

In *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, love is not equated with goodness. In fact, it is "love," or what is described as such, that most hinders Shen Te. The theme of love as a weakness is introduced in Scene 2 as the policeman describes the problem with Shen Te's lifestyle. "Miss Shen Te lived by selling herself... it is not respectable. Why not? A very deep question. But, in the first place, love - love isn't bought and sold like cigars, Mr. Shui Ta." This is also a reference to the play's original title, "Die Ware Liebe," which translates to "Love as a Commodity."

The theme of love as a weakness is emphasized with regard to Shen Te and Shu Fu in the beginning of Scene 4. Shen Te is walking home from Yang Sun's house and everything seems pleasant to her because she is, as she says, in love: "They say you walk on air when you're in love but it's even better walking on the rough earth, the hard cement." In Scene 4, Yang Sun will reveal to Shui Ta that he plans to abandon Shen Te and take her money. After he leaves, Shui Ta says, "One weakness is enough, and love is the deadliest." Meanwhile, Shu Fu speaks of his love for Shen Te for the first time: "I begin to suspect I am in love with her. She is overpoweringly attractive!"

The issue of gender comes to the forefront during Scene 4, when Yang Sun interacts with Shui Ta in a completely different manner than that in which he interacts with Shen Te, Shui Ta defends his cousin (himself) by saying, "She is a human being, sir! And not devoid of common sense!" However, Yang Sun answers, "Shen Te is a woman: she is devoid of common sense. I only have to lay my hand on her shoulder, and church bells ring." Moreover, when Shen Te returns and Yang Sun reminds her of how he loves her, she says, "Forgive me, Mr. Shu Fu, I want to go with Mr. Yang Sun." She proves Yang Sun's rude characterization of her correct by ignoring the horrible things he said about her to Shui Ta. They exit as she sings to the audience, "I don't want to know if he loves me / I want to go with the man I love."

Love is represented as a weakness in Scene 6. After the would-be wedding guests depart, Yang Sun makes a fake announcement, explaining that the ceremony is postponed because Shui Ta has not arrived, but "also because the

bride doesn't know what love is." He is making the point to Shen Te that if she loved him, she would sell her shop to support him in his dream of becoming a pilot in Peking. Nevertheless, it is clear to the audience that it is Yang Sun himself who does not know what love is, since he has betrayed Shen Te.

Wong is aware that love is a weakness and he reveals this to the gods in Scene 7a. They ask him how he wants them to help Shen Te, and he suggests, "Well, um, good-will, for instance, might do instead of love?" This is because Shen Te's love for Yang Sun has created so many problems for her. This belief is reaffirmed by Shui Ta as he offers Yang Sun a job "in consideration of my cousin's incomprehensible weakness" for him. It is ironic that Shui Ta is able to recognize this weakness, yet as Shen Te he still acts on it.