becoming a ruler's beloved, a favorite could be assured of high official position and generous emolument. But whereas the visibility of sexual favorites shows a general tolerance for homosexual acts, men who used sexual wiles for social advancement were censured and scorned. Criticism of the practice of basing official appointments on sexual abilities and good looks rather than political skill dates far back in Chinese political theory. A chapter found in the *Classic of Documents (Shu jing)* entitled "The Instructions of Yi" ("Yi lun") includes a series of severe instructions from a virtuous minister to the young Shang king. Although the text is widely considered inauthentic, it still dates from at least the late Zhou or early Han. In this passage, the wise adviser lists the many possible distractions facing an inexperienced ruler:

He warned those in authority, saying, "If you dare to have constant dancing in your palaces, and drunken singing in your chambers—that is called the way of shamans. If you dare to set your hearts on wealth and women, and abandon yourselves to wandering about or to hunting—that is called the way of dissipation. If you dare to despise sage words, to resist the loyal and upright, to put far from you the aged and virtuous, and to be familiar with shameless youths [*wan tong*]*—that is called the way of disorder. Now if a high noble or officer is addicted to one of these ways with their ten evil vices, his family will surely come to ruin. If the prince of a country is addicted to these, his state will surely come to ruin.*"²⁶

The term *wan tong* literally means "shameless youths." James Legge, an early translator of the classics, originally rendered the term into English as "procacious youths." Apparently he intended to write "proctacious," a Victorian circumlocution for "sodomitical."²⁷ As Legge suggested, this passage perhaps condemns the same practice of male favoritism that other authors examined in greater detail.

By the later Zhou the convergence of political and sexual favoritism had created such a threat to orderly government that philosophers felt compelled to speak out against the practice. Two political texts in the *Guanzi* anthology place favoritism first in a list of the most important threats to good government.²⁸ The sagacious Mozi repeats these warnings in greater detail:

Rulers employ their relatives, or men who happen to be rich and eminent or pleasant-featured and attractive. But just because a man happens to be rich and eminent or pleasant-featured and attractive, he will not necessarily turn out to be wise and alert when placed in office. If men such as these are given the task of ordering the state, then this is simply to entrust the state to men who are neither wise nor intelligent, and anyone knows that this will lead to ruin.

Moreover, the rulers and high officials trust a man's mental ability because they love his appearance, and love him without bothering to examine his knowledge. As a result a man who is incapable of taking charge of a hundred persons is assigned to a post in charge of a thousand, and a man who is incapable of taking charge of a

thousand persons is assigned to a post in charge of ten thousand. Why do the rulers do this? Because if they assign a man they like to such a post, he will receive an exalted title and a generous stipend. Hence they employ the man simply because they love his appearance.²⁹

Mozi's warnings indicate a general trend that allowed homosexual love to play a role in ancient Chinese politics. This custom was not confined to China: Islamic and Japanese rulers are also known to have considered male sexual favorites for government office.³⁰ In the case of China, Mozi seems to have been worried that practices such as these, as well as lesser forms of emolument based on good looks, threatened efficient government. In fact, homosexuality within ancient officialdom seems to have been prevalent enough that the Machiavellian Han-dynasty work *Intrigues of the Warring States* (*Zhanguo ce*), a collection of anecdotes recounting pre-Han political schemes, mentions Duke Xian of Jin using a favorite as a secret weapon for spreading disinformation among the enemy. The success of this plot speaks for the influence of male favorites in Zhou political life:

Duke Xian wished to attack Yu but feared the presence of Gong Zhiqi. Xun Xi said, "*The Book of Zhou* [*Ji zhong Zhou shu*] says, 'A beautiful lad can ruin an older head.' Send the king a comely boy whom you have instructed to ruin Gong Zhiqi. The latter's admonitions will go unheeded and he will flee." Having done this, Duke Xian attacked Yu and took it.³¹

Xun Xi noted the common belief that "a beautiful lad can ruin an older head." This is not, however, a condemnation of homosexuality. The original quotation reads, "A beautiful lad can ruin an older head; a beautiful woman can tangle a tongue." The author of this saying compared two sexual partners, a beautiful woman and man, and remarked that each can blind men with lust and cause them to commit acts they normally would not consider doing. Sex in general is cautioned against as a disruptive force.

Historical writings support Mozi's and Xun Xi's abstract

dicts this grotesque caricature of castrated men as obese androgynes. The use of eunuchs as sexual partners by men of high status may have been preferred because their sexual passivity was assured and they fit a clearly defined sexual role.

Since during most periods eunuchs came from the lowest social realms of Chinese society and from less developed tribal neighbors, most eunuchs would probably have repelled refined emperors with their coarse visages and unsophisticated bearing. Only in eras of eunuch ascendancy at court would these men receive the polish and learning that someone brought up in genteel surroundings might admire. During certain times in Han history, eunuchs such as Li Yannian acquired the graces that helped endear them to their rulers.

Both eunuchs and noncastrated favorites reaped enormous rewards. The celebrated love of the Han Emperor Ai for his beloved Dong Xian exemplified the privileges a devoted imperial patron could bestow, as well as the political ramifications this kind of relationship could entail. The following passage summarizes the account of his life in *Records of the Han*.

Dong Xian's father, a respected censor, appointed Dong Xian to be a retainer to the Emperor Ai. He was a person whose beauty incited admiration. Emperor Ai gazed at him and spoke of Dong Xian's deportment and appearance. The emperor asked, "What about this retainer Dong Xian?" Because of this Dong Xian spoke with the emperor. Thus began his favor.

Dong Xian's favor and love increased daily. He held high office and each year was granted ten thousand piculs of grain. His honors alarmed the court.

Dong Xian's nature was always gentle, affable, and flattering. He was good at seducing by holding fast. Every time he was granted a leave of absence he turned it down. Instead he remained constantly at the palace studying medicine. The emperor found it difficult to make Dong Xian return home. He summoned Dong Xian's wife, and, like an official, she took up residence in a government estate. The emperor also summoned Dong Xian's sons and daughters, finding them to be bright and well mannered.

The emperor ennobled Dong Xian's father as the marquis of Guannei, with an attendant fief. Dong Xian became the marquis of Gao'an. These fiefs were each worth two thousand piculs of grain annually. Everyone in Dong Xian's household, down to his slaves, received grants from the emperor. The prime minister repeatedly remonstrated that because of Dong Xian the regulations of the state were in chaos.¹⁴

Dong Xian's powers and privileges were extraordinary. Their sheer numbers and repetitiveness make it needless to recount them all here. His biography enumerates the highest offices and titles attainable, the greatest of which he received by the age of twenty-two. He was even entrusted with the construction of the emperor's tomb, a duty of the greatest ritual importance and solemnity. Dong Xian's power was such that he was even able to help block one of the most important land reform proposals of the Han, since any such restrictions would have had most effect on the wealthiest subjects of the realm, such as himself.¹⁵

During a feast, a visiting chieftain from the northern nomads remarked on the incongruous youth of such a mighty official. The emperor explained that Dong Xian was a sage, which accounted for his early attainments. At this, the chieftain rose and bowed to the youthful prodigy, congratulating his hosts on the good fortune of having a flesh-and-blood sage in their midst. Of course, the real reason for Dong Xian's rank was just the opposite of sagacity. Sexual favor together with a privileged background better explain how someone might attain the pinnacle of worldly success at an age so young that it would even warrant comment from foreign visitors.

Dong Xian's family also received exceptional benefits from his favor. Father, father-in-law, brother, and grandson all received office and privilege. We should not be surprised at the emperor's willingness to reward the family of a beloved. This practice directly parallels the custom of choosing important officials from the families of imperial consorts.¹⁶ Treating a favorite's family with the same esteem accorded the families of favored concubines

subsumed in favor of the interests of the household as a whole. Consequently, many couples must have found themselves emotionally or sexually incompatible. For the wife, expected to remain faithful to her husband, there was no honorable recourse. But men could escape an unpleasant marital situation in several ways. A wealthy man could simply purchase concubines or female slaves to fulfill his sexual demands. Other men could form extra-marital heterosexual affairs with women outside the household, but such opportunities were limited. Homosexuality, which included neither shame nor potential for pregnancy, became an attractive option for those seeking sexual gratification outside the household.

Within marriage, the husband held supreme authority. Prior to the Han, a man could even legally kill his own son,²⁸ and traces of this life-and-death authority remained even during the Han. A woman would not dare to question her husband on the vital question of his sexuality or object when her husband sought others, such as concubines, for sexual companionship. In fact, jealousy was one of the seven reasons for which a husband could divorce a wife.²⁹ This recognition of polygamy as an unquestioned Han custom sanctioned male promiscuity. Wives were legally required to acquiesce to their husbands' demands for alternate sexual partners, among whom were other men. By denying wives any say in their sex lives, married men could favor the half-eaten peach at will. The government did not interfere with the sexual status quo because it left most moral questions regarding the household to be solved within the household itself—which in a patriarchal society meant that decisions regarding sexual morality inevitably favored male interests. The very organization of the Han household therefore facilitated the acceptance of male homosexuality.

This atmosphere of openness allowed further development of an emerging sense of homosexual tradition, taking many of its most moving accounts from Han historical literature. The Han tradition finds its greatest exemplar in the famous tale of the Emperor Ai and his favorite Dong Xian. As Ba Gu succinctly observed, "By nature Emperor Ai did not care for women,"³⁰ and

the genuine tenderness he felt for his beloved Dong Xian captivated the popular imagination. This short passage describing his love is the most influential in the Chinese homosexual tradition:

Emperor Ai was sleeping in the daytime with Dong Xian stretched out across his sleeve. When the emperor wanted to get up, Dong Xian was still asleep. Because he did not want to disturb him, the emperor cut off his own sleeve and got up. His love and thoughtfulness went this far!³¹

Just as Mizi Xia gave a homosexual connotation to the term "eating peaches," so did the image of a cut sleeve come to signify the devotion of Emperor Ai to Dong Xian and, broadly, male homosexual love. All of Ai's courtiers "imitated the cut sleeve, also calling it the chopped sleeve," as a tribute to the love shared by their emperor and Dong.³² The tender power of this image—an array of opulent courtiers fastidiously dressed in colorful silk tunics, each missing a single sleeve—guaranteed that the moment would continue to burn in the imaginations of readers for almost twenty centuries.

The terse account of the cut sleeve became absorbed into a tradition of recorded homosexuality that must have seemed ancient even to Emperor Ai. Men of dynastic history did not feel alone in having affectionate feelings for other men. The complete integration of homosexuality into early Chinese court life, as reported in *Memoirs of the Historian* and *Records of the Han*, was alluded to repeatedly in later literature and gave men of subsequent ages a means for situating their own desires within an ancient tradition. By seeing their feelings as passions of the "cut sleeve," they gained a consciousness of the place of male love in the history of their society.

The dramatic ascendancy of Dong Xian almost to the imperial throne marks a high point in the Chinese homosexual tradition and in the influence of homosexuality over Chinese society. Not only was male love accepted, but it permeated the fabric of upper-class life. From the vital concerns of politics to the frivolous world of men's fashion, homosexuality played an important role. This

sway over elite society was most pronounced at the height of the Western Han, when homosexuality occupied an esteemed and powerful place in court life. Still, the patterns and images of homosexuality formed during the Zhou and brought to fruition during the Han became even more elaborated under subsequent dynasties.



3

Powdered Jade

Three Kingdoms and Six Dynasties (220 to 581)

After four hundred years of national unity, the fall of the Han dynasty in A.D. 220 plunged China into another period of division and chaos. Internicine warfare, weak emperors, strong generals, and transcendental philosophies marked the age. A quick succession of rulers and dynasties continued for another four centuries until the founding of the illustrious Tang dynasty in the seventh century. As in previous periods, homosexuality continued as a part of the sex lives of the social elite. Famed emperors, poets, and philosophers openly professed their attachments to other men. The enthusiasm with which the ruling elites of the minor dynasties

following the Han embraced male love led authors to remark on the popularity of half-eaten peaches and cut sleeves at the royal courts. The official records of the short-lived Liu Song dynasty go even further in describing the extent of homosexuality among the upper classes:

From the Xianning and Taikang reign periods (275–290) of the Western Jin dynasty onward, male favoritism flourished considerably and was as extensive as attraction to women. All of the gentlemen and officials esteemed it. All men in the realm followed this fashion to the extent that husbands and wives were estranged. Resentful unmarried women became jealous.¹

In a more specific case, a poem by Liu Xiaozhuo (481–539) describes one woman's anxiety over whether the man she loves will ignore her in favor of a boy. It concludes, "She dawdles, not daring to move closer, / Afraid he might compare her with leftover peach."² We will never be sure whether this admiration for male love actually led to a decrease in heterosexual marriage and consternation among unmarried women. It is possible that, as these authors' observations suggest, bachelors who preferred men delayed taking a wife for as long as possible. And records of the period mention ardent gynaphobes who would flee at the sight of a woman.³

Even allowing for the hyperbole to which early historians were prone, these passages attest to the continued visibility of homosexuality after the fall of the Han. R. H. Van Gulik, a scholar of Chinese sexual history, even singled out the late third century as a high point in the openness of male homosexuality.⁴ Moreover, the expanding variety of sources from this period gives us a broader range of views of male homosexuality than we find in earlier periods. Official histories continue to provide detailed information on the lives and loves of the ruling elite. In addition, less formal works include descriptions of officials, writers, and men of less exalted status. These new sources include sufficient information to begin probing enigmas such as the patterns of homosexual relationships and ideals of male beauty.

As for terminology, many of the words appearing in Han records continue to be used after the dynasty's demise. Use of the terms *chong* and *xing*, which appear frequently in histories of the period, shows a continuation of the earlier tendency to describe sexuality in terms of social roles rather than sexual essence. A less objective term also comes into use: *xie xia*.⁵ *Xie* means both "nude" and "dirty," linking the carnal aspects of sex with a negative value judgment; *xia* means "intimacy" or "intimate" and sometimes appears alone as well. The compound therefore means something like "undue familiarity" and was used by censorious historians to express their disapproval at the improper influence that favorites exercised in court life.

Records of the Wei (*Wei shu*) gives an early example of the use of another new term to describe homosexual attraction to men: "*nanfeng*," literally meaning "male wind," though a more accurate translation would be "male custom" or "male practice." This term marks an important development in Chinese sexual terminology, for whereas previous terms described only social relationships, this compound describes the male homosexual act itself. *Nanfeng* became a popular word, and remains in use today as a literary expression for male homosexuality.

The official history of the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577) added to this expanding vocabulary. That work speaks of men's delight in *nanse*, with *se* denoting sexual attraction, passion, or lust. Thus this term might be translated as "male eroticism," further reflecting the new trend of defining sexuality according to sexual act rather than social role. During this period, then, we see that Chinese developed a vocabulary for describing homosexuality that endured until the introduction of Western scientific terminology, with its implicit Western classifications of sexuality, during the late nineteenth century.

Most of the official dynastic histories describing the period date from the early Tang dynasty, and consequently often reflect the concerns of the age in which their authors lived, the Tang, as much as the earlier periods they purport to describe. These histories include sections detailing the lives of male favorites of the

between past and present: "In the Liang and Chen dynasties, this custom did not change. Since the four dynasties suffered from these favorites, I am now setting forth this chapter in continuation of the works of previous historians."¹⁵ Literature of the period also shows the tendency to refer to the past as a way of understanding the present. Taken together, historical writing and literature from this age display a distinct awareness of the male homosexual tradition.

Beyond tradition, these dynastic histories speak about more contemporary matters as well, bluntly acknowledging the extent of homosexuality in court life. One historian laments, "How widespread favoritism was at the end of the Qi!"¹⁶ As *Records of the Southern Qi* observes, "Everyone at the court desired intimacy."¹⁷ The sheer number of biographies surviving from these dynastic histories describing the period of disunity following the Han attests the extent of favoritism. *History of the North* alone contains forty biographies of favorites. The full translation and explanation of these records would require a book in itself. Since the lives of these favorites often repeat themes explored in detail in the previous chapter, here I will try simply to extract some general trends exemplified by this period.

One perennial theme, dating back to the unhappy story of Mizi Xia, concerns the fickleness of the ruler's affections. A world-weary historian muses, "The old ones were not the original old ones because the new had become the old. The intimates were not the previous intimates, because the distant had become the intimate."¹⁸ A favorite's position was generally insecure. Given the added instability inherent in the chaos of the period, capturing a ruler's affections did not necessarily lead to permanent power or prosperity. The sheer number of imperial favorites during this period demonstrates their ephemerality.

These favorites are often shown in the larger context of imperial sensuality—their inherent undesirability stems from their tendency to distract the ruler from serious matters of state. One historian uses the rococo prose style of the period to create a sense of the temptations an emperor faced:

With gates like those of a jade hall of state and a home like a golden grotto; concubines and serving women; the music of Yan, Qin, Cai, and Zheng; pearly pools with jade bridges; frolicking fish, dragons, peacocks, and horses; flowery halls stuffed full of delights whose sparkling rays penetrate even the azure clouds—these harm good government and injure people. Intimates are also among these distractions. And so with accounts of youthful rulers and widespread chaos, I have recorded how flatterers and evildoers can prevail.¹⁹

This historian does not identify favorites as a singular menace to good government, but puts them in the context of the myriad distractions that could corrupt an undisciplined monarch. And yet the danger presented by favorites could not be avoided. One chapter of biographies ends with a summary of the long list of famous imperial favorites, at the end of which the despairing historian rhetorically asks how something so ubiquitous could possibly be avoided.²⁰

As for the favorites themselves, looking through the accounts of their lives we do not find a stereotyped formula repeated for each person, as often happens in Chinese biography. Because favorites advanced through irregular channels, their lives show a wide range of backgrounds, skills, accomplishments, and fates. Many came from well-connected families, which is understandable since the children of officials and nobles would have had the greatest access to their rulers. Wang Zhongxing, for example, was born the son of an official and eventually became the beloved of the fourth-century Emperor Wei Gaozu.²¹ In contrast, Wang Zhongxing's rival for Gaozu's affections, Wang Rui, had an impoverished father who made his living as an astrologer and fortune-teller.²² Zhou Shizhen came from even lowlier origins as a servant.²³ Several favorites came from minor merchant families. Dai Faxing, for instance, began life helping his father sell coarse hemp cloth in the marketplace.²⁴ Even a variety of ethnic backgrounds appears in these biographies. The importance of Central Asian peoples to China at this time is shown by the rise of Gao'a Nagong, of nomadic origins, and the Sogdian dancing boys of the

see for the first time evidence of homosexuality among military men, great artists, and philosophers. For example, the honored poet Pan Yue and the grand master of calligraphy Wang Xizhi both fervently admired male beauty. Significantly, the greatest intellectual force of his age, Xi Kang (223–262), had as a lover the gifted poet Ruan Ji, author of a beautiful encomium to male lovers of the Zhou and Han. Even surviving incised stone portraits from the period show these two lovers sitting side by side.⁶¹

As the most outstanding member of the “Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove,” a literary and philosophic society of talented bohemians, Xi Kang is remembered both for his sublime poetry and his personal adherence to Neo-Taoist principles that shocked establishment scholars. During his own lifetime, however, Xi Kang was as renowned for his appearance as for his talents and intellect. His biography records this striking presence: “Kang was seven [Chinese] feet, eight inches tall, with an imposing facial expression. He treated his bodily frame like so much earth or wood and never added any adornment or polish, yet had the grace of a dragon and the beauty of a phoenix.”⁶² Some contemporaries described him as “like the wind beneath the pines, high and gently blowing,” while one admirer said, “As a person Xi Kang is majestically towering, like a solitary pine tree standing alone. But when he’s drunk he leans crazily like a jade mountain about to collapse.”⁶³ From the profuse praise of his contemporaries it seems clear that Xi Kang possessed an extraordinary appearance, with the stereotypical Taoist metaphor of the pine tree representing his transcendental character, while jade and the phoenix related his beauty.

One tale of Xi Kang parallels that of the wife of the Zhou-dynasty Duke Gong of Cao, who gazed through a peephole at a noble guest having sexual intercourse with his male retainers. In this variation on an ancient theme, the wife of Shan Tao covertly observed the nocturnal activities of Xi Kang and his lover, Ruan Ji. Apparently impressed by the sexual talents of Xi Kang and Ruan Ji relative to those of her husband, she told Shan Tao that he could compare to them only on an intellectual level.

The first time Shan Tao met Xi Kang and Ruan Ji he became united with them in a friendship “stronger than metal and fragrant as orchids.” Shan’s wife, Lady Han, realized that her husband’s relationship with the two men was different from ordinary friendships, and asked him about it. Shan replied, “It’s only these two gentlemen whom I may consider the friends of my mature years.”

His wife said, “In antiquity Xi Fuji’s wife also personally observed Hu Yan and Zhao Cui. I’d like to peep at these friends of yours. Is it all right?”

On another day the two men came, and his wife urged Shan to detain them overnight. After preparing wine and meat, that night she made a hole through the wall, and it was dawn before she remembered to return to her room.

When Shan came in he asked her, “What did you think of the two men?” His wife replied, “Your own ability is in no way comparable to theirs. It’s only on the basis of your knowledge of men and your judgment that you should be their friend.”⁶⁴

In this tale of comic voyeurism we find affirmation that leading literati openly discussed and practiced homosexuality. Not only was Shan Tao’s wife aware of the homosexual tradition, as indicated by her reference to a famous Zhou account of homosexual voyeurism, but she even praised Xi Kang and Ruan Ji for their sexual prowess.

In contrast to these sorts of egalitarian friendships, the unusual relationship of Yu Xin (513–581), author of the famous “Lament for Jiangnan,” and Wang Shao brings up the question of how class-structured and trans-generational relationships could change when the partners’ social statuses and ages changed.

When Wang Shao was young he was beautiful, and Yu Xin opened up his home to him and loved him. They had the joy of the cut sleeve. Wang Shao relied on Yu Xin for clothing and food, and Yu Xin gave him everything. Wang Shao received guests and was also Yu Xin’s wine server.

Later Wang Shao became the censor of Yingzhou. When Yu Xin went west to Jiangling he passed through Jiangxia. Wang Shao greeted Yu Xin very weakly. Sitting together, Wang Shao’s affec-

tion for him decreased. He had Yu Xin enter the feast and seated him beside his couch. Yu Xin looked like a widower.

Yu Xin could bear this no longer. Having drunk too freely, he jumped directly onto Wang Shao's couch and repeatedly trampled and kicked his food. Looking directly at Wang Shao he said, "Today your appearance seems very strange compared to your former one!" Guests filled the hall. Wang Shao was extremely embarrassed.⁶⁵

Although Wang Shao's later rise to officialdom indicates that he was probably not a common prostitute, he did rely on the illustrious poet Yu Xin for patronage during his youth. In return for entertaining guests, acting as a cup bearer, and rendering sexual services, he received clothing, food, and lodging. Despite the fact that highly literate men commonly served as retainers to the rich, this former servitude made Wang Shao uncomfortable in the presence of his former patron. In any event, Wang's early service did not interfere with his official career; he eventually rose to a powerful post, indicating that society still did not view sexual subservience among important men harshly.

The complexity of homosexual relationships inevitably led to the creation of poetic works immortalizing conflicting sentiments. Ruan Ji (210–263), lover of Xi Kang, was one of the most famous poets to apply his brush to a homosexual theme. This work, one of several dealing with homosexuality from the "Jade Terrace" collection of love poetry, beautifully illustrates the stock imagery on which men of his time could draw in conceptualizing and describing love for another man.

In days of old there were many blossom boys—

An Ling and Long Yang.

Young peach and plum blossoms,

Dazzling with glorious brightness.

Joyful as nine springtimes;

Pliant as if bowed by autumn frost.

Roving glances gave rise to beautiful seductions;

Speech and laughter expelled fragrance.

Hand in hand they shared love's rapture,
Sharing coverlets and bedclothes.

Couples of birds in flight,
Paired wings soaring.

Cinnabar and green pigments record a vow:
"I'll never forget you for all eternity."⁶⁶

The poem begins by reference to the past, a standard poetic convention. This technique emphasizes the sense of tradition holding together all of these events, a device seen fleetingly in earlier homosexual literature. Invoking the revered notion of antiquity automatically lent an air of dignity and importance to an author's writings. Ruan Ji continues with the names of two famous favorites of the Zhou: Lords An Ling and Long Yang. These men, together with Mizi Xia and Dong Xian, formed the core of a pantheon of figures seen by later generations as symbols of male love. Literate Chinese throughout dynastic history looked to these ancient icons of homosexuality much as medieval Europeans did to Ganymede. The poem then ends in a descriptive paean to the devotion expressed by these early figures.

The Jin-dynasty (265–420) poet Zhang Hanbian wrote another early poem praising male love, a tribute to Zhou Xiaoshi that described the boy's charms in glowing terms:

The actor Zhou elegantly wanders,
the youthful boy is young and delicate,
fifteen years old.

Like the eastern sun,
fragrant skin, vermilion cosmetics,
simple disposition mixes with notariety.
Your head turns—I kiss you,
lotus and hibiscus.

Your appearance is already pure,
your clothing is new.
The chariot follows the wind,
flying after fog and currents of mist.

whichever feeling happens to predominate."²⁹ In regularizing Neo-Confucian ideas, Zhu Xi expanded on Han Yu's demands for emotional restraint by including in his *Reflections on Things at Hand* quotations from earlier philosophers that embodied this theme. He enshrined such statements as "A man with passions has no strength, whereas a man of strength will not yield to passions," and "Generally speaking, if one acts because of pleasure, how can one avoid being incorrect?"³⁰ The emergence of such views straightforwardly opposed extramarital sexuality and all other sensual pleasures. Nonetheless, we cannot be sure what effect their writings had on the typical patron of prostitutes. It is as difficult to gauge the influence of Neo-Confucians over the average person as it is to measure the influence of any elite philosophic movement over society as a whole. At the very least, in any case, their writings visibly manifested an emerging ideal of temperance in personal conduct.

Buddhist institutions such as temples and monasteries do not seem to have been hostile to homosexuality. Indeed, the Buddhist clergy even developed a reputation, perhaps undeserved, for sensual indulgence of all kinds. And yet lay beliefs and practices, often juxtaposed to institutional Buddhism, in many cases took the concept of sexual sin far more seriously than did some clerical traditions. Considering the profound influence of certain Buddhist ideas on Neo-Confucian thought, the intolerance shown by certain Song officials for specific forms of homosexuality may have had its roots in popular Buddhist tracts. These moral tracts, known as *shan shu*, admonished believers to refrain from what some Buddhists regarded as sin, even though many of these ethical concepts were alien to native Chinese ways and had in fact been imported from Indian sources.

Although these Chinese texts date back as far as the sixth century, they gained widespread use only under the Song and subsequent dynasties.³¹ These texts, faithful to their Indian predecessors, are uniformly hostile to homosexuality. This hostility is found already in a sixth-century text, the earliest example of this Chinese genre, which regards homosexuality as a sin.³² A similar

text, composed in 921, goes still further, condemning transvestism in an effort to enforce rigid gender roles.³³ Another tract, written prior to 1694, is more specific in its condemnation of homosexuality. It includes the admonitory tale of a man who sinned against nature deities by burning their statues. In retribution, his life was ruined: he failed the government examinations, became an alcoholic, engaged the services of male and female prostitutes, and had his wife seduced by his friends. He was eventually punished by burning in the deepest regions of hell for eons.³⁴ In this case, the text uses homosexual prostitution as a symbol of degeneracy and as a cause for divine punishment.³⁵

We should not exaggerate the extent of this hostility. Homosexuality maintains a high profile in sources from the Song and subsequent dynasties. Despite the theoretical disapproval of sensuality by Neo-Confucians and Buddhists, and despite the enactment of a law discouraging male prostitution, Song sources uniformly attest the existence of a highly developed system of male prostitution. Always reticent to interfere in sexual matters, the government does not seem to have widely enforced the antiprostitution prohibitions. And the intellectual and political establishment, too diverse to reach a consensus on such sensitive issues, apparently merely accepted the inevitability of discrepancies between ideals and reality. Even in an atmosphere of decreased tolerance, homosexuality continued to be practiced openly enough to attract the occasional attention of writers. A precarious balance between the limited general acceptance of passive homosexuality and the Chinese hesitancy to enforce standards of male sexual conduct allowed male homosexuality to continue openly in the major metropolitan centers of the Song and later dynasties.



5

Popular Indulgence and Bawdy Satire

Homosexuality in Humor

So far this study has dealt almost exclusively with the erotic practices of only a tiny portion of Chinese society. Instead of describing the sexual habits of average people, most ancient records focus only on the lives of a minute privileged elite—rulers, high officials, and literati. Since literacy in Chinese is particularly time consuming and difficult to attain, the average person lacked the luxury of a literary education. As in most societies, full literacy was generally limited to those with money and leisure. Because early Chinese literature was written by the rich for the rich, it is not surprising that it was preoccupied with the sex lives of the

rich. In the Chinese context, this orientation meant concern with political affairs to the exclusion of virtually everything else.

Because of this limited view of early sexuality we cannot be sure of the extent of homosexuality in Chinese society as a whole. Although the sexual practices of different classes may often reflect one another, the wide divisions between rich and poor in early China preclude the automatic application of findings from one group to another. But not all of Chinese literature stays completely silent on the sexual lives of the common people. In later imperial history a new literary medium for information about sexual practices began to emerge: anthologies of humor. This genre might seem a less than credible historical source—our first impression is of ingenuous crudity and unsophistication. By necessity a joke is composed of one-dimensional, stereotypical characters and events, often inverted for humorous purposes. But through them we can glimpse the perceptions of the cut sleeve among peasants and laborers.

We must take care to recognize the interpretive limits of these jokes. First, jokes do not necessarily portray people as they would have viewed themselves. Many of these stereotypes may have been imposed by the rest of society. A second caveat regards the ahistoricity of humor. Although we can know approximately when many of these jokes were finally written down, some probably date from earlier eras. Similarly, these jokes created during later dynasties often conform to themes and formulas found in much older anecdotes. Humor in China, as elsewhere, was basically an oral tradition. The few instances of written jokes are usually merely reflections of an original oral form. Their oral nature makes the exact dating of each joke a futile exercise. For this reason I consider them here as a whole, as reflecting the general perceptions of homosexuality in later imperial history.¹

An important characteristic of these jokes, one deserving full consideration, is the overall negative tone they convey. These jokes often depict bitter relations among the classes, and even among men of the same social class. Some even suggest the specter of homosexual rape, a genuine problem to Qing-dynasty law-

Li Yu composed this myth to provide a sense of justification to the origins of male love, much as Socrates' myth of the origin of the genders in Plato's *Symposium* attempted a similar etiology for the ancient Greeks. Li Yu's explanation of the original motivations for homosexuality is economic. Because men were poor, they shared living quarters. As a result of this forced proximity, they soon discovered anal intercourse. Li Yu finally concludes that poverty, in antiquity as in his own time, accounted for men becoming favorites: "Due to the fires of lust perhaps some handsome young boys, poor and unable to make a living, because of this could seek clothing and food. These were the extenuating circumstances, as in the present age."²²

Once again the basis of male homosexual relations is linked to patronage and prostitution, dominance and submission. Another tale from the same period, "Chronicle of Extraordinary Love" ("Qing qi ji"), gives a similar reason for male prostitution. In this story, poverty forces a boy to sell himself to a brothel. Eventually an older man falls in love with him, buys his freedom, and takes him home to live as a concubine. The boy dresses as a woman, using a miraculous liquid that allows him to bind his feet perfectly in only a month. Eventually they are separated by calamity, so the boy takes his husband's son and joins a nunnery where he can raise the boy in safety.²³ Both stories link male prostitution to poverty. Similarly, the only chance for a permanent exclusive homosexual relationship lies in one partner adopting female gender identity.

After giving his utilitarian explanation of homosexuality, Li Yu then goes on to show that the southern custom is "natural" in the sense that it appears in nature as well as among men. He claims that there exists a tree called the "southern custom tree" (*nanfeng shu*).²⁴ This tree actually consists of two trees, one smaller and the other larger, representing the unequal ages of many men in homosexual relationships in Li Yu's own day. These two trees intertwine to become one. Their coupling is so intense that even if they are chopped down, the two trunks cannot be separated. Here Li Yu is presumably borrowing the famed image of interlocked trees from Han-dynasty literature and pictorial art and interpret-

The story itself is set in Fujian, which Li Yu explains is "the region foremost in passion for men," and concerns two men who become "husband and wife" (*fufu*).²⁵ First the narrator introduces Jifang, a brilliant and handsome young scholar in his early twenties—in short, the stereotypical romantic ideal. Thoroughly misogynistic, he goes so far as to outline his dislike for women in orderly detail. In this way he resembles an equally ardent woman-hater in the eighteenth-century novel *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi*) who complained, "They affect me so painfully, I can smell a woman three rooms away!" Instead Jifang has turned to what he describes as the love of the Zhou-dynasty Lord E and the Han Emperor Ai.²⁶ Unlike the woman-hater in *The Scholars*, though, Jifang bows to social convention and marries a woman. His young wife soon died during childbirth, leaving him to raise his young son by himself.

The other partner in this relationship is Ruiji, a beautiful fourteen-year-old boy from a poor family. Owing to a succession of natural calamities, all men in the prefecture are ordered to attend a special temple festival to appease the deity. Since no women are allowed to go, Ruiji excitedly predicts that during the festivities everyone will be enjoying the southern custom. He is not disappointed. While there, the assembled men hold a beauty contest for handsome youths and post the names of those considered most attractive. Ruiji wins first place.

Jifang falls in love with Ruiji and decides he wants to marry him, expressing his intent using the word *qu*, which usually refers to heterosexual marriage. Apparently Li Yu assumed that the custom of homosexual marriage would be unfamiliar to many of his readers, since he includes an explanation:

In Fujian the southern custom is the same as that for women. One tries to discern a youth for whom this is the first marriage. If he is a virgin, men are willing to pay a large bride price. They do not skip the three cups of tea or the six wedding rituals—it is just like a proper marriage with a formal wedding.²⁷

Accordingly, Jifang goes to Ruiji's father to ask for his son's hand in marriage. The narrator explains that Ruiji's father is a

youths can be quite high: some boys bring up to five hundred pieces of gold. In order to pay for the exceptionally attractive Ruiji, Jifang sells all of his land.

After the marriage, Jifang shows incredible devotion to his young beloved. Yet a cloud remains over this otherwise happy marriage, because both men know that the day of separation will some day come when Ruiji inevitably leaves to marry a woman. In gratitude for all of the love and devotion showered on him by his lover, Ruiji castrates himself so that he can avoid heterosexual marriage and remain with Jifang forever. Remarkably, the scar heals into the shape of a vagina. From this time forward Ruiji binds his feet, dresses as a woman, and remains indoors like a virtuous wife.

To the modern Westerner, this sort of plot development strains credulity. But in the fantastic world of Chinese popular fiction, such events hovered on the cusp of possibility. A sixteenth-century miscellany records what it purports to be the factual case of a man who developed female sexual organs at the age of forty-four and married a close male friend. Though s/he began to menstruate, s/he was never able to bear children.²⁸ In such a world, the events in Li Yu's tale might have seemed unlikely but certainly not unimaginable.

Popular resentment builds up against the happy couple of Li Yu's fiction, and soon a jealous prefect accuses Jifang of unlawfully castrating a minor. When Ruiji admits that he castrated himself out of gratitude to Jifang, the prefect orders him beaten for self-mutilation, a violation of the Confucian concept of filiality. As he is stripped for beating, a crowd surges forward for a glimpse of his beautiful flesh. Jifang steps forward and asks to be beaten in Ruiji's place. Pent-up jealousies are released in a particularly savage beating that results in Jifang's painful death. On his deathbed, Jifang charges Ruiji with raising and educating his son so that he can pass the imperial examinations. As his husband dies, Ruiji "cries until blood flows from his eyes."²⁹

Ruiji sees that Jifang's son, Chengxin, studies diligently, and supports them by working at a relative's shop making shoes.

Ruiji's main worry is that Chengxin will give up his studies because of a frivolous homosexual infatuation. When fellow students and even a teacher try to seduce the attractive young Chengxin, Ruiji finds a new school for him. When Chengxin is fourteen—the age when Ruiji married—a handsome young scholar remarkably similar to Jifang falls in love with Chengxin and attempts to kidnap him. Thinking that in Fujian "boys without fathers esteem the southern custom, whereas in other places they do not," Ruiji takes the boy and they move to Guangdong.³⁰ Eventually, of course, Chengxin passes the examinations and Ruiji is honored as a "Mencius's mother"—the paragon of widowhood who devotes everything to the education of her son.

Li Yu portrays male marriage in idealistic terms. Despite the jealousy of others, the couple has only the utmost devotion for each other. Even after the death of one husband, the remaining spouse leads a chaste life as a paragon of parental rectitude. This story is one of love, fidelity, and chaste widowhood. The transformation of gender roles is complete, providing one of the few Chinese references to trans-genderal homosexuality. Nevertheless, the bizarre circumstances surrounding Ruiji's castration suggest that the particulars of gender transformation in this case owe more to Li Yu's fertile imagination than to social reality.

Even more important within the story are references to an actual marriage ceremony. This ritual was not simply the product of Li Yu's wild imaginings: men apparently found it desirable to construct homosexual relationships along the lines of heterosexual marriage. The greatest advantage to be gained was the legitimization of the union according to a recognized convention. The efficacy of such legitimizing analogies can be seen as well in cases of prostitution and extramarital heterosexual relations—for instance, in the famous play *The Peach Blossom Fan* (*Tao hua shan*), set in the late Ming dynasty. At that time, among elite courtesans the madam acted as a young prostitute's adoptive mother, and customers of the most desirable courtesans went through a long and expensive "courtship" process prior to sexual intercourse.³¹ In this particular drama a matchmaker is introduced into the proce-

ture. Eventually the "husband" and his prostitute "bride" engage in a mock wedding ceremony.³²

An even earlier work illustrates the analogic use of marital metaphors by those engaged in an extramarital sexual union. In the Tang-dynasty short story *The Dwelling of the Playful Goddess* (*You xian ku*), a highly stylized description of an ephemeral sexual encounter between a handsome scholar and a young widow, the widow offers her paramour the role of head of the household at an impromptu feast.³³ By assuming this ritual role of male head of the household, his sexual attachment to her is cloaked in the language of marriage. In this case, as in *The Peach Blossom Fan*, an important factor in the application of marital forms to extramarital seduction is the presence of a matchmaker.³⁴ As symbols of the marriage ceremony, and hence of legitimacy, the presence of a matchmaker was considered so important that to legal theorists of the Yuan dynasty it even partially ameliorated sexual impropriety. Although an illicit sexual relationship arranged by a go-between was still censured, the penalties meted out under such circumstances were substantially reduced.³⁵ *The Dwelling of the Playful Goddess* follows this way of thinking. In it, the woman's sister-in-law takes on the matchmaker's role, saying, "How can you cut up firewood? Without an axe, it can't be done. How do you take a wife? Without a go-between, she can't be gotten."³⁶ Here she repeats a line from an ancient poem, appealing to the antiquity of the sentiment to further legitimize this extramarital union.

Similarly, men of certain parts of China also appealed to heterosexual marriage as a model when trying to construct a more stable and respectable type of relationship with one another. As Li Yu acknowledged, the province of Fujian in southeast China was particularly famed for its cut sleeves and half-eaten peaches. The Dutch soldier Hans Putnams, who attacked the Fujian coast in the early seventeenth century, confirmed this fact in calling men of the region "filthy pederasts";³⁷ and the literatus Shen Defu (1578–1642) stated that men of all social classes in Fujian would take male lovers. Another account confirms the popularity of homosexuality in that province, noting that the Fujianese "look at the young

and handsome and remember them. They do not discuss literature and art, but instead notice new patronages." When an official in Fujian would retire from office, it was customary for several hundred "young and handsome" youths to come to his retirement party. One writer described these young men as "like a group of jade bamboo shoots": they would celebrate together for several days, and during this time "favors would be continuous." Rather than being criticized for such behavior, these youths would find themselves recommended for important positions by the recipients of their charms. In this way the end of one career could lead to the start of others.³⁸

Shen Defu described the most extreme form these relationships among men could take in Fujian: marriage. Two men were united, the older referred to as "adoptive older brother" (*qixiong*) and the younger as "adoptive younger brother" (*qidi*). Similar terminology was employed among men of seventeenth-century Japan, who referred to participants in a "troth of brotherly love" (*kyōdai keiyaku*) as taking on an "elder brother's role" (*ani-bun*) and a "younger brother's role" (*otōto-bun*).³⁹ The creation of fictive kinship ties as a means of organizing homosexual relations was not limited to China and Japan. It is also common in groups as different as southern African lesbians and inmates in the U.S. penal system.⁴⁰

In the Chinese case, the term *qi* used in both compounds has many alternate meanings. One early denotation was "a written contract or agreement." It was also used in reference to an exceptionally strong friendship, as in the term "sworn friends" (*qiyou*). And third, it could denote adoption, a much more complicated and diverse social act than its Western equivalent. To Chinese ears, then, the word *qi* would have had connotations of contractuality, deep friendship, and adoption.

We have a description of an actual ceremony for swearing friendship from the works of the invaluable Li Yu. Two men sacrifice a carp, a rooster, and a duck. They then exchange their exact times of birth, smear each other's mouths with the blood of the victims, and swear eternal loyalty to each other. The ceremony

culture to justify Japanese homosexual practices. He referred mainly to the most ancient sources of homosexual history in China, such as *Records of the Han* and *Memoirs of the Historian*. One story even centers directly on the love between a Chinese gentleman and a kabuki actor in Osaka—an unexpected setting, since Chinese traders were legally confined to the Chinese quarter of Nagasaki. This brief tale shows a parallelism between the sexual roles of actors in the two countries:

One spring some years ago, a man from China who had become very devoted to [the actor] Yoshikawa Tamon had to leave and go back to his country. Tamon, weeping bitterly, went as far as the mouth of the river to see him off. The night was cold and it began to rain and storm, soaking him to the skin, but he bore it gladly.⁵³

Here we discern the existence of some direct homosexual links between the two cultures, which were sufficient to convey at least rumors of the long and respected Chinese homosexual past. Not only did the tradition of literature regarding the cut sleeve influence all levels of Chinese society, as shown in popular literature of the Ming, but it even extended beyond the borders of China to impress or disgust distant cultures.



7

Reflections at the End of a Tradition

Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1912)

Open sexual expression and erotic literature blossomed under the Ming. Yet together with this relative lack of inhibitions came chaos in many areas of life. After the Manchus restored order by establishing the Qing dynasty in 1644, a period of reaction set in against what many perceived as Ming libertinism. Literature generally became more circumspect, shaping our perceptions of the period. Some scholars have detected a growing social conservatism as well. Vivien Ng has suggested that the Qing dynasty represents a time when homosexuality was brought under increased regulation as an attempt to firm up the foundations of society uprooted during the late Ming.¹

Ming society also contrasts with Qing absolutism in the high degree of individualism expressed by leading Ming intellectual figures. The influential Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yang-ming's emphasis on the individual as a repository of truth set off a wave of highly personal and idiosyncratic speculation. This trend in Ming thought culminated in the radical individualism of Li Zhi, who emphasized the shocking originality of his introspective works in their provocative titles, such as *A Book to Burn* (*Fen shu*) and *A Book to Be Hidden Away* (*Cang shu*).² While the content of Li Zhi's controversial ideas did not typify their time, in another sense their highly individualistic orientation sums up the pervasive spirit of the age. Ming society has been called an age of great humanism owing to the tolerance shown personal expression. Along with intellectual openness came greater freedom and tolerance in sexual matters as well.

Less philosophically minded officials at the Manchu court had a different view of Ming individualism. Rather than distinctive expression, they saw political and social chaos. Qing rulers kept tighter control over the writings and behavior of their subjects than had their Ming predecessors. And the laws and actions of certain emperors, particularly those most influenced by Manchu customs at the beginning of the dynasty, show a desire to limit other aspects of society that had gone unregulated in the previous age. At the same time, Qing society still shows a high degree of tolerance for some forms of homosexual behavior, as seen in the records major scholarly figures left of their loves.

Qing law expresses this new tendency toward social control through judicial activism. Homosexuality came to be increasingly regulated by the courts, although the actual enforcement of these laws was apparently highly selective. Although legalists of dynasties following the Song did not revive the Song penalties against male prostitution, Qing officials oversaw the promulgation of increasingly sophisticated laws to punish homosexual rape.³ Perhaps such laws represent one aspect of increasingly conservative tendencies; yet this form of sexual violence was apparently a problem of genuine concern. Several case histories survive describing

homosexual rape, and Western moralists, who had long accused Chinese officials of homosexuality, happily seized on these instances as proof of Chinese ethical degeneracy. One British visitor recorded in detail his outrage:

The commission of this detestable and unnatural act is attended with so little sense of shame, or feelings of delicacy, that many of the first officers of the state seemed to make no hesitation in publicly avowing it. Each of these officers is constantly attended by his pipe-bearer, who is generally a handsome boy, from fourteen to eighteen years of age, and is always well dressed.⁴

When evidence of sexual violence exacerbated the act, Westerners reacted with even greater assurance of their own superiority. An account from a Western journal of 1835 captures the spirit of the West's indictment of Chinese sexual morals:

[A Chinese gazetteer is] filled with details of a case of this abominable practice, which exists to a great extent, in almost every part of the empire, and particularly in the very officers of the "shepherds of the people," the guardians of the morals of the celestial empire. The sodomite was Woopaou, formerly a soldier under the (Manchu) banners, aged thirty-four years. . . . "Woopaou being in the house of Mrs Wei, where her grandson was at play, seized the lad, and binding him in a blanket (to prevent him from alarming the neighbors), committed violence on his person. The boy then ran home crying, followed by the villain; but his grandmother was enraged, and would listen to no overtures; Woopaou therefore fled, and after an absence of two years returned, was seized, and delivered over to the criminal court for trial." What is to be the result, we have not yet learned. The boy was only eleven years old.⁵

The Western commentary to this early translation of a Chinese legal document links homosexuality with rape. It also states that homosexuality was widespread in China, especially among officials. The implication is that Chinese officials were all similar to rapists. The Chinese returned such insults by charging foreigners with like crimes. The same journal in 1840 reported, "Judging

foreigners to be as bad as themselves, (Chinese officials) falsely charge them with the guilt of this sin, and in broad capitals post it up on the factor's own walls, 'where all eyes may see it,' there to remain for months."⁶ Whether Westerners were actually guilty of homosexual rape is difficult to determine.⁷ Chinese and Europeans slandered one another with mutual accusations of what both agreed to be a reprehensible crime. But whereas Europeans condemned all forms of homosexuality as immoral wickedness, the Chinese concerned themselves mainly with the forceful violation of free men and sex with free minors.

Rape of men seems to have been a concern of jurists as early as the Qin dynasty (221–207 B.C.). A version of the Qin legal code unearthed from the tomb of an ancient official discusses punishment for a servant who "forcibly fornicates with his master or mistress."⁸ Yet the Qin code lumps heterosexual and homosexual rape together, and judicial officials of subsequent dynasties do not seem to have departed from the Qin example, probably handling homosexual rape merely through analogy to heterosexual rape.

A specific law for the prosecution of homosexual rape was first suggested in 1679, during the reign of the Kangxi Emperor. Owing to bureaucratic delays, a statute governing homosexual rape was not finally added to the Qing code until 1740, with minor amendments added in 1819 and 1852.⁹ Kangxi personifies the new Manchu morality through his violent hostility to Chinese homosexual customs. Ming rulers either ignored homosexuality or, if inclined, took full advantage of handsome male favorites. The Zhengde Emperor, who lavished loving attention on his Muslim favorite Sayyid Husain, demonstrates the acceptance of homosexuality in Ming court life.¹⁰ Even during the Qing, as the rustic identity of the ruling elite became inexorably cast aside in favor of the splendid sophistication of Chinese civilization, the Manchu emperors became more amenable to Chinese sexual practices as well. The Qianlong Emperor lavished his favorite, Heshen, with honors and high office, and the Xianfeng Emperor found himself attracted to a leading actor, the female impersonator Zhu

Lianfeng. Even the young Tongzhi Emperor scandalized his relatives by publicly wooing a young scholar.

In contrast, Kangxi's more traditional Manchu upbringing seems to have turned him against native Chinese sexual customs, so much so that he even executed three of his son's male favorites when he discovered that they were having sexual relations.¹¹ It is not surprising that he took the initiative to stop the most exploitive homosexual practices of his own day. First he tried to halt the importation to Beijing of boy actor-prostitutes from the south. He discovered one official who abused his power to force families in southern China to sell their sons into prostitution—one Suzhou servant family had been bullied into selling their son for five hundred taels of silver.¹² In addition to battling the forced procurement of youths for prostitution, Kangxi also fought against more isolated cases of male sexual violence. The result was a comprehensive law code governing the punishment of different varieties of homosexual rape:

- I. If a gang abducts a male child of good family and sodomizes [*jijian*] him, whether or not they subsequently murder him, the principals are to be immediately beheaded as in the case of vagabond outlaws.¹³ If accomplices joined in the rape, they are to be strangled after assizes. The remaining offenders are to be enslaved and sent to Heilongjiang.
- II. If no gang was formed, but there is the rape and murder of a boy, and if the boy sodomized is under ten years old,¹⁴ then likewise [as in the case of vagabond outlaws] there is to be immediate decapitation.
- III. If there is the rape of a boy who is ten to twelve years old, there is to be decapitation after assizes. If he consented to rape, then, as in the case of a young woman who consents to rape,¹⁵ there is to be strangulation after assizes.
- IV. If a single person commits sodomy, and there is no injury, there is to be strangulation after assizes.
- V. [If a single person commits sodomy and injures his victim] but the injured person does not die, there is to be decapitation after assizes.

- VI. If there is attempted rape without injury, there is to be punishment of 100 heavy blows and exile to a distance of 3,000 *li*.
- VII. If there are injuries short of death, there is to be strangulation after assizes.
- VIII. If there is sodomy with consent, then, as in the case of military or civil consensual lewdness, there is to be one month in the cangue and 100 heavy blows.
- IX. If there is a false claim of sodomy, the accuser is to be punished in the same degree as the accused person would have been convicted. But in cases that would have called for immediate decapitation, the accuser is to be sent into military exile at a distance of 4,000 *li*.¹⁶

Most problematic is the eighth article of the code, which prohibits consensual homosexual relations. The legal context for accurately understanding this new and unprecedented judicial hostility to homosexuality has been explained in detail by M. J. Meijer.¹⁷ He notes that the Qing code adopted an unequivocal stand against all forms of extramarital sexuality as a way of strengthening the Confucian ideal of family, perhaps in reaction to Ming chaos. As a consequence, Qing legalists condemned homosexuality in an effort to limit all sexuality to a marital context. Such a rationale accounts for a punishment that, though harsh by modern Western standards, was among the lightest possible under the Qing legal system. And considering the openness of homosexuality throughout the Qing, it is doubtful that the idealistic eighth article of this law was ever systematically enforced.

The portions of the law regarding rape, however, performed a necessary service. European hyperbole aside, there was still a temptation for the strong to sexually abuse the weak. Although rape was usually a heterosexual crime, sometimes men also violated an unwilling male victim. Chinese law dealt with this sort of crime directly, and Qing legal records abound with examples of successful convictions. In one case two men, "perceiving the clear white countenance" of a boy of twelve, decided to "commit successive sodomies upon the boy." Not all such cases made ref-

erence to the specific code regarding homosexual rape; some followed the more traditional practice dating from the Qin. In this particular instance, the defendants were sentenced by analogy to a statute that deals with "successive consummated rapes by more than one man of a respectable woman." Both were executed.¹⁸

Authorities prosecuted not only successful homosexual rape, but attempted rape as well. A similar case records the deportation to Heilongjiang of a man convicted in 1809 of attempted homosexual rape.¹⁹ Unlike the Song law against male prostitution, homosexual rape law of the Qing was actively enforced. And Qing law treated all rapists comparably, regardless of the gender of their victim. Instead, punishment relied entirely on consideration of the age of the victim and the degree of violence perpetrated.²⁰

Even literature deals with the problem of male rape. The works of Li Yu, for example, are filled with examples of sexual violence. This social problem stirred the imaginations of other prose authors as well. One tale tells of an evil spirit who rapes an innocent young man:

A certain young scholar went to pay a call on a friend. Since it was a summer night he strolled outside the village, losing track of the distance. Suddenly he heard a moaning sound. Following the sound to find its source, he came upon a naked boy lying on the ground. He asked the reason for the boy's pain.

The boy said that earlier in the evening he had passed by a place where he had met a voluptuous woman with flowing hair. She called after him and they struck up a conversation. Desirous of his blossoming beauty, she soon began to flirt and play. Saying that her father was always out, she invited him to her home to sit for a while. She led him to a place where there was a three-pillared cottage. No one was home. The woman closed the door and brought out some fruit, which they ate together. Laughing, she said that since they already got along so well together they should relax on the bed.

She pressed close to him on his pillow. Then the woman suddenly

Mei's wife, the deep devotion felt by lover and beloved, the contrast of poetic elegance with disease and decrepitude—all of these interrelated themes are captured in a single brief scene:

Du went to Mei's house in considerable apprehension, certain that he would be humiliated. But to his surprise Mrs. Mei instead of reproaching him seemed to pity him and urged him to go in and cheer her husband up. With mixed feelings of joy and sorrow, he wondered how serious Ziyu's illness could be and how best to comfort him. But doing as he was told, he went boldly to Mei's room. He found the curtains drawn, the desk covered with dust, and light gauze curtains hanging round a single hardwood bed.

The maid parted the curtains and called:

"Here is Mr. Du, sir!"

Mei muttered something in his sleep. Then Du sat on the edge of the bed and saw how lean and haggard his friend had grown. He bent over the pillow and called out in a low voice, his tears falling ceaselessly on the scholar's face.

Then Mei laughed in his sleep and chanted: "On the seventh day of the seventh month in the Palace of Eternal Youth, we spoke in secret at midnight when no one else was near."

After chanting these lines he laughed again deliriously. Du's heart contracted with pain and he shook him gently. He could not speak loudly, however, as Mrs. Mei was outside and he had to address his beloved friend formally. Mei was in fact dreaming of Du in his longing to see him again on the Double Seventh to pour out his heart in Sulan's house. So obsessed was he by this idea that he had chanted these two lines of Tang poetry. It seemed that nothing could wake him. Deep in his dreams, he laughed once more and declaimed: "I thought never to see him again in heaven or in hell. . . ." Still fast asleep, he turned his face to the wall. Du's eyes were brimming with tears but all he could do was to look on helplessly, not daring to call out."⁷⁴

The original readers of this episode were acutely aware that the love of Mei Ziyu and Du Qinyan was not merely an isolated event, but part of a social and cultural tradition stretching back more than two thousand years to the Bronze Age. During that

time it had shaped political careers and had inspired sublime literature. Emperors and scholars, monks and prostitutes—a cross-section of society had partaken of the passions of the cut sleeve. Soon this continuity with the past was to come to an end. A growing sexual conservatism exemplified by Qing law, together with a new literary language and influences from Western morality, was soon to sever most links with the homosexual tradition of antiquity. The names of Mizi Xia and Dong Xian would ultimately lose their place as famed icons of male love. From a position of prominence and openness, men involved in homosexual activities would fall to a place of terrified obscurity within their society. This pathetic end to the homosexual tradition had been predicted millennia before by Grand Historian Sima Qian. He saw the destiny of Chinese homosexuality augured by the fateful execution of the most famous symbol of male love: "How violent are the seasons of love and hatred! By observing the fate of Mizi Xia, we can guess what will happen to favorites of later times. 'Even the future a hundred ages hence may be foretold!'"⁷⁵



Appendix

Lesbianism in Imperial China

Since lesbianism remained separate from the male homosexual tradition, it would have been an imposition of Western conceptual categories to have integrated lesbianism into the body of this study. Nevertheless, it is a subject that deserves investigation. I have therefore gathered together what information I could find concerning Chinese lesbianism in dynastic times to produce this separate section.

Unfortunately, references to lesbianism in traditional sources are rare. Partly this lack was due to the relative absence of personal freedom accorded women. Bound to their husbands economically and often forced into seclusion in the home, many women were

denied the opportunities to form close bonds with women outside their household. Moreover, the relationships that did form would usually escape notice by men uninterested in women's affairs. Since men also controlled the literary world, this combination of factors meant that few examples of lesbianism were recorded in print. As a result, lesbianism never inspired a sustained literary tradition such as that associated with male homosexuality, and the scattered mentions of lesbianism that remain are unrelated.

In ancient times, some of the relationships between women in the Han court seem to have had sexual overtones. With thousands of women locked in the palace together with only the emperor and eunuchs, it seems inevitable that some should have formed deep attachments to one another. Sometimes these women would form couples, known as *dui shi*. Literally meaning "paired eating," this term may have connoted cunnilingus.¹ Ying Shao (ca. 140–206) noted, "When palace women attach themselves as husband and wife it is called *dui shi*. They are intensely jealous of each other"² *Records of the Han* mentions in passing the love of two slave women, Cao Gong and Dao Fang, describing it as *dui shi*.³ Han records also state how the servant of one empress dressed in male attire, with the context of this transvestism suggesting a possible lesbian relationship.⁴

At times men of the household encouraged lesbianism as a way of adding variety to sexual routine. The seventeenth-century short story "The Pearl-sewn Shirt" includes a scene in which an older woman aids in the seduction of the young beauty San Qiao'er. Using the excuse that her own home is too hot, the older woman asks to sleep with San Qiao'er. She inflames the younger woman with "dirty and obscene local gossip" and tales of her own amorous adventures, then, climbing into San Qiao'er's bed, arouses her with candid talk of sex. Demonstrating how an erotic tool can simulate intercourse, she fans out the lamp flame by pretending to brush away a moth. By this time San Qiao'er has reached a state of ready excitement, and the older woman allows the seducer Chen Dalang, her patron, stealthily to take her place in the bed.⁵

Traditional handbooks on marital intercourse sometimes describe acts combining lesbian and heterosexual elements:

Lady Precious Yin and Mistress White Jade lay on top of each other, their legs entwined so that their jade gates (genitalia) pressed together. They then moved in a rubbing and jerking fashion against each other like fishes gobbling flies or water plants from the surface. As they became more excited, the "mouths" widen and choosing his position carefully, Great Lord Yang thrusts between them with his jade root (penis). They moved in unison until all three shared the ultimate simultaneously.⁶

Prints and paintings survive that depict this and similar acts, showing that it was probably considered to be more than just a theoretical possibility.⁷

Of course, most lesbian encounters did not include a male participant. Women utilized a variety of means for self-satisfaction. In addition to the pudendal contact described above (which earned the nickname "grinding bean curd") there was also cunnilingus, manual stimulation of the clitoris, and the use of artificial erotic tools. Some women would even use a tiny bound foot to stimulate their partner's vagina.⁸ Olisboi, made from wood or ivory, were often constructed in a double-headed form that offered simultaneous vaginal penetration for both partners. Other olisboi were carved from a plant that swelled on contact with moisture, such as that present in the vagina. Still others were made of silk cloth stuffed with expandable silk threads or bean curd.⁹ Women and even some men would sometimes place a hollow ball made from copper or silver in the vagina or anus as a form of stimulus. These various artificial devices are described in surviving literature and are portrayed in erotic art.¹⁰ One surviving print even pictures a limber woman who has strapped a penis-shaped object to her leg next to her foot for the purpose of masturbation.¹¹

Prose fiction provides one of the few detailed views of lesbian life, even though the surviving works on this subject were all written by men. Once again the uncanny social insight of Li Yu found fertile subject matter in the world of lesbian love. His first

play, *Pitying the Fragrant Companion* (*Lian xiangban*), involves a young married woman's love for a younger unmarried woman.¹² The married woman convinces her husband to take her talented beloved as a concubine. The three then live as a happy ménage à trois free from jealousy. A similar, presumably nonfictional, account in the eighteenth-century literatus Shen Fu's autobiography *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* (*Fusheng liuji*) describes his wife Shen Yun's infatuation with a singing girl. She wanted to procure the girl as Shen Fu's concubine, but his family objected to a union with a girl of such a lowly social background. Instead the girl was forced to marry another man. As a result Shen Yun went into a deep bout of melancholy, fell ill, and died.¹³

A different sort of lesbian love affair is detailed in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. A former actress, Nénuphar, living in the luxurious garden of the Jia family, is discovered by the young master Baoyu as she secretly burns spirit money for the dead. He inquires of Parfumée, another actress, why Nénuphar was doing this.

"So who *was* she making the offering for?"

Parfumée's eyes reddened slightly and she sighed.

"Oh, Nénuphar is crazy."

"Why?" said Baoyu. "What do you mean?"

"It was for Pivoine," said Parfumée, "the girl in our troupe who died."

"There's nothing crazy about that," said Baoyu, "if they were friends."

"*Friends!*" said Parfumée. "They were more than that. It was Nénuphar's soppy ideas that started it all. You see, Nénuphar is our Principal Boy and Pivoine always played opposite her as Principal Girl. They became so accustomed to acting the part of lovers on the stage, that gradually it came to seem real to them and Nénuphar began carrying on as if they were really lovers. When Pivoine died, Nénuphar cried herself into fits, and even now she still thinks about her. That's why she makes offerings to her on feast-days. When Étamine took over the roles that Pivoine used to play, Nénuphar became just the same towards her. We even teased her about it: 'Have you forgotten your old love then, now that you've got yourself a new one?' But she said, 'No, I haven't forgotten. It's like when a man loses his wife and remarries. He can still be faith-

ful to the first wife, as long as he keeps her memory green.' Did you ever hear anything so soppy in your life?"

"Soppy" or whatever it was, there was a strain in Baoyu's own nature which responded to it with a powerful mixture of emotions: pleasure, sorrow, and an unbounded admiration for the little actress.¹⁴

Parfumée herself is on intimate terms with other young women, and even affects male dress. The original editor of the work notes that female transvestism was common in that upper-class household.¹⁵ Eventually the actresses take religious vows, a confirmation of suspicions by authors such as the Yuan-dynasty literatus Tao Zongyi that some nuns engaged in lesbian activities.¹⁶

Remarkable in the tale of Nénuphar is the resemblance of her lesbian relationship to marriage. The analogy is not merely coincidental. Other sources document lesbian group marriages. Some form of heterosexual "group marriage" goes back to at least the Tang, when it was influenced by non-Chinese customs.¹⁷ A Qing novel describes an informal group of Shanghai prostitutes who love one another intensely and are presided over by an iron-fisted madam. They call their group the "Mirror-polishing Gang." These women reject contact with men as repugnant, and lavish money and attention on their female lovers.¹⁸ Even in modern Taiwan there have been reports of a gang of thirty or so high school-aged female transvestites who call themselves the "H" (for "homo") gang. Their leader was arrested and charged with dressing as a man and blackmailing other young women through threats of physical violence and threats of forcing them into prostitution.¹⁹ Although hardly typical of modern Chinese lesbianism, this modern version shows a similar tendency for lesbians to form tight groups for mutual support and economic benefit.

The most carefully documented of the female marriages are the "Golden Orchid Associations" of southern China. Scholars are uncertain as to the full implications of the choice of this particular title.²⁰ Within the group, a lesbian couple could choose to undergo a marriage ceremony in which one partner was designated

"husband" and the other "wife." After an exchange of ritual gifts, the foundation of the Chinese marriage ceremony, a feast attended by female companions served to witness the marriage. These married lesbian couples could even adopt female children, who in turn could inherit family property from the couple's parents.²¹ This ritual was not uncommon in the Guangzhou area. One male observer described the marriage ritual and went on to predict dire consequences from the practice:

Two women dwell together, always existing as if they were one woman. They are as close as a stalk of grain coming through a stone. . . . This infection spreads, to the extent that these [Golden Orchid] associations cannot be escaped within the province. All women who take this oath get to know one another, arranging eventually to unite. They desire and delight in binding together, passing on to a [frivolous] life of music, finally able to end their lives unmarried.²²

The author of this passage saw these women as remaining unmarried contrary to established morality. They, however, saw themselves as happily married to another woman. Yet there may have been reasons in addition to love that would have made lesbian marriage seem attractive. One reason is religious. Certain Buddhists believe that two people are destined to remarry each other in each successive life. Even if both partners are reincarnated as women, they are still fated to marry.²³ Other factors included admiration of heterosexual chastity, fear of dying in childbirth, and a desire for economic and social independence. That indispensable compendium of Qing social relations, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, describes one woman who takes an oath not to marry, in addition to the actresses who become nuns to escape heterosexual marriage.²⁴ Like marriages among the men of Fujian, lesbian marriage seems to have been a localized custom found mainly in the Guangdong region. And like its male counterpart, these lesbian marriages were simply the most visible manifestation of a wider range of lesbian practices throughout China.

Notes

Introduction

1. Abbé Renaudot, trans., "An Account of the Travels of Two Mohammedans Through India and China in the Ninth Century" in *A Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World*, ed. John Pinkerton, (London, 1811), 7:195.

2. Galeote Pereira, "Certain Reports of the Province of China" in *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Charles Boxer (Nendeln, Liecht., 1967), pp. 16–17.

3. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York, 1984), p. 220.

4. Gaspar de Cruz, "Treatise in Which the Things of China Are Related at Great Length, with their Particularities, as Likewise of the Kingdom of Ormuz" in Boxer, *South China*, p. 223.

5. This theme has been artfully explored in detail by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

6. The use of homosexuality as justification for hostility toward other cultures has deep roots in the West. The nun Hrosvitha (ca. 935–ca. 1002), for example, condemned the Arabs for homosexuality in her narrative poem *Passio S. Pelagii*; see Sister M. Gonsalva Wiegand, ed., *The Non-Dramatic Works of Hrosvitha* (St. Louis, 1936), pp. 129–158.

7. In addition to the work of Edward Said, who discusses Oriental studies in general, Paul A. Cohen has investigated the particular case of China in *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York, 1984).

8. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York, 1976), pp. 27–28.

9. Robert Hans Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1644 A.D.* (Leiden, 1961), p. 49. Van Gulik employs characteristic modesty by describing sexual acts in the erudite obscurity of Latin. He abandons both Chinese and English to render the terms as *penilincto* and *introitus per anum feminae*.

10. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (New York, 1980), pp. 16, 100–109, 156ff.

11. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago, 1980), p. 79.

12. Gilbert Herdt, *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea* (New York, 1987), pp. 161–169; Gilbert Herdt, “Fetish and Fantasy in Sambia Initiation” in *Rituals of Manhood: Male Initiation in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Gilbert Herdt (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982), pp. 52–56; Gilbert Herdt, *Guardians of the Flutes: Idioms of Masculinity* (New York, 1981), pp. 277–294.

13. David Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago, 1988), p. 25.

14. On the Mamlukes, see Stephen O. Murray, “The Mamlukes” in *Cultural Diversity and Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray (New York, 1987), pp. 213–219; on the chiefs of the Big Namba, see Tom Harrisson, *Savage Civilization* (London, 1937), p. 410.

15. Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston, 1986).

16. For the Mesopotamian case, see Delbert Hillers, “The Bow of Aqhat: The Meaning of a Mythical Theme,” in *Orient and Occident*, ed. Harry A. Hoffman, Jr. (Neukirchen-Vluyn, W. Ger., 1973), pp. 71–80; on Paleo-Siberian shamans, see Charles Ducey, “The Life History and Creative Psychopathology of the Shaman,” in *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society*, ed. Werner Nuensterberger, vol. 7 (New Haven, 1956), pp. 173–230.

17. Charles Wagley, *Welcome of Tears: The Tapirape Indians of Central Brazil* (New York, 1977), p. 160.

Chapter One

1. See the example of Zou Yan in Wing-tsit Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, 1963), p. 247.

2. Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxingai shilu* (History of homosexuality in China) (Hong Kong, 1984), p. 19.

3. Zhao Yi, *Gai yu cong kao* (edition of 1790), 43:5B–6A. Zhao Yi declares, “Among men there are those who are called *mei ren*”; he then quotes examples from ancient texts to prove his statement.

4. *Shi jing* poem no. 94, in Hans H. Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretations of Chinese Poetry* (New Haven, 1976), pp. 52–53.

5. *Shi jing* poems nos. 31, 56, 57, 61, 68, 84, 86, 87, and 116 in Waley’s translation are just a few that could easily be interpreted as either heterosexual or homosexual.

6. Arthur Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs* (New York, 1937), p. 292, no. 265.

7. Bernhard Karlgren, trans., *The Book of Odes: Chinese Text, Transcription, and Translation* (Stockholm, 1950), p. 86, no. 133. I have slightly altered Karlgren’s capitalization and romanization.

8. [Du Zhengsheng] Tu Cheng-sheng, *Zhoudai chengbang* (Zhou-dynasty city states) (Taipei, 1979), pp. 55–59 and passim.

9. The dramatic shifts in social patterns accompanying the chaos of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods are described by Cho-yun Hsu in *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722–222 B.C.* (Stanford, 1965).

10. Mizi Xia’s biography appears in the *Shuo nan* of Han Fei, the *Shuo yuan* of Liu Xiang, and the collection *Duanxiu pian* (Collection of the cut sleeve), edited by an anonymous scholar who wrote under the nom de plume Wuxia Ameng, which includes information from both earlier versions. A short description of the *Duanxiu pian* appears in Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, p. 63. The most accessible edition of the *Duanxiu pian* appears in volume 9 of *Xiangyan congshu* (Collected writings on fragrant elegance) (Shanghai, 1909–1911), also described by Van Gulik in the “Abbreviations” to his work mentioned above. For the source of the translation quoted here I return to the original text of Han Fei.

11. Burton Watson, trans., *Han Fei Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York, 1964), pp. 78–. As throughout this book, I have changed Wade-Giles

romanization to pinyin; I have also corrected Watson's error as to Mizi Xia's surname.

12. *Analects* 6.22.

13. Han Fei used the word *chong* to designate the concept of "favor," a word often applied to a particularly loved female concubine. The ancient dictionary *Shuo wen* defines *chong* literally as "to honor [one with whom one] dwells [*zun ju*]" ; *ju* could also have the meaning of someone endowed with special talent (Xu Shen and Duan Yucai, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* [Shanghai, 1981], p. 340).

14. Quoted in Weixingshi guanzhaizhu, *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi* (The secret history of Chinese homosexuality), vol. 1 (Hong Kong, 1964), p. 13.

15. "Song of the Boatswain of Yüeh," trans. Irving Y. Lo, in *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry*, ed. Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 26. This poem is preserved in the Western Han dynasty *Shuo yuan* anthology of Liu Xiang.

16. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:1B–2A.

17. Ibid., 9:2A; taken from Lin Zaiqing's *Chengzhai zaji*. This attribution is given in Weixingshi guanzhaizhu, *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi* 1:30.

18. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, p. 16.

19. Doi Yoshiko, *Kodai Chūgoku no gazōseki* (Ancient Chinese stone reliefs) (Kyoto, 1986), pls. 55–58, 60–71, 76; Edouard Chavannes, *La sculpture sur pierre en Chine au temps des deux dynasties Han* (Paris, 1893), pl. 10.

20. T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Han Social Structure*, ed. Jack L. Dull (Seattle, 1972), pp. 110, 141, 158, 182, 334; also C. Martin Wilbur, *Slavery in China During the Former Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.–A.D. 25* (Chicago, 1943), pp. 67–68, 85–88.

21. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:1A–B.

22. Ibid., 9:1A.

23. J. I. Crump, trans., *Chan-kuo Ts'e* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 227–228.

24. Ibid., p. 229.

25. This story appears in both *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu*; see James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5 (Oxford and Hong Kong, 1868–1893), p. 187; the tale is summarized in Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, p. 93.

26. Clae Waltham, *Shu Ching, Book of History: A Modernized Edition of the Translations of James Legge* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 74–76.

27. For James Legge's translation and notes, see *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 3: *The Shoo King* (repr. Hong Kong, 1960), pp. 196–197; also Waltham, *Shu Ching*.

28. Identical lists appear in the *Ban fa*, a political text probably dating from the late fourth to early third century B.C., and the *Zhong ling*, a Huanglao text of the third century B.C.; see W. Allyn Rickett, trans., *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China*, vol. 1 (Princeton, 1985), pp. 143, 247.

29. This translation closely follows Burton Watson's in *Mo Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York, 1963). I have made several minor changes to bring Watson's translation of terms of affection in accord with my own.

30. For this practice in Islamic Albania, see Louis Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), p. 135; for Japan, see Donald H. Shively, "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, the Genroku Shogun," in *Personality in Japanese History*, ed. A. M. Craig and D. H. Shively (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970), pp. 97–99.

31. My translation follows Crump, *Chan-kuo Ts'e*, p. 62.

32. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:1B.

33. Ibid., 9:2A.

34. Crump, *Chan-kuo Ts'e*, p. 356.

35. In the gay slang of modern Taiwan, "cruising" is still referred to as "catching fish" (*diao yu*) or, more straightforwardly, "catching people" (*diao ren*). Although this metaphor arose independently of the tale of Lord Long Yang, it still shows some continuity in general perceptions of homosexuality.

Chapter Two

1. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, p. 61.

2. See table 1 in Fang-fu Ruan and Yung-mei Tsai, "Male Homosexuality in the Traditional Chinese Literature," *Journal of Homosexuality* 14, nos. 3–4 (1987):23.

3. Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, chap. 125; Ban Gu, *Han shu*, chap. 93.

4. [Sima Qian] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, trans. Burton Watson (New York, 1961), 2:462.

5. Ibid.

6. From Du You's *Tongdian*, as quoted in Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:3A.
7. [Sima Qian] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Records of the Grand Historian* 2:462–464.
8. I take this term from "The Types of Upward Mobility" in Yung-teh Chow, *Social Mobility in China: Status Careers Among the Gentry in a Chinese Community* (New York, 1966), p. 210.
9. Cho-yun Hsu, *Han Agriculture: The Formation of Early Chinese Agrarian Economy* (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), ed. Jack L. Dull (Seattle, 1980), pp. 78–79.
10. See Song Xuwu, *Xi Han huobi shi chugao* (A preliminary draft of the history of Western Han currency) (Hong Kong, 1971).
11. Donald John Harper, "The 'Wu shih erh ping fang': Translation and Prolegomena" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1982), p. 62.
12. Ban Gu, *Han shu* (Beijing, 1974), 46:2203.
13. [Sima Qian] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Records of the Grand Historian* 2:466.
14. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:5B–6A. To avoid repetition, this passage is an edited translation of the original. I have deleted ellipses for the sake of readability.
15. Hsu, *Han Agriculture*, pp. 22, 49.
16. Ch'ü, *Han Social Structure*, pp. 168–174.
17. Michael Loewe, "The Former Han Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge, 1986), 1:220.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 227–229.
19. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:8A.
20. [Sima Qian] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Records of the Grand Historian* 2:462.
21. Bo Xingjian, "Tiandi yinyang jiaohuan dale fu" (Poetical essay on the sexual union and supreme joy of heaven and earth and yin and yang), in *Shuangmei ying'an congshu* (Collection of the paired plums' shade), ed. Ye Dehui (repr. Hong Kong, n.d.), p. 8A.
22. [Sima Qian] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Records of the the Grand Historian* 2:465–466.
23. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:8B–9A.
24. *Ibid.*, 9:4B–5A.
25. See Alfred C. Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia, 1948); also Paul Gebhard, "Incidence of Overt Homosexuality in the United States and Western Europe," in *National Institute of*

Mental Health Task Force on Homosexuality: Final Report and Background Papers (Washington, 1972), pp. 22–30.

26. Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, p. 62.
27. Terms such as *chong* and *bi* originally referred to female concubinage.
28. Ch'ü, *Han Social Structure*, p. 22.
29. This custom dates from long before the Han; see He Xiu et al., eds., *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhu shu* (Annotated Gongyang commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals) (Shanghai, *Sibu beiyao*, n.d.), 8:10A.
30. For the surrounding context of this quotation, see [Ban Gu] Pan Ku, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, trans. Homer H. Dubs and P'an Lo-chi, vol. 3 (Baltimore, 1955), pp. 38–39.
31. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:5B.
32. *Ibid.*, 9:8A.

Chapter Three

1. Wang Shunu, *Zhongguo changji shi* (History of Chinese prostitution) (Shanghai, 1935), p. 64.
2. Anne Birrell, trans., *New Songs from a Jade Terrace: An Anthology of Early Chinese Love Poetry* (London, 1982), p. 290.
3. Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxing ai shilu*, p. 77.
4. Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, pp. 159–160. In particular he singles out the Xianning (275–279) and Taikang (280–289) reign periods as being noted for the popularity of homosexuality.
5. For an example, see Li Yanshou, ed., *Bei shi* (History of the North) (Beijing, 1974), 92:3017.
6. Chen Yue, ed., *Song shu* (Records of the Liu Song) (Beijing, 1974), 94:2302.
7. Li Yanshou, *Bei shi* 92:3018.
8. Xiao Zixian, ed., *Nan Qi shu* (Records of the Southern Qi) (Beijing, 1974), 56:971.
9. Chen Yue, *Song shu* 94:2301.
10. Li Yanshou, ed., *Nan shi* (History of the South) (Beijing, 1973), 77:1913.
11. Chen Yue, *Song shu* 94:2301–2302.
12. Li Yanshou, *Bei shi* 92:3017–3018.
13. *Ibid.*, 3017.
14. Xiao Zixian, *Nan Qi shu* 56:971–2.

15. Li Yanshou, *Nan shi* 77:1914.
16. Li Baiyao, ed., *Bei Qi shu* (Records of the Northern Qi) (Beijing, 1974), 50:685.
17. Xiao Zixian, *Nan Qi shu* 56:972.
18. Li Yanshou, *Nan shi* 77:1943.
19. Ibid.
20. Shen Yue, *Song shu* 94:2318.
21. Wei Shou, ed., *Wei shu* (Records of the Wei) (Beijing, 1974), 93:1996–1997.
22. Ibid., 93:1988–1996.
23. Li Yanshou, *Nan shi* 77:1935–1936.
24. Ibid., 77:1914–1916.
25. Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu* 50:690–692, 694.
26. David George Johnson, “The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy: A Study of the Great Families in Their Social, Political, and Institutional Setting” (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1970), p. 92.
27. Li Yanshou, *Nan shi* 77:1927.
28. Ibid., 77:1917–1919.
29. Xiao Zixian, *Nan Qi shu* 56:972–975.
30. Wei Shou, *Wei shu* 93:2007–2009.
31. Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu* 50:689–690.
32. Wei Shou, *Wei shu* 93:2002; Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu* 50:686–689.
33. Wei Shou, *Wei shu* 93:2001–2002.
34. Ibid., 93:1989.
35. Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu* 50:687.
36. Ibid., 50:688.
37. Wei Shou, *Wei shu* 93:1990–1996.
38. Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu* 50:686.
39. Wei Shou, *Wei shu* 93:1998–2000.
40. For examples, see Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu* 50:694; and Li Yanshou, *Bei shi* 92:3029–3030.
41. *Bawang gushi*, written by Lu Lin in the fourth century.
42. [Liu Yiqing] Liu I-ch’ing, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, trans. Richard B. Mather (Minneapolis, 1976), p. 310.
43. Ibid., p. 316.
44. According to the *Xu Jin yangqiu* of the fifth-century literatus Tan Daoluan, “The emperor [Sima Yu] was handsome in manner and demeanor, and his movements were dignified and circumspect” (ibid.).

45. Ibid.
46. Hou Lichao, *Zhongguo meinanzi zhuan* (Biographies of beautiful Chinese men) (Taipei, 1986), p. 91.
47. Ying-shih Yü, *Trade and Expansion in Han China: A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), p. 213. The Han dictionary *Shiming* confirms that “barbarian powder” was used to powder the face.
48. From the third-century *Wei lue* of Hu Huan, in [Liu Yiqing] Liu I-ch’ing, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*, p. 309.
49. The commentary of Liu Jun (462–521), in ibid.
50. [Liu Yiqing] Liu I-ch’ing, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*, p. 308.
51. Ibid., p. 314. A less euphemistic translation would substitute “lard” for “congealed ointment.”
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 310.
54. Ibid., p. 311.
55. Ibid., p. 312.
56. Ibid., p. 314. This quotation is preserved in Pei Qi’s *Yu lin*.
57. Ibid., p. 315.
58. Ibid., p. 316.
59. Ibid., p. 317.
60. Ibid., p. 315.
61. *Chūgoku no hakubutsukan* (Chinese museums) (Tokyo and Beijing, 1982), vol. 4, pl. 90.
62. [Liu Yiqing] Liu I-ch’ing, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*, p. 309.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., pp. 346–347.
65. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:9B–10A (with deletions).
66. Ibid., 9:2B; originally from Ruan Ji’s *Yong huai shi bashier shou*.
67. “Zhou Xiaoshi,” from Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:9A.
68. “Fanhua shi,” from ibid., 9:9B. In my translation I have borrowed heavily from Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, p. 213.
69. This poem has been previously translated. It appears as “His Favoured Boy” in Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, pp. 200–201; and as “The Young Catamite” in John Marney, *Beyond the Mulberries: An Anthology of Palace-Style Poetry by Emperor Chien-wen of the Liang Dynasty (505–551)* (Taipei, 1982), pp. 114–116.
70. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, p. 292.
71. Ibid., p. 165.

Chapter Four

1. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu* (Old Tang history) (Beijing, 1974), 76:2648.
2. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:12A–B.
3. Howard S. Levy, trans., *Translations from Po Chü-i's Collected Works*, vol. 1 (repr. New York, 1971), p. 104.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
5. *Ibid.*, 2:55.
6. *Ibid.*, 1:90.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 93–94.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 97–98.
9. For a textual history of this work, see Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, pp. 202–203.
10. Reading *lian* for *wan*.
11. Reading *long* for *ling*.
12. Bo Xingjian, “Tiandi yinyang jiaohuan dale fu,” pp. 7B–8A.
13. Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxinggai shilu*, pp. 74–75.
14. Weixingshi guanzhaizhu, *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi* 1:91.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.
16. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, pp. 125–127.
17. Yuan Mei, *Sui yuan sui bi* (Suiyuan miscellany) (Shanghai, 1935), 17:7B.
18. This is quoted by Zhao Yi in *Gai yu cong kao* 38.
19. Jeremiah 5:8; Deuteronomy 23:18. For medieval European views, see Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, passim but esp. pp. 152–156.
20. Tuo Tuo, *Song shi* (History of the Song) (Beijing, 1974), 470:13677.
21. *Ibid.*, 470:13689.
22. Song Lian, ed., *Yuan shi* (History of the Yuan) (Beijing, 1974), 205:4557.
23. Tao Gu, *Qing yi lu* (n.p., Chen shi kangxian zhai kanben, 1875), p. 10B.
24. From *Jinyu lu*, written by Xu Dazhuo circa 1280; in Weixingshi guanzhaizhu, *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi* 1:95.
25. Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu* (pub. 1147), quoted by Michael Freeman, “Sung,” in *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. K.C. Chang (New Haven, 1977), p. 160.

26. Previous translations of this work are [Song Ci] Sung Tz'u, *The Washing Away of Wrongs: Forensic Medicine in Thirteenth Century China*, trans. Brian E. McKnight (Ann Arbor, 1981); and Herbert Giles, “The ‘Hsi yüan lu’ or ‘Instructions to Coroners,’” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 27 (1924): 59–107. Unfortunately, neither translates the appendix on sodomy. All of my translations of this section are taken from the *Buzhu xiyuan lu jizheng* (The washing away of wrongs, with commentary) (Beizhi ed.), pp. 35A–B. These particular cases date from the Qing, though they seem to be continuations of much earlier practices.

27. Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou ketan* (comp. ca. 1119), in Weixingshi guanzhaizhu, *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi* 1:95.

28. Zhou Mi, *Guixin zazhi* (pub. ca. 1298), in Wang Shunu, *Zhongguo changji shi*, p. 226.

29. Han Yu, *Yuanxing* (An inquiry on human nature), in Chan, *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 452.

30. Cheng Yi, as quoted in [Zhu Xi] Chu Hsi and [Lu Zuqian] Lu Tsu-ch'ien, *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology*, ed. Wing-tsit Chan (New York, 1967), pp. 272–273.

31. For a complete history of this textual tradition, see T. Sakai, *Studies of Chinese Shan-shu: Popular Books on Morality* (Tokyo, 1960).

32. Wolfram Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), p. 63.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

35. Even practitioners of more theologically refined Buddhist practices condemned homosexuality and the mixing of gender roles. The Ming Chan master Rujing (1163–1228) cautioned those who seek enlightenment against being intimate with “eunuchs, hermaphrodites and the like”; see Takashi James Kōdera, *Dogen's Formative Years in China: An Historical Study and Annotation of the Hōkyō-ki* (Boulder, Colo., 1980), pp. 120, 174. And the Ming literatus Shen Defu mentioned Buddhism in his moral judgments of homosexuality; see Shen Defu, *Bizhou xian shengyu* (Casual writings from the Worn Brush Studio) (Taipei, 1969), pp. 123–125.

Chapter Five

1. I am indebted to Howard Levy for his careful compilation and lively translation *Chinese Sex Jokes in Traditional Times* (repr. Taipei,

1974). He has recognized the ahistoricity of this genre of humor, culling jokes from a variety of joke books to represent the range of humorous formulas. His work forms the raw material for this section of my analysis.

2. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 308, p. 226.
3. For example, see *ibid.*, no. 206, p. 178.
4. *Ibid.*, no. 208, p. 179.
5. *Ibid.*, no. 369, p. 257. I have changed "homosexuality" to "boys" to avoid Levy's anachronism.
6. This word is found in the bamboo slip version of *Wushier bing fang* (Fifty-two ailments), which was redacted in the third century B.C. For mentions of hemorrhoids in this early work, see Harper, "The 'Wu shih erh ping fang,'" pp. 409–431.
7. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 326, p. 233.
8. Clement Egerton, trans., *The Golden Lotus*, vol. 2 (London, 1939), p. 124.
9. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 386, p. 264.
10. [Wang Chong] Wang Ch'ung, "Lun heng: Selected Essays of the Philosopher Wang Ch'ung," trans. Alfred Forke, *Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen* 10 (1907): 100.
11. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 364, p. 256. I remove "who liked homosexuality" from Levy's translation; the use of this Western terminology seems anachronistic.
12. *Ibid.*, no. 371, p. 258.
13. *Ibid.*, no. 381, pp. 261–262.
14. *Ibid.*, no. 207, pp. 178–179.
15. *Ibid.*, no. 367, p. 257. I have changed "catamite" to "favorite."
16. Egerton, *Golden Lotus* 4:25.
17. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 382, p. 262.
18. *Ibid.*, no. 373, p. 259.
19. *Ibid.*, no. 374, p. 259.
20. Petty official: *xiao guanren*. For example, see *ibid.*, no. 377, pp. 260–261.
21. Keith McMahon, *Causality and Containment in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Fiction* (Leiden, 1988), pp. 74–75.
22. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 383, pp. 262–263.
23. *Ibid.*, no. 385, p. 263.
24. *Ibid.*, no. 384, p. 263.

25. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, pp. 98–100.
26. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 310, p. 227.
27. *Ibid.*, no. 360, p. 254.
28. *Ibid.*, no. 325, p. 233.
29. *Ibid.*, no. 327, p. 234.
30. Chen Sen (Shi Han Shi), *Pinhua baojian* (Precious mirror of ranking flowers) (Taipei, 1984), chap. 23.
31. Since this book was officially banned during the reigns of the Daoguang (1821–1850) and Tongzhi (1862–1874) emperors, it is now almost impossible to obtain. I use a translation from the Beijing University library manuscript made by Ruan and Tsai, "Male Homosexuality in the Traditional Chinese Literature," pp. 31–32, correcting their translation for grammar.
32. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 268, p. 257.
33. *Ibid.*, no. 324, p. 233.
34. *Ibid.*, no. 361, p. 254. I change "homosexual" to "man" so as to avoid Levy's anachronism.
35. *Ibid.*, no. 372, p. 258; again, changing "homosexual" to "man."
36. Abraham N. Franzblau, *Erotic Art of China: A Unique Collection of Chinese Prints and Poems Devoted to the Art of Love* (New York, 1977), print 36.
37. Levy, *Sex Jokes*, no. 370, p. 258; changing "homosexual" to "man."
38. *Ibid.*, no. 380, p. 261; changing "homosexual" to "favorite."

Chapter Six

1. V. A. Riasanovsky, *Customary Law of the Mongol Tribes (Mongols, Buriats, Kalmucks)* (Harbin, 1929), p. 57.
2. Greenberg, *Construction of Homosexuality*, p. 181. I owe a debt to David Greenberg for putting together this information on Mongol homosexuality.
3. Richard Burton, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, vol. 10 (New York, 1886), pp. 63–302, touches on many of these issues of Central Asian homosexuality; see also John J. I. Dollinger, *The Gentile and the Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ: An Introduction to the History of Christianity*, trans. N. Darnell (London, 1862), p. 238.
4. Paul Heng-chao Ch'en, *Chinese Legal Tradition Under the Mongols: The Code of 129* Reconstructed (Princeton, 1979).

5. Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxingai shilu*, pp. 129–137.
6. Xie Zhaozhe, *Wuza zu* (Five miscellaneous dishes) (Shanghai, 1959), 8:209.
7. Northern and southern homosexual life are both mentioned in Shen Defu, *Bizhou xian shengyu*, p. 125. A similar observation was made during the reign of Wanli, as quoted in Albert Chan, "Peking at the Time of the Wanli Emperor (1572–1619)," in *International Association of Historians of Asia Second Biennial Conference Proceedings* (Taipei, 1962), p. 128.
8. Wang Shunu, *Zhongguo changji shi*, p. 323.
9. Tang Xianzu, *The Peony Pavilion* (*Mudan ting*), trans. Cyril Birch (Bloomington, Ind., 1980), pp. 120–135.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
11. For an overview of Li Yu's work, see Patrick Hanan, *The Invention of Li Yu* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988).
12. Unfortunately, Nathan Mao's retelling of this story purposely misrepresents the sexuality of those involved, making his version worthless for scholarly purposes and tarnishing the story's literary merit as well ("The Elegant Eunuch," in Li Yu, *Li Yu's Twelve Towers, Retold by Nathan Mao*, trans. Nathan Kwok-kuen Mao [Hong Kong, 1975] pp. 52–62).
13. Li Yu, *Shier lou* (The twelve structures), vol. 2 (Taipei, 1980), pp. 174, 175.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 179.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 193, 204.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
17. McMahon, *Causality and Containment*, pp. 76–77.
18. Li Yu, *Wusheng xi xiaoshuo* (Silent operas), in *Li Yu quanji*, ed. Helmut Martin (Taipei, 1970), pp. 5381–5453.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 5382–5383.
20. Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, pp. 76, 157.
21. Li Yu, *Li Yu quanji*, 5383–5384.
22. *Ibid.*, 5384.
23. McMahon, *Causality and Containment*, pp. 77–78.
24. Li Yu, *Li Yu quanji*, p. 5385.
25. Passion for men: *nanse*; *ibid.*, p. 5392. For *fufu*, p. 5387.
26. [Wu Jingzi] Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Beijing, 1957), p. 377.

27. Li Yu, *Li Yu quanji*, p. 5406.
28. Li Yu, *Jiean laoren manbi* (Beijing, 1982), pp. 181–182.
29. Li Yu, *Li Yu quanji*, p. 5441.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 5442.
31. Sue Gronewold, *Beautiful Merchandise: Prostitution in China 1860–1936* (New York, 1982), pp. 8–9.
32. [Kong Shangren] K'ung Shang-jen, *The Peach Blossom Fan* (*T'ao-hua-shan*), trans. Chen Shih-hsiang, Harold Acton, and Cyril Birch (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976), pp. 23, 49.
33. [Zhang Wencheng] Chang Wen-ch'eng, *China's First Novelette: The Dwelling of the Playful Goddess*, trans. Howard S. Levy (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 23–24.
34. The matchmaker has long been considered an integral part of Chinese marriage ceremonies. This sentiment appears not only in the *Shi jing* but also in the fourth-century B.C. lyric *Li sao*.
35. [Song Lian] Sung Lien, "The Yüan Code: Illicit Sexual Relations," in *The Essence of Chinese Civilization*, ed. Dun J. Li (New York, 1967), p. 408.
36. [Zhang Wencheng] Chang Wen-ch'eng, *China's First Novelette*, p. 27. This line is taken from the *Shi jing*.
37. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China*, vol. 1 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), p. 95.
38. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:15B.
39. Paul Gordon Schalow, "'The Great Mirror of Male Love' by Ihara Saikaku" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 2:90.
40. For southern Africa, see Judith Gay, "'Mummies and Babies' and Friends and Lovers in Lesotho," *Journal of Homosexuality* 11, nos. 3–4 (1985): 97–116; also John Blacking, "Uses of the Kinship Idiom in Friendships at some Venda and Zulu Schools," in *Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa*, ed. J. Argyle and E. Preston-Whyte (Oxford, 1978). For American prisons, see R. Giallombardo, *Society of Women: A Study of a Women's Prison* (London, 1966).
41. Li Yu, *Jou pu tuan* (*The Prayer Mat of Flesh*), trans. Franz Kuhn and Richard Martin (New York, 1963), p. 52.
42. McMahon, *Causality and Containment*, p. 77.
43. From *Zi buwu*, in *Weixingshi guanzhaizhu*, *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi* 1:15.

44. Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxingai shilu*, p. 179.
45. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, pp. 137–138, 253, 306, 356–357.
46. And yet even today the same factors that led men of the Ming to participate in a homosexual marriage ceremony still exist in China. A terse news report in the *Boston Globe* (March 4, 1989, p. 6) stated that two men in rural China married on January 10, 1989. Ye Xing, 26, a veteran of the People's Liberation Army, married the farmer Li Linxing, 30, in a traditional ceremony. The former soldier suffered dismissal from his job because of his open homosexuality, and local officials were trying to break up the marriage.
47. McMahon, *Causality and Containment*, pp. 75–76.
48. Egerton, *The Golden Lotus* 2:348–349.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
50. Li Yu, *Jou pu tuan*, pp. 107–108. I have changed “rear audience chamber” to “rear chamber.”
51. A summary of the incident appears in Albert Chan, “Chinese-Philippine Relations in the Late Sixteenth Century and to 1603,” *Philippine Studies* 26 (1978): 70. For homosexuality among other groups of overseas Chinese, see Persia Crawford Campbell, *Chinese Coolie Emigration to Countries Within the British Empire* (New York, 1923), pp. 110, 211; also J. D. Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements* (Singapore, 1879), pp. 9–10; and Ta Chen, *Chinese Migrations, with Special Reference to Labor Conditions* (Washington, D.C., 1923). Chinese converts to Christianity in China itself were forbidden homosexuality; see P. P. Thoms, trans., “Prohibitions Addressed to Chinese Converts of the Romish Faith” *China Repository* 20 (February 1851): 92–93.
52. Schalow, “‘Great Mirror,’” 1:19. For this traditional etiology of Japanese homosexuality, see Aoki Masaru, *Zhongguo jinshi xiqu shi* (History of the modern Chinese opera) (Hong Kong, 1975), p. 447.
53. Schalow, “‘Great Mirror,’” 1:280.

Chapter Seven

1. Vivien W. Ng, “Ideology and Sexuality: Rape Laws in Qing China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 1 (1987): 57–70. Ng made further remarks on this point at the “Pedagogy and Politics” conference hosted by the Gay Studies Center at Yale and Yale’s Whitney Humanities Center, October 1988.

2. William Theodore de Bary, “Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought,” in *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, ed. William Theodore de Bary (New York, 1970), pp. 145–248.
3. For a discussion of laws regulating various aspects of homosexuality, see Wang Shunu, *Zhongguo changji shi*, p. 322.
4. Sir John Barrow, *Travels in China* (London, 1806), pp. 100–102.
5. From “Journal of Occurrences,” *China Repository* 5 (June 1835): 104.
6. T. H. Bullock, “The Chinese Vindicated,” *China Repository* 9 (September 1840): 321.
7. For instances of Europeans being prosecuted in Hong Kong for homosexuality by colonial authorities, see H. J. Lethbridge, “The Quare Fellow: Homosexuality and the Law in Hong Kong,” *Hong Kong Law Journal* 4, no. 3 (1976): 306–310. Also see J. J. Matignon, *Crime et misère en Chine* (Paris, 1901), pp. 187–209, for an account of European homosexual life in late-imperial Beijing.
8. Katrina C. D. McLeod and Robin D. S. Yates, “Forms of Ch’in Law: An Annotated Translation of the Feng-chen shih,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41, no. 1 (1981): 162–182; also A. F. P. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch’in Law* (Leiden, 1985), p. 169.
9. Ng, “Ideology and Sexuality,” p. 67.
10. Kwan-wai So, “Chu Hou-chao,” in *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368–1644*, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich, vol. 1 (New York, 1976), pp. 307–315.
11. Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K’anghsi* (New York, 1975), pp. xxi, 125.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 126–127.
13. The code here makes a reference to statute no. 273–07.
14. As throughout this book, “years” is used as the translation of *sui*.
15. See statute number 366–00.
16. This section is a translation of statute no. 366–03 in Xue Yunsheng and Huang Jingjia, *Duyi cunyi zhong kanben* (A typeset edition of the *Tu-i ts’un-i* [*Duyi cunyi*]), pt. 5, vols. 41–54 (Taipei, 1970), p. 1082. This section has been previously translated in George Thomas Staunton, *Ta Tsing Lee: Being the Fundamental Laws and a Selection from the Supplementary Statutes of the Penal Code of China* (London, 1810), pp. 569–570; and in *China Repository* 2 (May 1833): 107.
17. M. J. Mei, “Homosexual Offenses in Ch’ing Law,” *T’oung pao* 71 (1985): 109–133.

18. Derk Bodde and Clarence Morris, *Law in Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 428.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 383.
20. Ernest Alabaster, *Notes and Commentaries on Chinese Criminal Law* (London, 1899), p. 368.
21. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:16B–17A.
22. Colin P. Mackerras, *The Rise of the Peking Opera, 1770–1870: Social Aspects of the Theatre in Manchu China* (Oxford, 1972), p. 45.
23. Lawrence E. Gichner, *Erotic Aspects of Chinese Culture* (Washington, D.C., 1957), p. 76.
24. Wu-shan Sheng, *Die Erotik in China: Die Welt des Eros* (Basel, 1967), p. 53.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
27. Barrow, *Travels in China*, p. 101.
28. Zhao Yi, *Gai yu cong kao* 43:18A.
29. [Li Ruzhen] Li Ju-chen, *Flowers in the Mirror*, trans. Lin Tai-yi (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965), pp. 150–154.
30. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *The Story of the Stone*, trans. David Hawkes and John Minford (Harmondsworth, Eng., and Bloomington, Ind., 1973–1987), 3:279.
31. *Ibid.*, 2:437–445.
32. Hawkes's translation of this incident is misleading. As Xue Pan is being beaten he cries out placatingly, "Wo zhidao ni shi zhengjing ren." Hawkes translates this as "I know you're straight." In fact *zhengjing* has nothing to do with sexual roles. A more accurate translation would be "I know you're respectable." Hawkes's translation leads the Western reader to believe that Liu is offended by Xue Pan's assumption that he is "gay." In fact Liu is affronted by the insinuation that he is a passive actor-prostitute, thereby calling into question his "respectability" (*zhengjing*) or social standing.
33. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Story of the Stone* 2:52–53, 61–62. For a detailed analysis of homosexuality in this novel, see [Bai Xianyong] Pai Hsien-yung, "Jia Baoyu de suyuan: Jiang Yuhan yu huaxi ren—jianlun Honglou Meng de jieju yiyi" (The common fate of Jia Baoyu: Jiang Yuhan and the Person with Flower-lined Garments—a discussion of the resulting meaning of *Dream of the Red Chamber*), *Lianhe wenxue* 15 (January 1986): 25–30.

34. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Story of the Stone* 2:146–154, 171.
35. "Long Yang zhi xing." David Hawkes mistranslates this phrase as "Lord Long-yang's vice." In fact, *xing* conveys no sense of moral disapproval; on the contrary, it has many favorable connotations. Possible translations include joy, merriment, passion, desire, and appetite.
36. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Story of the Stone* 1:206–216.
37. Jonathan Spence has noted the association of food and homosexuality in Qing fiction, with reference to the friendship of Qin Zhong and Baoyu. The Chinese saw food and sexuality as complementary forms of sensuality, as revealed by literary imagery. See Jonathan Spence, "Ch'ing," in Chang, *Food in Chinese Culture*, p. 279. The same sort of imagery appears in the homosexual episodes of *Jin Ping Mei*. For one example, see the line "the boy passed him a sweetmeat and stroked his erect penis," in Egerton, *The Golden Lotus* 2:105. The late-Qing novel *Pinhua baojian* is replete with connections between food and homosexuality.
38. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Story of the Stone* 1:299.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 321–323.
41. *Ibid.*, 3:493.
42. Zhao Yi, *Gai yu cong kao* 43:18A.
43. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Story of the Stone* 3:494.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 496.
45. Yuan Mei, in Weixingshi guanzhaizhu, *Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi* 1:27.
46. David S. Nivison, *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsueh-ch'eng (1738–1801)* (Stanford, 1966), pp. 263–265.
47. Wang Shunu, *Zhongguo changji shi*, p. 322.
48. Gichner, *Erotic Aspects of Chinese Culture*, p. 76.
49. *Xingan huilan* (Taipei, 1968); see Ng, "Ideology and Sexuality," p. 68.
50. [Caihengzi] Ts'ai-heng-tzu, "Boy Actors in Peking," in Dun J. Li, *Essence of Chinese Civilization*, p. 425.
51. *Ibid.* A similar description of training can be found in J. J. Matignon, "Deux mots sur la pédérastie en Chine," *Archives d'anthropologie criminelle* 14 (1899): 38.
52. Wang Shunu, *Zhongguo changji shi*, pp. 326–327.
53. Other actors who were unwilling to undergo this painful ordeal

for the sake of their art wore special shoes that imitated bound feet; Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking Opera*, p. 97. Men sometimes had their feet bound for other reasons. At times it was even considered fashionable for ordinary men to bind their feet. See Howard S. Levy, *Chinese Footbinding: The History of a Curious Erotic Custom* (New York, 1966), pp. 192, 195.

54. Levy, *Chinese Footbinding*, pp. 194–195.

55. Zhou Zhifu, *Zhenliu dawen* (Pillow talks) (Hong Kong, 1955), p. 47.

56. See Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking Opera*, p. 149.

57. From *Jintai canli ji*, in Aoki Masaru, *Zhongguo jinshi xiqu shi*, p. 447.

58. Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking Opera*, p. 151. Only the great modern scholar Ch'i Ju-shan has attempted to defend the posthumous reputations of Qing actors by disputing the association between boy actors and prostitution. His main objection is that only close friends were allowed even to visit the home of an actor; for them to spend the night would have required friendship of the greatest intimacy. Ch'i's assessment is faulty on two counts, however. First, he refers to the habits of the best known and most successful actors. Performers who had already achieved a degree of popular success would have been free from the financial necessity of prostitution. Moreover, he neglects to note the murky distinction between outright prostitution and more subtle forms of patronage. The difference between close friends of a higher social status and sexual patrons would have been difficult to completely distinguish. See [Qi Rushan] Ch'i Ju-shan, *Guoqu mantan* (Discussions of the Chinese opera), vol. 1 (Taipei, 1956), pp. 36–37.

59. Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking Opera*, p. 138.

60. Chen Yinguan, as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 100.

61. For an explanation of the pun linking Bi Yuan to this novel, see Ruan and Tsai, "Male Homosexuality in the Traditional Chinese Literature," p. 30.

62. Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking Opera*, pp. 87–88; also see Arthur Waley, *Yuan Mei: Eighteenth Century Chinese Poet* (Stanford, 1970), pp. 98–100. Interestingly, Li Guiguan later knew the literatus Zhao Yi, a major source for understanding Qing homosexuality.

63. Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking Opera*, p. 93. Officials found consorting with female prostitutes could be stripped of their rank; see Bodde

and Morris, *Law in Imperial China*, pp. 435–436. Marriages between female prostitutes and officials were also forbidden; see *ibid.*, p. 259.

64. Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking Opera*, p. 141.

65. Waley, *Yuan Mei*, p. 27. As throughout this book, I have rendered Chinese names according to pinyin romanization.

66. Wuxia Ameng, ed., *Duanxiu pian* 9:15A.

67. The author and date of publication are often incorrectly given as Chen Senshu and 1852. This mistake was even made by Lu Xun. For the publishing history and true authorship, see Liu Ts'un-yan, *Chinese Popular Fiction in Two London Libraries* (Hong Kong, 1967), pp. 131, 134–137; and [Sun Kaidi] Sun K'ai-ti, *Zhongguo tongsu xiaoshuo shumu* (Bibliography of Chinese popular fiction [new edition]), rev. ed. (Taipei, 1983), p. 147.

68. The following observations on *Pinhua baojian* were made in [Lu Xun] Lu Hsun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Beijing, 1959), pp. 319–322, 417.

69. In fact, the novel's alternate title is given as *Qia qing yi shi* (A history of fortune, passion, and indulgence).

70. Chen Sen (Shi Han Shi), *Pinhua baojian*, p. 1.

71. There are many other similarities between Baoyu and Ziyu, the most obvious being the resemblance of names. Both names contain the character *yu* (jade). Like Baoyu's, Ziyu's jade is of supernatural origins. See *ibid.*, p. 2.

72. I have used the translation of Ruan and Tsai, "Male Homosexuality in the Traditional Chinese Literature," p. 31, with modifications.

73. *Ibid.*, changing "normal" and "abnormal" to "acceptable" and "unacceptable" to avoid Ruan and Tsai's anachronism.

74. [Lu Xun] Lu Hsun, *Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, pp. 321–322.

75. From [Sima Qian] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Records of the Grand Historian* 2:467.

Epilogue

1. Arthur Kleinman and David Mechanic, "Some Observations of Mental Illness and Its Treatment in the People's Republic of China," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 167, no. 5 (1979): 272. For Taiwan, see Tseng Wen-shing and Hsu Jing, "Chinese Culture, Personality Formation, and Mental Illness," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 16, no. 1 (1968): 5–14.

2. Fang-fu Ruan and Yung-mei Tsai, "Male Homosexuality in Contemporary Mainland China," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 17, no. 2 (1988): 189–199.

3. Pai Hsien-yung [Bai Xianyong], "A Sky Full of Bright, Twinkling Stars," in *Wandering in the Garden, Waking from a Dream: Tales of Taipei Characters*, trans. Pai Hsien-yung and Patia Yasin (Bloomington, Ind., 1982), pp. 143–144.

4. "Tongxinglian hefahua jianyi mingjie renshi qunqi fandui," in *Xingdao ribao* (June 9, 1983).

5. For Puyi's homosexuality, see Jerome Ch'en, "The Last Emperor of China," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28, no. 3 (1965): 340–341n. 8; and Henry McAleavy, *A Dream of Tartary* (London, 1963), p. 238; also Pan Jijiong, *Modai huangfei* (The last imperial concubine), vol. 2 (Hong Kong, 1957), p. 22.

6. Ezra F. Vogel, "The Unlikely Heroes: The Social Role of the May Fourth Writers," in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 145–146.

7. [Ba Jin] Pa Chin, *Family*, trans. Olga Lang (New York, 1972), pp. 64–65.

8. Daniel W. Y. Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought* (New Haven, 1965), p. 12.

9. From the advice column "Yangzi zhuanlan," *Lianhe bao* (April 4, 1982).

10. [Peng Huaizhen] P'eng Huai-chen, *Tongxinglian, zisha, jingshenbing* (Homosexuality, suicide, and mental illness) (Taipei, 1983).

11. For examples of press accounts of the suicide of homosexuals, see "Duanxiu fentao pi wei pangren burong" (Passion of the cut sleeve and half-eaten peach was unendurable), *Xingdao ribao* (November 3, 1980); and "Zhuang Kali Li Guanlong zisha" (Zhuang Kali and Li Guanlong commit suicide), *Zhongguo shibao* (August 20, 1985). For descriptions of one raid on a gay meeting place, the Golden Peacock bar, see "Jin Kongque you nan pei jiu" (The Golden Peacock has men to go with the wine), *Lianhe bao* (April 10, 1983), which includes a list of some patrons; as well as the cleverly titled article "Kongque duo nan fei" (Many men fly from the Peacock), *Shibao zhokan* (April 17, 1983). A particularly gruesome murder involving homosexuality in 1982 received extremely wide coverage in Taiwan; see "Zheng Mingshan gongcheng sha A Zhong" (Zheng Mingshan confesses to murdering A Zhong), *Lianhe* (July 28, 1982). And for examples of anxious letters, see the advice columns in the De-

12. "'Boli quan' bingtai bianben jiali, 'duanxiu pi' fengqi yingyu ezhi" (The disorder of the "glass circle" alters the fundamentals and becomes more terrible; the "passion of the cut sleeve" should be stopped), *Zhongguo shibao* (April 11, 1983).

13. Information on homosexuality in the contemporary People's Republic is extremely limited; see Ruan and Tsai, "Male Homosexuality in Contemporary Mainland China." Information for Taiwan is more copious, though of low quality. See [Peng Jiaxing] P'eng Chia-hsing, *Tongxinglian zhe de ai yu xing* (Homosexuals' love and sex) (Taipei, 1987); Huang Sha et al., "Bugan shuo chu kou de ai" (The love that dare not speak its name), *Renjian* 7 (May 1986): 20–45 (4 parts); [Er Dong] Ehr Tung, *Bugan shuo chu kou de ai* (The love that dare not speak its name) (Taipei, 1985); [Hu Yiyun] Hu I-yün, *Toushi boli quan mimi* (Exposing the secrets of the glass circle) (Taipei, 1985); [Lin Jiandong] Lin Chien-tung, *Aisi fengbao* (The AIDS controversy) (Taipei, 1985); Peng Huaizhen, *Tongxinglian, zisha, jingshenbing*. Articles on gay life appear regularly in Taiwanese newspapers and magazines, although the tone is usually sensationalistic.

Appendix

1. Barry Chua and S. H. Chua, "A Brief History of Chinese Lesbianism, Part I," *Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians Newsletter* (April 1988), p. 9.

2. Wilbur, *Slavery in China*, p. 431.

3. Ibid., pp. 424–425.

4. Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxingai shilu*, p. 273.

5. McMahon, *Causality and Containment*, p. 46.

6. F. Lieh-Mak, K. M. O'Hoy, and S. L. Luk, "Lesbianism in the Chinese of Hong Kong," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 12, no. 1 (1983): 22–23.

7. For examples see Franzblau, *Erotic Art of China*, print 28, as well as the prints in Robert Hans Van Gulik, *Erotic Colour Prints of the Ming Period, with an Essay on Chinese Sex Life from the Han to the Ch'ing Dynasty*, B.C. 206–A.D. 1644, 3 vols. (Tokyo, 1951).

8. Levy, *Chinese Footbinding*, p. 143.

9. Marjorie Upley, "Marriage Resistance in Rural Kwangtung," in *Women in Chinese Society*, ed. Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (Stan-

10. Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, pp. 163–166; Van Gulik, *Erotic Colour Prints*.
11. Franzblau, *Erotic Art of China*, print 39.
12. The play is also known as “The Fragrance of Beauties” (“Meiren xiang”); see Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts’un-yan, *Li Yü* (Boston, 1977), p. 148.
13. Paul S. Ropp, *Dissent in Early Modern China: Ju-lin wai-shih and Ch’ing Social Criticism* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1981), pp. 146–147.
14. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Story of the Stone* 3:132–133.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 237. Transvestism of women and men is a common theme throughout Chinese prose. In most cases it appears independently from homosexuality and consequently has not been dealt with in this study.
16. Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxingai shilu*, p. 274.
17. Cui Lingqin, *Jiao fang ji jiangding*, annotated by Ren Bantang (Shanghai, 1962), pp. 50–52.
18. *Qingbei leichao*. An epitome of this novel is given in Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo tongxingai shilu*, pp. 275–276.
19. “Tongxinglian shaonü zubang guihun” (A gang of young female homosexuals hangs out together), *Shijie ribao* (May 7, 1988).
20. Topley, “Marriage Resistance,” p. 76.
21. Lieh-Mak, O’Hoy, and Luk, “Lesbianism,” p. 23. The related “hairstyling” ritual of the Guangzhou region seems to have been primarily nonsexual; see Topley, “Marriage Resistance,” p. 81. A complete description of this and related practices can be found in Andrea Sankar, “Sisters and Brothers, Lovers and Enemies: Marriage Resistance in Southern Kwangtung,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 11, nos. 3–4 (1985): 69–82.
22. Chen Dongyuan, ed., *Zhongguo funü shenghuo shi* (History of Chinese female life) (Shanghai, 1937), p. 300. This section is excerpted from Zhang Xintai’s *Yueyou xiaozhi* (Short record of travels in Guangdong). The editor appends his own judgment: “Because homosexual desire leads to non-marriage, it is truly an offense against heaven. It is very harmful to women’s health and strength. . . . Women passing time unmarried sink to homosexuality. Since it is extremely widespread, this is truly a great problem.”
23. Topley, “Marriage Resistance,” p. 76.
24. Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Story of the Stone* 3: 5, 551–553.

Glossary of Chinese Terms

ai ren 愛人	qi 契
bi 嬖	qidi 契弟
chang 娼	qing 情
chong 寵	qixiong 契兄
di 弟	qiyou 契友
dui shi 對食	qu 娶
en 恩	shan shu 善書
fufu 夫婦	si 寺
hou ting 後庭	tongxingai 同性愛
ji 戛	tongxinglian 同性戀
jiao 叫	tu saizi 兔崽子
jijian 雞姦	wan 彎
junzi 君子	wan tong 頑童
lian 變	xia zhuan 狎磚
ling 陵	xianggong 相公
long 龍	xiao guanren 小官人
mei 美	xiaoren 小人
mei ren 美人	xie xia 褻狎
menzi 門子	xing 倖
nanfeng (a) 男風	xiong 兄
nanfeng (b) 南風	yu 玉
nanfeng shu 南風樹	ze 澤
nanse 男色	zhengjing 正經
ning 佞	zhi 痔