

The Slaves Of Xi Ling.

By Miss Irene Clearmont.

**An Adult
Tale**

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- Thanks to S.C. for the idea of setting a tale in those times and for calling Sax Romer to mind.

Dear Reader,

This is an extract from a document found in a second-hand bookshop in Tottenham Court Road, London. It lay inside an editor's proof copy of Sax Romer's unpublished novel, 'The Whores Of Fu Manchu'. Take it as it stands, there is no way to prove that the events written here ever occurred as written.

The style is, as one would expect, a little Edwardian or Victorian and the author is indeed inclined to use over-purple prose. So have a little patience with the writer, who I believe, is reliving his terrible experiences as his pen writes the words!

My research has showed no *certain* link between manuscript and Romer, also known by his birth name of Arthur Henry Sarsfield Ward. And I have means beyond the normal scholar to find out that which I want to know!

On the other hand the internal evidence suggests a date of between 1911 when he wrote 'Little Tich' and the first of the famous 'Fu Manchu' books in 1913, 'The Mystery of Fu Manchu'. I tend to think that this undocumented trip really happened, just at the time when the Manchu Emperors fell and the Warlords came into their power...

You decide...

Irene xxx

The Slaves Of Xi Ling.

Preface & Disclaimer.

I would never admit that I am the under-mentioned person in fictional form. That would not do! It is just not the way I write this type of literature. No I will leave it to you, the reader, to decide. Was that really Adam Willis Farthing Perkins who went to Shanghai and could not decide if he regretted the experience or was it your writer Arthur Henry Sarsfield Ward?

In my time I have written a deal of books, some good some perhaps not so good. People have copied my writing style so readily. Like that insufferable Burroughs chap whose twitterings and scratchings of the pen mimic my own carefully crafted words in style if not in my depth of fantasy.

My books have been filmed and shown in cinemas all over the American continent. Best of all I have become modestly rich and a high practitioner of the arts hermetical.

Denis Nayland Smith and Dr. Petrie are not the centre of this little fanciful outing, here are their real predecessors Adam Willis Farthing Perkins and the gross American, Garry Mercyfield Virginia the third.

Part the First

Arrival on the docks of Shanghai.

Shanghai is a good place to start.

Why?

Because a tale that sinks to the lows that this one does need start in a place that has been described as the City Of Sin! One commentator even wrote that God should be ashamed that he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and left the city of Shanghai to fester as the premier centre of lust and sin in the world!

Even though Shanghai is an oriental sink, at least there is a junction with our world of European chastity and continence, morality and rectitude. Some small common ground exists that allows the contrast between darkness of evil lust, sexual predation and female duplicity to be held up to inspection with a light of virtuous and moral might.

Adam Willis Farthing Perkins found himself amongst the sights, sounds and noxious perfumes of the Nanking Road jetty. The steam packet had discharged him, naked of all experience in Shanghai, China.

Lack of languages and low birth in Birmingham left him bereft of ideas of how to earn his way in the world, but he had decided upon a literary career of letters.

So it was, in response to an offer as a sub-editor on the 'Shanghai Morning, Noon and Evening China Gazetteer' that he found himself looking for some way to get to the Nanking

Road by the old French quarter. Adam turned this way and that, trying to make out the road signs but all the script was that confusing muddle of broken chopsticks that is known more kindly as Chinese characters.

That callow innocent inspection of the district immediately earned him a crowd of Chinese coolies that knew a green mark when they saw one. A gabble of Chinese and pigeon surrounded him with its uproar, bewildering and confusing him, as he tried to push his way through the press of rough clad Asiatics to escape their attention.

Then he was rescued by a big bustling European man in a worn suit who grabbed his hand and pulled Adam from the insistent crowd with a firm grip.

“Garry Mercyfield Virginia the third at your service, sir,” said Adam’s new acquaintance as soon as the temporary crowd had dispersed. As he spoke he brushed down the man that he had saved, with the back of his hand.

“Damn importunate these Orientals! Make a white man ashamed to a member of the same human race!” he continued.

“Well I am pleased to make your acquaintance,” said Adam. “I am new to Shanghai and I am most grateful for your intervention.”

Adam was almost panting with the strain of holding his bag amongst all those who had been so eager to relieve him of its weight and gain a few groats or the bag itself, in the process.

So that was how Adam met Garry. A chance meeting at best, and one that at least one would rue in time, but fate has a way of allowing the cards to fall with the faces up and it is to no one’s advantage to moan about fate.

As I said at the beginning, Shanghai is a metropolis that offers the soul, flesh and spirit enough amusement to satisfy the most gluttonous epicure of sex and drugs.

Opium dens litter the town especially the dense area of the Chinese City. Not just opium dens but, brothels, cathouses, Turkish steam baths, bordellos, prostitutes, whores, pimps, paedophiles and panderers fill the narrow streets in a riot of noise, smell and human detritus that spills into the French Quarter and the over the docks like a perverse fungus.

All of this enterprise is driven by the American Dollars, Sterling Pounds, Francs Français and Gold Marks that arrive everyday in the massive trade that sucks in opiates, silk, gold and tea. Yes, it is we Europeans that contrive and feed this centre of every vice.

The Chinese Hong merchants earn millions of the silver dollars, that are China's currency, and the foreigners, or '*gwailo*', retire after just a few years smuggling and trading.

Garry was an avid inhabitant of that sink, the netherworld beneath the silks of the Consulates and the starched shirts of the office clerks and it was not long before he invited his new friend into the stews.

Part The Second

The Red Gates open to reveal their treasure.

A month after Garry had rescued Adam on the noisome docks of Shanghai they met again for a green tea in the bar on the corner of Canton Road and the aptly named Fukien Road. It was there, over a strong gin and tea, that Adam agreed to join Garry that afternoon to partake of a little entertainment and amusement.

They met at two and made their way down the crowded streets into the old Chinese City, through the arched gates and into the stench and noise of pure oriental clamour.

The rickshaws took Garry and Adam to what appeared to be a small private house in the south of the myriad of winding alleys. A knock, a couple of coins and a few words at the door sufficed to allow them to enter a sumptuous entrance that belied the unprepossessing exterior.

Women with bound feet shuffled past on their way to answer errands as Adam and Garry waited for the procurer and guide to arrive.

Garry seemed relaxed and at home to his acquaintance but he watched every move around him and seemed relieved when the young mixed race Chinese man entered through the red inner gates and bowed to his two customers. Adam was doubly impressed when the young man spoke in almost accent-less English.

“Good evening sirs. I welcome you to the house of the Red Gates,” he said as he bowed again. “What is it, then can be offered to two such esteemed bulls?”

“Good evening to you, Lin Zhao,” replied Garry. “This is the first time that my friend has visited your esteemed establishment. I

suggest that we start with a little something to eat and drink and then you can show us the menu for the night.”

Adam followed the conversation with amazement but his stomach appeared to concur with the offer of the food and he meekly followed Garry and Lin into the world of the Red Gates.

As Garry and Adam sat awaiting the food, Adam took the opportunity to take in his surroundings. Everything was lacquered red except the jade and the deep toned wood that appeared to make up the structure of the building. Smatterings of gold enriched the colour and gave it substantive depth.

They were in some sort of a private side room but every now and again servitors of the palace of the Red Gates passed by, sometimes with the tiny steps of the bound foot women and sometimes carrying trays and bundles.

“This is quite a place,” said Adam with a grin at his companion.

“Wait for the main course,” said Garry. “The food is good but the menu of women and men defies all description.”

“We are in a brothel?” said Adam with an uncertain voice. “I thought that this was a place where we would eat and be entertained.”

Garry smiled a superior smile and patted his naive companion on the wrist.

“They are both the one and the same. Food and a pretty woman are a perfect fit. Chines delicacies are beyond compare, as are their dainty women.”

Adam tried to settle down but it was beyond his English manners to be sitting in, of all places, a Shanghai brothel and waiting for the women to arrive.

The food came first. Morsels of meat and fish in soup and noodles filled the little porcelain bowls. Pork with tangy sauce and rice steamed in rose water. Sweet dumplings with burned sesame and crackling skin of ducks feet.

“How much does all this cost?” asked Adam as they began to eat.

“I have never seen the price of the food on my bill. The companionship costs enough to make the food a priceless item!”

Garry laughed at his own little joke and looked over to see if Adam had appreciated its double meaning. But all he saw was Adam struggling with the two ridiculous little sticks that played the part of knife and spoon in that god-forgotten land.

The food was soon eaten. Each of the myriad of small bowls and its sauce were empty and a pretty, but silent, young girl came in to pick up the empty vessels.

Lin returned and asked Garry if he was ready for the afternoon’s menu. A small nod was sufficient and the girls were led into the room to stand in a smiling row before the two European men.

Adam looked in bewilderment at the selection of ten women. All were naked apart from sandals and a single red sash around their waist. What a profusion of every taste was on offer. From dainty to imposing they could satisfy any connoisseur’s leaning.

Lin moved down the row and introduced his menu with the luring touch of the expert auctioneer.

“Liu, here,” he said as pointed to the first, “is the daughter of a rich merchant who sold her because of his gambling debts. Liu is expert with her mouth and hands and I have been told that

she can keep a man on the edge of the clouds and rain for hours with her delicate skill.”

Lin moved down the line a little and indicated the very young girl who was next in line. “This is Chia. She was the mistress of one of the leaders of the Hong but she fell out of favour when new ying moved in with her lover. Chia is also expert with her mouth but I am told that she excels with her hands.”

“You would not regret picking her, Garry” he said to the American with a delicate wink. “She is so young and fresh that you simply have to try her soon, before she is spoiled.”

The next three girls were described in similar terms. Glowingly, Lin pointed out physical attributes and skills as he moved down the line.

The fifth girl was the only one with a smile that seemed to be less broad, a false smile that covered dislike. Lin gave her a little playful slap on her ass but it made her scowl with loathing.

“This is Xi Ling,” he said with a small sly smile. “She was the concubine of one of the minor Warlords of Lijiang. She has been loaned to punish her importunate manners. This is her first night behind the Red Gates and she is a little startled at all the fuss that is being made of her. Of all the women here tonight she is the most skilled with the lotus that lies between her thighs. Of all the women here she is the most expensive.”

Garry licked his lips with anticipation whilst Adam felt a chill of anticipation when he looked at the line of naked beauties arrayed for his delectation. Was it premonition of what he was to go through or simply expectation of the delights that he was about to savour?

After pointing out the other girls and praising their accomplishments, Lin smiled and moved his hand to indicate that the two *gwailo* should state their fancy.

“Xi Ling!”

Garry was quick to choose before Adam could pre-empt his choice.

Xi Ling cast a look of pure hatred at Garry from under her long eyelashes and made a small motion as if she was about to make the sin of rejecting his interest, but he took no notice and smiled. A bit of reluctance on her part made the storming of her gates so much more enticing for the American.

Adam found his throat too dry to say anything. Never before had he been so enchanted and overwhelmed by such a selection of loveliness. With a finger he pointed at Chia for a moment to indicate his choice.

Lin said something in Chinese, at which the girls who had not been selected left the room with downcast faces.

“Now is the moment where we must do business,” said Lin.

“Both of these beautiful women come at a premium price, both would command the raging desire of the Heavenly Emperor and cannot be had for mere change in the pocket. For Xi Ling a price of just a hundred silver dollars would be just and for the pretty flower named Chia fifty such dollars would be a price that would preen her honour and reflect her superior abilities.”

That started the haggling. Garry proved himself to be a master of negotiation and pulled the price down to thirty silver dollars each, though the sly smile on Lin’s face perhaps showed who was the master and who was the apprentice at such haggling.

Adam watched the proceedings with a dry mouth, the price was more than a week of work at his office, but he could not nay-say the deal, he was committed from the point that he had entered the Red Gates and his cock told him that the money was nothing in compare to the unspoiled beauty before him.

Part The Third

The gates are opened by Force.

So it was that Adam was led, by the eager Chai, to the room of clouds and rain where he was to be entertained. As he closed the flimsy door to the cubicle he could hear Garry drag his unwilling partner into the next room.

It seemed that Xi Ling was not going voluntarily but Garry was well able to subdue her and her shouts of protest were soon replaced by a whining and pleading in Chinese covered by the sounds of his crude remarks.

Adam stood for a moment as if not sure how to proceed, but Chai was not so bashful. With slow but pleasing movements she stripped her purchaser of his clothes to leave him standing naked, his erection standing from his body like a tree waiting for the woodsman's axe.

As Lin had announced, Chai's hands were skilled at pleasing a man's need. They slipped, almost casually, along the length of his shaft, building his prick to a hardness that Adam felt that he had never experienced before.

It was like his first erection, a startling firmness that seemed to spring out of nowhere. When Chai's other hand cupped his balls and stroked them he felt all his shame at having sex in this well lit room of a bordello, slip away to leave him eager to move to the next level.

In a heaven made by the slip of a girl who had her lips closed around his sex he felt his knees weaken and his senses reel. Chai coaxed him to sit on the edge of the low lacquered bed and knelt between his thighs with her lips still around the tip of his cock.

A tongue probed the entrance to his prick whilst hands glided the shaft and gently scratched that small patch of skin between balls and ass that is so exceptionally sensitive to female attention.

From his high viewpoint he could see just her lips closed around him and the slight movement of her breasts as she moved her whole body to take more of him in at each stroke of the hand. Little by little his manhood was swallowed entire, little by little he was approaching a massive climax as her lips sealed his manhood into her pretty face.

As Adam entered this dream state of sexual perfection he could hear, at the outer limits of his perception, the struggles of Xi Ling as she fought to stop her unwelcome client taking her by vile force. A sharp slap and the sound of her being thrown onto the bed penetrated the bamboo screens that passed for walls in this gilded bordello.

Next the sound of curses and then a roar of satisfaction as Garry penetrated his whore and began to take all of the thirty silver dollar's worth from her sumptuous body in a frenzy of thrusts.

For Adam it was almost like taking a drug, the tumult in the near cubicle and his own falling into the subtle hands and lips of his own precious flower girl.

Now he was coming! Now he would spill his semen. The flow of his juices were already to be felt, gathering for their ejaculation. Chai prolonged the agony of his climax and then pulled him sharply down as both her hands cupped his straining member and forced Adam to give up his seed.

At that moment, surely the most sensitive for all men, she opened her red stained lips and swallowed him whole again, to the root of his cock. Every drop of his precious yang was

caught in her throat, all the strength of his youth passed to her in exchange for this pleasure.

With one hand Chai pushed Adam back to lie on the thin cotton sheets and climbed to sit astride his panting body. In her hand she had a bottle which she opened and dripped onto him with a few words of Chinese that could have almost been a prayer or a summoning.

In the next room the cries of Xi Ling had become whimpers as Garry fucked her ruthlessly, every stroke that entered her and violated her sanctity was accompanied by his shout of triumph and her plaintive call.

Even though the walls of the cubicle shook with the fucking that he was administering, he did not stop. Indeed it seemed to Adam that he became more violent as the sound of a heavy slap reached the ears of Garry's acquaintance.

Adam felt the slipperiness of the oil on his naked flesh and enjoyed the heaven that it brought. A massage by slim hands brought him round to admire and enjoy the sensual nature of Chai, his pretty Chinese whore.

Now she was working his neck and shoulders, all the time allowing her open pussy to glide over his half erect prick in a soothing motion.

He felt his powers return, his cock start to push up against her slippery flesh and her nails caught his nipples in slight, almost unintentional teasing. Chai was moving toward her most elegant pleasuring.

The swallowing of him by her slim body whilst her hands massaged and teased the rest of his body with scented oil.

Now that she had sapped him the play would last for hours.

When sunset at last came, lengthening the shadows and making hiding places in the shade, she would make him come in a storm of pent up energy that would leave him sapped for days.

This was her art.

He would be in love by nightfall.

Part The Fourth

Gin, rape and the destroyer of innocence.

It was three days after the afternoon behind the Red Gates that Adam and Garry met again.

Though it had been the best of experiences for Adam he was chary of meeting Garry and hearing of his conquest. No, that was not what Adam wished to remember, the grunting, slapping and piteous cries that had emanated from the room next door whilst a slim Chinese whore had brought Adam to such a climax as he had never before imagined. The cries of protest had seemed inextricable mixed in his own intimate experience, they had become a part of a harmonious whole that begged to be repeated as often as thirty silver dollars lay in his purse.

'But we have agreed to meet!' thought Adam as he waited at the waterfront bar. 'So I suppose that I am obliged to keep my word and thank him for taking me to that heavenly bordello.'

Somehow the relationship that the two diverse Europeans had forged in this nightmare and celebrated city seemed suddenly fragile. A stuff made of porcelain and glass. Garry had spoiled that little feeling of friendship that Adam had created by his gross mistreatment of Xi Ling even though it had added to Adam's excitement.

With a gin in front of him and his eyes cast wide to anticipate his friend's arrival, Adam pondered when it was that he could next afford to sample the delights of Chai. He had heard, second or third hand, of Europeans buying their whores from the brothels. Paying vast sums to keep a beautiful captive to use privately in all sorts of ways, but Adam was just a lowly clerk and such things were so far out of his reach. A fantasy dream to relive once a month behind the Red Gates.

There he was at last. Garry. The man who shoved all the little Chinese out of his way like some sort of late Manchu overlord. Scattering them to all sides he arrived with a broad grin and a small bag of coins that he slapped down with a decisive clink.

Scattering the silver coins on the table he said, "So what do you think that these represent?"

Somehow the lack of a proper greeting from his erstwhile friend caused Adam to feel almost pure dislike for this boor. This noxious product of European superiority over Eastern subtlety!

Garry was nothing but a chimpanzee, a boastful lout, whose pleasure was rape and to soil the very fountain of womanhood that he had paid for, been gifted.

"I can't imagine," replied Adam in a frosty voice. "I suppose they amount to thirty dollars but what it is that they represent escapes me."

Entirely missing Adam's displeasure in his triumph, Garry laughed out loud. A sudden sound that made the drunks on the neighbouring tables start and look round in consternation.

"I got my fuckin' money back," laughed Garry.

"Pardon?"

"From that whorehouse," replied the American. "That sorry whore was so unwilling. So I asked for, and got, my money back!"

Adam could only start at the comment. The thought of visiting the brothel had scared him. The idea of going back and claiming a refund was beyond his inexperienced imagination.

"And they gave the yellow slut a good caning into the bargain," he continued. "Seeing the thrashing was almost enough to make me want to pay Lin the thirty back again! They thrashed

her with wet bamboo until the blood ran and I almost came in my pants.”

Clearly Garry was enjoying the memory of Xi Ling’s suffering. The leer and the tone of his voice denoted his satisfaction and his own righteousness.

“Then I bought that little puppy that you had a shove at,” he continued. “Too soft, but ripe for a good shafting, she was limp with exhaustion after I tied her and fucked the living daylights out of the bitch. She was so tight at the beginning...”

Adam’s head was in a whirl at this evil revelation. His delicate flower had been shafted by Garry the rapist and he knew instinctively that it would never be the same. That he would no longer be able to find it in himself to return to the Red Gates.

That was the last of Garry that Adam saw for several months. No longer did he answer the entreaties of his erstwhile friend. The relationship was severed, but not for good.

Because misfortune follows in the footsteps of fools and the adventure had really just begun, were they to know it.

Part The Fifth

Knives and opium.

Several months after the events recalled in the narrative above there came a curious coincidence. But a coincidence it was. Nothing more! Sometimes the fates coddle men with hope and extravagance; sometimes they curse them with ill fortune.

Adam had learned a smattering of that impossible Chinese language and had settled into life in that sink of humanity that is called Shanghai.

Many times had he been to brothels, bordellos and places that the denizens of Shanghai called dives. But never again had he visited the Red Gates. The golden memory was overlaid with the pain of Garry's betrayal behind those bamboo walls.

Nevertheless, Adam had become quite the epicure of sin. Occasional visits to opium 'parlours' and gin palaces gave him the contact with indiscretion that he had begun to crave.

It was that fateful day that he, with clay pipe in the hand, met up again with Garry. They were in an opium den that passed itself as safe for the myriad of foreigners who haunt Shanghai.

Both eyed the other up in assessing glances. Garry was falling to seed. His violent lifestyle and uncontrolled vices were plainly destroying his physical presence. His face was red and he sucked the opium from the pipe with almost passionate strength and then blew a cloud of blue smoke over his former friend.

"Well I never, it's '*too good*' Adam!" exclaimed Garry with a leer. "Too fuckin' good to talk to the likes of me. Just a goddam clerk and he's too grand for Garry!"

“No! It was your depraved behaviour that led the parting of our ways,” replied Adam in a stilted voice. “You are no gentleman.”

“Gentleman, you say? To hear you speak like that brings a poetic tear to my eye,” said Garry with heavy sarcasm.

“Oh, just fuck off!” cursed Adam. This was not his normal tone but the ejaculation of months of pent up anger at Garry.

“Oooh! Fuck off! That’s a bit high and mighty from you, you English tadpole.”

It looked as though there was about to be a fight. The righteous clerk against the drunken, drugged American, but as Adam raised his fists to signal his readiness to spar, a sudden fracas broke out on another table.

Two Chinese in coolie dress had drawn knives and were circling around each other with grim implacable expressions. The blood was already flowing from a savage cut on the larger man’s face but it had by no means disabled him.

Knife work at close range is almost as much a matter of luck as skill. A blow can ram home or slice flesh with no significant disabling result, but small nick can cut a vein and all is lost.

Around both combatants there was now a respectful gap that allowed the spectators of this dispute to watch and enjoy the blood and pain without a chance of becoming involved.

Adam and Garry found themselves pushed together, the excitement of the knife fight expelling all thought of their own petty disagreement.

It was then that Adam felt his wrists being held in an iron grip by someone behind him in the yelling crowd. He had but a moment to react before the rough scratch of rope bound his wrists and he was knocked to the floor in a welter of blows.

To his side he saw three Chinese dressed in black cotton who were giving Garry the same treatment as he was receiving, before a kick aimed at his face forced him to turn away.

As the excited crowd yelled and the two knife-fighting Chinese fainted and thrust, Garry and Adam were pulled free from the back of the yelling crowd and pushed into a small funeral rickshaw that was waiting in the noisome alley at the back of the opium den.

They were captured! Rough hoods like bags were pulled over their heads and the lacquered top of the rickshaw was closed to imprison them both in a nightmare smell of death, incense and horse dung.

Part The Sixth

Philosophy and rickshaws.

In later years Adam often thought about that ride in the rickshaw. Bumping heads with Garry, the smells and cries of the city all about, but accompanied by a stygian darkness that was deeper than the grave.

Was it an hour or ten? For sure it was further than the two former friends wanted to go because it was the road to captivity.

But the author is getting ahead of himself and giving away the plot of this tale to his own distress. I cannot any longer call it a story because a story is a fiction, a white lie, a fantasy and no closer to the truth than a rhyme or joke.

This is the first and last time, in all my myriads of written words, that I pray the reader understands that this is no simple and entertaining fiction.

No, this is a elucidation of the actions that actually happened, there is a compact core of truth in the matter. It is all clearly remembered and told and this moment was the first 'worst moment' of Adam's life.

Worse was to come.

The truth is that Adam was the victim of fate. To be with the man that had been shadowed for a week by the Tongs at the moment of his kidnapping was nothing more than an outrageous twist of providence.

That is the truth of it...

...there in that curse word, 'Fate'.

Part The Seventh

Whips and Fetters.

When the ride finished, both of the victims of that kidnapping were battered and bruised. The team who pulled that yellow lacquered cart had no interest in the comfort of the ride as far as their passengers were concerned. They had been paid to do a job that, today, was the transport of two *gwialo* who were going to feel the whip of revenge that lay comfortably in the slender hand of Xi Ling.

The cart stopped, not for the first time. But for the first time the lid was lifted and the two Europeans were unceremoniously dumped on the rough ground in a welter kicks administered by soft sandals but hard feet.

Both looked up to see coolies dressed in simple black cotton and emerging from behind them, into full sight, Xi Ling.

In her red sheath of Chinese silk she looked like a goddess. Not a goddess of mercy because she had a whip in her hand. No she was the personification of Chu-Jung, that Chinese goddess whose breath is the fumes of the lotus, revenge is in her heart and her cunt is the grave that men go to die in pain.

The whip was a snake of leather twice the length that a man is tall but she wielded it with skill and ferocious intent. The leather cracked across Garry and Adam with the sound of a strong man slapping wet meat. It tore their shirts, revealing its bite of red welts.

“Stop! You fuckin’ whore-bitch!” cried Garry, as if a single word or order from him would set the world to rights and put this woman back in her place at the Red Gates.

At this outrageous interference in her revenge Xi Ling caused the whip to strike the cheek of Garry on its next stroke. Missing

his eye with just an inch to spare, the end of the whip tore a ragged gash in the skin of his face. Adam felt the blood splash his face as the whip drew back with a flurry and a crack.

Xi Ling shouted in Chinese, but the meaning was lost. Each had received five strokes and Xi Ling was exhausted. Her high and emotional voice moved her companions to furious action.

With those slim Manchu blades that so many Chinese carry, they stripped the two *gwailo* of all their clothes. The razor sharp edges cutting cotton, leather belt and silk with ease. More than one blade drew against skin, slicing a bloody line on the soft white flesh.

Naked, and because they were exposed, vulnerable, the final act of the Manchu knives was to cut their wrists free of their bonds. But the respite was short lived as modern European hand cuffs were clicked onto wrists and shackles added to ankles almost like a cruel afterthought.

With a small motion of the hand Xi Ling waved over one of her entourage. When she spoke he translated almost as fast as she mouthed the words.

“You are truly the devil who thought that he could fuck the daughter of Sha Loung and live to tell the tale. I remember this,” she said as she pointed the handle of the whip at Garry’s flaccid cock. “You will not be needing it any longer, later it will be my pleasure to relieve you of its urgings.”

Now she moved to stand over Adam. “You were with him when he chose. You could have spared me by choosing more wisely and quickly, but you did not. For that you too will suffer, but I have not decided if your life is forfeit, like his, or if you would make a nice gift for a woman that I know.”

Adam just swallowed in abject fear. This was the worst nightmare that he had ever been caught up in. He turned his

head to see where they were. If there was any sign of hope on the horizon. But the group stood alone on a track and no habitation or other persons were in view.

Xi Lin spoke to her hirelings and mounted one of the two rickshaws that were by the side of the road.

Adam and Garry were dumped again into the yellow funeral cart, the lid was slid into position and the ride recommenced with both men knowing that their lives were now in the hands of an Oriental woman who was seeking revenge for her rape.

Part The Eighth

Journey.

They did not see Xi Ling again for weeks. Their captors took them from the coast, that haven for foreigners, deep into the dark underbelly of what used to be the Heavenly Empire. Now it was in the grip of the chaos of the Warlords who racked the country from one end to the other with their not so petty wars and strife as the Manchu overlords tumbled to the Triads, Tongs, White Lotus, Ming recidivists and the republicans.

Not a word of English was spoken by their captors, who also forbade the two captives to talk to one another. But they were fed some morsels and they were not unduly mistreated. It was rather that there was a monumental indifference to their fate.

All the while they were kept naked and chained, whether they were on the deck of a barge on the Yangtze Kiang or whether they were tossed over a horse. They were both on full display to the excited crowd that always gathered wherever they stopped.

Both were prodded and poked and many a woman weighed the *gwailo's* sexual parts in her hands to measure up how they compared to the local men in terms of form and size.

The sun beat down and both men became tanned as they never had the use of the sunshades that their captors reserved for their own comfort.

Only abject slaves had tanned skin in China.

Finally they left the river and started to go upcountry. The foothills of that plateau called the Himalayas start in rural China and quickly become a confusing mass of hills, cliffs, mountains and savage towering peaks.

Now the horses had been left behind! Both Adam and Garry struggled, naked and on foot, up the ill made roads that twisted around this forgotten part of Asia.

Continually exhausted, the party made its way up the hills that made up the realm of the Warlord known as Lo Liluoang, the angry dragon of the west, and his favourite concubine Xi Ling.

Part The Ninth.

The eight cuts.

The fortress loomed over the huddle of the small town like a brooding presence. It was no more than a medieval fort but the modern, breech loading artillery on the walls said much about its owner and his local power.

Cavalry paraded with red banners, the leftover elite dregs of the Manchu horsemen who had ruled China for hundreds of years. Now they were mercenaries who sought only to survive the revolutionary convulsions in China. Over their shoulders were the carbines of the former Emperor's select few and in their holsters were the latest Browning repeaters.

Not a single European face did the two prisoners see as they were walked up to the great ebony doors that guarded the citadel of Xi Ling's world. This was a part of the Orient that few Europeans had ever seen, or indeed ever wanted to see.

Weary and exhausted they were finally at the end of the week's long trek into the Chinese hinterland. There arrayed before them as if in some ironic diplomatic gesture was Xi Ling, her father and most of the inhabitants of the castle.

As Garry and Adam stood, silent, awaiting judgement, they once again went under that impersonal scrutiny that had become the hallmark of the whole trip.

Some discussion followed that both Garry and Adam could not follow but it finished with Xi Ling stamping her foot in anger as she pulled her *chi pao* robe to show the healed scars of the caning that she had received at Garry's behest.

In the end she stormed off in frustration as the warlord, Lo Liluoang, surveyed the two men who had been kidnapped at the behest of his concubine. He seemed fascinated by Garry

and ran his soft hand over the slave's back with an almost sensual movement.

Suddenly he barked an order and Garry was knocked to his knees. Whilst four men stood on his wrists and ankles, the fetters were removed and his arms and legs were staked to the ground so that he was spread face down, naked, in the soft sand of the courtyard.

Another sharp order and a soldier arrived with a tin bath that was full of water and bamboo rods that had been soaking for weeks.

Adam looked away from the inevitable punishment and his eyes caught a small movement behind the blinds in a window. Xi Ling was settling down to enjoy the beating whatever the argument had been previous to her storming off.

Sure enough the blinds were opened to reveal what could almost be described as a theatre box. Xi Ling and two other women sat in comfort and chatted whilst Garry was prepared.

On the courtyard sand a masseur came to administer a massage to loosen the muscles on the big American's back. All the while Garry cursed loudly, but it seemed as if that was all part of the show.

Finally the massage was over and a slender young woman, naked from the waist up, arrived to bow deeply before Lo Liluoang. They exchanged a few words and then at last the slim girl picked one of the canes from the water.

In Adam's head there was a moment, when the drops of water flashed in the bright sun. That remembrance would remain as a fixed memory for the rest of his life. The glitter of the water and the dark marks that it made on the sand when it splashed down. The slim girl, her breasts well formed and pert that moved in gentle sympathy with her graceful movement. The

sound of the cane hissing through the warm air and the expectant look on Xi Ling's pretty face as the cane met the flesh of its victim.

Eight strokes.

Eight strokes of the cane does not sound like much at all. Every public schoolboy has to suffer as much. But there is a difference between the casual punishment of schoolboys and the administering of torture by an expert.

Each blow was placed by the hand of an artist. The cane rose, it circled and gathered speed. Then its orbit changed and it drew across the flesh as it contacted to rip the delicate and massage softened skin with the ridges of the bamboo rod.

The young woman was Lo Liluoang's torturer. She administered the most wicked punishments with a small childlike smile and a touch of the fingers to her full lips.

She filled the canes with lead shot and ensured that enough tamarind had been added to the soak water. She was so much more than a technician of terror, she was an artisan of agony.

At each blow Garry cried in agony. From the very first he suffered a world of pain that made him animal. Lifted the veil of thousands of years of civilisation and revealed the howling creature beneath.

But the slim girl ignored his struggles. She checked her cane before every blow and tossed it to the sand if any sign of splitting showed. So savage were the blows that four canes lay discarded after only eight blows.

She circled her victim with the intent of a wolf that has disabled a large prey. When she saw that, in his fright, Garry had an erection she kicked off her sandal and massaged the turgid

member for a moment against the sand before placing the next blow.

After every blow she waited until her victim was still and calm so that he fully appreciated the next cut of the cane. Now barefooted she checked between his legs and occasionally massaged Garry's prick with her toes. The sensual becoming an creative composition mixed with the blood of the brutal.

His hips moved in a semblance of fucking as she brought him to two climaxes. One of pain and one of rape with the soles of her blood-soaked feet.

The audience of women on the balcony clapped politely and commented, appreciating the subtle contrast of pain that was so intense that the only outcome could be pleasure.

Adam could not decide if he was witnessing a barbaric ritual or a work of art. Every move seemed to be calculated to heighten the senses of victim and audience.

The terrible cuts on his back started to take the form of a Chinese character. A capital 'T' with cross strokes on the vertical. This too was part of the art of punishment.

Even the eight lucky strokes and the character written in pain had significance.

Blood splashed on the breasts of the artist who was performing to the edification of all but her victim, Garry. It trickled from the points of her nipples and onto the sand.

Then there was more liquid on the sand as sweat, blood and finally sperm flowed on to the sand between Garry's thighs.

This final convulsion as the eighth stroke tore at his back was greeted by appreciative noises from all but Adam and of course Garry who was in so much pain that he was almost unaware of the pleasure that had been forced from him.

This was the first taste of Xi Ling's revenge. That Lo Liluoang had refused his lover permission to carry out the revenge was after all so fitting.

There was so much more to appreciate as a spectator and Lo Liluoang's torturer had so much grace and flair for her horrific job that she made a mere caning into a lotus bloom of so much beauty that the victim was pleased by the pain.

Garry had passed out but his body shivered as the masseur applied a vinegar sponge and cleaned the blood from his back to reveal the single symbol that had been cut in eight strokes of the cane instead of the seven strokes of a calligraphic brush.

The character for revenge. Seven strokes of the pen and eight of the cane. Two strokes so artfully placed that they seemed one.

Now that he had been marked for punishment the real revenge would begin. Supervised by Xi Ling, administered by a young girl and sanctioned by a Chinese Warlord.

Part The Tenth.

The Thousand Cuts.

We Europeans are so innocent, so naive. We invent devices like the strappado, bastinado, lash, rack and brodequins. We wince at the kiss of the whip and cry out when put on the treadmill. We deal pain like tyros, children.

On the other hand, the Chinese consider every activity that man undertakes to be an art form. From eating, fucking, fighting and pissing they make ritual and grace. Torture is that most intimate of contacts. It can be likened to sex and love, but it is far deeper still.

That intimacy and the enveloping relationship that hangs like a spider thread between the victim and the emotive dealer of pain is heightened when that dealer in intimate agony is a woman.

Better yet that she is a young girl, never loved by a man and never taken any way down the road of sexual knowledge. Pleasure through love and trust, pain with art.

That she discovers heightened senses and gratification from pain is the aim of her master or mistress. Then she will do her work for the love of it. She cannot be subverted by victim or the victim's friends and family. Obdurate in her profession and skilful in its achievement.

Single-mindedly she will pursue the goal of information or revenge without straying from the path that leads eventually to anguish, agony and death for her victim and her ultimate gratification.

The consummation of torture with love.

Adam found himself in a small room that sat high in the single tower of the fortress. There was a low bed with elegant but robust carving. A tall lacquered chest that proved to be full of cotton robes and shutters to close the barred windows against the elements.

If he had not seen Garry carved with a cane and experienced the terrible trip to this remote place he might have thought himself to be a guest rather than a prisoner. If he had not been fettered with steel that went from the collar on his neck to a hole in the ceiling he would have had hope that Xi Ling had realised that he, Adam, was innocent. He had had no part in her awful humiliation, rape and caning at the house of the Red Gates.

But there was little hope for Adam and certainly no need for restraint on the part of Xi Ling.

Every day he counted a day by marking a discrete fingernail mark on the lacquer of the bed. Only food arrived, there was nothing to do but build up his apprehension of the events to come.

The caning of Garry had been fully deserved, decided Adam. Garry had reaped the reward of his ungentlemanly conduct in spades but now Adam had decided that Adam was his main priority. The thought of him being caned while made to climax to an appreciative audience was too much to bear. He, Adam, just had to survive and get out, alive!

After eight strokes of his fingernail lined the lacquer of the bed the girl who entered at his normal meal time did not appear. The sun rose and was beginning to fall from the sky when the door opened and the young girl that had caned Garry entered.

Dressed in a red cotton shift she seemed the model, the very image of innocence. Young, slender and delicate. But Adam

had seen those hands swing the punishing rod and the feet that twisted pain to pleasure.

Following her in was Xi Ling. She made no attempt to converse with Adam she just watched as her servant did her work. He felt her hands push him and he went. His heart clapped like a steam engine and his breath came in gusts in his terror at being handled by this slip of a girl. But he obliged and allowed him to be placed in the exact centre of the room.

She uttered a word loud in Chinese and the chain was pulled by an unseen helper in the room above. It moved slowly, link by link. Adam wondered if this was to be his fate. To be strangled by degrees for the pleasure of these two beauties?

Now he had to lift his heels from the floor as the chain tightened. It made his breath come in gasps. The collar started to close his throat and windpipe making him light headed.

A small sharp shout and the chain stopped pulling at his neck. It left him on the tips of his toes strung and presented in the centre of the room like a marionette. The puppeteers smiled and stripped him of his simple robe to leave him naked and ready for their attention.

Xi ling dangled a pair of handcuffs before his eyes and said something in Chinese.

"I am so sorry, I do not understand!" he assayed in English but she was not interested in his words. What she wanted could be indicated with clarity.

With a smile she moved her wrists behind her pert behind in indication of her desire.

Adam complied and felt his wrists being fettered. The slight movement caught him off balance and hanging by the collar for a moment. But there was no reaction from the two evil angels,

they just watched him regain his equilibrium and manage to stand once again on the balls of his feet.

Xi Ling sat on the bed with a little comment to her servant and laughed. To the struggling Adam it was as if he was not really there, this could not be real, this was some dream that had crowded rational thought from his mind.

But it was real.

The young torturer shed her cotton robe to reveal her naked body. Not just naked. Every tuft, strand and lock of hair had been removed from her body. Under her arms and between those soft thighs shone only the clear white tone of her skin.

Without shame she allowed her mistress and her victim to see every fold of her intimate parts. That keyhole-like opening that led to the tunnel of her sex. Breasts, not tiny, but small, pointed and with dark nipples that stood like little caps on her mounds.

With a look at Xi Ling and her own chuckle she began her work. Taking Adam's surging prick in her small hands she started to manipulate him. Pulling gently, so gently, she strengthened his erection and stiffened his cock. But her little tugs on him moved him forward as he thrust, pulling the collar at his throat.

And this was the game!

Make him thrust. Catch that delicate balance between risk, need and pleasure. Watch him thrust, a built in reaction to her hands on his prick and then watch him choke as he pushed into her hands.

Every thrust made Xi Ling laugh with pleasure as she enjoyed this most strange torture. As Adam choked and then, light headed, recovered each time, he came closer to climax. Like waves on a beach the girls changed the level of the water but the incoming tide was inevitable.

Just before that final climax, the hand left him hanging! Gasping for relief, red faced and pleading. He pleaded to be released, he pleaded for her to give him release and he pleaded to give release.

But the two girls just laughed and linked arms as they left the room.

For a few minutes Adam hung, trying to find the point of balance. But it eluded him and he had to keep his feet moving to catch his breath. Slowly his erection faltered and forgot how close it had been to satisfaction at the hands of that vixen.

A new noise entered the room that was his cell, the sound of a door slamming. The sound of Garry's voice, loud and angry and then suddenly quiet. The sound of furniture in the next room being shifted and the sounds of the voice of the young woman whose pleasure and duty was the pain of her mistresses victims.

For a while there was silence disturbed by the voices of the two women and then cries of protest. The deep voice of Garry carried through the upper levels of the tower and into the courtyard below. It made the passersby look up and then grin in realisation of the two 'satisfactions of life'.

That they were not the victim taking part in the proceedings and that there was always someone who had a much worse life.

Even Adam could not begin to guess what was happening in the neighbouring room. The voices and noises left no clue and he was so distracted by his own predicament that the thought that Garry was suffering scarcely entered his head.

Then came a howl of pain from the next room. Animal and brutal it rattled Adams nerves as Garry suffered some terrible pain.

The scream turned to sobbing of a most piteous sort as the two girls came back to Adam to pay him another visit. Xi Ling stood by the door as her servant, that flower or torturers, briefly showed her blood covered hands to her next victim.

Adam found that he neither could nor even find the breath to plead for mercy before she took his flaccid cock and started to bring him once again to climax. With a background of sobbing and the chuckles of Xi Ling he was brought to a climax.

The blood spattered naked girl, the terrible sobs from the next room, the laughing of Xi Ling and the grip on his throat all conspired to confuse and bewilder his mind. In the end it was the need for the release that drove him to wash her delicate hands with his emission.

She rubbed her hands together, blood and semen and her little tongue assayed a taste of that pleasure and pain.

That was the start of a strange three months of fear and pleasure for Adam. Powerless in the hands of the two female tyrants he suffered at their hands.

Oftimes they had it in mind to cane him. Not the regal punishment that Garry had suffered but a thin wisp of an ivory cane that was used on his backside as they made him come.

Every torture was accompanied by that physical pleasure and gratification. Every action of gratification was mingled with some sort of pain.

The two emotions, feelings, became mixed and melded into a single complete satisfying whole in his head. To have pleasure given then pain was the spice that had to be liberally sprinkled on the pleasure.

Always in the background was the torture of Garry that was proceeding in the next room. Ever a presence, ever a fear inducing background to his own struggles to come to terms with this life as a sexual marionette. He was becoming a hobby for his tormentress, an experiment in sexual training of the most extreme sort.

After a month Garry's cries became noticeable weaker as if he had no energy, as if the constant pain had worn him to a stub and left nothing to show as a reaction.

It was seldom that Adam wondered what was happening. He just knew that Garry was doomed and his own survival was hanging by a thin silk thread. When the two women entered the room, Xi Ling never participated; she just watched, laughed and enjoyed the flair and invention that was shown by her evil minded servant.

It seemed to Adam that she occasionally suggested activities to her companion but usually she was more than content to watch and just be surprised by fecund talent.

The scars of the canings never stayed long on Adam's body. They faded and were overlaid by new marks. The ebony ring that encircled the base of his cock ensured that he stood rigidly to attention as needed.

One day Xi Ling handed her confederate a long box with a giggle. Inside it, as the stricken Adam saw, was a large carved jade prick.

They used this many times on his long suffering body. They never let him climax for several weeks without having been fucked by the jade cock at least once. In the end it became the symbol of release.

Just the sight of it made his manhood point and expect treatment. When it entered him and pushed home, he came

without having been more than stroked a little by hand and caned with that vicious little ivory twig that gave so much pain for so little effort on the torturers behalf.

Eventually Garry was no longer to be heard. There was no more moaning in the night, no more screams of pain and no more sobbing during the day.

It seemed that there was no more Garry.

Xi Ling had managed nearly three months of terrible revenge on the man who had raped and misused her but still Adam did not know what had been done to his companion.

The door opened. In the background of the corridor there was activity. A large cloth bound bundle was taken past. Then a strange criss-cross wire form that was in the shape and size of a man. Then came Xi Ling and her usual companion. They stood before him and glanced over their shoulders at the activity outside.

Then they used sign language to explain what had happened to Garry. Xi Ling passed several pieces of wire to her servant and then pulled out a tiny, but razor sharp knife.

The wire was criss-crossed on his arm until squares of flesh pushed like pieces of chocolate though the wire. Xi Ling mimed paring off the flesh with her flensing knife and smiled as the knowledge of events in the cell next door finally took root in Adam's mind.

That was the wire suit Adam had seen.

Garry had been pushed into it and then the wire had been twisted to tighten the enclosure of his soft flesh, pushing his skin through the wire like an evil tourniquet that covered the whole of the body.

Then over the weeks, he had been pared to nothing like a soft fruit.

That was Garry's terrible death.

The death of a thousand cuts.

Part The Eleventh.

Pain for pleasure.

It was if he had been the light relief for Xi Ling after the intense gratification of seeing the American pared down to raw meat in the next room.

Now he was a reminder of her shame and had to be disposed of. She was not inclined to have him executed. First he had to be prepared. A male concubine, a servant of a woman's flesh is not easy to create. A slave that needs to be punished is even more of a trial.

A man has an innate superiority that must be broken down before he can become the plaything of a woman. Superiority of sex and superiority of his strength. Xi Ling entered Adam's mind and raped his consciousness. She proved that woman is master of man and that the yin always shapes the yang.

What I know is that when Adam was led from the chamber in which he had been confined for three months he was in many ways a different man.

He had become a man whose whole object in life had been so focussed on survival that he was able to bend to any circumstance.

He had lost his preconceived ideas about sex, the pleasuring of the flesh and of love. Because he had started to love his tormentress'. When they came to him his heart leapt for joy and when they left he was in the doldrums.

He had not lost the need to escape back to his real life but he had become patient and stern of resolve to overmaster his captivity and to use that one chance to escape that presented itself in a proper way.

On the other hand he had become a slave to the feet hands and mouth of the woman who caned and punished him. She never asked for sex in return. She never took his service in lieu. She took her pleasure from his pain. That was an intimate transfer without contact.

He knew in his heart of hearts that no matter how strong he was he would be the slave of the woman who knew his secret need to be punished as he was gratified.

Now came a phase in his life which passed like a dream on a summer evening. They moved him to a bright room in the tower with screens on the windows and a low bed on the floor. From the window he saw the days pass and the people below lived their ordinary lives.

But at night Xi Ling came with her servant of pain and tormented him, twisted his psyche and made him suffer pain and pleasure.

As the light of the day faded into that orange and peach of sunset a servant would arrive with pitchers of clean cold water. Without a word the *gwailo* would be sluiced down and cleansed. No soap, but a flour like sand would be rubbed against his skin to wear away the accumulation of sweat and grime from the night before.

Then he would be rubbed with salve. It softened the skin and quickened the healing of the previous days punishments.

All of this preparation was but the build up, the crescendo of activity that would prepare Adam for the ordeal of the night. Because night was the time that he would suffer the ministrations of Xi Ling and her devilish accomplice in crime.

Finally he was alone to think about the coming hours. His heart beating so fast that there was a rushing sound in his ears and his whole body was quivering in time with the beat of his heart.

Finally, naked, brushed, cleansed and taut with the tension of the interval, Adam heard the arrival of these two devils clothed in the flesh of woman.

First there would be an interminable tumble of keys in locks and low voices. Then the door would swing wide to admit Xi Ling and her friend.

Like lovers they entered the cell. Hand in hand they slipped in, hips swinging, bumping. Tight silk and low sandals. Each day Xi Ling would bring in some item and ceremoniously hand it to her companion with a little bow and a few words in Chinese.

Every day it would be accepted with a light kiss that brushed lips and cheek.

Then Xi Ling would seat herself on the bench that ran under the window. Her lips parted and hands working to free her from her robe.

She sat without shame, with her legs apart allowing her captive to appreciate her delicate sex. Parted ivory flesh with a vertical peach slit. Folds and clefts of delicate membrane that lured the eyes to a hint of darkness deep within.

Then the ritual would begin. As Xi Ling serviced her hungry cunt with hands or the ivory prick that she always brought, her companion would excite her with a delicate theatre show of agony and ascendant pleasure as she made Adam suffer.

Xi Ling filled the chamber with her little cries of exaltation while new hurts sprang like corn from the field of Adams flesh.

Sometimes it was a cane or steel whip. Fiery lines etched over his back like ley lines to his soul. Sometimes he bled, often it was just dark bruises that kissed his flesh. Sometimes it was ivory or steel that nipped and pinched the flesh. Pins and rods, mechanisms, apparatus' of pain. Used subtly and delicately by

sensitive hands that knew instinctively the placement of every nerve in his wracked body.

All the time that he suffered, Xi Ling enjoyed the pain, savoured the agony and gasped in gratification at the suffering. Finally there was some signal and the character of the interview changed. Now it was his pleasure that concerned the torturer. She inflicted overwhelming joy in the same cold way that she had just inflicted agony.

Adam was nothing more than a cipher for her skill. Her hands grasped and manipulated him. They probed every part of him. His body, his skin, every opening and even his psyche. He was raped by her fingers as they pushed into his flesh and found tender places where no light had ever fallen.

Objects were pushed into him and then manipulated. His engorged prick was teased and pulled. Lips, hands, fingers and cunt. He saw himself swallowed by ass and lips, cunt and palm.

All conspired to bring him to heights of exaltation that he had never known. The recent pain contrasting with the absolute pleasure in a nightmare rapture of pure heaven.

All the while Xi Ling watched, enjoyed and took her pleasure from the torment, but she never took part, never touched, just observed and commented. Xi Ling directed and cajoled, coaxed and directed. She was the producer of a passion play, intimate and enfolding. She led her victim and her female alter ego through the experience from agony to the heights of the clouds and rain.

And Adam? Well, he was passive. He was the test bed on which experimentation took place. As the two women refined and honed their skills Adam's very picture of the world around him changed. No longer concerned with the daily grind of every day life. He became obsessed with every motion. The ritual of

the bath and the entrance of the two women who filled his world with sensation.

His days in Shanghai were distant. How far then was his former life in the occidental world?

He felt that he was in love.

Not the tender love between two lovers in their first affair. Not the romantic love of Tristram for Isolde. No this was deeper, more moving than *ordinary* love. It was the appreciation of assiduousness that a slave gives his mistress. The enfolding love of a mother who cares for your soul and guards you from harm. All the while she punishes you for sins real and imagined and you fall into her soul like a salmon falls back into its river.

What they needed he supplied. What they demanded of him he gave freely and what they sucked from his soul they lapped up and savoured.

Part The Twelfth.

The Palaquin.

Week after week. Adam had become nothing more than a responsive marionette to his tormentress'. Not a thought of escape crossed his mind, filled as it was with love, servitude and ritual. But the world moves on and Adam's training was finally at an end. He had become a willing slave as love, servitude and gratification were inextricably mingled to a depth that touched his soul.

At last Xi Ling tired of the training. She knew that Adam was broken to her rod and now was the time to pass the completed project to another who was infinitely more brutal in her way of extracting gratification.

So it was that a palanquin arrived and Adam was transferred to another's care. Carried between two mules and escorted by two cavalymen, the lacquered palanquin made its way even further into the west.

Inside Adam cried. He sobbed tears of parting from that life. Xi Ling and her servant were departed from his life and were no more.

Strangely he had never known the name of the woman who had tortured him and then given such pleasure. At the time it had seemed so right. Anonymous pain and joy administered by the nameless servant of a mistress who revelled in training her western slave.

It took days of travel at the slow pace of the two mules that supported the palanquin. Up slope and down into the valleys, the savage beauty of the cliffs and scree softened by the pines and the tumbling of stream and brook.

In that extended time of travel. As thoughts settled and took form in new moulds. Adam realised that he was now the slave of any woman who held his key.

What was this key that would open his locks?

Simple, the knowledge that he, Adam, would serve if the pain was sharp enough and the reward of ecstasy was elevated enough. Any woman who knew his weakness would be his mistress.

Part The Thirteenth.

The Pain. Her Pleasure.

Xi Ling understood how all the keys to his locks worked. She gave Adam to a woman to whom pain was second nature. Agony and death was the thing that teased this woman's fancy and enhanced her nights of ennui. Slow and sudden agony was her only delight.

The house was low and stood, squatted in stands of bamboo that fenced in the gardens like a wall. Adam was helped out of the palanquin by one of his guards. He looked around at the house before he was led to his second imprisonment.

Alan found himself in a small cell. The whole of the floor was covered by a thick cotton mattress that was marked with stains that signified that he was not the first to inhabit the cell.

A chain was welded onto his neck ring and he was left to await his fate.

Xia Lao was older by far than Xi Ling. She was a woman who had been brought up in the Manchu court and claimed that the Emperor had chosen her for two whole nights fifty years before.

But concubine for two nights is not concubine for a year nor is it the title of 'little wife' that goes with those chosen for lengthy favour in the Emperor's wide bed.

That was so many long years ago. Now the Manchu Emperors were gone, all gone like a sigh in the night.

Xia Lao had found a courtier and come to this precipitous edge of the civilised world to pass her life in provincial boredom and tedium. Now her only distraction was the men who suffered at

her hands and the delicious punishment of the house slaves when they transgressed.

The missive from Xi Ling, reporting that Xia Lao was to have a new slave to work on, brought so much joy. She smiled for days and imagined all the things that her new slave would be able to do for her.

'I hope that he is full and proud in his yang,' she thought, 'and I so need to feel his lips on my little slit.'

At first she always considered the pleasure of the sex. How he would fill her and then serve her with his body. Bring her to heights untrod.

But it was never long before she considered how she would enjoy destroying him. That was her vengeance on the Emperor for not choosing her. That was the retribution that she showered on all men for scorning her. That was the revenge on her father for not binding her feet. That was her retaliation on the world for her ennui.

Rubbing her hands with anticipation she looked into the cubicle where the gwaile was now chained. Naked and white he sat squatting on the mattress floor and regarded her with his strange green eyes.

Xia Lao decided that he was a fine specimen, ideal for her use. He might even last a week or two before expiring! 'No,' she decided, she would make him last longer, perhaps a month.

So it was that Adam did not get the caning of seven rods that normally greeted one of Xia Lao's new slave lovers. He was, instead, fitted in a new robe and led to her chambers to be chained and await her pleasure.

Adam saw a woman of sixty years enter the room and recognised her as the woman who had come to observe him in

his cell. He smiled at her and wondered when his new owner would appear.

Then came the servants. They laid a tray of small delicacies before the woman and bowed to her, all the way out of the chamber. Suddenly Adam realised that this was to be his new mistress.

Perhaps forty years before she had been the flower in the Emperor's bed but now she had withered and drooped in the vase.

Xia Lao picked at the food like a bird, all the while glancing at her victim. She appreciated his body with the eyes of a torturer, noting the scars of the cane and whip that traced his torso and thighs. This was a body that would last long, inherent strength and resistance would be the spice that would make his suffering so piquant.

Finally she was finished and ready to begin. She picked up the small bell and called her servant to prepare the main course that would last all night.

In answer to the bell a woman appeared who would have graced the line up of a row of the Emperor's guard. Muscles on her arms like corded wood she was as strong as an ox.

Adam felt an erection come to his prick, an involuntary reaction that betrayed his understanding of her needs. His wrists were strapped to a belt that encompassed his waist and his ankles were fettered with leather bands. Finally a lacquered mask was tied to his head by a complex of thongs making him a demon without a face.

As he was prepared by the silent servant he felt anticipation and fear. This was not like his time with Xi Ling. She had been impersonal but appealing to his senses. Xia Lao was somehow different. Hateful and perverse, a woman whose aim was to

suck every last drop of gratification as he died at her bound feet.

His last view of the room as the mask enclosed him was Xia Lao opening a lacquered chest and laying the instruments of her pleasure in the order that they were to be used. Knives, rods and instruments of agony laid in neat little rows as if the ordering sanctified their use.

No eyeholes pieced the mask, he was blind! Every move in the theatrical production that now unfolded would be a shock, a revelation that would traumatize him. His breath sang sharply through the wide open lips that caricatured his own lips and mouth.

He heard the swish of a cane in the air. That sound made his cock perk and jerk as the anticipation became intense and the first blow fell across his belly. The blows were not hard but they stung with evil stripes of agony as the metal embedded in the cane tore at him with its kiss of pain.

Every blow was a shock, it made him cry out in fear and agony inside the close clinging mask. Tears rolled down his cheeks, hot in the confinement of his world that had been reduced to the ambit of his skin and the darkness that had been forced on him.

Adam tried to stand but it was too much to stand. He fell to his knees, babbling his cries for her to stop this terrible pain.

The blows stopped, to be replaced by the feel of her hands on the wounds that the lash had imprinted into his flesh. They ran over every cut and lesion, testing the hurt and savouring the harm. He could hear her rasping breath as she enjoyed the work that she had done. The warm blood being spread by her fingers and painted into a pattern of annihilation. This marking

of Adam laid out the pattern for her next actions. It was a diagram of the evil that she would inflict on him.

The next minutes were long. All that he could sense was that the rasping of her breath had been replaced by moans of pleasure.

Those hands which had now marked his body in blood were reaming their mistress' aging body. Seeking out that climax that she deserved after all the exertion that she had been put to in creating her art.

Finally she orgasmed. The thoughts of her fevered brain imagined the results of her night's work. They were tableaux of dismemberment and anguish.

Could she resist bringing his apotheosis this night?

No.

It was too tempting to start and finish in just one moonless night of terror.

With shaking hands she bid her slave stand and then pushed him onto the bed where he would tonight, or some night in the near future, expire for her gratification.

His prone figure lay awaiting her pleasure. The mask hid his hateful foreign features and she imagined that the Emperor lay at her mercy. Now she would take her due from him, he would have a last burst of pleasure and then Xia Loa would send him to the next kingdom.

She could not make him last, her intense inner demon drove her to finish him tonight and extract the last ounce of soluble agony from him in one glorious orgasmic climax of suffering.

Adam felt her move over his mask. Flesh, slippery and swollen with lust was presented for the attention of his lips and tongue.

He was helpless under her, he could but serve, even if it was to die at her hands.

As he brought her to a new height of gratification he felt her hands grasp his prick and begin his last moments of pleasure.

Nails bit his tight flesh leaving their tracks as she pumped him to an immediate climax. The pain brought him to that edge, the hands pushed him over the cliff.

With her hands she spread his juices over his body and then licked the blood and semen from her fingers like a child licking the cake mix in the kitchen.

Now would begin the end. He felt her dismount and search amongst the tools of her pleasure for the item that would begin his trip to hell.

A pressure. Adam felt that she was pushing a cold form into him. His ass opened as it had been trained to do with Xi Ling and admitted the metal shape easily.

All the while Xia Lao muttered to herself and sang in soft tones. This was one of her favourite tools. The one that most destroyed a man without touching his precious prick or tender balls.

A sound of shouting from outside the house penetrated the bamboo walls but Xia Lao was totally engrossed in her work. The moment of truth had arrived and she started to slowly turn a small wheel on the mechanism.

Adam started in fear and shock as the bud that she had placed in him started, slowly, to open into a flower. It forced him open with a smooth force that was irresistible. The clenching of his muscles cramped Adam but the turn of the worm wheel was overwhelming, an order of force above and beyond his powers of resistance.

As she worked, Xia Lao could feel that familiar feeling in her cunt. It was gathering, that exultation of pain. Soon he would start to split and arch in agony and at that moment she would climax as if a thousand tongues worked on her with all the skill of a courtesan.

The sounds of shouting grew louder, distracting her at last from that final turn of the wheel that would create a pain so intense that the helpless, faceless victim would surrender his humanity.

She turned to face the door as someone entered. He heard her enquiry. He heard the sound of that evil woman being spitted hard on a spear.

Her killer not wishing to waste a shot on such poor game.

Adam heard more shouts, a noise of shots and then he came to rest on a part of the penetrating metal that stood proud of his forced ass. That sudden movement pushed the device further in and he fainted as the pain took him beyond his limits, great as they were.

Part The Fourteenth.

The 32nd Sikh Pioneers.

So what else is there to say? Precious little! But I will relate Adam's escape in brief as you may well be curious as to how he left the hateful middle land that is known as China. Rest assured that his travails were over since by good fortune he had become mixed in the war that was spreading over even the most remote parts of that huge land.

After the raiders of Commander of the White Rose Zhang Xiliang had taken what they wanted, women gold and silver tael, they left behind that which was of no value. Amongst those things was the bound body of Adam. They left him for dead with a steel collar for his neck and bonds of leather.

When he awoke it was daylight. The mask was gone, cut off by one of the raiders leaving a scar which trailed from jaw to cheek. That the house had not burned was a mercy, that he still lived was the supreme fortune of his life.

A dull pain in his rear told him that the pear of agony was still embedded in him and the body of Xia Lao told him the story of his luck. Staggering, he found her knives. Knives of dull steel, sharpened as razors or saws that had been intended for his flesh but now served to free him of their fear.

Cutting the leather and loosening the pear he became a free man for the first time in months. But Adam was bereft of all that he needed to escape. Money, clothes and the simple use of the Chinese language.

How could he know that he was on the very borders of the British Empire? That between them, Xi Ling and Xia Lao had transported him across the country to be on the strip of

indeterminate ownership that lay between Assam and western China.

So as he staggered in a discarded peasant costume and wondered even which direction he should be walking he heard the clout of hooves on paving and the shouts of officers as a small troop of lancers drew up.

Adam looked from his hiding place as the troopers in their blue and yellow uniforms, resplendent with turban, lance and carbine milled around inspecting the damage that the raiders had left. Clearly these smart soldiers were not the ragtag Chinese troops and raiders and their skin was dark marking them as from the sub-continent.

Their uniforms marked them as British.

Slowly he climbed into view to be quickly surrounded by the cavalry troopers. One of them, clearly the commander, approached him with a quizzical look.

“Thank God!”

It was all he could think of to say to these stern men, his saviours.

“Lance Naik of the 17th Lancers, on attachment to the 25th Indian and Madras Pioneers. At *your* service!” his accent was clipped and Oxford, “May I ask, what the devil an Englishman dressed as a coolie is doing here in Angasti?”

The End

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