

*On the Role of Religion in Tang Tales:*

*An Introduction to Zhang Du's Xuanshi zhi 宣室志*

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*An Introduction to Zhang Du's Xuanshi zhi 宣室志*  
written by Fletcher John Coleman  
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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we  
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*On the Role of Religion in Tang Tales: An Introduction to Zhang Du's Xuanshi zhi* 宣室志

Thesis directed by Professor Paul W. Kroll

### **Abstract**

Despite containing some of the most fascinating tales within the anomaly account genre, scholarship on the *Xuanshi zhi* remains very limited. Attributed to the Tang dynasty official Zhang Du, the work has survived in several editions for a total of 205 stories that address a wide variety of issues. However, only a handful of the longest and most influential tales have been subjected to critical examination and virtually no studies of the entire collection exist. The goal of this thesis is to address the background and textual transmission of the work while also analyzing the major theme of religion within the collection. I provide extensive background information on the collection and author, include an index and classification system, and translate and analyze 63 religious tales. Given the limited extant scholarship, it is my goal to provide an overall characterization of the work based on its background and themes.

## Acknowledgements

Although I recognize that this is but a Master's thesis, it serves as the culminating project for the past three years I have spent at the University of Colorado, Boulder. I came into this program unsure of myself and my abilities, questioning whether or not I would be able to continue on in the field of Chinese studies. While it is my nature to remain doubtful of myself, I am indebted to the faculty of the ALC department at the University of Colorado for the kindness and patience they have shown in helping me to greatly develop my skills during my time here. They have kindled an interest in materials I never even knew to exist prior to my arrival in the department and taught me numerous invaluable lessons about what it means to be a scholar and colleague in academia.

Professors Paul Kroll and Antje Richter bear special mention with regard to the project at hand. It was in Professor Richter's course on medieval anomaly accounts that I first encountered the material I have dealt with in this thesis. She continued to nurture my interest in the subject through a guided reading course and has always made herself available to answer my many questions. I am likewise indebted to Professor Kroll for his enthusiastic willingness to undertake this thesis with me. I could not have completed this project without his steadfast encouragement and insight on all aspects of Tang dynasty literature and history. Thanks are due also to Professor Matthias Richter for agreeing to serve on my committee. His comments have always helped broaden my views of the materials we have examined together. Although the aims of this thesis are humble in nature, if it does nothing more than show some marginal return on the time that these individuals have invested in me, I will look back and consider it a personal success. The only parts of this project for which I wish to take full credit are the errors that surely remain.

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**Table One: List of Commonly Used Citation Abbreviations**

Abbreviation	Title
<i>XSZ</i>	<i>Xuanshi zhi</i> 宣室志
<i>ZHSJ</i>	<i>Zhonghua shuju</i> 中華書局
<i>BH</i>	<i>Bai Hai</i> 稗海
<i>BBCS</i>	<i>Baibu congshu</i> 百部叢書
<i>CSJC</i>	<i>Congshu jicheng</i> 叢書集成
<i>TPGJ</i>	<i>Taiping guangji</i> 太平廣記
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Jiu Tang shu</i> 舊唐書
<i>XTS</i>	<i>Xin Tang shu</i> 新唐書
<i>QTW</i>	<i>Quan Tang wen</i> 全唐文
<i>ZTDZ</i>	<i>Zheng tong dao zang</i> 正統道藏

## I. Introduction

Battling factionalism at court and regional threats across the empire, the Tang dynasty faced a period of notable decline over the course of the 9th century. At court, increasing entrenchment of political cliques limited the effectiveness of government officials in the face of the rising power of palace eunuchs. Failed attempts to break apart political parties and quash the influence of eunuchs led to further limitations on the power of the emperor. Struggles at court caused sustained crises over the line of imperial succession as rival factions vied to place their favored son upon the throne. With trouble brewing at court, complications boiled over on the borders of the empire as the Tibetans, Turks, and other groups challenged the authority of the Tang. Despite managing to quell major unrest until the final decades of the 9th century, the power of the Tang court was further weakened by its reliance on a system of regional military governors, who were often as much of a threat to the throne as they were supporters of it. Ultimately the court completely lost control as it faced widespread unrest in the closing decades of the century, inaugurating the period of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a more in depth description of the Tang dynasty in its waning years, see *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 3, Sui and T'ang China, 589-906, Part I*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 682-762.

Although the power of Tang court waned after the opening decades of the 9th century, population, trade, and cultural growth waxed strong until major natural disasters and rebellions in the latter half of the century crippled the empire. As was the case in the early Tang, major cities throughout the empire were still cosmopolitan confluences of international trade and culture. It is against this contradictory backdrop of court intrigue, military uncertainty, and cultural internationalism that the civil official Zhang Du 張讀 (*jinshi* 852) lived and wrote. Based on the little surviving evidence concerning Zhang Du's personal life, it is known that he spent his early years serving in relatively minor regional appointments before rising to positions in the Palace Secretariat and the Ministry of Rites. Zhang Du was also the grandson and great-great grandson of the much more famous officials, Zhang Jian 張薦 (744-804) and Zhang Zhuo 張鷟 (660-740). These two officials served in high positions in earlier Tang courts and were particularly known for their literary accomplishments. Continuing the tradition of his illustrious ancestors, Zhang Du's most famous achievement remains the compilation of a collection of strange tales known as the *Xuanshi zhi* 宣室志, which has been classified as part of the *zhiguai* 志怪 genre.

Borrowing a term first coined by Robert Campany, *zhiguai* are well described in English as “anomaly accounts.” These types of tales often present pseudo-historical renditions of strange and miraculous occurrences, omens, and illnesses that were said to have transpired throughout the empire. They are typically cited as having originated from an oral storytelling tradition that later developed as a mode of writing during the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420), with the prototypical collection being Gan Bao's 干寶 (d. 335) *Soushen ji* 搜神記.<sup>2</sup> Early anomaly accounts, their method of transmission, and development in the context of the Tang dynasty *xiaoshuo* 小說 tradition has been the subject of a number of scholarly studies over the past decade, including a book by Robert Campany and an

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<sup>2</sup> For an introduction, analysis, and translation of this collection, see Kenneth J. DeWoskin and J. I. Crump Jr., *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).



important dissertation by Sarah Allen.<sup>3</sup> The literary style of tales often mirrors that of historical writing, and events are portrayed with no skepticism towards their plausibility or veracity. Rather, strange events are relayed in a matter-of-fact manner as they relate to and explain the world at large. Stories are also often vouchsafed by alleged eyewitnesses, named either directly or indirectly within the tales.

The *Xuanshi zhi* is no exception to this pseudo-historical standard, presenting many remarkable stories that concern historical events from Zhang Du's life and the immediate past. These events include omens portending disasters at court, rebellions amongst the military circuit governors, and strange adventures of famous people of the time. Thus, the *Xuanshi zhi* and other anomaly collections provide a rare window into historical events outside official modes of historical writing. Furthermore, given that many tales were likely written down from an oral storytelling tradition and exchanged within a manuscript culture, they also provide a unique perspective in terms of broader reactions in society to historical events.

However, beyond its historical interest, the *Xuanshi zhi* also has a great deal of literary value. Although it is comprised mostly of very short accounts, the collection also contains longer narrative tales of a kind that were classified as *chuanqi* 傳奇. This distinction was made by scholars to highlight the major differences in literary qualities found between earlier *zhiguai* tales and the literary developments that occurred during the height of their popularity in the mid and late Tang. Furthermore, scholars tend to note that the "finest" Tang *chuanqi* are typically love stories that move away from central issues of the supernatural.<sup>4</sup> However, much work has been done to show that these genre distinctions were largely applied by later scholars and provide little value added to understanding the context in which the tales themselves were created. The various literary forms of anomaly accounts are closely related to

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<sup>3</sup> In particular, see Robert Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), and *Signs from the Unseen Realm* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 17. See also Sarah Allen, "Tang Stories: Tales and Texts" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> See Daniel Hsieh, *Love and Women in Early Chinese Fiction* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2008), 28.

one another and were not likely seen as separate entities, if entities at all, at the time of their creation.<sup>5</sup> Although it is not pertinent to separate out the *Xuanshi zhi* into various “genres” of tales, it is extremely interesting to read the collection with an eye for the variety of formal qualities found therein. Furthermore, although they have received little attention, many outstanding tales in longer narrative format that have nothing to do with love appear in the collection.<sup>6</sup> The tales in the *Xuanshi zhi* not only depict a society undergoing a period of increasingly drastic social change but also provide a window into the development of Chinese literature during the late Tang.

Despite the literary and historical value of the *Xuanshi zhi*, scholarship to date remains very limited. Counting every tale attributed to the *Xuanshi zhi* in extant collections, there are a total of two-hundred and five stories on a wide variety of topics. However, only a few of the most lengthy tales have been subject to any sort of critical examination, with preference given to those featuring fox romances.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, only one substantial textual study of the collection exists in Chinese or Western languages.<sup>8</sup> Because of the dearth of scholarly literature on the lineage of Zhang Du and the *Xuanshi zhi* itself, I wish to offer first and foremost a broad overview of the collection in my subsequent analysis.

My study begins by addressing Zhang Du’s background, the known details concerning the creation of the collection, the textual transmission of surviving editions, and a brief thematic breakdown of the tales in the collection according to the *Taiping guangji* classification system. I am indebted to the historical and textual analysis that Li Jianguo has completed on the *Xuanshi zhi*, but I will call into question several assertions he and other scholars have made concerning compilation and dating. From there, I have translated the largest identifiable grouping of stories within the collection—religious tales.

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of this issue, see “Tang Stories,” 5-7, 49-51.

<sup>6</sup> I provide translation and analysis of what I would consider to be several of these stories when addressing “problematizing tales.”

<sup>7</sup> See *Love and Women in Early Chinese Fiction*, 28-30.

<sup>8</sup> See Li Jianguo 李建國, *Tang Wudai zhiguai chuanqi xulu* 唐五代志怪傳奇叙錄 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1993). This work will be frequently cited and is the most reliable and complete introduction to the textual history of the *Xuanshi zhi* that exists to date.

These stories center on various religious figures, beliefs, doctrines, and practices related to Buddhism and Daoism and comprise fifty-eight of the two-hundred and five tales within the collection. I have divided the tales between Buddhist and Daoist and organized them thematically, beginning each section with a brief discussion of my thematic groupings. I have selected these tales precisely because they make up the largest corpus of stories and also provide a broad sample of the various literary forms found within the collection.

Following my translations, I tackle the issue of whether or not this collection can be identified as primarily “religious” in motivation and accompany my discussion with additional translations of what I deem problematic tales. Finally, I will engage with ideas that have been put forward by Sarah Allen concerning Tang anomaly accounts. Particularly, I will examine the relationship of tales to broader events of public concern, the issue of authorship of individual tales within the collection, and the supposed development of fictional writing during the Tang.

It is not within the scope of my present research to provide a complete translation of the collection. Rather than tackle all of the unique questions raised by the *Xuanshi zhi*, the present study is at its heart a translation project that I hope will heighten interest in the literary value of an otherwise neglected work.

## II. Family History

As mentioned in the introduction, relatively little information survives concerning Zhang Du as a historical individual. He appears only briefly in the basic annals and “*yiwen zhi*” 藝文志 sections of the Tang standard histories with regard to his official promotions and literary achievements.<sup>9</sup> He also receives very brief mention in a number of other sources concerning the exact year he received his *jinshi*

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<sup>9</sup> See *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書, ed. Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946) et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 19.702, 704 and *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, ed. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩 (1007-1072) et al. (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 161.4982. Hereafter abbreviated *JTS* and *XTS* respectively.

進士 degree, which is cited as the sixth year of the Dazhong reign period of Emperor Xizong (852).<sup>10</sup> In his study of the textual history of the *Xuanshi zhi*, Li Jianguo goes to great lengths to use these sources to provide firm dates for Zhang Du's life. However, he very much relies on taking biographical sources at face value when drawing his conclusions. For example, the *Tang qieshi* 唐闕史 states that Zhang Du was "but a lad of nineteen" when he received his *jinshi* degree.<sup>11</sup> Citing this as proof, Li Jianguo then backdates Zhang Du's birth to 834. While this certainly provides a rough date, I am wary of taking such statements as completely truthful. As with character motifs in the standard histories, saying a man received his degree at a young age also functions as general praise of his intellectual acumen.

However, along with the date of Zhang Du's *jinshi* degree, the basic annals of Emperor Xizong in the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 also provide some specific information as to when he flourished as an official. Zhang Du is noted as having been appointed to the Palace Secretariat in the fifth year of the Qianfu reign period of Emperor Xizong (878). He was then promoted to the position of Gentleman-attendant in the Ministry of Rites at the outset of the Zhonghe reign period (881). The *Jiu Tang shu* states that the highest position Zhang Du received was Assistant-director of the Left in the Department of State Affairs. However, he is also said to have been recalled to the capital to take up a position in the Academy of Scholarly Worthies and died while serving in this capacity, which Li Jianguo uses to speculate a rough date of death.<sup>12</sup> Given the vagueness of a number of the above sources and reliance on statements which could be inferred as nothing more than character motifs, I remain most comfortable only in giving the date of Zhang Du's *jinshi* degree and the known years in which he received his promotions. It remains tenuous to extrapolate too closely the specific dates of his birth and death.

Much of the information above concerning Zhang Du's life and official appointments is supported in his biographies in the two Tang histories. As the longest surviving accounts of his life, they

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<sup>10</sup> For quotations from and an analysis of these texts, see *Tang Wudai*, 3.809-810.

<sup>11</sup> See Gao Yanxiu 高彥休 (b. 854), *Yulan Tang que shi* 御覽唐闕史 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1966), 1.20A.

<sup>12</sup> See XTS 161.4982 translated below.

are worth translating in their entirety. In both Tang histories, his biography is appended to that of his grandfather, Zhang Jian. While several pages are devoted to the exploits of his grandfather and his great-great grandfather, Zhang Du only receives passing mention at the very end of his relatives' biographies. They appear as follows:

希復子讀，登進士第，有俊才。累官至中書舍人、禮部侍郎，典貢舉，時稱得士。位終尚書左丞。<sup>13</sup>

Xifu's son Du attained the rank of *jinshi* and was of outstanding talent. He accumulated offices to the point of Secretary in the Palace Secretariat and Attendant-gentleman of the Ministry of Rites, administered palace examinations, and at the time was said to possess the mind of a gentleman. His final position was Assistant-director of the Left in the Department of State Affairs.

孫讀，字聖用，幼穎解。大中時第進士，鄭薰辟署宣州幕府。累遷禮部侍郎。中和初為吏部，選牒精允。調者丐留二年，詔可，榜其事曹門。後兼弘文館學士，判院事，卒。<sup>14</sup>

Jian's grandson was Du, whose style name was Shengyong,<sup>15</sup> was intelligent and understanding as a child. During the time of the Dazhong reign period of Emperor Xuanzong (847-859),<sup>16</sup> he received his *jinshi* degree, and Zheng Xun<sup>17</sup> appointed him as his secretary in Xuanzhou.<sup>18</sup> He was transferred to the position of Gentleman-attendant of the Ministry of Rites. At the

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<sup>13</sup> *JTS* 149.4026.

<sup>14</sup> *XTS*, 161.4982.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Zhang Du's style name is often given as Shengpeng 聖朋 as a result of the brief introduction given to the collection in the *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*. The *Siku* is clearly using the *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志 as their source for this information; however, the *Junzhai* is the only early source that uses the style name of Shengpeng instead of Shengyong. Thus, it would seem that Shengyong is more likely accurate. See *Tang Wudai*, 3.808 and *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要, comp. Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724-1805) et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 142.2941.

<sup>16</sup> Note that this could also refer to the time during which Emperor Yizong was on the throne and shared the same reign name before initiating the Xiantong reign period (860-874).

<sup>17</sup> Zheng Xun 鄭薰 (*jinshi* 828) was an official who served in high capacity in the Palace Secretariat and the Ministry of Rites during the reigns of Emperors Wuzong (r. 840-847) and Xuānzong (r. 846-859) before being driven out to exile in Yangzhou by rival court factions. He was later rehabilitated by Emperor Yizong (r. 859-873) and returned to serve at court. Zheng Xun has no individual biography in the *JTS* but does have a short entry in the *XTS*. See *XTS* 177.5288.

<sup>18</sup> Xuanzhou was located in present day Xiancheng, Anhui.

beginning of the Zhonghe reign period (881-885), he served in the Ministry of Civil Appointment and was perfect in his selection of officials. He was transferred but requested to remain at his appointment for two years. It was permitted by imperial edict and notice of his service was posted on his department's gate. Later on, he served concurrently as a scholar in the Institute for Advancement of Literature and the Academy of Scholarly Worthies and died holding this position.

In each case, these passages offer little direct information beyond a rough historical time period and an outline of his official service. However, what I find most interesting with regard to the content and construction of the *Xuanshi zhi* is the lineal narrative created in the remainder of his relatives' standard history accounts. That is to say, by virtue of the overall accounts of Zhang Du and his relatives, what is said about his own character? First, Zhang Du's own work with anomaly accounts can be found to have antecedents amongst the literary achievements of his ancestors. His great-great grandfather, Zhang Zhuo, is credited with the composition of the unofficial history, the *Chaoye qianzai* 朝野僉載. Within the *Chaoye qianzai*, there are a number of tales that read very similarly to anomaly accounts and are even borrowed into the *Xuanshi zhi*. Even more noteworthy, the famous *chuanqi*, "Youxian ku" 游仙窟, was also allegedly written by Zhang Zhuo. Additionally, Zhang Jian is credited in the biography with a work by the name of the *Lingguai ji* 靈怪集. From the title of the work and its fourteen surviving passages, it is evident that it was also primarily concerned with anomaly accounts.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, the *Tang queshi* also states that Zhang Du was related on his mother's side to the famous statesman, Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (780-849), who compiled another collection of anomaly accounts, the *Xuanguai lu* 玄怪錄.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See *JTS* 149.4025 and also *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, comp. 李昉 (925-996) et al., (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 68.420 and 280.2230. Hereafter abbreviated *TPGJ*.

<sup>20</sup> See *Tang Que shi*, 1.20A, and also *XTS* 59.1542.

Based on these attributions, Zhang Du appears in a lineage of several generations of relatives concerned with nonstandard historical accounts and records of the strange.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the manner in which Zhang Du's predecessors are characterized in their shared biography is also quite interesting. In the case of both Zhang Zhuo and Zhang Jian, their biographies do not present completely rosy pictures of their character. While each is noted for his intelligence and service to the state, they are said to have been outspoken and incorrigible. For example, Zhang Zhuo's literary fame is tempered by the following evaluations in each of the Tang histories:

然性褊躁，不持士行，尤為端士所惡，姚崇甚薄之。開元初，澄正風俗，薦為御史李全交所糾，言薦語多譏刺時，坐貶嶺南。刑部尚書李日知奏論，乃追敕移於近處。<sup>22</sup>

However, [Zhang Zhuo] was by nature narrow-minded and short tempered and did not maintain proper scholarly conduct. He was particularly disliked by upright scholars, and Yao Chong<sup>23</sup> especially looked down on him. At the beginning of the Kaiyuan reign period of Emperor Xuanzong (712-742), when customs and practices were being clarified and corrected concerning the present times, Zhuo was denounced by the Imperial Censor, Li Quanjiao.<sup>24</sup> [Li] said that Zhuo's words were full of criticism about the present, and subsequently Zhuo was demoted and sent to Lingnan.<sup>25</sup> The Minister of Punishments, Li Rizhi,<sup>26</sup> sent up a memorial to the Emperor, following which imperial orders were sent recalling [Zhuo] to nearby locales. During the Kaiyuan period, he died while serving as the Vice-director of the Transit Bureau.

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<sup>21</sup> Some of these points have also been noted by Li Jianguo, see *Tang Wudai*, 3.833.

<sup>22</sup> *JTS* 149.4023.

<sup>23</sup> Yao Chong 姚崇 (650-721) was a major official during the Tang who began his career under Taizong and served as minister for many courts thereafter. He resigned in 716 but retained a great deal of influence in the government. See *JTS* 916.3021 and *XTS* 124.4381.

<sup>24</sup> Very little biographical material concerning Li Quanjiao 李全交 appears to exist. Beyond the reference here, he is also mentioned in the *XTS* as being one of the "three leopards," a group of particularly cruel and harsh censors known for torture. See *XTS* 209.5914.

<sup>25</sup> Lingnan indicates area south of the Five Passes (*Wu jun* 五嶺), which covers most of present day Guangdong and Guangxi provinces.

<sup>26</sup> Li Rizhi 李日知 (d. 715) was a Tang official who served as a chancellor beginning during the reign of Wu Zetian (r. 690-705) and ultimately requested retirement under Emperor Xuanzong in 712. Anecdotes particularly relate his benevolence to subordinates serving under him. See *JTS* 188.4926 and *XTS* 116.4241.

驚屬文下筆輒成，浮豔少理致，其論著率詆誚蕪猥，然大行一時，晚進莫不傳記。<sup>27</sup>

Zhuo composed prose with an agile brush but it was excessively showy and few principles were conveyed. His treatises were rash and full of satirical libel and overgrown with the obscene. However, they were widely circulated for a time, and there were none amongst the younger generations who did not pass on and record them.

While character depictions in standard histories should not be taken as literal accounts of the true nature of historical figures, it is interesting to see that Zhang Du is placed in a lineage of loyal officials but ones who were of peculiar character. The Tang standard histories paint a picture of a family of officials concerned with nontraditional affairs and events in their literary works. Although one does not find much direct information about Zhang Du in his biographical passages, there is a lineal narrative of character-type that reinforces the literary concerns of the family. Regardless of questions of historical veracity in either the *Jiu Tang shu* or the *Xin Tang shu*, when viewed in the light of historical narrative, these passages still contain information about the heritage and background motivations for Zhang Du's compilation of the *Xuanshi zhi*. He was of a family whose character was remarkable in nature and unusual in their literary concerns.

### III. Textual Transmission

The final major topic that needs to be addressed before turning to the translations themselves is the matter of the textual transmission of the *Xuanshi zhi* and how it affects our understanding of the authorship of the collection itself. Of the work that has been done to date on the *Xuanshi zhi*, the few detailed studies that exist all deal primarily with the textual transmission of surviving editions and dating of the original formation of the collection. Li Jianguo's work remains the most detailed, and he has also collated all of the appearances of individual tales across other sources in which they appear.<sup>28</sup> However, several other brief backgrounds of the collection exist and put forward slightly different theories as to

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<sup>27</sup> XTS 161.4979.

<sup>28</sup> See "Tang Wudai," 3.813-832.



the origins of surviving editions.<sup>29</sup> Rather than reiterate all of the work that has been done by these scholars in an effort to date the collection and its surviving editions, I will instead focus on the most pertinent points about the original compilation, surviving editions, and their origins

Beginning first with the potential timing of the original compilation of the collection, two main opinions have formed. The first was put forward by Wang Meng'ou in his broader work on Tang *xiaoshuo*. He notes that the latest exact date cited within the *Xuanshi zhi* occurs in the story concerning Hou Daohua and is in the fifth year of the Dazhong reign period of Emperor Xuānzong (851).<sup>30</sup> Other stories also corroborate this reign period.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the *Junzhai dushu zhi* also attributes an original preface to the collection said to have been written by Zhang Du's cousin, Miao Taifu 苗台符. Miao Taifu purportedly died in either the seventh or ninth year of the Dazhong reign period (853 or 855).<sup>32</sup> These dates would seem to suggest that the *Xuanshi zhi* was completed sometime between 851 and 855. However, Li Jianguo and other scholars have noted that a tale attributed to the *Xuanshi zhi* details the death of the poet, Cao Tang 曹唐.<sup>33</sup> This is pertinent given that Cao Tang is recorded as not having died until the Xiantong reign period (860-874).<sup>34</sup>

Before moving on, I would like to point out that there are problems with both sets of attributions. First, despite accounts detailing the relationship between Zhang Du and Miao Taifu, the *Junzhai dushi zhi* is the only early bibliographic source to attribute a preface to the *Xuanshi zhi*. No other

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<sup>29</sup> See *Xuanshi zhi* 宣室志, comp. Zhang Du 張讀 (jinshi 852), in *Duyi zhi Xuanshi zhi* 獨異志宣室志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), introduction; Wang Meng'ou 王夢鷗, *Tang ren xiaoshuo yanjiu* 唐人小說研究 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1978), v.4, 75-90; and Chen Jingnan 陳菁楠, "Xuanshi zhi yanjiu" 宣室志研究 (M.A. thesis, Fudan daxue, 2009). One of the most useful features of Chen Jingnan's dissertation is that it includes a list of all of the brief introductions that have been given to the *XSZ* and the few examinations of individual longer tales. See 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> See *XSZ* 9.1.

<sup>31</sup> For example, see *TPGJ* 351.2777 and 351.2778.

<sup>32</sup> For full examination of this source material, see "Xuanshi zhi yanjiu," 9-11. For an anecdote concerning the relationship between Miao Taifu and Zhang Du, see *TPGJ* 182.1357.

<sup>33</sup> This tale is included in the *TPGJ* but allegedly misattributed to the *Lingguai ji*. See *Tang Wudai*, 3.829, and *TPGJ* 249.2768.

<sup>34</sup> See *Tang shi jishi jiaojian* 唐詩紀事校箋, ed. Ji Yougong 計有功 (fl. 1121-1161) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1989), 58.1590.

source credits such a preface, nor does it survive in any remaining edition, and this leads me to approach this claim with some skepticism. Secondly, the story concerning Cao Tang does not appear in any surviving stand-alone editions of the *Xuanshi zhi* and is the only story with a date later than the Dazhong reign period. Thus, the only point that I wish to reiterate with confidence concerning any possible dating of an original compilation is that the latest dates that appear with any frequency in the collection are from the Dazhong reign period. As such, I would only venture to say that the work was likely not completed prior to the Dazhong period.

In my view, the dating, construction, and reliability of the surviving editions of the *Xuanshi zhi* is far more important than speculating on the ultimately unclear dating of an original compilation. The earliest stand-alone editions of the *Xuanshi zhi* that survive today are manuscript copies dating from the Ming dynasty. The first edition is a copy currently stored in Beijing Library that includes a preface stating it was copied from a Southern Song manuscript of the *Xuanshi zhi*.<sup>35</sup> The second version is a Ming manuscript edition that survived in Shang Jun's 商浚 collectanea, *Bai hai* 稗海, of which a facsimile edition has been published in the *Baibu congshu* 百部叢書 series.<sup>36</sup> Each of the manuscripts features the collection in ten *juan* with an addendum, for a total of one-hundred and fifty-four stories. Though character variants appear between the two editions, the number of tales included and the order in which they appear is identical between the manuscripts, suggesting that they were likely copied from the same source. Both manuscripts have passages that survive in dubious condition, with the *Bai hai* version containing slightly fewer character omissions overall.

The *Bai hai* edition was later copied into a great number of other collectanea, including the *Siku quanshu*, which features short editors' notes summarizing much of the information we have seen above

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<sup>35</sup> See *Beijing tushuguan guji shanben shumu* 北京图书馆古籍善本书目 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1987), 4.5.

<sup>36</sup> See *XSZ, Bai hai* 稗海, comp. Shang Jun 商浚 (dates unclear), in *BBCS* (Taipei: Yiwen, 1965), ser. 14.4.

concerning the known facts about Zhang Du's life and the compilation of the text.<sup>37</sup> These notes can also be found appended to many other publications of the *Xuanshi zhi*. Modern typeset editions have also been published. The first is an edition of the *Bai hai* manuscript in the *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成 series,<sup>38</sup> while the second is a Zhonghua shuju edition based on the *Bai hai* and collated against the Beijing Library manuscript and *Taiping guangji* versions of tales.<sup>39</sup>

Overall, the *Taiping guangji* survives as the most comprehensive source for the *Xuanshi zhi* tales. While the Ming editions only feature a total of one-hundred fifty-four tales, the *Taiping guangji* contains two-hundred and five tales allegedly pulled from the *Xuanshi zhi*. This brings us to the question of the authenticity of the Ming editions and the additional attributions made in the *Taiping guangji*. The earliest surviving complete edition of the *Taiping guangji* also dates from the Ming and was noted by its editors as being based on fragments of dubious quality.<sup>40</sup> However, it seems unlikely that the *Taiping guangji* would manage to misidentify fifty-one tales from the *Xuanshi zhi*. Given that versions are not fragmentary, the drastic discrepancy in the number of tales suggests that the two Ming manuscripts of the *Xuanshi zhi* do not represent the original form of the collection.

Li Jianguo has addressed two differing arguments made as to the origins of the Ming editions. The first position suggests that the *Bai hai* manuscript was copied directly from the *Taiping guangji*. This would also suggest that the Beijing Library edition was copied from the *Taiping guangji* given the close similarity between the two Ming manuscripts.<sup>41</sup> Li Jianguo believes however that the two Ming editions were indeed copied from a Southern Song version given variance between the *Taiping guangji* and the manuscripts. However, he speculates that the Southern Song edition was in fact already a reconstruction of a lost original guided by the *Taiping guangji* and made to fit the ten *juan* structure

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<sup>37</sup> See again *Siku quanshu*, 142.2941.

<sup>38</sup> See *XSZ*, in *CSJC* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), v. 2703.

<sup>39</sup> See again *Duyi zhi Xuanshi zhi*.

<sup>40</sup> See *TPGJ*, editor's notes 1-3.

<sup>41</sup> See *Tang Wudai*, 3.810.

attributed to the original compilation. He points to unique character errors that occur across all three editions and the overall general similarities between tales, suggesting that Ming editors also added the addendum when they recopied it in order to help address the discrepancy in the number of tales between the manuscript and the *Taiping guangji*. The point concerning the addendum is further supported by the fact that no bibliographic entries for the *Xuanshi zhi* mention an addendum until after the Ming.<sup>42</sup>

Once again, I find it difficult to do anything beyond speculate as to who may have copied what and when in terms of the manuscript editions and the *Taiping guangji*. While there are enough differences in versions of certain tales between the manuscripts and the *Taiping guangji* to suggest that they were perhaps not copied from one another, following the rule of *lectio difficilior*, the manuscript versions typically contain the more difficult readings.<sup>43</sup> However, they contain far fewer stories on an order of magnitude that would suggest the *Taiping guangji* could not possibly have been copied from the surviving manuscripts or misattributed so many tales. This issue is further complicated by character errors and variants that appear across all three versions.

Given the problems that remain concerning the creation of the surviving editions of the *Xuanshi zhi*, I once again feel comfortable only in agreeing with the point that the versions which remain today are not reflective of an original compilation. The huge difference in the number of tales between editions and the presence of the addendum would seem to suggest that the Ming manuscripts were already a reconstruction derived from bibliographic evidence about the original compilation. These irreconcilable issues have actually guided my analysis of the surviving text as a whole. Given that there is little way to prove whether or not individual tales were included in the original collection, I have chosen to accept all two-hundred and five tales attributed in the *Taiping guangji* in my examination of the text. Even in instances where tales are also clearly included in other compilations that predate the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 3.810-811.

<sup>43</sup> For example, compare the wording choices between *XSZ* 3.9 and *TPGJ* 356.2819.

alleged creation of the *Xuanshi zhi*, I do not see this as an indication of misattribution in the *Taiping guangji*. Rather, it is quite possible that they were copied into the *Xuanshi zhi* as well. Because of the questionable nature of surviving editions of the *Xuanshi zhi*, I see no reason to be overly exclusive in attempting to reconstruct tales from an “original” text. An urtext simply does not survive.

#### IV. Thematic Breakdown

In order to obtain a more complete picture of the content and themes at play within the collection, I first set out to systematize each of the two-hundred and five tales attributed to the *Xuanshi zhi*. As the *Taiping guangji* is one of the largest compilations of anomaly accounts and other literature, it does contain an index of works according to topical motif. Borrowing this classification system, I first sorted the collection according to the *Taiping guangji* indexing system:

**Table Two: *Taiping guangji* Indexing System**

Category Title	Translation	<i>XSZ/TPGJ</i> Tale	Total Number of Tales under Header	Percentage of Total <i>XSZ</i> Collection
<i>kunchong</i> 昆蟲	swarms of crawlers	<i>XSZ</i> 1.1-5	5	2.5%
<i>zhiying</i> 徵應	responses as manifestations	<i>XSZ</i> 1.6-11, 8.10, 11.12	8	4%
<i>sheng hua</i> 聖畫	drawings of sages	<i>XSZ</i> 1.12	1	0.5%
<i>shenxian</i> 神仙	divine transcendents	<i>XSZ</i> 1.13-15, 8.11, 9.1-2 <i>TPGJ</i> 21.140, 44.276, 49.303, 413.269	10	4.5%
<i>shen</i> 神	spirits	<i>XSZ</i> 2.1-10 <i>TPGJ</i> 310.2455, 310.2455, 310.2456	13	<b>6.5%</b>
<i>chushou</i> 畜獸	animals and beasts	<i>XSZ</i> 2.11-15, 3.1-3, 8.1-6 <i>TPGJ</i> 445.3635	15	<b>7%</b>
<i>meng</i> 夢	dreams	<i>XSZ</i> 3.4-6 <i>TPGJ</i> 278.2203, 278.2204, 278.2210, 281.2238	7	3.5%
<i>yecha</i> 夜叉	<i>yaksha</i>	<i>XSZ</i> 3.7-10	4	2%
<i>shen hun</i> 神魂	spirits and souls	<i>XSZ</i> 3.11	1	0.5%
<i>baoying</i> 報應	responses as retribution	<i>XSZ</i> 3.12, 5.1-2, 8.9, 7.16-17 <i>TPGJ</i> 121.855	7	3.5%
<i>qin niao</i> 禽鳥	birds and fowl	<i>XSZ</i> 4.1-3, 10.17-18	5	2.5%

<i>shuizu</i> 水族	tribes of the water	<i>XSZ</i> 4.4-7	4	2%
<i>gui</i> 鬼	ghosts	<i>XSZ</i> 4.8-14, 6.1-5, 10.1-5 <i>TPGJ</i> 346.2737, 349.2767, 349.2768, 351.2777, 351.2778, 351.2778	23	<b>11%</b>
<i>cao mu</i> 草木	herbaceous and woody plants	<i>XSZ</i> 5.3-12	10	<b>5%</b>
<i>mingji</i> 銘記	engraved memorials	<i>XSZ</i> 5.13-17, 7.1-3	8	4%
<i>lei</i> 雷	thunder	<i>XSZ</i> 5.18, 7.4-8 <i>TPGJ</i> 394.3146	7	3.5%
<i>jin yu fu</i> 金玉附	gold and jade attachments	<i>XSZ</i> 6.6-7	2	1%
<i>bao</i> 寶	treasures	<i>XSZ</i> 6.8-11, 7.9, 11.1-2	7	3.5%
<i>zai sheng</i> 再生	rebirth	<i>XSZ</i> 6.12, 7.10-11 <i>TPGJ</i> 377.3002, 378.3005, 378.3006, 384.3060	7	3.5%
<i>yaoguai</i> 妖怪	strange grotesques	<i>XSZ</i> 7.12, 11.3-5	4	2%
<i>shizheng</i> 釋證	testimonies to <i>Shakya</i> (on the efficacy of Buddhist teachings)	<i>XSZ</i> 7.13-15, 9.9-10	5	2.5%
<i>hu</i> 狐	foxes	<i>XSZ</i> 8.7-8, 10.6-11	8	4%
<i>yi seng</i> 異僧	extraordinary monks	<i>XSZ</i> 9.3-8 <i>TPGJ</i> 96.642, 98.652, 98.654, 98.655	10	<b>5%</b>
<i>dingshu</i> 定數	preordained lot	<i>XSZ</i> 9.11	1	0.5%
<i>she</i> 蛇	snakes	<i>XSZ</i> 10.12-16	5	2.5%
<i>za qi yong</i> 雜器用	various utensils of use	<i>XSZ</i> 11.6-11 <i>TPGJ</i> 371.2946	7	3%
<i>daoshu</i> 道術	daoist arts	<i>TPGJ</i> 72.451, 73.457, 73.459, 74.461, 74.465, 75.468, 75.470, 75.471, 75.472	9	4%
<i>yiji</i> 異疾	extraordinary illnesses	<i>TPGJ</i> 220.1690	1	0.5%
<i>huanshu</i> 幻術	fantastic arts	<i>TPGJ</i> 285.2275	1	0.5%
<i>huo</i> 火	fire	<i>TPGJ</i> 373.2965	1	0.5%
<i>long</i> 龍	dragons	<i>TPGJ</i> 420.3424, 421.3426, 421.3430, 422.3438, 422.3438, 423.3441, 423.3442,	8	4%

		423.3443		
hu 虎	tigers	TPGJ 427.3476	1	0.5%

The tales fall into thirty-two categories dealing with a variety of different topics. Thanks to Edward Schafer’s overview of the *Taiping guangji* classification system, it is possible to quickly identify general descriptions of each category.<sup>44</sup> As might be expected for a collection of anomaly tales, the greatest percentage of stories are classified under the header of “ghosts,” which accounts for eleven percent of the collection. Only five categories have more than five percent of the tales appear within them and so seem to represent some of the most important themes within the collection

While these classifications provide a useful overview and introduction to characteristic features of tales introduced within the collection, they actually provide little information in terms of the theme being addressed within a particular tale. Many of the classification headers used by the *Taiping guangji* focus on a single theme despite dividing tales into separate categories. For example, a story classified under “tigers” may actually deal with the theme of karmic retribution. The table above is meant solely to direct readers to groups of tales that are often located near one another and share a particular identifying feature, and it should not be taken to illustrate groupings of thematic meaning within the work. Even a cursory reading of the collection reveals that the largest groups of tales within the *Xuanshi zhi* focus on the themes of Buddhism and Daoism. Thus, in my subsequent translations, I have identified and categorized fifty-eight stories concerning Buddhism and Daoism under thematic headings that better represent the motivations of the tales.

## V. Notes on Translation

Before turning to the translations themselves, I would like to clarify several points concerning my techniques and texts. In all cases where stories are taken from the first ten *juan* of the *Xuanshi zhi*, I

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<sup>44</sup> Edward Schafer, “The Table of Contents of the *T’ai p’ing kuang chi*,” *CLEAR* 2.2 (1980), 258-63. I am indebted to this work for its description of the contents of headers of the *TPGJ* and generally follow Schafer’s translation of headers as well. Refer to this article for brief descriptions of the contents of the majority of the headers found here.

have used the Zhonghua shuju edition as my base text. For stories that appear only in the *Taiping guangji*, I have, needless to say, taken it as my source. Because tales appear in the same order in all versions of the text outside of the *Taiping guangji*, whenever I cite from the first ten *juan* of the *Xuanshi zhi*, I give the *juan* number followed by the ordinal number under which the story appears within the *juan*.

Additionally, the following tales feature many locations and characters that are difficult to identify precisely. If information exists for a place or individual, I have provided it upon first appearance. I have also noted when no such information can be found. In instances of transliterations of Buddhist terms into Chinese from Sanskrit, I have typically provided the Sanskrit term rather than a transliteration. I have not, however, provided footnotes concerning the common Buddhist deities and beings that appear frequently in these texts. I would also like to point out that certain Chinese words reappear frequently but are translated differently depending on occasion. Given the variety of contexts and usages in which such characters are employed, I have found it nearly impossible to translate them identically each time. Instead, I have done my best to select translations based on the context of individual usage.

To this point, I have also made no effort to translate the title of the *Xuanshi zhi*. The name most ostensibly refers to the conversations held between Emperor Wendi of the Han (r. 180-157 B.C.E.) and the minister Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-169 B.C.E.) on the subject of the supernatural. These conversations supposedly took place in the *xuanshi*, a central hall located in the Weiyang Palace. However, halls by this name were used earlier for a variety of purposes. Among other purposes, they had served as a location where emperors issued proclamations, punishments, and received sacrifices.<sup>45</sup> These difficulties have led to a wide variety of translations of the title of Zhang Du's work, which tend to be

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<sup>45</sup> See *Taiping yulan* 太平禦覽, comp. Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1985), 174.978B.



general in nature to accompany many possible varieties of meanings.<sup>46</sup> I will not again refer to the title in English in this paper, but I might suggest a general translation of “Record of the Proclamation Chamber.”

Finally, for the discerning reader who wishes to track down the other major versions of the tales translated here, they may be quickly found using the follow index:

**Table Three: Index of Religious Tales**

Description	Juan /Ordinal #	Thesis Page	BH	CSJC	TPGJ
Wei Jun	1.4	50	1.3A	1.2	476.3920
Sage Painting	1.12	63	1.9A	1.6	213.1635
Lord Yin	1.13	96	1.10A	1.6	21.144
The Monk Qixu	1.14	140	1.11A	1.7	28.184
The 10 Transcendents	1.15	99	1.15A	1.9	29.188
Kaiye Temple	2.1	64	2.1A	2.11	304.2407
Li Hui	2.10	147	2.10A	2.16	308.2437
Lord Cui of Henei	2.11	76	2.10B	2.16	434.3523
The Gatekeeper	2.14	52	2.12B	2.18	437.3557
Old Man Zhao	2.15	53	2.13A	2.18	437.3558
Mr. Li	3.2	54	3.2B	3.20	440.3591
Lou Shide	3.4	148	3.3B	3.20	277.2194
Lu Zhen’s Cousin	3.5	25	3.4B	3.21	278.2209
Zhu Xian’s Daughter	3.9	65	3.8B	3.23	356.2819
Lord Zheng’s Daugher	3.11	107	3.11A	3.25	358.2837
Mr. Li of Heshuo	3.12	77	3.11B	3.25	125.883
Liu Zongyuan	4.5	55	4.4A	4.30	467.3850
Liu Yi	4.6	56	4.5A	4.31	467.3851
Liu Cheng	4.7	57	4.5A	4.31	470.3872
Dongguan	4.12	67	4.10A	4.34	346.2742
Xu Yuanzhang	5.5	108	5.5B	5.39	415.3386
Wu Yan	5.7	108	5.6A	5.40	416.3387
Kou Qianzhi’s Incriptions	5.13	100	5.10A	5.42	391.3125
Zhu Jizhen	6.12	81	613.B	6.54	376.2995
Daoxuan’s Dragon	7.5	27	7.4B	7.59	393.3138
Zhikong	7.6	27	7.4B	7.57	394.3152

<sup>46</sup> For example, Anthony Yu suggests “Records of a Palace Chamber.” See Anthony Yu, “‘Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit!’ Ghosts in Traditional Chinese Prose Fiction,” *HJAS* 47.2 (Dec. 1987), 400.

Wei Sixuan	7.9	126	7.6B	7.60	400.3219
The Emperor's Eggs	7.13	59	7.11B	7.63	101.678
Xu Wendu	7.14	83	7.12A	7.63	101.678
Layman Shang	7.15	29	7.13B	7.64	101.680
Ning Mian	7.16	90	7.14B	7.65	108.731
Lotus Sutra Skull	7.17	92	7.15B	7.65	109.747
Old Man Yang	8.6	135	8.7A	8.70	445.3637
Wang Dongwei	8.9	134	8.10B	8.72	133.947
Zhang Quansu	8.11	128	8.11B	8.73	31.201
Hou Daohua	9.1	130	9.1A	9.75	51.316
Zheng Youxuan	9.2	101	9.2A	9.75	52.322
Huizhao	9.3	30	9.4A	9.77	92.611
Tang Xiujing	9.4	37	9.7B	9.79	94.625
Wei Gao	9.5	42	9.10B	9.80	96.641
Great Master	9.6	43	9.11A	9.81	97.646
Master Jian	9.7	45	9.12B	9.82	97.649
Li Deyu	9.8	60	9.13A	9.82	98.651
10 Radiant Buddhas	9.9	71	9.14B	9.83	99.663
Master Daoyan	9.10	73	9.15A	9.83	100.674
Master Fearless	10.15	47	10.14B	10.93	457.3741
Fang Jian		105			44.276
Recluse Yuan		109			72.451
Recluse Cheng		111			73.457
Luo Xuansu		112			73.459
Mr. Lü		114			74.461
Shi Min		117			74.465
Retired Scholar Yang		119			75.468
Ping Jian		121			75.470
Mr. Wang		122			75.471
Mr. Zhou		124			75.472
Master Xin Seven		47			96.642
Master Yeguang		85			121.855
Mr. Hou		87			281.2238
Mr. Lu		49			285.2275
Faxi Temple		74			423.3442

## VI. Buddhist Tales

When reading the *Xuanshi zhi* in its entirety, it is difficult to ignore the attention directed toward Buddhism within the collection. Many stories address important Buddhist figures, deities, beliefs, and

values. However, because the classification system of the *Taiping guangji* is often organized by character motif rather than theme, the importance of Buddhism is not apparent through the simple overview that it provides and one must turn to the tales themselves. Li Jianguo and other have also noticed the strong presence of Buddhism in their textual analyses of the collection.<sup>47</sup> Because the presence of Buddhism has been noted by myself and other scholars, I have attempted here to identify what might be considered the entire corpus of Buddhist tales within the *Xuanshi zhi* itself.

Since I am necessarily subjective in my decision-making, I have done my best to cast a wide net in identifying whether or not a particular tale is Buddhist in nature. Specifically, I have looked for tales that take Buddhist monks as their protagonist, occur in a Buddhist setting, concern Buddhist deities and scriptures, or deal with an issue of particular doctrinal importance to Buddhism (such as vegetarianism). Although many of the tales mention Buddhism specifically, I have preferred to err on the side of including some that appear to be influenced by Buddhist principles and beliefs but do not mention them outright. After collecting all such tales, I gathered a total of thirty-eight stories, which make up about a fifth of the total collection—the largest such individual body of tales within the work. Many of these stories deal with similar themes, and I have identified and placed them into the following thematic groupings:

**Table Four: Occurrences of Buddhist Themes**

Theme	<i>XSZ/TPGJ</i> Tales under Theme
extraordinary monks	<i>XSZ</i> 3.5, 7.5, 7.6, 7.15, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7 10.15 <i>TPGJ</i> 96.642, 98.654, 285.2275
injunctions against killing animals	<i>XSZ</i> 1.4, 2.14, 2.15, 3.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 7.13, 9.8
extraordinary events at Buddhist temples	<i>XSZ</i> 1.12, 2.1, 3.9, 4.12, 7.1, 9.9, 9.10 <i>TPGJ</i> 423.3442
karmic retribution and reward	<i>XSZ</i> 2.10, 3.12, 6.12, 7.14 <i>TPGJ</i> 121.855, 281.2238
effectiveness of Buddhist scriptures	<i>XSZ</i> 7.15, 7.16
<b>Total Number of Tales: 38</b>	
<b>Percentage of Collection: 19%</b>	

<sup>47</sup> See *Tang Wudai*, 3.833 and “*Xuanshi zhi yanjiu*,” 4.

### **Extraordinary Monks**

This is the broadest category and thus features the most tales. Prototypical tales of this type tend to feature a Buddhist monk who has miraculous abilities that are the source of the main action of the tale. The monks are not necessarily the protagonist of the tale, but they are generally one of two main characters. Their powers are commonly credited directly to faith in the Buddha or a true identity as a Buddhist deity. The powers themselves range from longevity and protection from harmful forces to divine prognostication. In certain cases, the monks are not aware of their own special capabilities until an outside observer points them out. In other cases, these monks and deities cloak their identity with very un-Buddhist behavior until the conclusion of the tale. One will notice that there are generally other concerns at play in these tales as well, including political and historical events, but that the monk is crucial to the overall outcome of the narrative. For the more typical examples of this type of tale, see *XSZ* 7.6, 9.4, and 9.6.

### **Injunctions against Killing Animals**

This category is quite direct in its concern. Most typically, these tales provide cautionary messages against killing animals. The killing of animals is shown to result directly in illness and death of the perpetrator and his family. Animals often appear personified within dreams to plead their case. Within the dream, the personified creature typically requests mercy if they are about to be killed at the hands of a human or warn the human of their impending doom if they happen to have killed the animal already. In certain cases, the animals will cry out directly to humans for compassion, usually by calling upon Buddhist deities for mercy. For good representations of this type of tale, see *XSZ* 7.13 and 9.8.

Although the majority of tales serve as warnings against killing animals, a handful of tales also show the positive rewards of behaving kindly toward animals. In such cases, humans are typically rescued from unforeseen dire circumstances as the direct result of previous kindness towards animals. Interestingly, these tales tend to also include a straightforward moral clearly stated at their conclusion.

For example, see *XSZ* 3.2. In certain tales, themes of both punishment and reward appear together. In these tales, characters are first threatened or punished for their errant ways but are later rewarded for changing their behavior. *XSZ* 4.7 is a good example of such a tale. Overall, these tales are closely related to those that I have identified as karmic retribution, but the primary theme in every tale here remains not harming living creatures, whether it be for food or entertainment purposes.

### **Extraordinary Events at Buddhist Temples**

Like those tales concerning extraordinary monks, this category is also broad in the types of events that are dealt with in each story. However, the main thread running throughout each is that primary events occur in the setting of a Buddhist temple or shrine and are often intertwined with the location itself. Most typically, these stories address a miraculous occurrence during the construction, renovation, or decoration of a Buddhist temple. Often, the events show the temple to be blessed by the gods or serving as the living quarters of a divine being. For good examples of such stories, see *XSZ* 1.12 and 2.1. However, some of the longest tales I have classified into this section feature cursed or haunted sections of temples resulting in spirit journeys or abductions that nearly cause the death of the protagonist. Generally, the characters are rescued directly by divine intervention but are warned that they must increase their devotion to the faith. For example, see *XSZ* 4.12.

### **Karmic Retribution and Reward**

In this section, tales generally deal with punishment and reward resulting from accumulation of karmic deeds in present and previous lives. Rebirth is often crucial to these stories, as characters are punished for their misdeeds through rebirth into an undesirable form. In certain interesting cases, characters are unaware of the crimes that they have committed in previous lives but are still held accountable in their present incarnation. Furthermore, in tales where characters have committed extreme misdeeds, they are punished directly in the same life in which they have committed the crime even if they have reformed their ways. While these stories are similar to those dealing with injunctions

against killing animals, those found here more typically concern crimes such as slander, theft, and murder. Good examples of these types of tales include *XSZ* 2.1, 3.12, and *TPGJ* 121.855. In cases of karmic reward, protagonists are usually rescued from illness and other serious afflictions through personal or familial religious devotion or good works. For example, see *XSZ* 7.14.

### **Effectiveness of Buddhist Scriptures**

This last category is the smallest and most specific. It includes tales in which protagonists are rescued from affliction or cause a miraculous occurrence by calling on specific Buddhist teachings. The two scriptures found here are the Lotus and Diamond sutras. Perhaps the most remarkable point concerning this category is that tales in this format are also used humorously in other instances within the collection. Humorous adaptations of such tales will be further discussed in the section concerning “problematizing” tales.

Robert Campany has recently published an introduction to and complete translation of an overtly Buddhist collection of miracle tales from the end of the fifth century, the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 (*Records of Signs from the Unseen Realm*) by the scholar Wang Yan 王琰. In the final portion of his introduction to the collection, he addresses the issue of narrative types frequently employed within the collection.<sup>48</sup> Although Campany is dealing with a strictly Buddhist collection of tales, a number of concerns that he finds within the *Mingxiang ji* are also strongly reflected in the *Xuanshi zhi*. Particularly, he deals with the notion of *ganying* 感應, which he describes as “the idea that elements of the unseen world respond—often strikingly, visibly, miraculously—to the stimulus of human devotional activity and karmic merit or lack thereof.”<sup>49</sup> Campany notes that this term and others are frequently brought up directly in the *Mingxiang ji*. In the tales I have translated here, the notion is not brought up directly but is clearly a motivating force in many of the tales dealing with injunctions, retribution, and reward.

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<sup>48</sup> See *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 49-62.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

Campany has also pointed out and described a number of tale types, such as miraculous Buddhist images, rebirth, and ritual, which also appear in the *Xuanshi zhi*.<sup>50</sup> However, because the number of these individual tale types is quite small in the corpus of *Xuanshi zhi* Buddhist tales, I have chosen to group and describe them in the broader thematic categories found above. Nevertheless, Campany's own classification of tale types and analysis of what comprises a Buddhist collection remains quite relevant to my own work. Following the translations of Buddhist and Daoist tales, I will further address the issue of whether or not it is productive to think of the *Xuanshi zhi* as primarily Buddhist or "religious" in motivation based on observations about another type of tale found in the *Xuanshi zhi*.

### Translations of Buddhist Tales

#### XSZ 3.5

太子賓客盧尚書貞猶子，為僧。會昌中，沙汰僧徒，斥歸家，以蔭補光王府參軍。一夕，夢為僧時所奉師來慰，問其出處再三，告以佛氏淪破，已無所歸，今為一官，徒遣旦夕，期再落頂上髮，方畢志願。且泣且訴之，良久曰：「若我志果遂，興佛法。」語未竟，見八面屯兵，千乘萬騎，旌旗日月，衣裳錦繡，儀衛四合，真天子大駕。軍中人喧喧言「迎光王」。部整行列，以次前去。盧方駭愕不能測，遽驚覺。魂悸流汗，久之方能言。卒不敢泄於人。無幾，宣宗自光邸踐祚，錄王府屬吏。盧以例不拘常調格遷敘。自是，稍稍興起釋教寺宇僧尼舊制，一契夢中語。盧校夢中所謂本師，蓋參軍事府主近師弟子。故以為冥兆。豈神之意，以是微而顯乎。

The nephew of Mentor to the Crown-prince, Minister Lu Zhen,<sup>51</sup> was a monk. During the Huichang reign period of Emperor Wuzong (841-846), he was cast out of the brotherhood and forced to return home. But, relying on his illustrious forbearers, he found a position as an adjutant in the princely estate of Li Chen.<sup>52</sup>

One night, he dreamt that the master he had served during his time as a monk came to console him and then questioned him repeatedly about his reason for departing. He told his master that the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 51-59.

<sup>51</sup> Relatively little official biographical information survives concerning Lu Zhen 盧貞 (dates unknown), who was a poet during the Tang. Several of his works are extant and he does receive minor mention in the Tang histories, though he is not given a biography of his own. See *JTS* 17.577 and *XTS* 195.5591.

<sup>52</sup> Li Chen 李忱 (also known as Li Yi 李怡, 810-859, r. 846-859) was the future Emperor Xuānzong of the Tang. He was the thirteenth son of Emperor Xianzong (r. 806-820) and is generally considered the last capable emperor of the Tang, as those who came after him were generally too young to rule or exerted very little political and military influence. For Emperor Xuānzong's basic annals, see *JTS* 18.613 and *XTS* 8.245.

Buddhists had sunk under the forces of official repression and so he had nowhere to return to. Now he was an official who spent all day upon the road, but the time had arrived to again let down the hair atop his head,<sup>53</sup> and he was about to complete his vows. He cried and carried on for some time and, after a long while had passed, said: "If my ambitions were to be fulfilled, I would put forward the Way of the Buddha." Before he had even finished speaking, he saw soldiers arrayed all about him to the eight directions. There were a thousand chariots and ten thousand cavalrymen, their standards and flags reaching to the sun and moon, clothed in brocade and embroidery with an honor guard on all four sides, and there truly sat the great carriage of the Son of Heaven. Men from within the gathered army announced loudly: "Welcome the Illustrious Prince." The units formed rank into a line, marching out one after the other. He was dumbstruck beyond belief, unable to fathom what he had seen, and then suddenly awoke with a start. He was trembling to his core and covered in sweat and, after a while, was finally able to speak.

In the end, he dare not tell another soul. Yet, before long, Emperor Xuānzong ascended the throne from his princely estate and gave office to those who had been on his princely staff. Thereafter, he was frequently promoted without restriction based on his merit and service. From then on, he gradually renovated Buddhist temples and advanced the old system of monks and nuns in accordance with the oath he had made in his dream. Thinking closely about the old teacher that he had dreamt of, Lu thought that he resembled the master he served under while working as an adjutant on the princely staff. Therefore, he took it as an omen from the shadowy realm. Is it not then that the will of the gods is thus evident in the subtlest workings of things?

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<sup>53</sup> This passage refers to letting one's hair down from the official hatpin, here a sign of his willingness to give up official position and return to the Buddhist brotherhood.



## XSZ 7.5

唐劉禹錫云：僧道宣持律第一。忽一旦，霹靂繞戶外不絕，宣曰：「我持律更無所犯，若有宿業，則不知之。」於是褫三衣於戶外，謂有蛟螭憑焉。衣出而聲不已，宣乃視其十指甲，有一點如油麻者，在右手小指上。疑之，乃出於隔子孔中，一震而失半指。黑點，是蛟龍之藏處也。禹錫曰：「在龍亦善求避地之所矣，而終不免。則一切分定，豈可逃乎！」

Liu Yuxi<sup>54</sup> of the Tang said: "The monk Daoxuan<sup>55</sup> is foremost in upholding the Buddhist precepts. One morning, the sudden rumbling of thunder roiled outside of Daoxuan's door ceaselessly. Xuan said: 'I truly uphold the precepts without violation; if this is some past karmic issue, then I know nothing of it.' Thereupon, he stepped outside and took off his threefold robes, saying that there must be a flood dragon hiding within them. Though he took off his robes, the din still roared on without end. Xuan then took a look at his ten fingernails, and it appeared as though there was a spot the size of a sesame seed on the pinky finger of his right hand. Daoxuan thought this suspicious, and then the dragon came out from within the small hole. In a single clap of thunder, Daoxuan chopped off half his finger. The black spot was the lair of the flood dragon."

Yuxi said: "When a dragon is about, they are indeed skilled at finding hiding places. Yet, in the end they cannot escape. When everything is fated, how could they manage to flee?"

## XSZ 7.6

唐晉陵郡建元寺僧智空，本郡人，道行聞於里中，年七十餘。一夕，既闔關，忽大風雷，若起於禪堂，殷然不絕，燭滅而塵坌，晦黑且甚，簷宇搖震。矍然自念曰：「吾棄家為僧，迨茲四紀。暴雷如是，豈神龍有怒我者不然，有罪當雷震死爾。」既而聲益甚，複坐而祝曰：「某少學浮屠氏，為沙門迨五十餘年，豈所行乖於釋氏教耶！不然，且有黷神龍耶！設如是，安敢逃其死！儻不然，則願亟使開霽，俾舉寺僧得自解也。」言竟，大聲一舉，若發左右，茵榻傾糜，昏霾顛悖。由是驚懼仆地。僅食頃，聲方息，雲月晴朗。然覺有腥腐氣，如在室內，因燭視之，於垣下得一蛟，皮長數丈，血滿於地。乃是禪堂北有槐，高數十尋，為雷震死，循理而裂，中有蛟蟠之跡焉。

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<sup>54</sup> Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842) was a major poet, essayist, and statesman of the late Tang and was widely praised by his contemporaries. In addition to his poetic works, he was also involved in attempted political reformations during the late Tang. See *JTS* 150.4210 and *XTS* 168.5128.

<sup>55</sup> The monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667), who lived during the Sui and early Tang dynasty, is primarily known for his expanded literary biographies of eminent Buddhist monks, the *Xu gao seng zhuan* 續高僧傳. Though he does not appear in the standard histories, see *Tong zhi* 通志, comp. Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1162) (Beijing: Wuying dian, 1749), 67.1105A.

During the Tang, there was a monk by the name of Zhikong<sup>56</sup> from the Jianyuan Temple in the Jinling Commandery,<sup>57</sup> who was also originally from the same commandery. Word of his attainment of the Buddhist way was heard throughout the villages. When he was a bit more than seventy, one evening he had completely shut himself off when suddenly there rose up great wind and thunder as though stirring from within his meditation chamber. It was intense and did not let up, whipping up the dust and blowing out the candles. It grew pitch dark like a moonless night and the eaves shook and shuddered. Looking around in alarm, Zhikong said to himself: "I have abandoned my family to become a monk and some four decades have passed to this day. For there to be such violent thunder like this, is there not some divine dragon angry with me? Otherwise, if I have committed some offense, I ought be struck dead by a thunderclap!"

Thereupon, the cacophony grew ever louder, and Zhikong again sat and prayed: "This lowly monk has studied the ways of Buddha since his youth and has been a monk for more than fifty years. Have I in some way gone against the teachings of Buddha? If not, then there must be some wanton dragon! If that is the case, dare it attempt to flee its death! If that is not the case, then I wish that the clouds may be quickly lifted so that all the temple monks may extricate themselves." When he had finished speaking, a loud sound arose all at once, as though coming at once from both left and right. The mattresses and couches were overturned and spoiled, and a dusky haze descended topsy-turvy. Thereupon, Zhikong fell face-down to the earth in fear. In a flash, the noise began to diminish and the clouds and moon grew bright and clear.

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<sup>56</sup> Zhikong 智空 (dates unknown) appears with very little mention in sources concerning the time period. This is the only mention he receives in stories such as this, and he does not appear in any of the histories or religious canons. There is one passing mention of him on a stele from the Tang, see "Huang shan san zu ta ming," 黃山三祖塔銘 in *QTW* 440.4486a.

<sup>57</sup> Jinling Commandery was located in present day Changzhou, Jiangsu. Though there were a number of Jianyuan temples extant, there was a Jianyuan Temple said to have been constructed in the area during the reign of Emperor Gao of the Qi (r. 479-482). Thus, it was given its name, as Jianyuan was Emperor Gao's only reign period. See *Nan chao fo si zhi* 南朝佛寺志, ed. Sun Wenchuan 孫文川 et al. (Jiangsu: Guangling shu she, 2006), 3.1a.

Yet, it seemed as though there was some rancid stench coming from within the room. Taking up a candle to have a look, Zhikong saw that there was a dragon at the foot of the wall. It measured several *zhang* in length, and its blood spilled out all over the floor. He then discovered that there was a locust tree growing to the north of the meditation chamber measuring several dozen *xun* tall that had been destroyed by the thunderstorm. It was split along its grain, and the winding tracks of a flood dragon were found within its cracks.

#### XSZ 7.15

有商居士者，三河縣人。年七歲，能通佛氏書。里人異之。後廬於三河縣西田中，有佛書數百編，手卷目閱，未嘗廢一日。從而師者百輩。往往獨遊城邑，偕其行者，聞居士每運支體，壘然若戛玉之音，聽者奇之。或曰：「居士之骨，真鎖骨也。夫鎖骨運絡如蔓，故動搖之，體則有清越之聲，固其然矣。昔聞佛氏書言，佛身有舍利骨，菩薩之身有鎖骨。今商居士者，豈非菩薩乎？然葷俗之人，固不可辨也。」居士後年九十餘，一日，湯沐，具冠帶，悉召門弟子會食，因告之曰：「吾年九十矣，今旦暮且死，汝當以火燼吾屍。慎無逆吾旨。」門弟子泣曰：「謹聽命。」是夕，坐而卒。後三日，門弟子焚居士於野。及視其骨，果鎖骨也。支體連貫，若紉綴之狀，風一拂，則纖韻徐引。於是里人竟施金錢，建一塔，以居士鎖骨瘞於塔中。

There was a layman by the name of Shang who was from Sanhe County.<sup>58</sup> When he was only seven years old, he was able to understand Buddhist writings, and the people of his village thought him extraordinary. Thereafter, he lived in a hut amidst the western fields of Sanhe County where he had hundreds of volumes of Buddhist texts. There he read scrolls, not wasting a single day, and so was able to teach many others.

Shang often traveled alone in the cities and towns, and those who did travel in his company marveled that his every movement rang out like the sound of tapping on jade. Someone said: “The scholar's skeleton is truly made up of locked bones. If one has locked bones that are enmeshed like vines; then, whenever they move, then their body emits a clear and ringing sound—so this must be the case. In the past, I heard that the Buddhist writings say the Buddha had relic bones,<sup>59</sup> while the

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<sup>58</sup> Sanhe County was located in present day Sanhe, Hebei.

<sup>59</sup> This term, “relic bones” or *sheli gu* 舍利骨 is a transliteration from the Sanskrit, *śārīra*, generally meaning treasured or sacred.

bodhisattvas had locked bones.<sup>60</sup> Now, this Layman Shang, is he not perhaps a bodhisattva? However, I am but a meat-eating commoner, and so I cannot tell for sure.”

The next year, Shang was over ninety years old. One day, he bathed, strapped on his belt and cap, and called his disciples together for a meal. He told them: "I am ninety. Before the day is out, I will die. You should cremate my corpse. Be careful not to disobey my wishes."

Shedding tears, his disciples told him: "We will respectfully obey your orders." That night, he sat down and died. After three days, his disciples cremated him out in the open country. Taking a look at his bones, they discovered they were indeed locked bones. His limbs and torso were linked up together as though they had been stitched up and, when the wind brushed against them, a fine sound rose up off of them. Thereupon, the people of his village all donated money and built a pagoda, burying Shang's locked bones beneath it.

### XSZ 9.3

元和中，武陵郡開元寺有僧惠照，貌衰體羸，好言人之休戚而皆中。性介獨，不與群狎，常閉關自處，左右無侍童。每乞食於里人，里人有年八十餘者云：「照師居此六十載，其容狀無少異於昔時。但不知其甲子。」後有陳廣者，由孝廉科為武陵官。廣好浮圖氏，一日，因謁寺，盡訪群僧。至惠照室，惠照見廣，且悲且喜曰：「陳君何來之晚耶！」廣愕然，自以為平生不識照，則謂曰：「未嘗與師遊，何見訝來之晚乎？」照曰：「此非立可盡言，當與子一夕靜語爾。」廣異之。

During the Yuanhe reign period of Emperor Xianzong (806-820), there was a monk by the name of Huizhao who resided in the Kaiyuan Temple of Wuling Commandery.<sup>61</sup> He was wan and feeble but good at predicting people's fate, and his predictions always came true. Huizhao was by nature independent, rarely associating with others. He often remained alone with his door shut and had no boy-servants. Whenever Huizhao went out begging amongst the villagers, an old man of more than

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<sup>60</sup> There is a more famous and unusual story featuring a prostitute who turns out to be a bodhisattva with locked bones which mirrors the format of this tale. See *TPGJ* 101.682 and Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 137.

<sup>61</sup> The famous Kaiyuan Temple was built during the Kaiyuan reign period of Emperor Xuanzong (713-742) and was located in Jiangling, Hubei. Imperial decree dictated a number of Kaiyuan temples be built throughout the realm, resulting in many satellite temples of the same name. However, I could not locate such a temple in the Wuling commandery (centered on present day Changde, Hunan). Furthermore, this tale is the only reference to the monk, Huizhao.

eighty would say: "Master Zhao has lived here for sixty years, but his appearance is no different from old times. But, I don't know how old he is."

Sometime thereafter, a man by the name of Chen Guang<sup>62</sup> was sent to serve as an official in Wuling after being nominated as Filial and Incorrupt. Guang was fond of the Buddhist teachings and so one day he paid a visit to the Kaiyuan Temple, calling upon all of the monks therein. When he came to Huizhao's room, Huizhao invited him in and sighed with a mixture of sorrow and delight: "Mister Chen, why have you come to me so late!"

Having never once met Zhao his whole life over, Guang was confounded and said: "Master, I have never once encountered you before, why do you invite me in only to exclaim that I have arrived late?"

Zhao responded: "This is not something that I can explain fully in an instant. We should spend a quiet evening together talking it over." Guang thought this quite remarkable.

後一日，仍詣照宿，因請其事。照乃曰：「我，劉氏子，彭城人，宋孝文帝之玄孫也。曾祖鄴陽王休業，祖士弘，並詳於史氏。先人以文學自負，為齊竟陵王子良所知。子良招召賢俊文學之士，而先人預焉。後仕齊梁之間，為會稽令。吾生於梁普通七年夏五月，年三十方仕於陳，至宣帝時為卑官，不為人知。與吳興沈彥文為詩酒之交。後長沙王叔堅與始興王叔陵皆廣聚賓客，大為聲勢，各恃權寵，有不平心。吾與彥文俱在長沙之門下。及叔陵被誅，吾與彥文懼長沙之不免，則禍且相及，因偕循去，隱於山林。因食橡栗，衣一短褐，雖寒暑不更。」

The next day, Chen Guang again paid a visit to Zhao's room, requesting that he explain the matter. Zhao then told him: "I am a son of the Liu clan of Pengcheng,<sup>63</sup> the great-great grandson of Emperor Xiaowen of the Song (r. 471-499).<sup>64</sup> My great-grandfather was Xiuye, Prince of Poyang,<sup>65</sup> my

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<sup>62</sup> Though there was a Chen Guang 陳廣 of some official repute from the Eastern Jin, there is no mention in historical sources of an official of the same name that fits the time frame of this tale.

<sup>63</sup> Pengcheng was located in present day Xuzhou, Jiangsu.

<sup>64</sup> Though the passage refers to an Emperor Xiaowen of the Song, this must be a typographical error that occurs across editions, as there was no Emperor Xiaowen of the Liu-Song dynasty. There was an Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei dynasty (r. 471-499), but this would make no sense in the context of the passage, especially given that Xiaowen was born in 467 after Liu Xiuye had already died. I suspect this is meant to refer to Emperor Wen of the Song (r. 424-453), as he was the father of Liu Xiuye, making him the appropriate candidate for great-great grandfather.

grandfather was Shihong,<sup>66</sup> and this is detailed in our family history. My ancestors undertook literary pursuits and were known by Ziliang of Qi, Prince of Jingling.<sup>67</sup> Ziliang summoned all the worthy scholars of literature, and my ancestors were among them. Thereafter, they served throughout the Qi-Liang area and were made commandants in Kuaiji.

“I was born in the fifth month of the seventh year of the Putong reign period of Emperor Wu of Liang (April or May, 526) and, when I was thirty, I went to serve the state of Chen. At the time of Emperor Xuan (r. 569-582), I was but a low official and remained unknown, composing poems and sharing wine with my companion, Shen Yanwen of Wuxing.<sup>68</sup> Later on, Prince Shujian of Changsha and Prince Shuling of Shixing widely gathered retainers,<sup>69</sup> each having obtained great power and influence through imperial favor but were unsettled in their hearts. Yanwen and I served together as retainers in the house of Prince Shujian. Then, when Prince Shuling was put to death, Yanwen and I were afraid that Prince Shujian could not avoid the same fate. Fearing that Shujian's misfortune would come to pass in turn, we then went off together and hid in the mountains and forests. We ate chestnuts and, be it summer or winter, clothed ourselves in short coarse robes.

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<sup>65</sup> This refers to Liu Xiuye 劉休業 (445-456), who was the fifteenth son of Emperor Wen of the Liu-Song dynasty (r. 424-453) and enfeoffed as the Prince of Poyang before he died at the age of twelve. See *Song shu* 宋書, comp. Shen Yue 沈約 (441-513) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 72.1881.

<sup>66</sup> Liu Shihong 劉士弘 (dates uncertain) was the second son of Liu Xiuyou 劉休祐 (445-471) and enfeoffed as Prince of Poyang upon Liu Xiuyou's death. Liu Xiuyou was the thirteenth son of Emperor Wen of the Song and was later reduced to the status of commoner and put to death under the rule of his older brother, Emperor Ming of the Song (r. 465-472). See again *Song shu*, 72.1881.

<sup>67</sup> This refers to Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良 (460-494), who was the second son of Emperor Wu of the Southern Qi dynasty (r. 482-493) and served as an important advisor to his father. Upon the death of his father, there was an effort made by the official Wang Rong 王融 (d. 493) to seat Xiao Ziliang on the throne but Xiao Zhaoye 蕭昭業 (473-494) ultimately won out and briefly served as emperor before being assassinated by his uncle. See *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書, comp. Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 (489-537) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 4.69.

<sup>68</sup> This tale is the only mention of a Shen Yanwen of Wuxing.

<sup>69</sup> These two princes refer to Chen Shuling 陳叔陵 (d. 581) and Chen Shujian 陳叔堅 (b. 553), respectively the second and fourth sons of Emperor Xuan of the Chen dynasty (r. 568-582). Upon the death of their father, Chen Shuling attempted to assassinate his elder brother, Crown-prince Chen Shubao 陳叔寶, as he was in mourning over his father's casket. Chen Shuling failed however and was initially captured by Chen Shujian but managed to escape. Chen Shuling then attempted to start a coup but again failed. Chen Shubao would turn out to be the incompetent final emperor of the Chen dynasty, posthumously known as Last Emperor of the Chen 陳后主 (r. 582-589). For these events, see *Chen shu* 陳書, comp. Yao Silian 姚思廉 (557-637) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 36.493, 28.366, and 6.105.

「一日，老僧至吾所居，曰：『子骨甚奇，當無疾爾。』彥文亦拜請其藥，僧曰：『子無劉君之壽，奈何雖餌吾藥，亦無補爾。』遂告去。將別，又謂我曰：『塵俗以名利相勝，竟何有哉！唯釋氏可以捨此矣。』吾敬佩其語，自是不知人事，凡十五年。

“One day, an old monk came to my residence and said: 'You have rare bones, you should suffer no illness.' Yanwen also humbly requested a diagnosis, to which the monk replied: 'You do not have the longevity of Mr. Liu. Even if you were to take my nostrums, they would have no beneficial effect.' Thereupon, the monk said his goodbyes and, when he was about to take leave, told me: 'In this dusty mortal plane, fame and profit give rise to one another. But, in the end, what good are they! Only through the teachings of the Buddha might you abandon this path.' I was extremely impressed by his words. From that point on, I paid no attention to worldly affairs, and fifteen years then passed.

「又與彥文俱至建業。時陳氏已亡，宮闕盡廢，台城牢落，荊榛蔽路，景陽結綺，空基尚存，衣冠文物，闕無所觀。故老相遇，捧袂而泣曰：『後主驕淫，為隋氏所滅，良可悲乎！』吾且泣不能已。又問後主及陳氏諸王，皆入長安，即與彥文挈一囊，乞食於路，以至關中。吾，長沙之故客也，恩遇甚厚，聞其遷於瓜州，則又逕往就謁。長沙少長綺紈，而又早貴，雖流放之際，尚不事生業。時方與沈妃酣飲，吾與彥文再拜於前，長沙悲慟久之，灑泣而起，乃謂吾曰：『一日家國淪亡，骨肉播遷，豈非天耶！』吾自是留瓜州。數年而長沙殂。

“Later, Yanwen and I arrived at Jianye.<sup>70</sup> At the time, the house of Chen had already been defeated, their palaces and towers all destroyed, the inner walls scattered in ruin, and the thoroughfares overgrown with thorns and brambles. Of Jingyang and Jieqi,<sup>71</sup> only their empty foundations remained; of all the trappings of civilized society, nothing was left to be seen. I chanced upon a venerable elder, who wept into his sleeves and said: 'The Last Emperor was arrogant and licentious, and so he was defeated by the Sui clan. Alas, how truly unfortunate!' I could not hold back my tears. I again asked after the Last Emperor and all the princes of the house of Chen, and we were told they had all been taken to Chang'an.

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<sup>70</sup> Jianye was the old county name for present day Nanjing.

<sup>71</sup> Jingyang was an ornate palace built by Emperor Wu of the Southern Qi (r. 482-493), while the Jieqi Pavilion was a lavish palace built by the Last Emperor of Chen and was said to have been decorated in gold and jade. Both of these palaces became symbols of lavish excess and were employed as allusions by later scholars.

“And so Yanwen and I then took up our traveling bag, begging along the way, and eventually came to Guanzhong.<sup>72</sup> Because I was an old retainer of the Prince Shujian of Changsha, we encountered a great deal of kindness. We heard that Prince Shujian had been transferred to Guazhou,<sup>73</sup> and so we then headed in that direction to pay our respects. Prince Shujian had matured into a fine gentleman but, though he had been honored in earlier times, after being banished to the borderlands was still unable to serve in official capacity. At the time, he was deep in his cups with Concubine Shen,<sup>74</sup> and Yanwen and I came and bowed twice before him. Prince Shujian sobbed with grief for a long while, tears raining down his face. He finally said to me: 'In a single day, my state and household sank into oblivion, my flesh and bones cast about. Oh heaven, why has this come to pass?' From that point on, I remained in Guazhou. After several years, Prince Shujian passed away.

「又數年，彥文亦亡。吾因髡髮為僧，遁跡會稽山佛寺，凡二十年，時已百歲矣。雖容狀枯瘠，而筋力不衰，尚日行百里。因與一僧同至長安。時唐帝有天下，建號武德，凡六年矣。吾自此，或居京洛，或遊江左，至於三蜀五嶺，無不往焉。迄今二百九十年矣，雖烈寒盛暑未嘗有微恙。

“After a few more years went by, Yanwen also died. I then shaved my head and became a monk, living as a hermit in a Buddhist temple on Mount Kuaiji.<sup>75</sup> After another twenty years had passed, I was already a hundred years old. Although I appeared withered and lean, my strength was not sapped, and I could still walk a hundred *li* in a single day. And so I went together with another monk to Chang'an. At the time, the Tang Emperor controlled the realm and had established the reign period of Wude (618-627), and another six years passed. From that point on, I sometimes lived in the capital, sometimes traveled about Jiangzuo,<sup>76</sup> eventually passing through the Five Ranges and Three Commanderies of Shu,

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<sup>72</sup> Guanzhong or “the land within the passes” refers to the large area encompassing the lower valley plains of the Wei River.

<sup>73</sup> Given the reference being banished to the borderlands, this is probably the county of Guazhou, which was the former name of Anxi County, Gansu.

<sup>74</sup> This is a somewhat suggestive passage, as Concubine Shen was actually Empress Shen Wuhua 沈婺華皇后 (dates unclear), wife of the Last Emperor of Chen. Though she was not the favorite of the Emperor, she followed him to the Sui capital in Chang'an and mourned over his death in 604. She later became a nun and was said to have died early in the reign of Emperor Taizong of the Tang (r. 626-649). See *Chen shu*, 7.130.

<sup>75</sup> Mount Kuaiji is located to the south of present day Shaoxing, Zhejiang.

<sup>76</sup> This refers to the areas south of the lower Yangzi River.



leaving no area unseen. These days, I am already two-hundred and ninety years old. Yet during the fiercest winters and hottest summers, I have never even caught the slightest sickness.

「貞元末，於此寺嘗夢一丈夫，衣冠甚偉，視之，乃長沙王也。吾迎延坐話舊，傷感如平生。而謂吾曰：『後十年，我之六世孫廣當官於此郡。師其念之。』吾因問曰：『王今何為？』曰：『冥官甚尊。』既而泣曰：『師存，而我已六世矣。悲夫！』」

“At the end of the Zhenyuan reign period of Emperor Dezong (785-805), I was living in this very temple when I dreamt of a man. He was clothed in a majestic cap and robes and, taking a look at him, I realized it was Prince Shujian. I welcomed him, and we sat reminiscing for some time, his wounded heart just as it had been his whole life. He then said to me: 'After ten years, my sixth generation grandson, Guang, will come to serve as an official in this commandery. Please don't forget this.' I then asked him: 'My prince, what has become of you now?' He replied: 'I am an honored official of the netherworld offices.' Shedding tears, he continued: 'You still remain, yet my family has already passed to the sixth generation! Alas!'

「吾既覺，因紀君之名於經笥中。至去歲，凡十年，乃以君之名氏訪於郡人，尚訝君之未至。昨因乞食里中，遇邑吏，訪之，果得焉。及君之來，又依然長沙之貌。然自夢及今，十一年矣，故訝君之晚也。」已而悲惋，泣下數行。因出經笥示之，廣乃再拜，願執履錫為門弟子。照曰：「君且去，翌日當再來。」廣受教而還。

“I then awoke and recorded your name on my scripture box. When last year arrived, ten years had already passed, and I then heard that someone by your name was paying visit to people amongst the commandery. Yet, I was astonished that you still had not arrived to see me. Yesterday when I was begging food in the village, I chanced upon a local bailiff and, visiting with him, learned that you had already called upon him. Then, when you came to see me, you still looked just like Prince Shujian. From the dream until today, eleven years have passed, and so I was surprised at your tardiness.”

Shortly thereafter, Huizhao sighed mournfully and, shedding tears, took out the box of scriptures to show him. Guang bowed twice and respectfully requested to become Huizhao's disciple.

Zhao replied: "You should go now and come again tomorrow." Guang observed his wish and returned home.

明日，至其居，而照已遁去，莫知其適。時元和十一年。

The next day, Guang came once more, but Zhao had already left and no one knew his whereabouts. At the time, it was the eleventh year of the Yuanhe reign period of Emperor Xianzong (816).

至大和初，廣為巴州掾，於蜀道忽逢照，驚喜再拜曰：「願棄官從吾師，為物外之遊。」照許之。其夕偕舍於逆旅氏。天未曉，廣起，而照已去矣。自是竟不知所往。然照自梁普通七年生，按《梁史》，普通七年，歲在丙午，至唐元和十年乙未，凡二百九十年，則與照言果符矣。愚常以梁、陳二史，校其所說，頗有同者，由是益信其不誣矣。

At the outset of the Taihe reign period of Emperor Wenzong (827-835), Guang was made a commandant in Bazhou<sup>77</sup> and, on the road to Shu, he suddenly encountered Zhao. Delightfully surprised, he bowed twice and said: "I wish to give up my office and follow you, my Master, together wandering beyond the mortal realm." Zhao allowed it, and they spent the night together at an inn. Before daybreak Guang arose, but Zhao had already departed. From that point on, Guang never again knew of Zhao's whereabouts.

Zhao was born in the seventh year of the Putong reign period of Liang Wudi (526). According to the *History of the Liang*, the seventh year of Putong was a *bingwu* year. From then until the tenth year of the Yuanhe reign period (816), which was a *yiwei* year, two-hundred and ninety years had passed, which is in accordance with what Zhao had said. Though I am but foolish, I have compared his account to the two histories of the Liang and Chen. There are many similarities, and so I am even more inclined to believe that Huizhao was not lying.

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<sup>77</sup> Bazhou refers to present day Bazhong, Sichuan.

#### XSZ 9.4

中宗朝，唐公休璟為相。嘗有一僧，發言多中，好為厭勝之術。休璟甚敬之。一日僧來，謂休璟曰：「相國將有大禍，且不遠數月，然可以禳去。」休璟懼甚，即拜之。僧曰：「某無他術，但奉一計爾，願聽之。」休璟曰：「幸吾師教焉。」僧曰：「且天下郡守，非相國命之乎？」曰：「然。」僧曰：「相國當於卑冗官中訪一孤寒家貧有才幹者，使為曹州刺史，其深感相國恩，而可以指蹤也。既得之，原以報某。」休璟且喜且謝，遂訪於親友。張君者，家甚貧，為京卑官，即日拜替善大夫。又旬日，用為曹州刺史。既而召僧謂曰：「已從師之計，得張某矣。然則可教乎？」僧曰：「張君赴郡之時，當令求二犬，高數尺而神俊者。」休璟唯之。已而張君荷唐公特達之恩，然莫喻其旨，及將赴郡，告辭於休璟。既而謝之曰：「某名跡幽昧，才識疏淺。相國拔此沈滯，牧守大郡，由擔石之儲，獲二千石之祿，自涸輟而泛東溟，出窮谷而陟層霄，德固厚矣。然而感恩之外，竊所憂惕者，未知相國之旨何哉？」休璟曰：「用君之才爾，非他也。然常聞貴郡多善犬，願得神俊非常者二焉。」張君曰：「謹奉教。」既至郡數日，乃悉召郡吏，告之曰：「吾受丞相唐公深恩，拔於不次，得守大郡。今唐公求二良犬，可致之乎？」有一吏前曰：「某家育一犬，質狀異常，願獻之。」張大喜，即獻焉。既至，其犬高數尺而肥，其臆廣尺餘，神俊異常，而又馴擾。張君曰：「相國所求者二也，如何？」吏白曰：「郡內唯有此，他皆常也。然郡南十里某村某民家，其亦有一焉。民極惜之，非君侯親往，不可取之。」張君即命駕。齋厚直而訪之，果得焉。其狀與吏所獻者無異，而神采過之。張君甚喜，即召親吏以二犬獻休璟。休璟大悅，且奇其狀，以為未常見。遂召僧視之。僧曰：「善育之。脫相君之禍者，二犬爾。」

During the reign of Emperor Zhongzong (r. 684, 705-710), Tang Xiujing was made chancellor.<sup>78</sup>

There was a monk whose predictions were often correct and who was skilled in the art of casting curses.

Xiujing thought extremely highly of the man. One day, the monk came to Xiujing and said: "Chancellor, you are about to encounter great misfortune, and it isn't more than a few months off. However, you can dispel it through prayer and offerings." Extremely frightened, Xiujing bowed and requested advice.

The monk told him: "I have no particular skills, but I can offer up a plan—are you willing to hear it?"

Xiujing replied: "Master, I humbly await your instruction."

The monk answered back: "Do you not control all of the commandery magistrates within the realm?"

"I do."

The monk continued: "Chancellor, from within the ranks of the low and menial officials, you should pay a visit to the humble household of a competent official and make him the governor of

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<sup>78</sup> Tang Xiujing 唐休璟 (627-712) served as a general and high official primarily during the reigns of Emperors Zhongzong, Ruizong (r. 684-690, 710-712), and Wu Zetian (r. 690-705), and was also enfeoffed as a duke. Late in his life, he was allowed to retire during the second reign of Emperor Ruizong and was buried with honors. For his biography, see *JTS* 93.2978.

Caozhou.<sup>79</sup> He will be so grateful for your kindness that he will immediately fall in line behind you. Once you have done this, report back to me."

Xiujing was thankful and delighted, and thereupon went to call on a close friend. It was one Mr. Zhang, who was a low official in the capital and whose household was extremely poor. That very day, Xiujing had him promoted to Grand-master for Assisting Goodness. After another ten days had passed, he made him governor of Caozhou.

Xiujing then summoned the monk and said to him: "Master, I have already followed your plan using one Mr. Zhang. What else can you tell me?"

The monk responded: "At the time when Mr. Zhang goes to assume his position in the commandery, order him to find two dogs for you that are several *chi* tall and have a divine bearing." Xiujing consented to the monk's instructions.

Shortly thereafter, feeling the weight of the especially great kindness that Tang Xiujing had shown him, there was nothing that Mr. Zhang would not do for him. When he was about to go take up his position in the commandery, he went to say goodbye to Xiujing. He thanked him and said: "My name and achievements were secluded and obscured, my talent and insights were sparse and meager. Chancellor, you have pulled me from these murky depths, made me the magistrate of an important commandery. From the remuneration of but a paltry peck, you have awarded me a salary of two-thousand bushels. Your virtue is so magnanimous that it could dry up the overflowing eastern sea, penetrate the most wayward valleys, and ascend to the highest heavens! However, beyond my gratitude, I have troubled over the fact that I do not yet know why you have done this."

Xiujing answered: "I only wish to use your talent, I have no other motive. However, I have often heard that your commandery is praised for its many fine dogs. I hope that I might obtain two extraordinary specimens of divine bearing from you."

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<sup>79</sup> Caozhou is the old name for present day Heze, Shandong.

Mr. Zhang replied: "I will humbly do as you please."

Several days after Mr. Zhang arrived in his commandery, he summoned the commandery clerks and told them: "I have been granted great favor by Chancellor Tang, who has promoted me beyond the normal order and made me the magistrate of a great commandery. Now, he seeks two fine dogs, how might we send them to him?"

One clerk stepped forward and said: "My family has raised a dog that is remarkable in appearance and bearing, I wish to donate it." Zhang was greatly pleased, and the dog was then sent to him. When the dog arrived, it was several *chi* tall and robust. Its chest was more than a *chi* across, its bearing divine and extraordinary, and it was also docile and obedient.

Zhang then said: "The Chancellor seeks two of them, what now?"

The clerk replied: "Within our commandery there is only this one, all the others are but ordinary. However, ten *li* to the south of the commandery in a certain person's household, in a certain village, there is also another. The people cherish it highly and, unless a lord or marquis goes there personally, it cannot be obtained."

Mr. Zhang then ordered his carriage readied. Loading it with gifts, he went straight away to pay the household a visit and was indeed able to obtain the dog. The dog's appearance was exactly the same as the one that had been donated by the clerk, but its demeanor even surpassed the other. Mr. Zhang was once more greatly pleased and then summoned his most trusted clerks to present the two dogs to Xiujing. Xiujing was extremely delighted and marveled over the dogs' appearances, thinking them quite out of the ordinary. Thereupon, he summoned the monk to take a look. The monk said to Xiujing: "Raise them well. Only these two dogs can rid you of your misfortune."

後旬日，其僧又至，謂休璟曰：「事在今夕，願相君嚴為之備。」休璟即留僧宿。是夜，休璟坐於堂之前軒，命左右十餘人執弧矢立於榻之隅，其僧與休璟共處一榻。至夜分，僧笑曰：「相君之禍免矣。可以就寢。」休璟大喜，且謝之。遂徹左右，與僧寢焉。迨曉，僧呼休璟：「可起矣。」休璟即起，謂僧曰：「禍誠免矣，然二犬安所用乎？」僧曰：「俱往觀焉。」乃與休璟偕尋其跡，至後園中，見一人仆地而卒矣，視其頸有血，蓋為物所噬者。又見二犬在大木下，仰視之，見一人袒而匿其上。休璟驚，且詰曰：「汝為誰？」其人泣而指死者曰：「某與彼俱賊也，昨夕偕來，且將致害相國。蓋遇此二犬，環而且吠，彼遂為噬而死。某懼，因匿身於此，伺其他去，將逃焉。迨曉終不去。今即甘死於是矣。」休璟即召左右，令縛之。曰：「此罪固當死，然非其心也，蓋受制於人爾。願釋之。」休璟命解縛，其賊拜泣而去。休璟謝其僧曰：「賴吾師，不然，死於二人之手。」僧曰：「此蓋相國之福也，豈所能為哉？」

After ten days had passed, the monk again came calling and said to Xiujing: "The matter will come to a head this evening. I hope that you prepare yourself well." Xiujing then had the monk stay for the evening. That night, Xiujing sat in the antechamber of his main hall, having ordered more than ten attendants to wait with bows drawn to the side of his bed. The monk and Xiujing sat together on the bed. When midnight arrived, the monk smiled and said: "My lord, your misfortune has been avoided. You can now go to sleep." Xiujing was greatly pleased and thanked the monk. Thereupon, he sent away the attendants and went to sleep beside the monk.

When dawn arrived, the monk called to Xiujing: "You may arise."

Xiujing got up and then asked the monk: "If my misfortune has truly been avoided, then what use were the two dogs?"

The monk replied: "Let us go and take a look at them."

The monk then went with together Xiujing and, following the dogs' tracks, they came to the rear garden. There, they saw a dead man sprawled out on the ground. There was blood on the man's neck, and it looked as though he had been bitten by an animal. Then, they spotted the two dogs sitting beneath a large tree. Looking up into the tree, they saw a bare-chested man hiding in it. Xiujing was alarmed and called out to the man: "Who are you?"

Crying, the man pointed to the corpse and said: "He and I are bandits. Last night, we came together and were about to do harm to you. However, we encountered these two dogs, and they

encircled us barking. My partner was bitten to death. Frightened, I hid myself up here waiting for the dogs to leave so that I might make my escape. Dawn came and they still hadn't gone, and so I will now die of my own accord here."

Xiujing summoned his attendants and ordered them to bind the man. Xiujing then said: "For this crime, you ought be put to death. However, this is not my wish, as you were probably just taking orders from another. I would rather that you be set free." Xiujing ordered that the bindings be released and, bowing, the bandit left. Xiujing thanked the monk and said: "Master, had I not relied on you, I would have died at the hands of these two men."

The monk responded: "This is likely just a result of your good fortune, how could I be responsible for it?"

休璟有表弟盧軫，在荊門，有術士告之：「君將有災戾，當求一善禳厭者，為庶可矣。」軫素知其僧，因致書於休璟，請求之。僧即以書付休璟曰：「事在其中爾。」及書達荊州，而軫已卒。其家開視其書，徒見一幅之紙，並無有文字焉。休璟益奇之。後數年，其僧遁去，不知所終。

Xiujing had a younger cousin by the name of Lu Zhen.<sup>80</sup> When Lu Zhen was in Jingmen, an occult practitioner told him: "Sir, you will soon encounter calamity. You should seek out one who is skilled at making offerings and casting curses, I hope that you will do so."

For some time, Zhen had known of the monk and so he sent a letter to Xiujing asking for his help. The monk then sent a letter to Xiujing with a message saying: "The matter is taken care of within." By the time the letter had been passed along to Jingzhou, Zhen had already died. His family opened the letter to take a look but only saw an empty piece of paper with no writing on it. Xiujing thought this all the more unusual. After a number of years had passed the monk went off, and no one knows where he ended up.

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<sup>80</sup> This tale is the primary reference for Lu Zhen.

## XSZ 9.5

唐故劍南節度使太尉兼中書令韋皋，既生一月，其家召群僧會食。有一胡僧，貌甚陋，不召而至。韋氏家童咸怒之，以弊席坐於庭中。既食，韋氏命乳母出嬰兒，請群僧祝其壽。胡僧所自升階，謂嬰兒曰，「別久無恙乎？」嬰兒若有喜色。眾皆異之。韋氏先君曰：「此子生才一月，吾師何故言別久耶！」胡僧曰：「此非檀越之所知也。」韋氏固問之，胡僧曰：「此子乃諸葛武侯之後身爾。武侯當東漢之季，為蜀丞相，蜀人受其賜且久。今降生於世，將為蜀門帥，且受蜀人之福。吾往歲在劍門，與此子友善。今聞降於韋氏，吾固不遠而來。」韋氏異其言，因以武侯字之。後韋氏自少金吾節制劍南軍，累遷太尉兼中書令，在蜀十八年，果契胡僧之語也。

After the late Wei Gao, who had served simultaneously as secretariat director and supreme military governor of Jian'nan during the Tang,<sup>81</sup> had been born for about a month, his family invited a group of monks to take a meal with them. There was one foreign monk who was extremely ugly that had not been invited but came anyway. All of the Wei family's servant boys were angry at the man and so gave him a shoddy banquet mat on which to sit in the courtyard. When they were ready to eat, Mr. Wei ordered a wet nurse to bring out the infant Wei Gao and asked the group of monks to offer him a blessing of longevity. The foreign monk rose up and advanced forward from his seat, saying to the infant: "I trust you have been well all these years?" It seemed as though a look of delight spread over the infant's countenance. Everyone gathered at the banquet thought this quite unusual.

The patriarch of the Wei clan then said: "This child has been born but a month, why would you say that it has already been a long while?"

The foreign monk replied: "This is not something that a layman could comprehend." Yet, the Wei family asked him once again and the monk told them: "This boy is the reincarnation of Zhuge Wuhou.<sup>82</sup> During the time of the Eastern Han, Zhuge Wuhou served as chancellor in the state of Shu, and the people of Shu were blessed with his service for some time. Now he has been once more reincarnated in this generation and will become the commander of Shu, receiving the blessing of the

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<sup>81</sup> Wei Gao 韋皋(745-805) was a major military official during the Tang dynasty and long served as a military circuit governor of the areas surrounding modern day Sichuan. He was responsible for quelling the Tufan and restablizing the Tang relationship with the Nanzhao peoples. See *JTS* 140.3821 and *XTS* 158.4933. Jian'nan was one of the major regional administrative units during the Tang and roughly encompassed modern day Sichuan and Chongqing.

<sup>82</sup> This is referring to the famous Three Kingdoms strategist from Shu Han, Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-243).



people of Shu. In former times, I was in the area of Jian and on friendly terms with this boy. When I heard that he had been reborn to the Wei clan, not considering it distant, I most certainly came.”

Mr. Wei thought the monk's speech remarkable and so gave the child the style name of Wuhou. Thereafter, the child of the Wu family at a young age became a commander in the army of Jian'nan with the rank of the golden scepter, ultimately promoted to a concurrent appointment as secretariat director and defender-in-chief. He served in Shu for eighteen years, thereby bringing to realization the words of the foreign monk.

#### XSZ 9.6

唐貞元中，有一僧客於廣陵，亡其名，自號大師，廣陵人因以「大師」呼之。大師質甚陋，好以酒肉為食。日衣弊襲，盛暑不脫，由是蚤蟻聚其上。僑居孝感寺，獨止一室。每夕闔扉而寢，率為常矣。性狂悖，好屠犬彘，日與廣陵少年鬥毆，或醉臥道傍。廣陵人俱以此惡之。有一少年以力聞，常一日，少年與人對博，大師怒，以手擊其博局，盡碎。少年曰：「駿兒，何敢逆壯士耶！」大師且罵而唾其面，於是與少年鬥擊，而觀者千數，少年卒不勝，竟遁去。自是，廣陵人謂大師有神力。大師亦自負其力，往往剽奪市中金錢衣物，市人皆憚其勇，莫敢拒。

During the Zhenyuan reign period of Emperor Dezong, there was a monk staying in the Guangling area.<sup>83</sup> His name had been lost but he called himself "Great Master," and so the people of Guangling all referred to him as "Great Master." The Great Master was an extremely ugly man, fond of taking wine and meat for his meals. Every day he wore shoddy layered robes, not even taking them off during the height of summer, and so lice and fleas gathered on them. He went to live out in the Xiaogan Temple,<sup>84</sup> receiving a room to himself. Every evening, he would shut his doors and go to bed, staying asleep for a long time. He was by nature strange and unstable, and he was fond of butchering dogs and pigs. Each day he would fistfight with the young men of Guangling or sleep in a drunken stupor by the roadside. The people of Guangling all despised him because of this.

There was a young man famous for his strength. One day, the one man was gambling with others. Great Master became angry and, taking his fist, beat down upon the game board, smashing it to

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<sup>83</sup> Guangling is the old name of Yangzhou, Jiangsu.

<sup>84</sup> There is brief mention of a Xiaogan Temple located in the vicinity of Guangling. See "Tang gu zhu zuo zuo lang Gu Kuang ji xu" 唐故著作左郎顧況集序, in *QTW* 686.7026a.

pieces. The young man said to him: "You buffoon, how dare you insult a strong man such as me!" Great Master spit in the man's face and cursed him and immediately a fight broke out. More than a thousand onlookers gathered to watch, and in the end the young man was defeated and ran off. From then on, all the people in Guangling said that Great Master had divine strength. Great Master grew even more conceited about his strength and often bullied people out of money and goods at the market. Because everyone feared his strength, no one dared resist him.

後有老僧召大師，至，曰：「僧當死心奉戒，奈何食酒食，殺犬彘，剽奪市人錢物，又與少年同毆擊，豈僧人之道耶！一旦吏執以聞官，汝不羞人耶！」大師怒罵曰：「蠅蚋徒嗜膻腥爾，安能知龍鶴之心哉！然則吾道亦非汝所知也。且我清其中而混其外者，豈汝齷齪無大度乎？」老僧卒不能屈其詞。

Thereafter, an old monk summoned Great Master. When Great Master arrived, the monk said to him: "Monks should accept the prohibitions with all their heart and soul. How can you drink wine and eat meat, kill dogs and swine, bully the townspeople out of their money and goods, and even go so far as to beat up young men? How could this possibly be the path of a monk! If one day a clerk catches you and word is passed on to the authorities, wouldn't you be ashamed of yourself!"

Great Master responded to the monk with an angry curse: "Flies and gnats such as yourself are addicted to the stench of mutton, how could you possibly comprehend one with the heart of a dragon or crane! My path is certainly not one that you could understand. Moreover, I may be disorderly on the outside but am pure within, how could you be so downright despicable and narrow-minded?"

In the end, the old monk was unable to persuade Great Master with his argument.

後一日，大師自外來歸，既入室，閉戶。有於門隙視者，大師坐於席，有奇光自眉端發，晃然照一室。觀者奇之，具告群僧。群僧來，見大師眉端之光，相指語曰：「吾聞佛之眉有白毫相光，今大師有之，果佛矣。」遂相率而拜。至明日清旦，群僧俱集於庭，候謁廣陵大師，比及開戶，而廣陵大師已亡去矣。群僧益異其事，因號大師為「大師佛」焉。

The next day Great Master returned from his visit and, going into his room, shut the door. Someone peeked through the crack in his door and saw Great Master sitting on his mat. There was a strange light coming out from between his eyebrows, illuminating the whole room in a bright flash. The

onlooker marveled at this and went to tell a group of monks. The group of monks all came and, seeing the light from Great Master's brow, each pointed and said: "I have heard that the white hairs between the Buddha's eyebrows revolved in radiance. Great Master's do as well, he must be Buddha!"

Thereafter, they all paid worship one after the other. When dawn arose the next day, the group of monks all gathered in the courtyard and waited to pay visit to the Great Master of Guangling. But, when they opened up the door, they discovered that the Great Master of Guangling had already disappeared.

The group of monks was even more dumbstruck by this turn of events and so came to call Great Master, "Great Master Buddha."

#### XSZ 9.7

元和初，長樂縣有馮生者，家於吳，以明經調選於天官氏，是歲，見黜於有司，因僑居長安中。有老僧鑒其名者，一日來詣生，謂生：「汝，吾姓也。」因相與往來，近歲餘。及馮尉於東越，既治裝，鑒師負笈來，告去。馮問曰：「師去安所詣乎？」鑒師曰：「我廬於靈巖寺之西廡下且久，其後遊長安中，至今十年矣，幸得與子相遇。今將歸故居，故來告別。然吾子尉於東越，道出靈巖寺下，當宜一訪我也。」生諾曰：「謹受教。」

At the outset of the Yuanhe reign period of Emperor Xianzong, there was a one Mr. Ping who lived in Chang'le County.<sup>85</sup> His household was from Wu<sup>86</sup> and, because he was well-versed in the classics, he was given an appointment in the Ministry of Personnel. In a certain year, he was expelled from the ranks of the officials and went to live abroad in Chang'an. There was an old monk by the name of Jian who one day came to pay a visit to Mr. Ping. He said to Ping: "You share my family name." Thus they became close, often visiting one other over the course of a bit more than a year.

Thereafter, Ping was given a position in Dongyue.<sup>87</sup> As Ping was preparing his belongings for the journey, Master Jian came by carrying a book-bag, prepared for traveling study, and said his goodbyes.

Ping asked him: "Master, where do you plan on visiting?"

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<sup>85</sup> Chang'le County is located in present day Fuzhou, Fujian.

<sup>86</sup> Based on the conclusion of this tale, this area refers to the Wu Commandery, which encompassed the present day areas stretching from Suzhou to Shaoxing.

<sup>87</sup> Dongyue referred originally to an ethnic group that was a branch of the Yue people living in the Zhejiang area. As such, it came later to refer to the area around southeastern Zhejiang.

Master Jian replied: "I lived below the western halls of Lingyan Temple<sup>88</sup> for some time, after that coming to travel about Chang'an. From then until now, some ten years have passed, and I am fortunate to have encountered you. Now I prepare to return to my old place of residence and have come to say goodbye. When you go to take up your position in Dongyue, the road goes out below the Lingyan Temple, and so you should come pay me a visit."

Ping promised: "I most certainly will."

後數月，馮生自長安之任，至靈巖寺門，立馬望曰：「豈非鑿師所居寺乎？」即入而詣焉。時有一僧在庭，生問曰：「不知鑿師廬安在吾將詣之。」僧曰：「吾曹數輩，獨無鑿其名者。」生始疑異，默而計曰：「鑿師信士，豈欺我耶！」於是獨遊寺庭，行至西廡下，忽見有群僧畫像，其一人，狀同鑿師，生大驚曰：「鑿師果異人也，且能神降於我。」因慨然泣下者久之。視其題曰：「馮氏子，吳郡人也。年十歲學浮圖法，以道行聞。卒年七十八。」馮閱其題，益異之。

After several months had passed, Mr. Ping left Chang'an to take up his post. When he arrived at the gates of the Lingyan Temple, he reined in his horse and gazing on, said: "Isn't this the temple where Master Jian lives?" And so he went in to pay a visit.

At the time there was a monk in the courtyard and Ping asked him: "I don't know where Master Jian lives, but I hope to pay him a visit."

The monk replied: "There is no one amongst us who goes by the name of Jian."

At first, Ping thought this rather strange but, keeping silent, he thought to himself: "Master Jian is a man of his word, how could he possibly deceive me!" Thereupon, he wandered alone within the temple courtyard and, when he arrived beneath the western hall, suddenly saw the painted image of a group of monks. One of the men depicted was none other than Master Jian, and Ping shouted out in surprise: "It turns out Master Jian was a supernatural being whose spirit was able to come down and appear to me." Ping shed tears with great feeling for a long while. Taking a look at the inscription on the man's image, it read: "Jian was a man of the Ping clan from Wu Commandery. When he was ten

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<sup>88</sup> Though there are several historical Lingyan Temples, the most logical location for this is the Lingyan Temple located on Mount Lingyan in Suzhou, Jiangsu.

years old, he began studying the Buddhist ways and then took up the Buddhist calling. He died at the age of seventy-eight." After Ping had read the inscription, he thought it even more remarkable.

#### XSZ 10.15

天寶中，無畏師在洛。是時有巨蛇，狀甚異，高丈餘，圍五十尺，魁魁若盤繞，出於山下，洛民咸見之。於是無畏曰：「後此蛇決水瀦洛城。」即說佛書義甚精。蛇至夕則駕風露來，若傾聽狀。無畏乃責之曰：「爾蛇也，營居深山中固安，其所何為，將欲肆毒於世即速去，無患生人。」其蛇聞之，遂俯於地，若有慚色，須臾而死焉。其後祿山據洛陽，盡毀宮廟，果無畏所謂決洛水瀦城之應。

During the Tianbao reign period of Emperor Xuanzong (742-756), there was a certain Master Fearless in the Luoyang area. At the time there was a huge snake, extremely strange in appearance, more than a *zhang* tall, fifty *chi* in circumference, and very imposing coiled about itself. It came out from beneath the mountains, and all the people of the Luo area saw it. Thereupon, Master Fearless said: "Soon, the snake will flood the Luo River and burst the dykes" He then recited the Buddhist scriptures with great vigor. When dusk fell, the snake rode down on the wind and showed itself, appearing as though listening intently. Master Fearless then admonished it, saying: "You snake, you should live safe and secure deep in the mountains. Why have you come here? If you wish to recklessly spread your poison about the world, then be gone and do not trouble the land of the living." The snake listened to him and then bent down to the earth as though ashamed. In a flash, it was dead. Thereafter, An Lushan seized Luoyang and completely destroyed all of the palaces and temples. This is what Master Fearless spoke of concerning the flooding of the Luo River and bursting of the dykes.

#### TPGJ 96.642

辛七師。陝人。辛其姓也。始為兒時。甚謹肅。未嘗以狎弄為事。其父母異而憐之。十歲好浮圖氏法。日閱佛書。自能辨梵音。不由師教。其後父為陝郡守。先是郡南有瓦窰七所。及父卒。辛七哀毀甚。一日。發狂遯去。其家僮迹其所往。至郡南。見辛七在一瓦窰中端坐。身有奇光。粲然若鍊金色。家僮驚異。次至一窰。又見一辛七在焉。歷七窰。俱有一辛七在中。由是呼為辛七師。

Master Xin Seven was a man of Shan, Xin being his surname.<sup>89</sup> In the beginning when he was a child, he was extremely cautious and solemn. He never once improperly attended to his affairs, and his parents loved him and thought him extraordinary. At the age of ten, he became fond of the Buddhist doctrines and read Buddhist writings every day. He was able to distinguish the sounds of Sanskrit without instruction from a teacher.<sup>90</sup>

Later on, his father became governor of the Shan commandery. In the south of the prefecture, there were seven clay kilns.<sup>91</sup> After his father died, Xin Seven was wholly consumed with grief. One day, he went mad and ran off. A servant boy from his household tracked his route. Arriving at the south of the prefecture, he saw Xin Seven sitting straight up inside a clay kiln. There was an unusual light about his body, beaming like the color of metal being smelted. The servant boy was astounded. Arriving at the next kiln, he again saw another Xin Seven sitting therein. Passing by each of the seven kilns, they all had a Xin Seven within them. From this point on, he was known as Master Xin Seven.

TPGJ 98.654

有佛陀薩者。其籍編於岐陽法門寺。自言姓佛氏。陀薩其名也。常獨行岐隴間。衣黃持錫。年雖老。然其貌類童騃。好揚言於衢中。或詬辱群僧。僧皆怒焉。其資膳裘紵。俱乞於里人。里人憐其愚。厚與衣食。以故資用獨饒於羣僧。陀薩亦轉均於里中窮餓者焉。里人益憐其心。開成五年夏六月。陀薩召里中民告曰。我今夕死矣。汝為吾塔瘞其尸。果端坐而卒。於是里中之人。建塔於岐陽之西岡上。漆其尸而瘞焉。後月餘。或視其首。髮僅寸餘。弟子即剃去。已而又生。里人大異。遂扃其戶。竟不開焉。

There was a man by the name of Fo Tuosa,<sup>92</sup> who was associated with the Buddhist temple in Qiyang.<sup>93</sup> He himself said that his family name was Fo and his name was Tuosa. He often went traveling

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<sup>89</sup> In this passage, Shan refers to the commandery established in the Tang that is located in present day Henan, Sanmenxia. Though tales concerning Master Xin Seven appear in the Buddhist canon, there appears to be no information regarding his personal name or details as a historical figure.

<sup>90</sup> I take this as referring to Buddhist religious chanting in Sanskrit rather than the language itself, given the use of the character *yin* 音.

<sup>91</sup> As the name itself would suggest, these kilns were used for firing clay tiles. However, they were also used for other products such as brick and pottery and so I have chosen a more general rendition.

<sup>92</sup> His name more literally means "Buddha Bodhisattva," quite a name to have given oneself.

<sup>93</sup> Qiyang refers to the southern portion of the Qi Mountains, located in Qishan County, Shaanxi.

alone between the Qi and Long mountains.<sup>94</sup> He went about clothed in yellow and carrying his tin-ringed staff<sup>95</sup> and, though old, had the appearance of a haughty young lad. He was fond of giving wild sermons amongst the thoroughfares, sometimes bringing shame and disgrace down on his fellow group of monks, and so the monks would get angry with him. His food, money, furs, and vestments were all begged from the townspeople, who took pity on his foolishness. When he had abundant food and clothing, he would pass along his excess to the other monks. Tuosa also made his rounds to aid the poor and starving amongst the villagers and so the townspeople sympathized even more with his compassion.

During summer time in the sixth month of the fifth year of the Kaicheng reign period of Emperor Wenzong (July, 840), Tuosa called the townspeople to him and told them: "This evening I will die, please inter my corpse in a stupa." He then died while seated upright. The townspeople then built a pagoda on the western ridge of Qiyang and lacquered Fo Tuosa's corpse, interring it therein. After a bit more than a month had passed, someone took a look at the corpse's head and saw that about an inch of hair had grown on it. A disciple shaved it but, before long, it grew back again. The townspeople were all dumbstruck by this, thereupon bolting the door of the pagoda and never opening it again.

*TPGJ 285.2275*

大唐中。有平陽路氏子。性好奇。少從道士遊。後廬於太白山。嘗一日。有老僧叩門。路君延坐。與語久之。僧曰。擅越好奇者。然未能臻玄奧之樞。徒為居深山中。莫若襲輕裘。馳駿馬。遊朝市。可不快平生志。寧能與麋鹿為伍乎。路君謝曰。吾師之言。若真有道者。然而不能示我玄妙之跡。何為張虛詞以自炫耶。僧曰。請弟子觀我玄妙之踪。言訖。即於衣中出一合子。徑寸餘。其色黑而光。既啟之。即以身入。俄而化為一鳥。飛冲天。

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<sup>94</sup> Again, the Qi Mountains are located in Qishan, Shaanxi, while the Long Mountains are the southern portion of the Liupan Mountains, which run across eastern Gansu.

<sup>95</sup> These tin-ringed staffs were shaken by Buddhists to draw attention while seeking alms or used to scare away animals while traveling.

During the great Tang, there was a man of the Lu clan who lived in Pingyang.<sup>96</sup> He was by nature fond of the extraordinary and when he was young, travelled in the company of a Daoist adept. Thereafter, he went to live in a hut on Mount Taibai.<sup>97</sup>

One day, an old monk came and knocked on his door. Mr. Lu invited him in to have a seat and they chatted for some time. The monk said to him: "Almsgiver,<sup>98</sup> you are fond of the extraordinary, yet you have never reached so far as the pivot of the mysterious and profound. It's no use for you to live deep within the mountains. Wouldn't it be better to just wear furs, ride a fine horse, and travel amongst the towns and markets—how would you not then be pleased with your life's lot? Yet you would rather take the deer as your companions?"

Mr. Lu politely replied: "Sir, you truly speak as though you are one who has obtained the Dao. However, you are certainly unable to show me traces of the mysterious and profound. Why must you then spread about these empty words just to show off?"

The monk responded: "Please take a look at these traces of the mysterious and profound." When he had finished speaking, he pulled out a small box from within his robes. It was about an inch in diameter and glistened black. He then opened it up and jumped in. In a flash, he transformed into a bird and flew off into the heavens.

### **Injunctions against Killing Animals**

#### **XSZ 1.4**

有御史韋君，嘗從事江夏，復以奉使至京；既還，道次商於館亭中，忽見亭柱有白蜘蛛曳而下，狀甚微。韋君曰：「是為人之患也，吾聞汝雖小，螫人，良藥無及。」因以指殺焉。俄又見一白者下，如前所殺之，且視其上，有網為窟，韋乃命左右挈帚盡為掃去，且曰：「為人患者，吾已除矣。」

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<sup>96</sup> Though Pingyang was historically the name of several different areas, based on the reference to Mount Taibai, it seems that Pingyang here is most likely referring to the county and commandery located near present day Linfen, Shanxi.

<sup>97</sup> Mount Taibai is located in Baoji, Shaanxi.

<sup>98</sup> I read *tanyue* 擅越 as a character error for *tanyue* 檀越 (almsgiver).



明日欲去，因以手撫其柱，忽覺指痛不可忍之，乃是有一白蜘蛛螫其上。韋君驚，即拂去，俄遂腫延，不數日而盡一臂。由是肩輿舁至江夏，醫藥無及，竟以左臂潰為血，血盡而終。

There was an Imperial Censor, Wei Jun,<sup>99</sup> who was at one time assigned to serve in Jiangxia.<sup>100</sup>

Once more dispatched as an envoy, he returned to the capital. Later on when Jun was returning [to Jiangxia], he stopped en route to conduct business at an outpost. Suddenly he saw a white spider, very minuscule in size, dragging itself down a pillar of the building. Wei Jun said to the creature: "You are a worry to people. I have heard that though you may be small, if you sting a person, even good medicine is of no use." As such, Jun stuck out a finger and smashed it.<sup>101</sup> Shortly thereafter Wei Jun again saw a white spider drop down, just like the one he had killed before. Looking above it, [Jun saw] there was a web serving as their den. Wei then ordered his assistants to raise brooms and brush the insects all away, saying: "These worrisome creatures, I will get rid of them!"

The next day Wei Jun wished to depart and, taking his hand, he rubbed the pillar [where he had killed the spiders]. Suddenly he felt an unbearable pain in his finger, and it was none other than a white spider stinging his skin. Wei Jun was alarmed and flicked it away. Shortly thereafter, Jun's finger became swollen and distended and, before several days had passed, the swelling had extended to his entire arm. After this, a sedan chair carried Wei Jun to Jiangxia but doctors' medicine was without effect. Blood finally burst from the ulcerated left arm and, when the blood had finished draining, Wei Jun died.

先是，韋君先夫人在江夏，夢一白衣人謂曰：「我弟兄二人為汝子所殺。吾告上帝，帝用雪其冤，且遂吾請。」言畢，夫人驚寤，甚異之，惡不能言。後旬餘而韋君至，具得其狀，方悟所夢。覺為夢日，果其殺蜘蛛於館亭時也。夫人泣曰：「其能久乎！」數日而韋君終矣。

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<sup>99</sup> Wei Jun (or "Lord Wei") does not appear in the standard histories despite serving in the position of Imperial Censor. However, an individual of the same name does appear in another relatively lengthy strange tale. See *TPGJ* 37.233.

<sup>100</sup> Jiangxia corresponds to present day Jiangxia district in Wuhan, Hubei.

<sup>101</sup> It is noteworthy that Jun decides to use what appears to be his finger to kill the spider immediately after expounding on its toxicity.

Earlier on while Wei Jun's mother was in Jiangxia, she dreamt of a white clad man who said to her: "My two brothers were slain by your son.<sup>102</sup> I have told the Lord of Heaven and the Lord will wipe clean this injustice, thus satisfying my request." When he finished speaking, the Lady awoke with a start. Thinking the dream extremely suspicious, she felt it despicable beyond words. After a little more than ten days, Wei Jun arrived. Fully taking in his [critical] condition, the Lady discovered it was as she had dreamt. She realized that the day of her dream was in fact the time when Wei Jun had killed the spiders at the outpost. The Lady wept, exclaiming: "How long can he have!" Wei Jun died after several days.

#### XSZ 2.14

郭司空釗，大和中，自梓潼移鎮西涼府。時有闖者甚謹樸，釗念之，多委以事。常一日，釗命市紋繒絲帛百餘段，其價倍，且以為欺我，即囚於獄，用致其罪。獄既具，釗命笞於庭。忽有十餘犬爭擁其背，吏卒莫能制。釗大異之，且訊其事。闖者曰：「某好閱佛氏《金剛經》，自孩稚常以食飼群犬，不知其他。」釗嘆曰：「犬尚能感其惠，吾安可以不施恩？」遂釋放闖者。

During the Dahe reign period of Emperor Wenzong (827-835), Minister of Works Guo Zhao<sup>103</sup> was transferred from Zitong and garrisoned at Xiliang.<sup>104</sup> At the time, there was a gatekeeper who was extremely honest and sincere. Zhao thought highly of him and often entrusted him with his affairs. One day, Zhao ordered him to purchase more than a hundred bolts of patterned silk fabric from the market place. Thinking the cost twice as much as it should have been, Guo Zhao felt that the gatekeeper had cheated him and so imprisoned him for the crime. After the prison sentence had been served, Zhao then ordered the gatekeeper flogged in the courtyard. Suddenly, more than a dozen dogs appeared and

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<sup>102</sup> The meaning of *xian furen* 先夫人 is somewhat difficult in this passage, as it would most typically refer to the primary wife or foremost lady of the household. However, Wei Jun is clearly referred to as this woman's *zi* 子, or son. This would suggest most strongly that the Lady Wei is in fact his mother.

<sup>103</sup> Guo Zhao 郭釗 (dates uncertain) was the son of Princess Shengping, who was the daughter of Emperor Daizong (r. 762-779). He was married to Lady Shen, whose mother was Princess Changlin, also a daughter of Emperor Daizong (making the two cousins). Guo Zhao was the son of the famous Tang general, Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (697-781), who helped put down the An Lushan rebellion and quell Uyghur and Tibetan incursions. Guo Zhao served with distinction as a high minister particularly during the reign of Emperor Muzong (r. 820-824), when his younger sister was honored as Empress-dowager Yi'an 懿安皇后 by Emperor Muzong for serving as favored concubine of the deceased Emperor Xianzong. See *JTS* 120.3473.

<sup>104</sup> Zitong was located near present day Mianyang, Sichuan. During the Tang, Xiliang fu referred to the area of Liangzhou, which became part of the Tibetan kingdom in 764. The area was located near present day Wuwei, Gansu.

fought to cover up the gatekeeper's back. None of the clerks or soldiers were able to take control of the animals. Zhao though this all extremely strange and so questioned the gatekeeper on the matter. The gatekeeper told him: "I am fond of reading the Buddhist Diamond Sutra and since childhood have often fed the packs of dogs with my leftovers. I know nothing else of the matter." Zhao let out a sigh of admiration and said: "If the dogs are able to be moved by your benevolence, how could I not be kind?" Zhao thereupon released the gatekeeper.

#### XSZ 2.15

扶風縣西有天和寺，在高岡之上。其下有龕宇軒豁，可窮居者，趙叟家焉。叟無妻孥，病足而偻，常策杖行乞於市。里中人哀其老病且窮無所歸，率給以食。叟既得食，常先聚群犬以餐之。後歲餘，叟病寒，臥於龕中。時大雪，叟無衣，裸形俯地，且戰且呻。其群犬俱集於叟前，搖尾而嗥，已而環其衽席，競以足擁叟體，由是寒少解。後旬餘，竟以寒死其龕。犬具哀鳴，晝夜不歇，數日方去。

To the west of Fufeng County, there was the Tianhe Monastery located atop a ridge.<sup>105</sup> Beneath it there was an open-air shrine where the poor could take shelter, and Old Man Zhao made his home there. Zhao was without a wife or children and was club-footed and hunchbacked. He often took up his walking stick and went begging in the market place. The people of the village took pity on his old age and infirmity and the fact that he was poor with nowhere to turn to, and so they gave him food. Whenever Old Man Zhao had gotten a bit to eat, he would always first gather the packs of dogs to feed them. After a bit more than a year, Zhao took ill from cold and was lying in the shrine. At the time there was a heavy snow, and Old Man Zhao had no robes. He lay bent and naked on the ground, trembling and moaning. Zhao's pack of dogs all gathered before him, wagging their tails and howling. Shortly thereafter, they formed a ring about his sleeping mat and embraced his body with their paws, thereby slightly relieving the cold. After a bit more than ten days had passed, Old Man Zhao finally died of cold at the shrine. Day and night without rest, the dogs all cried out mournfully. Only after several days had passed did they finally depart.

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<sup>105</sup> Fufeng was located near present day Baoli, Shaanxi. However, this tale appears to be the primary reference to a Tianhe Monastery located in the area.

### XSZ 3.2

竇應中，有李氏子，亡其名，家於洛陽。其世以不好殺，故家未嘗畜狸，所以宥鼠之死也。迨其孫，亦能世祖父意。常一日，李氏大集其親友，會食於堂。既坐，而門外有數百鼠，俱人立，以前足相鼓，如甚喜狀。家僮驚異，告於李氏。李氏親友乃空其堂而縱觀。人去且盡，堂忽摧圯，其家無一傷者。堂既摧，群鼠亦去。悲乎！鼠固微物也，尚能識恩而知報，況人乎？如是則施恩者宜廣其恩，而報恩者亦宜力其報。有不顧者，當視此以愧。

During the Baoying reign period of Emperor Suzong (762-763),<sup>106</sup> there was a man of the Li clan whose name has been forgotten that had his household in Luoyang. His whole life, he was never fond of killing living things and so his household never raised raccoon-dogs<sup>107</sup> so that the mice might be spared. Even his grandchildren shared in their grandfather's belief. One day, Mr. Li had a great gathering of all his friends and relatives and they assembled in the hall to eat. Once they were seated, some several hundred mice gathered outside the door. All at once, the mice stood up before the gathered guests, put one foot forward, and began drumming their feet as though extremely delighted. The household servants were all astounded and went to tell Mr. Li. Spreading out to take a look, the friends and relatives of Mr. Li all emptied out of the hall. When everyone had left the hall suddenly collapsed, but not a single person was harmed. Once the hall had fallen, the swarm of mice departed.

Oh what compassion! Mice are but small creatures, yet they are able to recognize kindness and know how to repay it—but what more of man? If it were thus, then those spreading about kindnesses would spread them far and wide, while those repaying kindnesses would repay them with all their strength. If there are those who would not heed this, they ought look upon this example and be ashamed.

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<sup>106</sup> Emperor Suzong actually died in May of 762, about a month after he changed the reign name to Baoying. Emperor Daizong was acting emperor thereafter but did not change the reign name until August of 763.

<sup>107</sup> The *li* 狸 is a type of animal from the canine family similar in appearance to the raccoon or fox and native to East Asia.

#### XSZ 4.5

唐柳州刺史河東柳宗元，常自省郎出為永州司馬，途至荊門，舍驛亭中。是夕，夢一婦人，衣黃衣，再拜而泣曰：「某，家楚水者也。今不幸，死在朝夕，非君不能活之。儻獲其生，不獨戴恩而已，兼能假君祿，益君為將為相，且無難矣。幸明君子一圖焉。」公謝而許之。既寤，嘿自異之。及再寐，又夢婦人且祈且謝，久而方去。明晨，有吏來，稱荊帥命，將宴宗元。宗元既命駕，以天色尚早，因假寐焉。既而又夢婦人，顰然其容，憂惶不暇，顧謂宗元曰：「某之命，今若敗縷之懸甚風，危危將斷且飄矣。而君不能念其事之急耶！幸疾為計。不爾，亦與敗縷皆斷矣。願君子許之。」言已，又祈拜，既告去。心亦未悟焉，即俛而念曰：「吾一夕三夢婦人告我，辭甚懇。豈吾之吏有不平於人者耶！抑將宴者以魚為我膳耶！得而活之，亦吾事也。」即命駕詣郡宴。既而以夢話荊帥，且召吏訊之。吏曰：「前一日，漁人網獲一巨黃鱗魚，將為膳，今已斷其首。」宗元驚曰：「果其夕之夢。」遂命挈而投江中，然而其魚已死矣。是夕，又夢婦人來，亡其首。宗元益異之。

Liu Zongyuan<sup>108</sup> of Hedong,<sup>109</sup> who was the prefectural governor of Liuzhou during the Tang, was once demoted from his post as attendant in the imperial palace to that of military supervisor in Yongzhou. En route to take up the new position, he arrived at Jingmen and stayed the night in the way station.<sup>110</sup> That evening, he dreamt of a lady clad in yellow robes. Shedding tears, she bowed twice and said: "My household is located on the waters of Chu. I have now been visited by misfortune and shall die within the span of a day. Without you sir, I shall lose my life. If I might yet live, I shall not only repay this kindness but will also bestow emoluments upon you. You shall become a chancellor and general and will encounter no difficulties. I hope that you, wise sir, might come up with a plan for me." She asked that this be permitted and then took her leave. Thereupon, Liu Zongyuan awoke with a start, marveling at the strange dream.

Thereafter he fell back asleep, once more dreaming of the woman who again came to plead her favor, finally leaving after some time. The next morning, a clerk arrived and announced that the

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<sup>108</sup> Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) was a famous poet and prose master of the Tang dynasty and is typically classified as one of the eight great masters of prose from the Tang and Song. He was a proponent of old-style prose and is also well known for his pieces on travel. He served with some distinction as an official before falling out of favor due to associations with failed reformist movements. This tale clearly refers to his exile, as he was first sent to Yongzhou, before being transferred to Liuzhou. See *JTS* 160.4213 and *XTS* 168.5132.

<sup>109</sup> Hedong corresponds to present day Shanxi.

<sup>110</sup> All of the areas mentioned in these two lines correspond closely to present day areas of the same name. Jingmen refers to present day Jingmen, Hubei. Yongzhou refers to Yongzhou, Hunan, and Liuzhou refers to Liuzhou, Guangxi. It is interesting to note that there are accounts attributing the name of Liuzhou to the time that Liu Zongyuan spent as governor there.

commander of Jingmen was preparing a banquet for Zongyuan. Zongyuan then ordered his carriage readied but, because it was still early, he dozed off once more. In short order, he again dreamt of the lady, who this time appeared with furrowed brow and a look of apprehension. She looked at Zongyuan and said: "Right now my fate is suspended like a ragged thread in a fierce wind. Perched perilous it is about to be severed and shall float away. Yet, you are unable to be roused to the urgency of this matter! I hope that you will hasten your plan of action. If you do not, I shall indeed be severed like the ragged thread. I hope that you will consider this." When she had finished speaking, she again bowed and took her leave.

Before Liu Zongyuan had fully regained his consciousness, his head drooped and he thought to himself: "In one night, I dreamt three times of this woman making her request to me and her words were very sincere. How could my clerks possibly commit injustices to others! But, perhaps the one who is about to give me a banquet wishes to serve me fish! I must make it my business to save them." Then, [after waking fully,] he ordered his carriage take him to the commandery banquet.

Upon arriving, he told his dream to the commander of Jingmen, who called a clerk to look into the matter. The clerk told them: "Yesterday, a fisherman caught a huge yellow-scaled fish in his net. It was about to be fixed for the meal, and its head has already been chopped off." Zongyuan said with surprise: "And so this was my dream from yesterday evening." Thereupon, they ordered the fish be carried and tossed into the river, but it had already died. That evening, he once again dreamt of the lady but her head was missing. Zongyuan thought this even more astounding.

#### XSZ 4.6

唐河東柳沂者，僑居洛陽。因乘春釣伊水，得巨魚，挈而歸，致於盆水中。先是，沂有嬰兒，始六七歲。是夕，沂夢魚以喙齧嬰兒臆。沂悸然而寤，果聞嬰兒啼，曰向夢一大魚齧其臆，痛不可忍，故啼焉。與沂夢同。沂異之，乃視嬰兒之臆，果有瘡而血。沂益懼。明旦，以魚投伊水中，且命僧轉經畫像。僅旬餘，嬰兒瘡愈。沂自後不復釣也。

During the Tang, there was one Liu Yi of Hedong who went to live abroad in Luoyang.<sup>111</sup> Taking advantage of springtime, he went out fishing on the Yi River.<sup>112</sup> Liu Yi caught a huge fish and put it in a basin of water to carry home.

Yi also had a child about six or seven years of age. That evening, Yi dreamt a fish bit his child on the chest with its mouth. Yi woke fearfully with a start and, indeed, heard his child crying. His child told him that he had dreamt a large fish bit him on the chest. It was unbearably painful and so he began crying. It was the same as Yi's dream. Yi thought this unusual and then saw his son's chest indeed had a bleeding sore on it, causing his fear to multiply.

The next day, he took the fish and threw it back into the Yi River, afterwards ordering monks to turn prayer wheels and commission a religious image. After a little over ten days, the boy's sore started to heal. Henceforth, Yi did not again go fishing.

#### XSZ 4.7

宣城郡當塗民有劉成者、李暉者，俱不識農事，嘗用巨舫載魚蟹，鬻於吳越間。唐天寶十三年春三月，皆自新安江載往丹陽郡，行至下查浦，去宣城四十里，會天暮，泊舟，二人俱登陸。時李暉往浦巖村舍中，獨劉成在江上。四顧雲島，闕無人跡，忽聞舫中有連呼阿彌陀佛者，聲甚厲。成驚而視之，見一大魚自舫中振鬚搖首，人聲而呼阿彌陀佛焉。成且懼且悚，毛髮盡勁，即匿身蘆中以伺之。俄而舫中萬魚，俱跳躍呼佛，聲動地。成大恐，遽登舫，盡投群魚於江中。有頃而李暉至，成具以告暉，暉怒曰：「堅子安得為妖妄乎？」唾而罵言且久。成無以自白，即用衣資酬其直。既而餘百錢，易荻草十餘束，致於岸。明日遷於舫中，忽覺重不可舉，解而視之，得緡十五千，簽題云：「歸汝魚直。」成益奇之。是日，於瓜洲會群僧食，並以緡施焉。時有萬莊者，自涇陽令退居瓜洲，備得其事，傳以紀述。

Amongst the Dangtu people of the Xuancheng commandery<sup>113</sup> there were two men by the name of Liu Cheng and Li Hui,<sup>114</sup> who together paid no mind to farm work. Once, they took a huge boat loaded down with fish and crab to sell between the areas of Wu and Yue. In the third month of spring of the

<sup>111</sup> This tale is the primary reference to the individual by the name Liu Yi.

<sup>112</sup> The Yi River begins in western Henan province and flows to Luoyang, draining into the Luo River. Note that this Yi is also a homophone for Liu Yi's personal name.

<sup>113</sup> Xuancheng Commandery included the areas of present day Wuhu, Tongling, Chizhou, and Xuancheng counties in Anhui. Dangtu refers to Dangtu County, which was located nearby in Ma'an shan, Anhui.

<sup>114</sup> While people by these names appear occasionally in the histories, they are almost certainly not the two mentioned here, as these two seem to have no association with officialdom.

thirteenth year of the Tianbao reign period of Emperor Xuanzong, they set out together from the Xin'an River and headed towards Danyang commandery.<sup>115</sup> They traveled until they came to the lower Chapu, some forty *li* from Xuancheng. When dusk was about to fall, they moored their boat and the two men went ashore.

At the time, Li Hui headed up to the village on the ridges above the water and only Liu Cheng remained by the river. It was all quiet about the cloudy isles with no trace of inhabitants, when suddenly from the boat a fearsome and steady cry of "Amitabha!" arose. Alarmed, Cheng went to take a look and saw within the boat an enormous fish flapping its head and shaking its whiskers. It shouted "Amitabha!" in a voice like that of a human. Cheng was struck with dread and terror, his hair standing on end, and he went to hide himself in the reeds to observe the fish. Shortly thereafter the ten-thousand fish from within the boat's hold began to leap about, shouting the name of Buddha, their roar shaking the earth. Cheng was terrified and quickly climbed aboard the boat, throwing all the fish back into the river.

After a little while had passed, Li Hui returned and Cheng told him everything that had happened. Hui said to him angrily: "You blockhead, how could it be something so absurd!" Hui then spit and cursed at Cheng for some time. Cheng had no other way to explain himself, and so he used the money he had set aside for clothing to repay the cost of the fish. He had only several hundred cash left over, and so he took several bundles of reeds and grasses and returned to the shore to spend the night upon them.

The next day, he went to take the bundles back to the boat, but they felt so heavy that he could not even lift them up. Taking a closer look, he found fifteen thousand strings of cash with a note that read: "I repay to you the cost of the fish." Cheng thought this all the more remarkable. That same day in Guazhou, Liu Cheng gathered together a group of monks for a meal and used the cash to pay for it. At

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<sup>115</sup> Danyang commandery corresponds to present day Danyang, Anhui, which was located adjacent to and sometimes included in the territory of Dangtu.



the time, there was a man from Wanzhuang who had retired to Guazhou from his post as a commandant in Jingyang and,<sup>116</sup> hearing of the whole affair, passed down this account.

### XSZ 7.13

唐敬宗皇帝御曆，以天下無事，視政之餘，因廣浮屠教。由是，長安中緇徒益多。及文宗嗣位，親閱萬機，思除其害於人者，嘗顧左右曰：「自吾為天子，未能有補於人。今天下幸無兵革，吾將盡除害物者，使億兆之民，指今日為堯舜之世，足矣。有不能補化而蠹於物者，但言之。」左右或對曰：「獨浮屠氏不能有補於大化，而蠹於物亦甚，可以斥去。」於是文宗病之，始命有司詔中外，罷緇徒說佛書義。又有請斥其不修教者。詔命將行，會尚食廚吏修御膳，以鼎烹雞卵，方燃火於其下，忽聞鼎中有聲極微，如人言者。迫而聽之，乃群卵呼「觀世音菩薩」也。聲甚淒咽，似有所訴。尚食吏異之，具其事上聞。文宗命左右驗之，如尚食所奏。文帝嘆曰：「吾不知浮屠氏之力乃如是耶！」翌日，敕尚食吏無以雞卵為膳。因頒詔郡國，各於精舍塑觀世音菩薩像。

During the reign of Emperor Jingzong of the Tang (r. 824-826), because there were no troublesome affairs amongst the realm and the government was overseen with extra care, the teachings of Buddha spread far and wide. Because of this, the number of black-clad monks going about in Chang'an grew ever greater. When Emperor Wenzong (r. 826-840) succeeded to the throne, he closely inspected the myriad workings of things. Pondering how to cast out those elements harmful to the people, he once called his attendants to him and said: "Since the time I took over as the Son of Heaven, there is nothing more I might do to benefit the people. Presently, the realm is fortunate to be without the scourge of war. I am on the verge of expelling all harmful things, and I will make the people point to the present day and say it truly is the age of Yao and Shun. This is indeed sufficient. If there remains something that is not beneficial and might corrupt beings, you need only speak of it."

Someone from amongst his attendants responded: "Only the Buddhists are unable to benefit the great transformation of things and are also extremely harmful. They should be expelled."

Consequently, Wenzong became distraught over this and began to order his officials to send a decree throughout the land putting a stop to monks expounding on the meaning of the Buddhist scriptures.

Furthermore, he permitted those who did not follow this order to be punished.

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<sup>116</sup> Given the reference to Guazhou, which was located near present day Yangzhou, Jiangsu, Wanzhuang likely refers to the village of the same name located near present day Putou, Jiangsu. Jingyang refers to present day Xianyang, Shaanxi.

When the imperial edict was about to circulate, the chefs of the imperial kitchen were gathered preparing the imperial meal. They were planning to cook eggs in a cauldron and so were about to light a fire beneath it. All of a sudden, they heard a tiny sound rising from within the cauldron, just like the sound of a person speaking. Drawing near, they listened to it and heard the pile of eggs calling out: "Avalokitesvara!" Their words sounded bitter and harsh to swallow, as though bearing some grievance. The chefs thought this quite strange and so passed along word of the matter to those higher up. Emperor Wenzong ordered his attendants to look into it, and they discovered it was just as had been reported by the chefs. Emperor Wenzong sighed and said: "I had no idea that Buddha had powers such as this!" The next day, he ordered that the imperial chefs no longer use eggs in his meals. He then circulated an edict amongst the commanderies of the realm that they each construct a statute of Avalokitesvara in a Buddhist monastery.

#### XSZ 9.8

相國李德裕為太子少保，分司東都。嘗召一僧問己之休咎，僧曰：「非立可知，願結壇設佛像。」僧居其中，凡三日。謂公曰：「公災戾未已，當萬里南去爾。」公大怒，叱之。明日，又召其僧問焉。」慮所見未子細，請更觀之。」即又結壇三日，告公曰：「南行之期，不旬月矣。不可逃。」公益不樂，且曰：「然則吾師何以明其不妄耶！」僧曰：「願陳目前事為驗，庶表某之不誣也。」公曰：「果有說也」即指其地曰：「此下有石函，請發之。」即命窮其下數尺，果得石函，啟之，亦無睹焉，公異而稍信之。因問：「南去誠不免矣，然乃遂不還乎？」僧曰：「當還爾。」公訊其事，對曰：「相國平生當食萬羊，今食九千五百矣。所以當還者，未盡五百羊爾。」公慘然而嘆曰：「吾師果至人。且我元和十三年為丞相張公從事，於北都，嘗夢行於晉山，見山上盡目皆羊，有牧者十數迎拜我。我因問牧者，牧者曰：『此侍御平生所食羊。』吾嘗記此夢，不泄於人。今者果如師之說耶。乃知陰鷲固不誣也。」後旬日，振武節度使米暨遣使致書於公，且饋五百羊。公大驚，召告其事。僧嘆曰：「萬羊將滿，公其不還乎？」公曰：「吾不食之，亦可免耶！」曰：「羊至此，已為相國所有。」公戚然。旬日，貶潮州司馬，連貶崖州司戶，竟沒於荒裔也。

Prime Minister Li Deyu was the Junior-guardian of the Crown Prince and served in the branch offices of the eastern capital.<sup>117</sup> Once, he summoned a monk to ask about his fate. The monk told him:

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<sup>117</sup> Li Deyu 李德裕 (787-850) was a chancellor and major political figure during the reigns of Emperors Wenzong and Wuzong and the leader of a political faction that vied for power against the group led by Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (780-849). Li Deyu was particularly influential during the reign of Emperor Wuzong but was disliked by Emperor Xuānzong. When Xuānzong took the throne, Li Deyu was systematically demoted and exiled, where he then died.

"There is nothing I can let you know right away. I would like to set up an altar and construct a statue of Buddha."

The monk stayed with him and, after three days, told Li Deyu: "Your disasters and calamities have not ceased, you will travel ten-thousand *li* to the south." Li Deyu was extremely angry and rebuked the monk.

The next day, he again summoned the monk and asked him: "I think that perhaps you did not carefully examine what you saw, might you take another look at it?"

Thereupon, the monk spent another three days raising an altar and then told Li Deyu: "Your trip to the south will not exceed ten months, but it cannot be avoided."

Deyu was even more displeased and again said: "Well, if that's the case, how do I know what you say isn't complete nonsense!"

The monk replied: "I shall put the matter before your very eyes to examine. There are many examples to show that I do not deceive you."

Li Deyu then responded: "Then prove it is indeed as you say."

Thereupon, the monk pointed to the ground and said: "Beneath us, there is a stone casket. Please excavate it."

Li Deyu ordered several *chi* of earth be dug out, and they indeed found a stone casket. Opening it to take a look, there was in fact nothing to be seen within. Deyu thought this remarkable and gradually began to put faith in the monk, and so he then asked: "If travelling southward is truly unavoidable, am I never to return?"

The monk responded: "You should return." Li Deyu then continued to ask after the matter, and the monk told him: "For your whole life, you have ten-thousand sheep that you may eat. Presently, you

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This tale seems to be prefiguring his death in exile, interesting also considering that Zhang Du was a descendent of Niu Sengru. See *JTS* 174.4509 and *XTS* 180.5327.

have eaten nine-thousand five-hundred. You ought to be able to return, as you have not yet exhausted the final five-hundred sheep."

Deeply saddened, Li Deyu sighed and said: "You truly are a Shakyamuni. During the thirteenth year of the Yuanhe reign period of Emperor Xianzong (818), I was engaged in service to Prime Minister Zhang<sup>118</sup> in the northern capital and once dreamt I was travelling on Mount Jin.<sup>119</sup> As far as the eye could see, the mountaintop was covered in a flock of sheep and some dozen shepherds welcomed me bowing. I questioned the shepherds, and one of them told me: 'These are all the sheep for your honor's entire life.' I have always remembered this dream but never told it to anyone. Now, it is just as you have said and so I am convinced you are not deceiving me."

After some ten days had passed, the military circuit governor of Zhenwu, Mi Ji,<sup>120</sup> dispatched an envoy to Li Deyu with a letter and also gave him five-hundred sheep. Li Deyu was greatly alarmed and summoned the monk to tell him of the matter. The monk sighed and said: "And so the ten-thousand sheep are used up, perhaps you shall not return after all?"

Li Deyu replied: "I shall not eat them and thereby might escape this fate!" The monk responded: "The sheep have arrived, and so they already count towards your tally." Li Deyu was very distressed by this. After ten days had passed, he was demoted to the position of military supervisor in Chaozhou and then again demoted to revenue manager in Yazhou.<sup>121</sup> In the end, he died in the desolate borderlands.

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<sup>118</sup> Based on the dating here and the relationship between the two men, this most likely refers to Zhang Hongjing 張弘靖 (760-824), who served as chancellor under Emperor Xianzong and on whose staff Li Deyu once served. Zhang Hongjing himself served in various high positions in addition to chancellor, including military circuit governor of Hedong and Xuanwu. However, when he was later given the governorship of Lulong, his mismanagement was blamed for inciting a rebellion amongst the army stationed there. Zhang Hongjing has no biography of his own, but his relationship with Li Deyu can be seen in Deyu's own biography. See again *JTS* 174.4509 and *XTS* 180.5327.

<sup>119</sup> Mount Jin most likely refers to the mountain located in Jinshan County, near Yanqing, Beijing.

<sup>120</sup> It is noteworthy that there is almost no mention of Mi Ji 米暨 in either of the Tang histories, despite the relatively high position of circuit governor of Zhenwu (based in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia) attributed to him here. In the two mentions that he receives in the official histories, he is however mentioned as the military circuit governor of Xiazhou and Xiasuiyin. See *JTS* 18.609 and *XTS* 8.245 respectively.

<sup>121</sup> Chaozhou corresponds to present day Chaozhou, Guangdong, while Yazhou was located in present day Haikou, Hainan.

## Extraordinary Events at Buddhist Temples

### XSZ 1.12

雲花寺有聖畫殿，長安中謂之七聖畫。初，殿宇既制，寺僧召畫工，將命施彩飾，會貴其直，不合寺僧祈酬，亦竟去。後數日，有二少年詣寺來謁曰：「某，善畫者也。今聞此寺將命畫工，某不敢利其價，願輸功，可乎？」寺僧欲先閱其跡，少年曰：「某弟兄凡七人，未嘗畫於長安中，寧有跡乎。」寺僧以為妄，稍難之。少年曰：「某既不納師之直，苟不可師意，即命圻其壁，未為晚也。」寺僧利其無直，遂許之。後一日，七人果至。各挈彩繪，將入其殿，且謂僧曰：「從此去七日，慎勿啟吾之門，亦不勞飲食，蓋以畏風日所侵鑠也。可以泥錮吾門，無使有纖隙，不然，則不能施其妙矣。」僧從其語。如是凡六日，闕無有聞。僧相語曰：「此必他怪也。且不可果其約。」遂相與發其封。戶既啟，有七鴿翩翩望空飛去。其殿中彩繪，儼若四隅，唯西北墉未盡其飾焉。後畫工來見之，大驚曰：「真神妙之筆也。」於是無敢繼其色者。

The Yunhua Buddhist Temple had a Portrait Hall of the Sages, and in Chang'an it was known as the Portrait of the Seven Sages.<sup>122</sup> In the beginning when the hall was being constructed, the monks solicited a painter and planned to have him decorate the hall. However, the painter's price was too high and, ignoring the monks' entreaties, finally he departed. After a few days, two young men went to visit the temple to pay their respects and said: "We are skilled at painting. We heard that this temple has some painting to be done. We dare not draw a profit from the temple but wish to volunteer our services, is that permissible?" The temple monks first wished to take a look at some of their work, and the boys said to them: "We seven brothers have never painted in Chang'an, how could you view our works?" The monks thought this a bit presumptuous and made objections. The boys then said: "Since we will not accept your payment, if by chance you do not find our work in accordance with your wishes, then you can simply order us to plaster over the walls and nothing will be lost."

Since the monks had an opportunity to benefit at no cost, they allowed it. The next day, the seven brothers indeed arrived, each carrying their drafting patterns. Entering into the temple, they said to the monks: "For the next seven days, be careful not to open up our door. Also, do not trouble yourselves over our food and drink, as we fear damage to the work from wind and sun [were the door to

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<sup>122</sup> The Yunhua Temple was indeed located in Chang'an.

be opened]. You should seal the door with clay so that there are no tiny cracks, otherwise we will not be able to execute the wondrousness of our painting.”

The monks heeded their words, and for six days it was silent and nothing could be heard. The monks said amongst themselves: "This is certainly proof enough that there is something strange about those men, and so we mustn't keep to our agreement." Thereupon, the monks together broke the seal and opened the door. Seven doves swiftly and gracefully darted out into the sky. Paintings majestically adorned the four corners of the hall and only the decoration on the northwest wall had not been completed. Later on a painter came to take a look at it and, amazed, he said: "This is truly a miraculous piece of work!" Thereafter, no one dared finish the painting.

#### XSZ 2.1

至德二年十月二十三日，豐樂里開業寺有神人足跡甚長，自寺外門至佛殿。先是，闍人宿門下，夢一人，長二丈餘，被金甲，執槊，立於寺門外。俄而，以手曳其門，扃鑰盡解，神人即挽而入寺，行至佛殿，顧望久而沒。闍人驚寤。及曉，視其門，已開矣。即具以夢白於寺僧。寺僧共視，見神人之跡。遂告於京兆。京兆以聞，肅宗命中使驗之，如其言。

On the twenty-third day of the tenth month of the second year of the Zhide reign period of Emperor Suzong (Thursday, Dec. 8, 757), huge footprints of a divine being were found in the Kaiye Temple of Fengle village.<sup>123</sup> They went from the outer gate of the temple all the way to the hall of the Buddha.

Prior to this, there was a gatekeeper who spent the night beneath the temple gates. He dreamt that there was a man over two *zhang* tall clad in metal armor and carrying a lance standing outside the temple gate. Shortly thereafter the man pulled at the gate with his hands and, when the door bolt was completely unlatched, the divine man opened the gate and entered into the temple. He walked up to the hall of the Buddha and looked at it silently for some time. The gatekeeper then woke with a start. When dawn arrived, he looked at the gate and saw that it was already open. He then told his dream to

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<sup>123</sup> Fengle was located in present day Jingmen, Hubei. The Kaiye Temple does receive some mention in the histories, particularly for having burnt down and been rebuilt. See *JTS* 37.1367 and 159.4188, along with *THY* 48.845.

the temple monks. The temple monks all went to take a look and saw the tracks of the divine being.

They then went to report the affair to the capital. When it was heard of in the capital, Emperor Suzong ordered a palace messenger go and investigate the matter. It was just as it had been told.

### XSZ 3.9

武陵郡有浮屠祠，其高數百尋，下瞰大江。每江水泛揚，則浮屠勢若搖動。故里人無敢登其上者。有賈人朱峴，家極贍，有一女，無何失所在。其家尋之，僅旬餘，莫窮其適。

There was a Buddhist shrine in Wuling commandery that had a pagoda several hundred *xun* tall, and a great river sat below it. Whenever the river flooded over, the pagoda appeared to rock and sway under the force and so the people of the village did not dare climb atop it. There was a merchant by the name of Zhu Xian<sup>124</sup> whose household was extremely wealthy. He had a daughter who before long disappeared. His household searched for her but, after a bit more than a fortnight had passed, no trace of her could be found.

一日，天雨霽，郡民望見浮屠之顛若有人立者，隱然紋纈衣，郡民且以為他怪。峴聞之，即往觀焉。望其衣裝，甚類其女。即命人登其上取之，果見女也。峴驚訊其事，女曰：「某向者獨處，有夜叉，長丈餘，甚詭異，自屋上躍而下，入某之室，謂某曰：『無懼我也。』即攬衣馳去，至浮屠上。既而兀兀然，若甚醉者。凡數日方稍寤，因懼且甚。其夜叉率以將曉則下浮屠，行里中取食飲某。一日，夜叉方去，某下視之，見其行里中，會遇一白衣。夜叉見，辟易退遠百步，不敢竊視。及暮歸，某因詰之：『何為懼白衣者乎？』夜叉曰：『向者白衣自小不食太牢，故我不得近也。』某問何故，夜叉曰：『牛者，所以耕田疇，為生人之本。人不食某肉，則上帝佑之。故我不得而近也。』某默念曰：『吾人也，去父母與異類為伍，可不悲乎？』明日，夜叉去，而祝曰：『某願不乙太牢為食。』凡三祝，其夜叉忽自郡中來至浮屠下，望某而語曰：『何為有異志而棄我乎？使我終不得近子矣。從此別去。』詞畢，即東向走，而竟不知其所往。某喜甚，由浮屠中得以歸。」

One day after it had finished raining, the townspeople looked up and saw that there appeared to be a person sitting atop the peak of the pagoda. The person appeared faint and clad in multicolored woven silk robes, and the townspeople thought it was some sort of strange being. Xian heard of the matter and went to take a look at it. Seeing the type of clothing, he thought it very similar to that of his daughter's. He ordered some men to climb up and fetch her, and they found that it was indeed his daughter.

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<sup>124</sup> This tale appears to be the primary reference to Zhu Xian.

Xiang questioned his daughter intensely about the matter, and she responded:

“Previously when I was alone, a yaksha that was more than a *zhang* tall appeared and was extremely strange and cunning. It leapt down from above my room and entered into it. It said to me: 'Do not be afraid of me.' It then took me by my robes and carried me off, and we arrived atop the pagoda. Thereafter, I became dazed and dumbstruck as though dead drunk.

“After several days, I then awoke and became extremely afraid. When it was about dawn, the yaksha descended from the pagoda and went to the village to get food and drink for me. One day when the yaksha was about to go, I looked down and saw it moving about the village. It encountered someone clad in white robes and, when the yaksha saw the person, it recoiled back in fright and retreated a hundred paces—not even daring to take a peep. At dusk, the yaksha returned and I asked it: 'Why were you afraid of the person in white robes?'

“The yaksha told me: 'The person you saw before in the white robes has since childhood never eaten sacrificial meat, and so I cannot draw near them.' I then asked why, and the yaksha replied: 'Cattle are used to plough the fields and farmland and are the root of all living beings. If a person does not eat any meat, then they are blessed by the God on High. Therefore, I cannot draw near them.'

“I silently thought to myself: 'I am but a person, having been separated from my mother and father and forced to keep company with a strange being. How could I not be melancholy?' The next day after the yaksha left, I intoned a blessing: 'I will never again eat of the sacrificial meats.' After I had prayed three times, the yaksha suddenly returned from the village to the foot of the pagoda and looking up at me said: 'Why do you secretly plot to abandon me? You have made it so I can never again draw near to you. Henceforth, we go our separate ways.' When it had finished speaking, it walked off to the east and I do not know where it ended up. I was delighted and could finally return home from the pagoda.”



#### XSZ 4.12

董觀，太原人，善陰陽占候之術。唐元和中，與僧靈習善，偕適吳楚間。習道卒，觀亦歸併州。寶應中，觀遊汾涇，至泥陽郡，會於龍興寺。堂宇宏麗，有經數千百編。觀遂留止，期盡閱乃還。

Dongguan<sup>125</sup> was a man of Taiyuan who was skilled in the art of fortune-telling from the Yin and Yang. During the Yuanhe reign period of Emperor Xianzong, he went traveling together with his friend, the monk Lingxi,<sup>126</sup> in the areas of Wu and Chu. Xi died on the road, and Guan then returned to Bingzhou.<sup>127</sup>

During the Baoying reign period of Emperor Suzong, Guan went traveling on the Fen and Jing rivers.<sup>128</sup> When he arrived at Niyang commandery, he went to the Longxing Temple.<sup>129</sup> The eaves of its halls were majestic and beautiful, and thousands of scriptures were stored within. Guan then stayed awhile and, when he had finished reading all the books, returned home.

先是，院之東廡北室，空而扃鑰。觀因請居，寺僧不可，曰：「居是室者，多病或死。且多妖異。」觀少年恃氣力，曰：「某願得之。」遂居焉。旬餘，夜寐，輒有胡人十數，挈樂持酒來，歌笑其中，若無人。如是數夕，觀雖懼，尚不言於寺僧。一日經罷，時已曠黑，觀怠甚，閉室而寢。未熟。忽見靈習在榻前，謂觀曰：「師行矣。」觀驚且恚曰：「師，鬼也。何為而至？」習笑曰：「子運窮數盡，故我得以候子。」即牽觀袂去榻。觀回視，見其身尚偃，如寢熟。乃嘆曰：「嗟乎！我家遠，父母尚在。今死此，誰蔽吾屍耶！」習曰：「何子之言失而憂之深乎？夫所以為人者，以其能運手足善視聽而已。此精魂扶之使然，非自然也。精魂離身，故曰死。是以手足不能為，視聽不能施，雖六尺之軀，尚安用乎？子寧足念！」

Prior to that however, there was a room to the east of the main hall of the temple that was empty and yet sat bolted shut. Guan requested that he might reside within, but the temple monks did not allow it, saying: "Of those who have lived within this room, many have taken ill and some have died. There have also been many strange and abnormal occurrences within."

As a young man, Guan had relied on his strength and vigor and so replied: "I wish to live here." He was then permitted to reside within. After about a fortnight had passed, while he was sleeping in

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<sup>125</sup> This tale and one other, XSZ 5.8, are the primary references to Dongguan.

<sup>126</sup> This tale is the primary reference to Lingxi.

<sup>127</sup> Bingzhou was an old name for present day Taiyuan.

<sup>128</sup> Niyang commandery refers to the area centered on Ding County, Gansu.

<sup>129</sup> While a great deal of Longxing temples appear in a variety of sources, including fifteen mentioned in the *TPGJ* alone, I was unable to locate any other reference to a Longxing Temple in this specific area during the Tang.

the evening, some dozen foreigners appeared toting instruments and carrying wine. They sang and laughed within the room as though no one was there. It was like this for several nights but, though Guan was afraid, he did not tell the temple monks.

One day after he had finished reading scripture, it was already beginning to get dark, and Guan was feeling lazy. He shut his room and went to sleep. Before long, he suddenly saw Lingxi sitting before his bed. Xi then said to Guan: "Master, you will soon go traveling."

Guan responded with surprise and anger: "Master, you are but a ghost. Why have you come here?"

Xi laughed and replied: "Your days are numbered and so I have come to wait for you." He then took Guan by his sleeve to lead him from his bed. Guan turned back to look and saw his body lying there, as though in a deep sleep.

Guan exclaimed: "Alas! My household is far off, and my parents still reside there. If I die like this, who will see to my corpse?"

Xi replied: "Why are your words laden with such deep worry and regret? While one is but a human being, they are able to move their hands and feet and are good at seeing and hearing, nothing more. These faculties are caused by the essence and soul and do not arise on their own. When the essence and soul leave the body, it is called death. And so one cannot move their hands and feet, sight and hearing cannot be employed, and though you may be a full six *chi* tall, what good would it do? You best take this into consideration!"

觀謝之，因問習：「常聞我教有中陰去身者，誰為耶！」習曰：「吾與子謂死而未更生也。」遂相與行。其所向，雖關鍵甚嚴，輒不礙。於是出泥陽城西去。其地多草，茸密紅碧，如毳毼狀。行十餘里，一水廣不數尺，流而西南。觀問習，習曰：「此俗所謂奈河。其源出於地府耶？」觀即視其水，皆血，而腥穢不可近。又見岸上有冠帶袴襦凡數百，習曰：「此逝者之衣。由此趨冥道爾。」又望水西有二城，南北可一里餘，草樹蒙蔽，廬舍駢接。習與觀曰：「與子俱往彼，君生南城徐氏，為次子；我生北城侯氏，為長子。生十年，當重與君捨家歸佛氏。」觀曰：「吾聞人死當為冥官追捕，案籍罪福，苟平生事行無大過，然後更生人間。今我死未盡夕，遂能如是耶！」

Guan apologized and then asked Xi: "I once heard in my studies of leaving the body in mid-life, who'd have thought [it was this]?"

Xi responded: "You and I are dead and have not returned to life." Thereupon, they went off together. When they went out, though the door was bolted tightly, it did not impede their movement. And so they then went out west from the walls of Niyang. The ground was covered in grasses, thick and dense in red and green, just like a down blanket. After they had traveled about a dozen *li*, they saw a body of water, not more than several *chi* wide, flowing to the southwest. Guan asked about it, and Xi replied: "This is what the commoners call Hell River. Its headwaters flow out from the Earth Office." Guan then took a look at the water and saw it was all blood, but it was so foul and rank that he could not draw near.

Guan then saw a pile of several hundred caps, belts, trousers, and short-jackets atop the riverbank. Xi told him: "This is the clothing of the dead. From here we hasten on the shadowy path." Guan again looked to the west of the waters and saw two cities, separated north and south by about a *li*. Grasses and trees concealed and covered them, and their huts and cottages sat joining parallel. Xi said to Guan: "You and I each head towards one. You were born in the southern city to the Xu clan and were the second son. I was born in the northern city to the Hou clan and was the eldest son. After I turned ten, you and I together abandoned our households and returned to the Buddhist fold."

Guan then said: "I have heard that when people die, they are pursued and captured by officials of the netherworld who have a file of all their crimes and good deeds. If for your whole life you had no major transgressions, then you are born again into the realm of man. I have not yet been dead a full evening, is it possible it will indeed be like this?"

曰：「不然。冥途與世人無異，脫不為不道，寧桎梏可及身哉？」言已，習即牽衣躍而過。觀方攀岸將下，水豁然而開，廣丈餘，觀驚貽惶惑。忽有牽觀者，觀回視，一人盡體皆毛，狀若獅子，其貌即人也。良久，謂觀曰：「師何往？」曰：「往此南城爾。」其人曰：「吾命汝閱《大藏經》，宜疾還，不可久留。」遂持觀臂，急東西指郡城而歸。未至數里，又見一人，狀如前召觀者，大呼曰：「可持去。將無籍。」頃之，遂至寺。時天以曙，見所居室，有僧數十擁其門，視己身在榻，二人排觀入門，忽有水自上沃其體，遂寤。

Xi replied: "It is not thus. The shadowy path and the realm of man are no different from one another. To leave one is not to be without a path. Would you prefer to have shackles on your body?" Xi held his robes and leapt across the river. Guan was about to mount the riverbank and descend down when the waters were suddenly rent asunder. There was a gap about a *zhang* wide, and Guan stared at in with alarm and uncertainty. Suddenly there was someone pulling Guan along and, when he looked back, he saw a person whose body was completely covered in fur with the form of a lion but whose face was that of a man.

After some time had passed, the man said to Guan: "Where were you going?"

Guan replied: "I was heading towards the southern city."

The man then said to him: "I command you to read the Buddhist canon and your illness should be healed. You cannot linger here for long." Thereupon, he took Guan by the arm, quickly pointed to the commanderies and towns to the east and west, and then went back. Before Guan had gone more than several *li*, he again saw another person whose appearance was like that of the one who had just instructed him. He shouted to Guan: "I can take you there; you have no register [here]."

In a flash, Guan arrived back at the temple. At the time, the sky was beginning to turn bright and there were several dozen monks crowding the doorway to his room. His saw his body on the bed and two men jostled him through the doorway. Suddenly water was dumped down over Guan's body and he awoke.

寺僧曰觀卒一夕矣。於是具以事語僧。後數日，於佛宇中見二土偶人像為左右侍，乃觀前所見者。觀因誓心精思，留閱藏經，雖寒暑無少墮。凡數年而歸。時寶應二年五月十五也。

The temple monks told Guan that he had been dead for an evening. Thereupon, he told the whole story to the monks. After several days had passed, Guan saw two clay idols in the rafters of the temple that looked like those beings that he had previously seen. Guan then swore an oath to concentrate his thoughts, remaining there to read over the Buddhist canon and, be it summer or winter, did not slow one bit. After several years had passed, he returned home. At the time, it was the fifteenth day of the fifth month of the second year of the Baoying reign period of Emperor Suzong (Thursday, June 30, 763).

會昌中，詔除天下佛寺，觀亦斥去。後至長安，以占候遊公卿門，言事往往而中。常為沂州臨沂縣尉。餘在京師，聞其事於觀也。

During the Huichang reign period of Emperor Wuzong, an edict was sent down to rid the land of Buddhist temples and so Guan was cast out. Later, he arrived in Chang'an and went about the households of the high officials offering fortune-telling services, often regaling those families with this bygone affair. Once there was an official from Linyi County in Yizhou who was staying in the capital, and he heard of this affair from Guan.<sup>130</sup>

#### XSZ 9.9

興福寺西北隅有隋朝佛堂，其壁有畫十光佛者，筆勢甚妙，為天下之標冠。有識者云，此國手蔡生之跡也。蔡生，隋朝以善畫聞。初建堂宇既成，有僧以百金募善畫者，得蔡生。既畫，謂人曰：「吾平生所畫多矣。獨今日下筆，若有鬼神翼而成者。」由是長安中盡傳其名。貞觀初，寺僧以此堂年月稍久，慮一旦有摧圮，遂召數工及土木之費，且欲新其制。忽一日，群僧齋於寺庭，既坐，有僧十人，俱白皙清瘦，貌甚古，相次而來，列於席。食畢偕起，入佛堂中，群僧亦繼其後。俄而十人忽亡所見。群僧相顧驚嘆者久之。因視北壁十光佛，見其風度與向者十人果同。自是，僧不敢毀其堂，且用旌十光之易也。

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<sup>130</sup> The areas of Linyi and Yizhou correspond to present day Linyi, Shandong.

In the northwest corner of the Xingfu Temple<sup>131</sup> there is a Buddha hall from the Sui dynasty. On its walls are painted the images of ten radiant Buddhas. The vigor of the brushwork is marvelous and subtle, and the piece is held up as one of the finest in the realm.

Someone looking at the painting once said: "This piece is from the realm's finest hand and must be the work of Mr. Cai. Mr. Cai was famous for his skill in painting during the Sui dynasty. In the beginning, when the eaves of the hall had been raised, the monks took a hundred in gold and went to recruit a fine painter, getting Mr. Cai. When he had finished painting, he said to others: 'Amongst all the many works I have painted over the course of my life, only when I laid down my brush today did it seem as though the piece was spirited to completion on the wings of divine beings.'" From that point forward, Mr. Cai's name was on the lips of all of Chang'an.

At the outset of the Zhenguan reign period of Emperor Taizong (627-650), the monks thought that the hall was growing a bit decrepit with the passing of the years and one morning were considering having it renovated. They gathered funds and hired a construction crew, wishing to have the hall remodeled. One day, there was a group of monks setting up a vegetarian banquet in the hall. When they had all been seated, ten ancient monks, lean and hoary, suddenly came single file into the hall. When the banquet was complete, the ten old monks all arose and went into the Buddha hall. The other temple monks followed after them. In a flash, the ten ancient monks suddenly disappeared from view. The temple monks looked at one another in surprise for some time. Then, they looked to the painting of the ten radiant Buddhas and saw that the beings in the painting looked just like the ten ancient monks. From then on, the monks dare not knock down the hall and also had it adorned with ten banners.

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<sup>131</sup> This most likely refers to famous Xingfu Temple that was established during the Southern Qi dynasty and was located in present day Changre, Jiangsu.

XSZ 9.10

有道巖師者，居於成都實應寺。唐開元十四年五月二十一日，於佛殿前軒燃長明燈，忽見一巨手在殿西軒，道巖悸且甚，俯而不動。久之，忽聞空中語云：「無懼，無懼。吾善神也。且不敢害師之一毫，何俯而不動耶！」道巖既聞，懼少解。因問曰：「檀越為何人匿其軀而見其手乎？」已而聞空中對曰：「天命我護佛寺之地，以世人好唾佛祠地，我即以背接之，受其唾。由是背有瘡，漬吾肌且甚。願以膏油傅其上，可乎？」道巖遂以清油置巨手中，其手即引去。道巖乃請曰：「吾今願見檀越之形，使畫工寫於屋壁，且書其事以表之，冀世人無敢唾佛祠之地者。」神曰：「吾貌甚陋，師見之，無得慄然耶！」道巖曰：「檀越但見其身，勿我阻也。」見西軒下有一神，質甚異，豐首巨准，巖目呀口，體狀魁碩，長數丈。道巖一見，背汗如沃。其神即隱去。於是具以神狀告畫工，命圖於西軒之壁。

There was a Master Daoyan who resided in the Shiyang Temple in Chengdu.<sup>132</sup> On the twenty-first day of the fifth month of the fourteenth year of the Kaiyuan reign period of Emperor Xuanzong (Thursday, June 5, 726), Daoyan was in antechamber of the temple hall lighting an altar lamp when he suddenly saw a huge hand in the western chamber of the hall. Trembling with fear, Daoyan ducked down and lay still. After a short while, he heard a voice ring out from the emptiness that said: "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid—I am a beneficent spirit. I wouldn't dare harm a single hair on your head. Why are you lying there motionless?"

When Daoyan heard this, he became slightly less afraid. He then asked: "Who is it that hides yet shows their hand?"

Quickly, a reply rang out from the emptiness: "Heaven has ordered me to protect the grounds of this Buddhist temple. Because the commoners are fond of spitting on the grounds of Buddha's altar, I use my back to catch and absorb the spittle. As a result, there are deep sores on my back that crack through my skin. I would like to rub some balm on them, might you help me?" Daoyan then took a bottle of ointment and placed it in the giant hand, which drew back out of sight.

Daoyan then called out a request: "Might I take a look at you so that I could have artisans paint your likeness on the chamber wall and inscribe what you have told me so that others might hear of it? I'd hope then that the commoners would not dare spit on grounds inscribed with the words of Buddha."

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<sup>132</sup> This line presents several difficulties, as this tale appears to be the only reference to both Master Daoyan and the Shiyang Temple in Chengdu.

The spirit responded: "I am extremely ugly. If you saw me, it would make your heart skip a beat!"

Daoyan in turn replied: "I still wish to take a look at you, don't hold back on my account."

Daoyan then saw the spirit from beneath the western chamber. It had an enormous head with stern eyes and a toothy maw, was huge in stature and imposing in appearance, and several *zhang* tall. As soon as Daoyan took a look, his back grew slick with sweat, and the spirit then disappeared from view.

Thereupon, Daoyan described the spirit's entire appearance to a painter and ordered it drawn on the wall of the western chamber.

*TPGJ 423.3442*

政陽郡東南有法喜寺。去郡遠百里。而正居渭水西。唐元和末。寺僧有頻夢一白龍者自渭水來。止於佛殿西楹。蟠遶且久。乃直東而去。明日則雨。如是者數矣。其僧異之。因語與人。人曰。福地蓋神祇所居。固龍之宅也。而佛寺亦為龍所依焉。故釋氏有天龍八部。其義在矣。況郊野外寺。殿宇清敞。為龍之止。不亦宜乎。願以土龍置於寺楹間。且用識其夢也。僧召工。合土為偶龍。具告其狀。而於殿西楹置焉。功畢。甚得雲間勢。蜿蜒鱗鬣。曲盡其妙。雖丹青之巧。不能加也。至長慶初。其寺居人有偃於外門者。見一物從西軒直出。飄飄然若升雲狀。飛馳出寺。望渭水而去。夜將分。始歸西軒下。細而視之。果白龍也。明日因告寺僧。僧奇之。又數日。寺僧盡赴村民會齋去。至午方歸。因入殿視。像龍已失矣。寺僧且歎且異。相顧語曰。是龍也。雖假以土。尚能變化無方。去莫知其適。來莫究其自。果靈物乎。及晚。有陰雲起於渭水。俄而將逼殿宇。忽有一物自雲中躍而出。指西軒以入。寺僧懼驚。且視之。乃見像龍已在西楹上。迫而觀之。其龍鬣鱗角。若盡沾濕。自是因以鐵鎖系之。其後里中有旱澇。祈禱之。應若影響。

To the southeast of Zhengyang commandery is the Faxi Temple.<sup>133</sup> If you go out from the commandery about a hundred *li*, it is located just to the west of the Wei River. At the end of the Yuanhe reign period of Emperor Xianzong, there was a temple monk who frequently dreamt of a white dragon coming from the Wei River and stopping at the western portico of the temple. There, it would wind around the columns for some time before heading off into the east. It would then rain the next day, and it happened like this a number of times. The monk thought this quite strange and told others about it.

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<sup>133</sup> Though there is a very famous Faxi Temple located in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, it does not appear possible that this temple is one and the same. The Faxi Temple of Hangzhou was not built until just after 900, and Zhengyang commandery was also located in Jingzhou (Hubei), making both the time and location incongruous. However, I could not locate any well-known Faxi Temple in the Zhengyang area.



Someone replied: “The blessed realms<sup>134</sup> are where venerated spirits live and so dragons make their home there. However, Buddhist temples are also places in which dragons reside. Therefore the Buddhists also have the eight races, and this is what they mean.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, this temple is located out in the countryside and its temple halls are pure and spacious. Wouldn't it be a most appropriate place for a dragon to stop? You should construct an earthen dragon and place it amongst the temple columns in recognition of your dream.”

The monk summoned workers to pack earth into a dragon idol in accordance with his description of its appearance, then placing it in the western portico of the temple hall. When the work was completed, it had a heavenly aura, wriggling and winding with supple scales. The workmanship was most subtle and wondrous, and even a skillful coat of red and green could not have improved upon it.

At the outset of the Changqing reign period of Emperor Muzong (821-825), a person residing in the temple was taking a rest beyond the outer gate when he saw a creature come up out of the western portico. Soaring, sailing, it rose up like a cloud and rushed out of the temple grounds in the direction of the Wei River. When it was almost midnight, it then returned to rest under the western portico. Taking a closer look, it was in fact the white dragon. The next day, the man told the temple monks, and they thought this quite remarkable.

After a number of days had passed, the temple monks had all gone to attend a *zhai* ceremony with the villagers. When afternoon arrived, they had just returned and entered into the temple hall and saw that the dragon idol had already disappeared. The monks let out startled cries of surprise and then said to one another: “This dragon, although it was made of earth, it was able to transform without boundary. No one knows where it has gone nor looked into its origins, is it not some numinous being?”

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<sup>134</sup> The term *fu di* 福地 (blessed realms) is a general reference to the Daoist heavens.

<sup>135</sup> The *tian long ba bu* 天龍八部 refers to the eight races of beings that protect the Dharma. From highest to lowest, they are devas, nāgas, yaksha, gandharva, asura, garuda, kinnara, and mahoraga. It is interesting to see that the story appears to be reconciling the appearance of a dragon at a Buddhist temple by virtue of noting that they typically live in the Daoist heavens but also form one of the eight races in the Buddhist belief system.

When evening came, dark clouds arose above the Wei River and, in an instant, closed in on the temple halls. Suddenly, a creature leapt out from within the clouds and went into the western portico. The temple monks were all struck with fright and, going to take a look, saw that the dragon idol had returned to its place atop the western portico. Taking a closer look, the dragon's whiskers, scales, and horns all appeared completely soaked through. From that point on, they bound up the dragon and locked it tight. Thereafter, whenever there was a drought or flood in the village, they would pray to the dragon, and it seemed as though it had an effect.

### **Karmic Retribution and Reward**

XSZ 2.11

有崔君者，貞元中為河內守。崔君貪而刻。河內人苦之。常於佛寺中假佛像金凡數鎰，而竟不酬。僧以太守竟不敢言。未幾，崔君卒於郡。是日，寺有牛產一犢者。其犢頂上有白毛若縷織，出文字曰崔某者。寺僧相與觀之，且嘆曰：「崔君常假此寺中佛像金，而竟不還。今日事，果何如哉？」崔君家聞之，即以他牛易其犢。既至，命剪去文字。已而便生。及至其家，雖豢以芻粟，卒不食。崔氏且以為異，竟歸其寺焉。

There was a Lord Cui who during the Zhenyuan reign period of Emperor Dezong served as the governor of Henei.<sup>136</sup> Lord Cui was greedy and mean and the people of Henei all suffered by him. Once he borrowed a hefty sum of money set aside for the construction of a statue of Buddha in a temple but, when things were said and done, did not repay the money.<sup>137</sup> In the end, the temple monks did not dare to speak of the matter because Cui was the governor.

Before long, Lord Cui died in the commandery. On the very same day, a cow in the temple gave birth to a calf. On the top of the calf's head there were white hairs that seemed to be woven together to form characters that read: "A certain Mr. Cui."

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<sup>136</sup> Henei refers to the area north of the Yellow River in present day Henan province.

<sup>137</sup> *Yi* 鎰 was an archaic measure for gold and cash metals, equaling roughly twenty taels. I read *chou* 酬 as the common variant *chou* 酬. The latter character appears as a compound with *zhi* 直 in *TPGJ* 434.3523, which comes close to this meaning in the sense of "straightening out" the debt.

The temple monks gathered together to look at it and, exclaiming how unusual it was, said: "Lord Cui was the governor of our commandery and once borrowed money to be used for a statue of Buddha within the temple but in the end did not repay it. Well, as for today's affair, how about that?"

Lord Cui's household got wind of the matter and then took another ox to exchange for the calf. Upon arriving, they ordered the characters cut out of its hair. However, shortly thereafter they grew out again. When the family arrived back at their household, although they reared the calf on fodder and grain, in the end it refused to eat. The Cui clan thought this unusual and finally returned the calf to the temple.

#### XSZ 3.12

唐貞元中，有李生者，家河朔間，少有膂力，恃氣好俠，不拘細行，常與輕薄少年遊。年二十餘，方折節讀書，為歌詩，人頗稱之。累為河朔官，後至深州錄事參軍。生美風儀，善談笑，曲曉吏事，廉謹明幹。至於擊鞠飲酒，皆號為能，雅為太守所知。

During the Zhenyuan reign period of Emperor Dezong, there was a certain Mr. Li whose family resided in the Heshuo area.<sup>138</sup> As a young man, he was full of backbone. He relied on his vigor and martial skill, paying no mind to the details of proper conduct, often going about in the company of frivolous youths.

When he was a bit more than twenty years old, Mr. Li suddenly changed his ways and took up learning, composing songs and poems, and people began to praise him. He obtained a position as an official in Heshuo and later served as an administrative supervisor in Shenzhou.<sup>139</sup> Mr. Li had an elegant demeanor, was skilled in humor and conversation, quite insightful in his clerkly duties, and circumspect and wise. Concerning archery and drinking, he was said to be skilled in each, and his refinement was even known of by the head of the commandery.

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<sup>138</sup> Heshuo is also a general reference to the areas north of the Yellow River.

<sup>139</sup> Shenzhou was the former name of present day Hengshui, Hebei.

時王武俊帥成德軍，恃功負眾，不顧法度，支郡守畏之側目。嘗遣其子士真巡屬郡，至深州，太守大具牛酒，所居備聲樂宴士真。太守畏武俊，而奉士真之禮甚謹。又慮有以酒忤士真者，以故僚吏賓客，一不敢召。士真大喜，以為他郡莫能及。飲酒至夜，士真乃曰：「幸使君見待之厚，欲盡歡於今夕，豈無嘉賓，願得召之。」太守曰：「偏郡無名人，懼副大使之威，不敢以他客奉宴席。唯錄事參軍李某，足以侍談笑。」士真曰：「但命之。」於是召李生，入趨拜。士真目之，色甚怒。既而命坐，貌益恭，士真愈不悅，瞪顧攘腕，無向時之歡矣。太守懼，莫知所謂。顧視生覩然而汗，不能持杯，一坐皆愕。有頃，士真叱左右，縛李某繫獄，左右即牽李袂，疾去械獄中。已而士真歡飲如初。

At the time, Wang Wujun was commander of the armies in Chengde.<sup>140</sup> He burdened the populace while exaggerating his own achievements, paying no attention to legal standards, and so the commandery magistrates all fearfully cast sidelong glances in his direction.

Wang Wujun once dispatched his son, Shizhen,<sup>141</sup> on an inspection of the commanderies under his control. When he arrived at Shenzhou, the head of the commandery had gathered offerings of wine and oxen and prepared music and a banquet for Shizhen. The commandery head was afraid of Wujun and thus treated Shizhen very carefully with all the appropriate ceremony. Furthermore, he was afraid that someone might grow drunk and insolent towards Shizhen, and so he did not dare invite any guests or colleagues to the banquet.

Shizhen was delighted by the preparations and thought that no other commandery had surpassed them. They drank wine into the evening, and Shizhen then said: "I am fortunate to have been received so graciously, having enjoyed myself fully this evening. Yet, how is it that there are no other honored guests? I hope that you might invite a few."

The commandery head replied: "It is just that our commandery has no famous people. I am afraid to have them share the company of such a mighty emissary and dare not give any other guest a

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<sup>140</sup> Wang Wujun 王武俊 (735-801) was a prominent general in the Tang army during the reign of Emperor Dezong and served for many years as the military circuit governor of Chengde (centered around Shijiazhuang, Hebei). After alternating between submission to and rebellion against Emperor Dezong, he ultimately gained de facto control of the Chengde area after agreeing to once more pledge allegiance to the imperial throne. See *JTS* 142.3871 and *XTS* 211.5951

<sup>141</sup> Wang Shizhen 王士真 (d. 809) was the eldest son of Wang Wujun and served as a general under his father, participating in the rebellions against imperial rule. However, after Wang Wujun ultimately returned his allegiance to the throne, Wang Shizhen was allowed to take over his father's position as circuit governor of Chengde, which would later pass on to his own son. See *JTS* 142.3876 and *XTS* 211.5955.

place at your banquet table. There is only a certain administrative supervisor, Mr. Li, who is good enough to entertain you with his humor and conversation."

Shizhen responded: "Then only invite him." Thereupon, the Mr. Li was summoned, and he came quickly to pay his respects. However, as soon as Shizhen laid eyes on him, he glowered with anger. Mr. Li was ordered to take a seat but, though he was all the more respectful, Shizhen grew even more displeased. Shizhen glared at him and bared his fists, showing not even a single moment of pleasure. The head of the commandery grew terrified and had no idea what to say. He saw Li red with shame and pouring sweat, sitting there astounded, not even able to hold his cup. Shortly thereafter, Shizhen shouted to his attendants, ordering them to tie up Mr. Li and throw him in prison. The attendants bound Li's arms and rushed off to toss him in a cell. After that, Shizhen began to drink just as happily as he had at the outset.

迨曉宴罷，太守且驚且懼，乃潛使於獄中訊李生，曰：「君貌甚恭，且未嘗言，固非忤於王君，君寧自知耶！」李生悲泣久之，乃曰：「常聞釋氏有現世之報，吾知之矣。某少貧，無以自資，由是好與俠士遊，往往掠奪里人財帛。常馳馬腰弓，往還太行道，日百餘里。一日遇一年少，鞭駿騾，負二匹囊，吾利其資，顧左右，皆巖崖萬仞，而日漸曛黑，遂力排之，墮於崖下。即疾驅其騾逆旅氏，解其囊，得繒綺百餘段。自此家稍贍，因折弓夭，閉門讀書，遂仕而至此，及今凡二十七矣。昨夕君侯命與王公之宴，既入，而視王公之貌，乃吾曩時所殺少年也。一拜之後，中心慚惕，自知死不朝夕。今則延頸待刃，又何言哉！為我謝君侯，幸知我深，敢以身後為托。」

At daybreak the banquet ended but the commandery head was still fearful and alarmed, and so he secretly went to the prison to question Mr. Li. He said: "You appeared respectful and hadn't even spoken. I know that you weren't insolent to Lord Wang. How does he not know this himself?"

Mr. Li cried mournfully for some time before speaking:

"I once heard of Buddhist retribution in one's current life, I now know of this. When I was young and poor, I had no resources, and so I took pleasure in wandering about with errant warriors, often robbing villagers of their goods. I often went about with my bow upon my back, going to and from the major roadways, traveling more than a hundred *li* in a single day.

"One day I chanced upon a young man driving a fine mule loaded with two packs. Wishing to avail myself of his goods, I looked to my left and right. There were only steep cliffs and high mountains and, when the day gradually grew dark, I overpowered him and threw his body off a precipice. Then, I quickly drove his mule back to an inn and, opening up the packs, found more than a hundred bolts of patterned silk. From that point on, I was able to provide something for my family, and so I smashed my bow, shut my door, took up my studies, and then became an official. From then until now, twenty seven years have passed. Last night when you, Sir, invited me to banquet with Duke Wang, as soon as I entered and saw his face, I recognized him as the young man that I had killed in bygone days. Upon paying my respects, my heart was filled with shame, and I knew I would die before the day was out. Now I just stretch out my neck and await the executioner's blade, what more can be said! I wish to thank you, please know that I am sincere and dare entrust myself to you in death."

有頃，士真醉悟，急召左右：「往取李某首來。」左右即於獄中斬其首以進。士真熟視而笑，既而又與太守大飲於郡齋。酒醉，太守因歡，乃起曰：「某不才，幸得守一郡，而副大使下察弊政，寬不加罪，為恩厚矣。昨日副大使命某召他客，屬郡僻小無客，不足奉歡宴者。竊以李某善飲酒，故請召之。而李某愚憨，不習禮法，大忤於明公，實某之罪也。今明公既已誅之，宜矣。竊有所未曉，敢以上問。李某之罪為何願得明數之，且用誠於將來也。」士真笑曰：「李生亦無罪，但吾一見之遂忿然激吾心，已有戮之之意。今既殺之，吾亦不知其所以然也。君無複言。」

Shortly thereafter, Shizhen awoke from his drunken slumber and quickly called his attendants: "Go and fetch me Mr. Li's head." The attendants then went to the prison and chopped off Li Sheng's head, presenting it to Shizhen. Shizhen looked at it for a while and smiled, and then went off to drink heartily with the head of the commandery at his residence.

After he had become giddy with drunkenness, the commandery head said to Shizhen: "I have no talent and am lucky to be put in charge of a single commandery. But you, Deputy-emissary, have to scrutinize the bad policies of those below you, yet are lenient and do not over-punish and are benevolent and kind. Yesterday, when you ordered me to invite other guests, I told you that our backwater commandery had no honored guests and no one was worth inviting to your welcome banquet. I said that Mr. Li was skilled at drinking wine, and so you asked that I summon him. Yet Mr. Li

was stupid and foolish, did not use the proper courtesies, and was disrespectful to you, My Lord. This was truly a crime. My Lord, you have already had him put to death, and this was appropriate. But there is something which I do not yet comprehend and dare to ask. Why was it necessary to decide Mr. Li's fate based on this crime and not just warn him for the future?"

Laughing, Shizhen replied: "Mr. Li truly committed no crime. It is just that as soon as I saw him, my heart was filled with rage, and I already had a desire to kill him. Now that I have had him killed, I really have no idea why I did so. There is nothing more to say about it."

及宴罷，太守密訊其年，則二十有七矣。蓋李生殺少年之歲，而士真生於王氏也。太守嘆異久之，因以家財厚葬李生。

When the banquet was finished, the commandery head secretly inquired after Shizhen's age and discovered that he was twenty-seven. Shizhen probably did it because he was born into the Wang clan and was the same age as the youth that Li had murdered. The commandery head sighed over this extraordinary event for a long while and then had his family bury Mr. Li with full honors.

#### XSZ 6.12

陳蔡間有民竹季貞，卒十餘年矣。後里人趙子和亦卒，數日忽寤，即起馳出門。其妻子驚，前訊之，子和曰：「我，竹季貞也，安識汝今將歸吾家。」既而語音非子和矣。妻子遂隨之。至季貞家，見子和來，以為狂疾，罵而逐之。子和曰：「我，竹季貞，卒十一年，今乃歸。何拒我耶！」其家聆其語，果季貞也；驗其事，又季貞也。妻子俱駭異。詰之，季貞曰：「我自去人世，迄今具一紀，居冥途中，思還省妻孥，不一日忘。然冥間每三十年即一逝者再生，使言罪福。昨者吾所請案據，得以名聞冥官，願為再生者。既而冥官謂我曰：『汝宅舍壞久矣，如何？』案據白曰：『季貞同里趙子和者，卒數日，願假其屍與季貞之魂。』冥官許之，即遣使送我於趙氏之舍，我故得歸。」因話平昔事，應然可聽。妻子方信而納之。自是季貞不食酒肉，衣短粗衣，行乞陳、蔡、汝、鄭間，緡帛隨以修佛施貧餓者，不一還家，至今尚存。

In the area between Chen and Cai,<sup>142</sup> there was a man named Zhu Jizhen<sup>143</sup> who had been dead for more than ten years. Later on, a man named Zhao Zihe<sup>144</sup> from the same village also died. After he had been dead for several days, he suddenly regained consciousness and then mounted his horse to ride

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<sup>142</sup> Chen and Cai refer to two of the feudal states of Zhou which were located respectively in present day Huaiyang and Cai counties, Henan.

<sup>143</sup> This tale is the only reference to Zhu Jizhen.

<sup>144</sup> Though there was a Zhao Ziliu 趙子流 with the courtesy name of Zihe 子和 who appears later on in the Song dynasty, this is the only reference to an individual by this name in the Tang.

off. His wife was alarmed and stood blocking his way to question him. Zhao replied: "I am Zhu Jizhen. I do not know you and am returning to my family." His voice was not that of Zihe. The wife followed him back to Jizhen's family who, upon seeing Zihe arrive, thought he was a crazy man and tried to drive him off with curses.

Zihe said to them: "I am Zhu Jizhen, I have been dead eleven years but have now returned. Why do you try to drive me away?" Hearing the man speak, the family recognized him as Jizhen. Questioning him further, he was indeed Jizhen. His wife was truly astonished and questioned Jizhen further, to which he replied:

"This is the twelfth year since I passed from the mortal realm. I have lived upon the shadowy path, always thinking of my hometown and family, not forgetting them for a single day. However, every thirty years in the shadowy realm, a single dead person is reborn, and you must speak of your crimes and blessings. Yesterday, the judicial administrator that I asked for help was able to pass my name along to the underworld officials and obtain an audience, where I then requested my rebirth. An official said to me: 'Your body has already been decayed for a long time. What can be done about this?'

"The judicial administrator stated my case: 'A man by the name of Zhao Zihe from Jizhen's same village just died several days ago. We wish that Jizhen's soul borrow his corpse.' The underworld official permitted it and dispatched me with an envoy to the house of Mr. Zhao. I then returned [to the mortal realm]."

He then spoke of past affairs from his life, relating everything just as it had been. Jizhen's wife believed his story and took him in. From that point on, Jizhen did not drink wine or eat meat, wore only short, coarse robes, went out begging in Chen, Cai, Ru, and Zheng, and used his profits to repair Buddhist temples and feed the hungry. He never again returned home and is still alive today.



高陽許文度，唐大和中，僑居岐陽郡。後以病熱近月餘。一日，臥於榻，若沈醉狀。後數日始寤。初，文度夢有衣黃袍數輩，與俱行田野，四望間，迥然無雞犬聲，且不知幾百里。其時天景曠晦，愁思如結。有黃袍者謂文度曰：「子無苦。夫壽之與夭，固有涯矣。雖聖人，安能逃其數？」文度忽悟身已死，恐甚。又行十餘里，至一水，盡目無際，波若黑色，杳不知其深淺。黃衣人俱履水而去，獨文度懼不敢涉。已而有二金人，皆長五寸餘，奇光皎然，自水上來。黃衣者望見金人，沮色震怵，即辟易馳去，不敢偷視。二金人謂文度曰：「汝何為來地府中我今挈汝歸生途，慎無恐。」文度懼稍解，因再拜謝之。於是金人與文度偕行數十里，俄望見里門，喜不勝。忽聞有厲聲呼文度者，文度悸而醒。見妻子方泣於前，且奇且嘆，而羸憊不能運支體，故未暇語其事。後旬日，疾少間，策而步於庭，忽見二金人，皆長五寸餘，在佛捨下，即昔時夢中所見者，視其儀狀，無毫縷之異。心益奇之，始以其事告於妻。妻曰：「昨者以君病且亟，妾憂不解。然常聞釋氏有救苦之力，由是棄資玩，鑄二金人之像，每清旦，常具食祭之。自是，君之苦亦瘳除，蓋其力也。」文度感二金人報效之速，不食生牢，常閱佛書，因盡窮其指歸焉。

During the Dahe reign period of Emperor Wenzong, Xu Wendu of Gaoyang<sup>145</sup> went to live abroad in Qiyang commandery. Thereafter, he fell sick with fever for almost a month. One day, he was lying down on his bed and appeared as though dead drunk. After several days had passed, he began to come about.

Prior to that, Wendu had dreamt of a number of men dressed in yellow robes who led him out into the countryside. All around, not a single peep of chicken or dog could be heard, and Xu Wendu had no idea how many hundreds of *li* they traveled. At that time, the sky grew dark and moonless and knots of worry tied themselves about Wendu's mind. One of the yellow-robed men said to Wendu: "Don't be bitter. If you are to die young, then this is your limit. Even if you were a sage, how could you escape your lot?" Suddenly realizing that he had already died, Wendu's fear multiplied.

They walked another dozen *li* or so and came upon a body of water. It stretched out as far as the eye could see, and its waters appeared black and deep beyond fathoming. The yellow-robed men all went treading out atop the water, and only Wendu was so scared that he dare not follow. Shortly thereafter two gold beings appeared, each only a bit more than five *cun* tall. They shone about with a rare brilliance and arrived atop the water. When the yellow-robed men saw the gold beings, they shook

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<sup>145</sup> This tale is the only reference to Xu Wendu. Gaoyang was located in present day Qi County, Henan.

with fear and apprehension. They then ran off at top speed, not even daring to steal a look back. The two gold beings said to Wendu: "Why have you come to the Earth Offices? Fear not, we will now take you back to the path of the living." Wendu's fear diminished slightly and he bowed twice and thanked them. Thereupon, the gold beings accompanied Wendu several dozen *li* and, upon seeing his village gates, Wendu became overjoyed beyond belief. Suddenly, Wendu heard a stern voice call out his name, and he then awoke with a fearful start. Wendu saw his wife before him on the verge of tears, and he sighed, marveling over the strange event. However, he was so exhausted that he couldn't even move his limbs and could not yet tell his tale.

After ten days had passed, his illness began to let up. Walking about the courtyard with his staff, he suddenly saw two metal Buddha statues, each a bit more than five *cun* tall, sitting beneath the Buddhist altar. Thinking back on the appearance of the beings he had seen in his dream, there was not even a hair's difference between the two. Wendu was even more awestruck by this and so he told his tale to his wife. She replied: "Yesterday you grew severely ill, and I couldn't stop my worrying. However, I had often heard that Buddha has the strength to rescue those in need, and so I gave up my spending money in order to have two metal statues of Buddha cast. Every morning in the clear dawn, I would offer up food to them. Therefore, it was probably their strength that rid you of your suffering and healed you."

Moved by the quick speed with which the two Buddhas had responded to his circumstances, Wendu gave up eating livestock, often read the Buddhist texts, and so was able to completely obtain all of his ambitions as a result.

唐師夜光者。薊門人。少聰敏好學。雅尚浮屠氏。遂為僧。居于本郡。

During the Tang, there was a Master Yeguang who was from Jingmen.<sup>146</sup> When young, he was quick-witted and fond of study, holding the Buddhist teachings in high regard. Later he became a monk and lived in the commandery where he had been born.

僅十年。盡通內典之奧。又有沙門惠達者。家甚富。有金錢巨萬。貪夜光之學。因與為友。是時玄宗皇帝好神仙釋氏。窮索名僧方士。而夜光迫於貧。不得西去。心常怏怏。惠達知之。因以錢七十萬資其行。且謂夜光曰。師之學藝材用。愚竊以為無出於右者。聖上拔天下英俊。吾子必將首出群輩。沐浴恩渥。自此託跡縉徒。為明天子臣。可翹足而待也。然當是時。必有擁篲子門。幸無忘半面之舊。夜光謝曰。幸師厚貺我。得遂西上。儻為君之五品。則以報師之惠矣。夜光至長安。因賂九仙公主左右。得召見溫泉。命內臣選碩學僧十輩。與方士議論。夜光在選。演暢玄奧。發揮疑義。群僧無敢比者。上奇其辯。詔賜銀印朱綬。拜四門博士。日侍左右。賜甲第。洎金錢繒綵以千數。時號幸臣。惠達遂自薊門入長安訪之。夜光聞惠達至。以為收債於己。甚不懌。惠達悟其旨。因告去。既以北歸月餘。夜光慮其再來。即密書與薊門帥張廷珪。近者惠達師至輦下。誣毀公繕完兵革。將為逆謀。人亦頗有知者。以公之忠。天下莫不聞之。積毀銷金。不可不戒。廷珪驚怒。即召惠達鞭殺之。

When he was barely ten years old, Yeguang had already uncovered all the mysteries of the Buddhist canon. There was another monk by the name of Huida<sup>147</sup> whose family was very rich, their wealth worth millions. Huida admired Yeguang's erudition and so became his friend. At the time Emperor Xuanzong was intrigued by divine transcendents and the followers of Buddha, and so he searched the land for famous monks and method-masters.<sup>148</sup> However, constrained by his poverty, Yeguang was unable to go west and was down and dispirited in his heart. Huida knew this, and so he raised seventy-thousand cash for travel expenses and told Yeguang: "Master, you possess sharp knowledge and useful talent. I humbly believe there is no one who can surpass you. The Sage-emperor seeks out the outstanding talents of the realm, and your head must rise up from the pack. Bathe yourself in the waters of grace and from this point forward follow only the tracks of Buddhists, become a

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<sup>146</sup> Accounts of Master Yeguang appear in relation to the debates held by Emperor Xuanzong that figure in this tale and also concerning his ability to see spirits. See *JTS* 191.5106 and *XTS* 204.5810.

<sup>147</sup> Though the name Huida appears at various points in the histories, I could not locate a monk who would fit this time period.

<sup>148</sup> That is to say, famous practitioners of Buddhism and Daoism.

vassal of the Enlightened Son of Heaven, and attend to him with your feet at ready. And when the time comes, you will certainly need someone to sweep your gate, and I hope that you will not forget the face of your old friend."

Yeguang thanked him, saying: "Master, I am truly fortunate to have received your great blessing and can now travel west. If I am able to obtain official rank, I will repay the kindness you have shown me."

When Yeguang arrived in Chang'an, because he bribed the attendants of Princess Jiuxian,<sup>149</sup> he was able to gain access to the imperial hot springs retreat and was later selected by the ministers as one of ten monks to participate in a debate against the method-masters. Yeguang spoke eloquently on the profound and abstruse, called into question his opponents' weak points, and none of the monks dared oppose him. The Emperor marveled at Yeguang's skill in debate and ordered that he be awarded a silver seal and vermilion sash, making him a scholar of the Four Gates.<sup>150</sup> The Emperor had Yeguang in attendance daily and granted him a mansion, wealth, and several thousand bolts of silk. At the time, he was known as "favored vassal."

Thereafter, Huida paid a visit to Chang'an from Jingmen. When Yeguang heard that Huida had arrived, he thought that he had come to collect his debt and was very displeased. Huida became aware of Yeguang's feelings and so he left. After Huida had returned north for a little over a month, Yeguang began to worry he would come again and so secretly wrote to the commander of Jingmen, Zhang Tinggui:<sup>151</sup> "Recently, Master Huida came to the capital and falsely accused you of soliciting rebellion, saying that you were about to revolt. Anyone with a bit of knowledge knows that your loyalty is

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<sup>149</sup> As best as historical sources would seem to indicate, there was no Princess Jiuxian. This is the earliest mention of her name, and she was not a princess of any Tang emperor. There was however a Princess Jinxian 金仙 (689-732) who was the daughter of Emperor Ruizong. See *JTS* 7.157 and *XTS* 83.3656. The passage here may contain a graphic error and actually refer to her.

<sup>150</sup> The Four Gates refers to the four imperial academies.

<sup>151</sup> Zhang Tinggui 張廷珪 (d. 733) was a high official who served in the courts of Wu Zetian, Zhongzong, Ruizong, and Xuanzong, ultimately being enfeoffed as Baron of Fanyang. He was known for his skill in calligraphy, particularly clerk script. See *JTS* 101.3150 and *XTS* 118.4261.

renowned throughout the realm. However, accumulated heat can melt gold, and you must guard yourself against this." Tinggui was alarmed and enraged and so he summoned Huida and had him beaten to death.

後數日。夜光忽見惠達來庭中。罵夜光曰。我以七十萬錢資汝西上。奈何遽相誣謗。使我冤死。何負我之深也。言訖。遂躍而上。摔拽夜光。久之乃亡所見。師氏家僮咸見之。其後數日。夜光卒。

After several days had passed, Yeguang suddenly saw Huida arrive in his courtyard. He cursed Yeguang and said: "I gave you seventy thousand cash for your journey west. How could you so rashly slander me and have me brought to an unjust death! How could you so deeply betray me?" When Huida had finished speaking, he leapt up and tossed Yeguang about for some time before finally disappearing. All of Yeguang's boy-servants saw it occur and, after several days had passed, Yeguang died.

#### TPGJ 281.2238

上谷侯生者。家于荆門。以明經入仕。調補宋州虞城縣。初娶南陽韓氏女。五年矣。韓氏嘗夕夢黃衣者數輩召。出其門。偕東行十餘里。至一官署。其宇下列吏卒數十輩。軒宇華壯。人物極眾。又引至一院。有一青衣。危冠方履。狀甚峻峙。左右者數百。几案茵席。羅列前後。韓氏再拜。俄有一婦人年二十許。身長豐麗。衣碧襦絳袖。以金玉釵為首飾。自門而來。稱盧氏。謂韓氏曰。妾與子仇敵且久。子知之乎。韓氏曰。妾一女子。未嘗出深閨。安得有仇敵耶。盧氏色甚怒曰。我前身嘗為職官。子誣告我罪而代之。使吾擯斥草墊而死。豈非仇敵乎。今我訴於上帝。且欲雪前身冤。帝從吾請。汝之死不朝夕矣。韓氏益懼。欲以詞拒。而盧氏喋喋不已。青衣者謂盧氏曰。汝之冤誠如是矣。然韓氏固未當死。不可為也。遂令吏出案牘。吏曰。韓氏餘壽一年。青衣曰。可疾遣歸。無久留也。命送至門。行未數里。忽悸而寤。惡之不敢言。自是神色摧沮。若有疾者。侯生訊之。具以夢告。後數月。韓氏又夢盧氏者至其家。謂韓氏曰。子將死矣。韓氏驚寤。由是疾益加。歲餘遂卒。

Mr. Hou of Shanggu,<sup>152</sup> whose family was from Jingmen, was well versed in the classics. He earned a position as an official appointed to Yucheng County in Songzhou.<sup>153</sup> He was first married for to a woman from the Han clan. After five years passed, she dreamt of a number of men clad in yellow

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<sup>152</sup> While there are tales of a famous method-master, Hou Sheng 侯生, of the Qin dynasty, it is certainly not he who appears in this tale. There is no mention of an official by this name in the histories of the Tang, and I believe the name is again used generally here in the sense of a certain "Mr. Hou."

<sup>153</sup> Yucheng County in Songzhou refers to the present day area of Shangqiu, Henan.

robes that summoned her from her house and took her some dozen *li* to the east where they came upon a suite of government offices. There were several dozen clerks and soldiers arrayed beneath its eaves, the rafters were lofty and magnificently adorned, and the people and place made a most impressive scene. She was again guided to a courtyard where there was a man in blue robes, imposing from his cap down to his shoes, appearing most stern and upright. He had several hundred attendants with writing desks and cushioned mats arrayed in lines front and back. Ms. Han bowed twice and a woman of about twenty suddenly appeared. She was tall and buxom, wearing an emerald jacket with crimson sleeves and a gold hairpin ornamenting her head. She came through the gate and announced herself as Ms. Lu. She said to Ms. Han: "You and I have been enemies for a long time, were you aware of this?"

Ms. Han replied: "I am a woman and have never left the inner chambers, how could we be enemies?"

Ms. Lu's face grew red with anger and she said: "In a former life, I served as an official. You falsely accused me of a crime and I was replaced. They dismissed me out into the common wilds and I died, how could we not be enemies? I have taken my plaint to the August on High and am about to have this injustice from my former life wiped clean. The August One has complied with my request, and you will die before the day is out."

Ms. Han grew even more terrified and tried to talk her out of it, but Ms. Lu just cackled endlessly. The man clad in green robes said to Ms. Lu: "Your grievance is indeed as you say. However, Ms. Wei should not yet die and this cannot yet come to pass." He then ordered a clerk to take out a piece of official correspondence.

The clerk read aloud: "Ms. Han has an extra year of life."

The man in blue robes said: "You should hurry home, you haven't got much time remaining." He then ordered her accompanied to her gates. Before Ms. Han had traveled even several *li*, she

suddenly awoke with a terrible start. She was so unsettled by the experience that she dare not speak of it. From that point on her spirit was broken and she looked defeated, as though ill. Mr. Hou asked her what was wrong, and she told him of the whole dream.

After several months had passed, Ms. Han again dreamt that Ms. Lu came to her house and said: "You are about to die." Once more, Ms. Han awoke with a start and, from then on, her illness grew more severe. After a bit more than a year had passed, she died.

侯生竊歎異。未嘗告于人。後數年。旅遊襄漢。途次富水。郡僚蘭陵蕭某。慕生之善。以女妻之。及蕭氏歸。常衣絳袖碧襦。以金玉釵為首飾。而又身長豐麗。與韓氏先夢同。生因以韓氏之夢告焉。蕭氏聞之。甚不樂。曰。妾外族盧氏。妾自孩提時。為伯舅見念。命為己女。故以盧為小字。則君亡室之夢信矣。

Mr. Hou secretly sighed to himself over this strange event and never told another person. After a number of years went by, he was traveling about the Xiang and Han and, on the way, stopped over in Fushui.<sup>154</sup> Amongst the officials of the commandery, there was a certain Xiao of Lanling<sup>155</sup> who admired Mr. Hou's goodness and so gave him his daughter in marriage. Mr. Hou then returned home with Ms. Xiao, who often wore an emerald jacket with crimson sleeves and decorated her hair with a golden hairpin. She was also tall and buxom, just as the woman in Ms. Han's old dream. Because of this, Mr. Hou related Ms. Han's dream to her. After Ms. Xiao had heard, she was very unhappy and said: "There was once a Ms. Lu in my mother's clan and, when I was still a child, my mother's eldest brother saw me and said I looked just like her. Therefore I was nicknamed Lu, and so your previous wife's dream must have been true."

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<sup>154</sup> The Xiang and Han rivers flow through Hunan and Shaanxi respectively, with the latter being a tributary of the Yangzi River. Fushui here refers to the Tang commandery centered on present day Zhongxiang, Hubei.

<sup>155</sup> Lanling was located in present day Zaozhuang, Shandong.

## Effectiveness of Buddhist Scriptures

XSZ 7.16

甯勉者，雲中人，年少，有勇氣，善騎射，能以力格猛獸，不用兵仗。北都守健其勇，署為衙將。後以兵四千軍於飛狐城。時薊門帥驕悍，棄天子法，反書聞闕下。唐文宗皇帝詔北都守攻其南。詔未至，而薊門兵夜伐飛狐。鉦鼓震地，飛狐人洶然不自安，謂寧勉曰：「薊兵豪健不可敵，今且至矣，其勢甚急，願空其邑以遁去。不然，旦暮拔吾城，吾不忍父子兄弟盡血賊刃下，悔寧可及！雖天子神武，安能雪吾冤乎？幸熟計之。」勉自度兵少，固不能折薊帥之鋒，將聽邑人語，慮得罪於天子；欲堅壁自守，又慮一邑之人悉屠於賊手。憂既甚，而策未決。忽有諜者告曰：「賊盡潰矣。有棄甲在城下，願取之。」勉即登城垣望，時月明朗，見賊兵馳走，顛躓者不可數，若有大兵擊其後。勉大喜，開邑門，縱兵逐之，生擒數十人，得遺甲甚多。先是，勉好浮圖氏，常閱佛書《金剛經》，既敗薊師，擒其虜以訊焉曰：「向夕望見城上有巨人數四，長二丈餘，雄俊可懼，怒目呿吻，袒裼執劍。薊人見之，慘然汗慄，即走避，又安有鬥心乎？」勉悟，巨人乃金剛也，益自奇之。勉官御史中丞，後為清塞副使。

Ning Mian was a man of Yunzhong.<sup>156</sup> When he was young, he was a brave lad who was skilled in archery and horsemanship. He could face up to fierce beasts relying on his strength alone and had no need for weapons. The governor of the Beidu wished to put to use his bravery and vigor and so assigned Ning Mian to the military offices. Later on, Ning Mian took a force of four thousand soldiers and was stationed in the city of Feihu.<sup>157</sup>

At that time, the commander in charge of Jimen was arrogant and proud.<sup>158</sup> He had abandoned the rule of the Son of Heaven, and his mutinous edicts were heard of in the capital. Emperor Wenzong ordered the governor of Beidu to attack Jimen from the south. Before the command had arrived, the forces of Jimen launched a night assault on Feihu. The sound of gongs and drums shook the earth, and the people of Feihu were startled and could not be settled.

Someone said to Ning Mian: "The forces from Jimen are overwhelming and cannot be matched. Moreover, they are now on the brink of arrival and the situation is urgent! We should evacuate the city and retreat. If I don't pull out of my hometown in a single day's time, I couldn't bear to see my father,

<sup>156</sup> Yunzhong was a commandery located in present day Togtoh County, Inner Mongolia. The character Ning Mian appears only in the context of this tale.

<sup>157</sup> Beidu, literally "the northern capital," referred to the present day area of Taiyuan during the Tang.

<sup>158</sup> Jimen, also known as Jiqiu, refers to the area outside of present day northwestern Beijing.



sons, and brothers' blood spill out beneath the blades of these bandits. Would you prefer to see it so? Although the Son of Heaven wields divine might, how could He sweep such an injustice from my conscience? Please think this over carefully."

Mian reckoned his own forces to be few and so he could not hope to blunt the attack of the commander of Jimen. He was on the brink of taking the advice of the townspeople and considered offending against the Son of Heaven. Mian wished to conceal and protect himself but then thought again on a whole town's worth of people butchered as one beneath the hands of the rebels. He was at the height of worry and had yet to decide upon a course of action. Suddenly, one of his scouts reported: "The rebel forces have been completely smashed! They are fleeing in disarray beneath the city walls, let's pursue them!" Mian then mounted the wall to take a look. At the time, the moon was shining bright, and he saw the rebel soldiers riding away and retreating in numbers more than he could count. It was as though a mighty army was beating against their flanks. Mian was delighted. He opened the city gate and set his own forces in pursuit, capturing several dozen of the opposing soldiers alive and a good deal of armor.

Prior to this however, Mian took delight in the teachings of the Buddha and often read the Diamond Sutra. Then, when he had defeated the commander of Jimen, Mian interrogated the prisoners he captured. They told him: "When we faced the dusk and looked toward the city, we saw three or four enormous giants each taller than two *zhang* apiece. They were fearsome and glared at us with gaping mouths, their chests bare and brawny with swords drawn. When we men of Jimen spotted them, we broke out in a fearful sweat, struck through to our core. We then ran off, how can one fight against the will of their heart?" Mian was struck with wonder, realizing that the giants had been Buddha's own

vajra warrior-attendants.<sup>159</sup> Mian rose to the rank of Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief, and later became Deputy-envoy of Qingsai.<sup>160</sup>

#### XSZ 7.17

唐貞觀中，有玉潤山悟真寺僧，夜如藍溪，忽聞有誦《法華經》者，其聲纖遠。時星月回臨，四望數十里，闐然無睹，其僧慘然有懼。及至寺，且白其事於群僧。明夕，俱於藍溪聽之，乃聞經聲自地中發，於是以標表其所。明日，窮表下，得一顛骨在積壤中。其骨槁然，獨唇吻與舌鮮而且潤。遂持歸寺，乃以石函置於千佛殿西軒下。自是，每夕常有誦《法華經》聲在石函中。長安士女觀者千數。後新羅僧客於寺，僅歲餘，一日，寺僧盡下山，獨新羅僧在，遂竊石函而去。寺僧跡其往，已歸海東矣。時開元末年也。

During the Zhenguan reign period of Emperor Taizong, there was a monk at the Wuzhen Temple on Mount Yurun.<sup>161</sup> The monk was spending the night at the Lan Creek<sup>162</sup> when he suddenly heard a voice faint and faraway chanting the Lotus Sutra. But at the time the stars and moon circled overhead and, for some dozen *li* all around, it was still and silent with no one to be seen and so the monk became frightened. When he returned to the temple, he told all of his fellow monks what had happened. The next night, they gathered at Lan Creek to listen to it and then heard the sound of the Sutra rising forth from the ground. They immediately marked the spot where it was coming from. The next day, they dug at the mark and found a skull within the soil. The bones were withered but its lips and tongue remained fresh and lifelike. They took it back to the temple and put it in a stone casket, placing it beneath the western eaves of the Thousand Buddha Hall. From then on, every night the chanting of the Lotus Sutra could be heard coming from within the stone casket. The men and women who came from Chang'an to see it numbered in the thousands. Later on, a monk from Silla<sup>163</sup> came to stay at the temple. After a bit more than a year had passed, the temple monks one day all went down to the base of the mountain. Only the monk from Silla remained at the temple, and he stole the stone casket and ran off. The temple

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<sup>159</sup> *Jin gang* 金剛 specifically refers to the Buddha's warrior attendants, which is clearly what Ning Mian is calling to mind in this instance. Note the play on words between *jingang* and *Jingang jing* 金剛經 (Diamond sutra).

<sup>160</sup> Qingsai most likely refers to the area of Qingsaijun, which was located in present day Yang'gao, Shanxi.

<sup>161</sup> Wuzhen Temple was located outside of present day Lan County, Xi'an. The Temple was located on Mount Zhongnan, suggesting Mount Yurun must refer to one of its peaks.

<sup>162</sup> Lan Creek is one of the major western tributaries of the Jin River and originates in Anxi County.

<sup>163</sup> This refers to the long reigning dynasty (57 B.C.E.-935 C.E.) based on the Korean peninsula.

monks followed his tracks, but he had already gone back to the lands east of the sea. This occurred during the waning years of the Kaiyuan reign period of Emperor Xuanzong (713-742).

## VII. Daoist Tales

In addition to Buddhism, a large corpus of tales concerning elements of Daoism also appears within the *Xuanshi zhi*. However, one must be very careful to explain how the term “Daoist” is being defined when applying it as a topical category. Although the tales identified here share many common traits, they are somewhat more difficult to classify as tales concerned specifically with religious Daoism. This is primarily due to the fact that these tales less frequently name religious scriptures and ritual directly. Furthermore, certain terms that mention the “Dao” do not necessarily refer to religious Daoism in any manner. For example, the term *dao shu* 道術 (Daoist arts) can be used outside of the context of Daoism and sometimes refers to abilities gained through Buddhist practice or arcane wisdom. Many of the elements that are found in these tales concern traditions which existed prior to the organization of religious Daoism in China. These include the search for longevity, alchemical practices, abstention from grains, and the use of talismans.

That being said, most of the above mentioned features were also incorporated into Daoist practice and came to form aspects of ritual and scripture. Furthermore, many of the tales which use more general elements also specifically mention Daoist deities, talismans, or scriptures found in the *Daozang* 道藏, or identify their protagonists as Daoist adepts. They also occasionally take place in religious Daoist settings, such as Daoist temples or shrines. Therefore, I consider such tales to be indicative of a Daoist thematic context.

In applying the term “Daoism,” I have again cast a wide net and have identified the following broad thematic categories:

**Table Five: Occurrences of Daoist Themes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b><i>XSZ/TPGJ</i> Tales under Theme</b>
transcendents	<i>XSZ</i> 1.13, 1.15, 5.13, 9.2 <i>TPGJ</i> 44.276
talismanic arts	<i>XSZ</i> 3.11, 5.5, 5.7 <i>TPGJ</i> 72.451, 73.457, 73.459, 74.461, 74.465, 75.468, 75.470, 75.471, 75.472
alchemy	<i>XSZ</i> 7.9, 8.11, 9.1
<b>Total Number of Tales: 20</b>	
<b>Percentage of Collection: 10%</b>	

### **Transcendents**

These tales typically feature a protagonist who is a Daoist adept that has achieved transcendence or a transcendent deity who has descended to earth to interact directly with Daoist adepts. This category is closely related to tales concerning alchemy, where the main goal is also generally transcendence or longevity. However, the stories categorized here do not take as their focus the quest for transcendence but rather feature characters that have already achieved it. They are very similar to the tales seen earlier featuring extraordinary Buddhist monks; however, characters here do not work miracles in quite the same sense and tend to merely pass on an item or piece of knowledge to a human. For good examples of these qualities, see *XSZ* 1.13 and 1.15.

### **Talismanic Arts**

Although the use of talismans is not unique to religious Daoism, I have included this category given the fact that the majority of stories also feature another Daoist component besides talismans. Such components range from the identification of characters as Daoist adepts, the study of talismanic arts from a Daoist master or deity, and the use of talismans that feature elsewhere in Daoist scripture. The main unifying feature of these tales is a protagonist who is skilled in the use of talismans and employs them to resolve the main conflict within the story. These conflicts typically deal with the quelling of a demon or strange creature, but also include abductions and the difficulty of childbirth. *TPGJ* 73.459 is a prime example of these features.

## Alchemy

This last small category of tales concerns characters who directly seek to achieve transcendence and longevity through the study of alchemy. Protagonists typically study the alchemical arts from a master and then seek to refine an elixir of transcendence on their own. I have included the tales found here as Daoist because protagonists typically study the alchemical arts from a Daoist figure or they themselves are identified as a Daoist adept. An interesting feature of these tales is that those characters seeking to refine the elixir of transcendence without exception fail in their task. Usually, protagonists fail to recognize a transcendent deity that has been sent to help guide them in their quest for transcendence. Their failure to recognize the deity as a result of their ignorance or bad behavior leads them to be left behind to die in the mortal realm. Certain characters actually manage to create the elixir but are then ignorant of their success and do not bother ingesting the elixir themselves. All three tales classified into this section provide good examples of these features.

As a final note, it is worth mentioning that the tales I have placed into the three categories above tend to contain elements of each of the three categories. I have made distinctions between the three based on what appears to be the most relevant element to the plot of the tale itself, but there is more fluidity between the categories than was the case with the Buddhist tales. Furthermore, as compared to the Buddhist tales, there is far less emphasis on religious didacticism in these Daoist stories. They do not focus on specific doctrines and typically do not use examples to warn characters against lack of religious faith. Rather, the failures that occur in these tales focus on the inability of a character to achieve divinity themselves or the inability to recognize an encounter with a divine being as it occurs. Once again, Robert Campany has also dealt with issues raised by the tales above, including a book on transcendence. I have once again found his definitions included therein to be quite helpful in understanding what exactly constitutes a transcendent being and find that the stories in the *Xuanshi zhi*

again reflect his definitions quite well.<sup>164</sup> He also deals with non-Daoist transcendents, an issue I will take up when dealing with problematic tales from the collection.

## Translations of Daoist Tales

### Transcendents

#### XSZ 1.13

唐故尚書李公誥鎮北門時，有道士尹君者。隱晉山，不食粟，常餌柏葉，雖髮盡白，而容狀若童子，往往獨遊城市。里中有老父年八十餘者，顧謂人曰：「吾孩提時嘗見李翁言，李翁，吾外祖也。且曰：『我年七歲，已識尹君矣，迨今七十餘年，而尹君容狀如舊，得非神仙乎？吾且老，自度能幾何為人間人，汝方壯，當志尹君之容狀。』自是及今，七十餘歲矣，而尹君曾無老色，豈非以千百歲為瞬息耶！」

During the Tang when the minister Li Shen was garrisoned at the Northern Gate,<sup>165</sup> there was a Daoist adept by the name of Lord Yin.<sup>166</sup> He lived as a recluse on Jin Mountain<sup>167</sup> and did not eat grains, often eating cypress needles. Although his hair was completely white, his face and body were like that of a young boy and he often wandered alone in the city markets. In the village, there was an old man of more than eighty who said to others: “When I was still just a young lad I once had a conversation with

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<sup>164</sup> See Robert Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 57.

<sup>165</sup> A Li Shen 李誥 from the Tang appears only very briefly in historical concerning his promotion to one of the official offices which he received. See *JTS* 17.547.

<sup>166</sup> There are several possibilities for the identification of Lord Yin. One possibility is that it is referring to Yin Xi 尹喜, the legendary guardian of the Western Pass who received the *Dao de jing* 道德經 from Laozi. However, an alternative identification might be Yin Wencao 尹文操 (c.622-688), who was an important Daoist figure at the court of Tang Gaozong (r.650-684CE). However Yin Wencao was less legendary and was thought to have obtained transcendence in 688CE. This dating does not quite seem to fit the story at hand, where Lord Yin seems to be somewhere over 150 years old based on the rough estimation provided in the anecdote. For basic information concerning Yin Wencao, see “The Northern Celestial Masters,” *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 289.

<sup>167</sup> The term *jin shan* 晉山 can also be a general Buddhist term referring a Buddhist temple or the ritual of succession for initiating a new temple abbot. I believe that the term here is referring to an actual mountain however, though I have not been able to identify its location. This would make sense given that Lord Yin is identified as a Daoist recluse and the manner in which the term is used later in the story when the adept Zhu Taixu arrives at the mountain. It is possible the mountain refers to Mount Jin (Yanqing City, Beijing). However, given that Lord Yin's body is later interred near the Fen River in Shanxi, it seems much more likely that Mount Jin would refer to a place near this area.

Old Man Li,<sup>168</sup> who was my maternal grandfather. He said to me: 'When I was seven years old, I already knew Lord Yin. Now he is more than seventy, yet his appearance is still just as before. Is it possible that he has obtained divine transcendence? In my old age, I guess I am largely just a normal human being. But when you grow up, you should make it your intention to be like Lord Yin.' From then until now, more than seventy years have passed, yet Lord Yin still does not have the appearance of old age. Doesn't it seem like he takes ten thousand years as the blink of an eye or a single breath!"

北門從事馮翊嚴公綬，好奇者。慕尹之得道，每旬休，即驅駕而詣焉。其後嚴公自軍司馬為北門帥，遂迎尹君至府庭，館於公署，終日與同席。常有異香自肌中發，公益重之。公有女弟學浮圖氏，嘗曰：「佛氏與黃老固殊致。」且怒其兄與道士遊。後一日，密以堇樹致湯中，命尹君飲之。尹君既飲，驚而起曰：「吾其死乎？」俄吐出一物，甚堅，有異香發其中。公命剖而視之，真麝臍也。自是尹君貌衰齒墮，其夕，卒於館中。嚴公既知女弟之所為也，怒且甚。即命部將治其喪。後二日，葬尹君於汾水西二十里。

Duke Yan Shou,<sup>169</sup> who was assigned to Pingyi in the Northern Gate,<sup>170</sup> was very fond of the extraordinary. He admired that Yin had obtained the Dao and, every time he had his day of rest, he rode off to pay a visit to Lord Yin. Later on, when Duke Yan was promoted from Minister of the Army to Commander of the Northern Gate, he invited Lord Yin to come to his seat of government. Yan gave Yin lodging at the government offices and kept him all day long by his side. A special fragrance always arose from Yin's skin and Duke Yan thought even more highly of him because of it.

The Duke had a younger sister who studied Buddhism, and she once said to him: "Buddha is certainly of a very different sort than the Yellow Emperor and Laozi." Moreover, she was very angry that

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<sup>168</sup> While a figure known as Old Man Li (Li Weng 李翁) appears in a number of anecdotes, they do not always appear to denote the same individual and generally do not place an importance on longevity, as seen here. As such, it is difficult to identify a particular individual associated with this figure.

<sup>169</sup> Yan Shou 嚴綬 (746-822) was a high official and general who served most prominently during the reign of Emperor Xianzong. He served as the military circuit governor of a number of regions, particularly around Sichuan, and was dispatched on a number of occasions against governors who rebelled against imperial authority. Though he initially achieved great success, his command of military forces later stagnated and he was relieved of command of imperial armies. See *JTS* 146.3959.

<sup>170</sup> Pingyi is located in present day Shaanxi, Hancheng, and surrounding environs.

her older brother wandered about with a Daoist adept. The next day she slipped poison<sup>171</sup> into Lord Yin's soup and sent it out for him to drink. Lord Yin drank it and then rose with alarm, saying: "Am I dying?!" Yin suddenly spit up a small hard object that emitted a special fragrance. Duke Yan ordered it cut open and examined and it turned out to a real musk gland. Thereafter, Lord Yin's countenance grew feeble and his teeth fell out. That night, he died in his room. Duke Yan knew what his younger sister had done and was extremely angry. He ordered his military officers to carry out the funeral arrangements and, after two days, Lord Yin was buried about seven miles west of the Fen River.<sup>172</sup>

明年秋，有照聖觀道士朱太虛，因投龍至晉山，忽遇尹君在山中。太虛驚而問曰：「師何為至此耶！」尹君笑曰：「吾去歲在北門，有人以堇斟飲我者，我故示之以死。然則堇斟安能敗吾真耶！」言訖，忽亡所見。太虛竊異其事。及歸，具白嚴公，曰：「吾聞仙人不死，脫有死者，乃屍解也。不然，何變異之如是耶！」將命發其墓以驗之，然慮惑於人，遂止其事。

During autumn of the next year, a Daoist adept of the Zhaosheng Temple named Zhu Taixu<sup>173</sup> arrived at Jin Mountain to perform the casting of the dragon slips<sup>174</sup> when he suddenly chanced upon Lord Yin on the Mountain. Surprised, Taixu asked Yin: "Master, how have you arrived here?" Lord Yin chuckled and replied: "Last year when I was at the Northern Gate, an individual poisoned me and so I feigned my death. How on earth could poison damage me in my perfected state!" When Yin had finished speaking, he suddenly disappeared. Taixu inwardly thought this strange and, returning, he told it all to Duke Yan. The Duke exclaimed: "I have heard that transcendent beings do not die. When it appears that they have died, it is in fact corpse deliverance. Otherwise, how could he have transformed in this fashion!" The Duke ordered that Yin's tomb be unearthed and examined but, worrying that it would cause confusion amongst the people, he cancelled the order.

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<sup>171</sup> The poison mentioned here is *jīn* 堇/堇. The poison itself is aconite, an alkaloid that induces vomiting, cardiac arrest, and respiratory failure. It is a compound of the *aconitum* plant family, which includes wolf's bane.

<sup>172</sup> The Fen River begins in northeastern Shanxi province and flows through central Shanxi into the Taiyuan Basin, ultimately draining into the Yellow River.

<sup>173</sup> This anecdote appears to be the source of reference for both the Zhaosheng Temple and Zhu Taixu.

<sup>174</sup> *Tou long* 投龍 is a reference to the Daoist ritual of *tou long jian* 投龍簡 or "casting the dragon slips." This ritual is a segment of the Daoist *jiao* 醮 ceremony and is used to thank the gods of the three offices of Heaven, Earth, and Water and beg forgiveness for one's sins.



XSZ 1.15

唐玄宗常夢仙子十餘輩，御卿雲而下，列於庭，各執樂器而奏之。其度曲清越，真仙府之音也。及樂闌，有一仙人前而言曰：「陛下知此樂乎？此神仙《紫雲曲》也。今願傳授陛下，為聖唐正始音，與夫《咸池》、《大夏》固不同矣。」玄宗喜甚，即傳受焉。俄而寤，其餘響猶若在聽。玄宗遽命玉笛吹而習之，盡得其節奏，然嘿不泄。及曉，聽政於紫宸殿，宰臣姚崇、宋璟入，奏事於御前，玄宗俛若不聞。二相懼，又奏之。玄宗即起，卒不顧二相。二相益恐，趨出。時高力士侍於玄宗，即奏曰：「宰相請事，陛下宜面決可否。向者崇、璟所言，皆軍國大政，而陛下卒不顧，豈二相有罪乎？」玄宗笑曰：「我昨夕夢仙人奏樂曰《紫雲曲》，因以授我，我失其節奏，由是嘿而習之，故不暇聽二相奏事。」即於衣中出玉笛，以示力士。是日，力士至中書，以事語於二相。二相懼少解。曲後傳於樂府。

Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang once dreamt of some ten transcendents who came to pay their respects to him. Descending on fortuitous clouds, they lined in his courtyard, each carrying a musical instrument and playing it. Their music was clear and resounding, a sound from the offices of the perfected transcendents. When the music ceased, a transcendent being came forward and said: "Does His Majesty know this song? This is the Melody of the Purple Clouds of the Spirits and Transcendents. Presently, we wish to pass this song on to His Majesty to serve as the music for the upright founding of the Holy Tang, thereby distinguishing it from the Xianchi and Daxia."<sup>175</sup> Xuanzong was extremely delighted, and the song was then passed on to him. A short while thereafter he awoke, and it was almost as if he could still hear the sound of the music. Xuanzong quickly called for a flute to practice the song, catching its rhythm completely, and then wrote it down so it was not lost.

At daybreak, Xuanzong held court in the Purple Palace Hall. When the ministers Yao Chong<sup>176</sup> and Song Jing<sup>177</sup> came to memorialize before the Emperor, Xuanzong bent his head as though he was not listening. The two ministers were very afraid and memorialized once more. Xuanzong then rose and still paid no attention to the men. The two ministers became even more fearful and left in a hurry.

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<sup>175</sup> The Xianchi and Daxia are known as the music and dances of the legendary Emperors Yao and Yu respectively.

<sup>176</sup> Yao Chong 姚崇 (650-721CE), born Yao Yuancong 姚元崇, was a major Tang official who served under the courts of Wu Zetian, Zhongzong, Ruizong, and Xuanzong. See *JTS* 96.3021 and *XTS* 124.4381.

<sup>177</sup> Song Jing 宋璟 (663-737CE) was a major Tang official who served as a chancellor during the reigns of Ruizong and Xuanzong. See *JTS* 96.3029 and *XTS* 124.4389.

At that time, Gao Lishi<sup>178</sup> was waiting upon the Emperor and memorialized Him, saying: "I wish to ask about certain affairs and see if His Majesty might resolve them. However, Chong and Jing who came before me spoke on the military, state, and great government, yet His Majesty still paid no attention to them. Did these two ministers perhaps commit an offense?"

Xuanzong chuckled and replied: "Yesterday evening I dreamt of transcendent beings playing a song called the Melody of the Purple Clouds who then passed the song on to me. I lost its rhythm and so I have been reciting it in my head and practicing it. As such, I was too preoccupied to listen to the two ministers memorialize on affairs." Then, from within his robes, Xuanzong pulled out a flute and played it for Lishi. That day, Lishi went to the Secretariat and told the two ministers of this affair. The ministers' fear abated slightly. Afterwards, the song was passed on to the Music Bureau.

#### XSZ 5.13

寇天師謙之，後魏時得道者也。常刻石為記，藏於嵩山。上元初，有洛川郟城縣民，因採藥於山，得之以獻縣令樊文。言於州，州以上聞，高宗皇帝詔藏於內府。其銘記文甚多，奧不可解。略曰「木子當天下」；又曰「止戈龍」；又曰「李代代不可移宗」；又曰「中鼎顯真容」；又曰「基千萬歲」。所謂「木子當天下」者，蓋言唐氏受命也。「止戈龍」者，言天后臨朝也。止戈為「武」，武，天后氏也。「李代代不可移宗」者，謂中宗中興，再新天地。「中鼎顯真容」者，實真宗之廟諱，「真」為睿聖之徽諡，得不信乎？「基千萬歲」者，「基」玄宗名也，「千萬歲」，蓋應數久長也。後中宗御應，樊文男欽賁以石記本上獻，上命編於國史。

The Celestial Master, Kou Qianzhi,<sup>179</sup> during the time of the latter Wei obtained the Dao. He often carved inscriptions on stone and hid them on Mount Song. At the outset of the Shangyuan reign period of Emperor Gaozong (674-676), there was a person of Gaocheng County in Luochuan<sup>180</sup> who was collecting medicinal herbs on the Mountain. Finding one of the stones, they presented it to the county

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<sup>178</sup> Gao Lishi 高力士 (684-762CE) was a very important eunuch official during the Tang who rose to importance primarily during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong, as he had been the Emperor's close attendant since youth. See *JTS* 184.4757 and *XTS* 207.5858.

<sup>179</sup> Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365-448) was a very famous Daoist who rose to particular prominence during the Northern Wei dynasty, when he succeeded in having Daoism made the state religion. He claimed to have had a vision that Daoism had degenerated from the time of the first Celestial Master, Zhang Daoling, and became known for attempts to eliminate what was perceived as excess in Daoist ritual practice. Kou Qianzhi eventually had the title of Celestial Master conferred upon him by Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei (r. 424-452). See *Wei shu*, comp. Wei Shou 魏收 (506-572) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 114.3049.

<sup>180</sup> These areas are located near present day Yan'an, Shaanxi.

magistrate of Fanwen.<sup>181</sup> It was talked about throughout the prefecture and, when those above heard about it, Emperor Gaozong ordered that it be collected into the imperial treasury.

The engravings were quite numerous and difficult to understand. One seemed to read: "The son of wood should undertake the realm. *Zhige long*. The generation of the clan of Li cannot have their ancestral clan removed. The central tripod makes obvious its true appearance. Long live Ji." As for the so-called "the wooden son should undertake the realm," it probably spoke of the Tang clan receiving the mandate of heaven. "*Zhige long*" spoke of Empress Wu sitting on the throne. This is because the characters *zhi* 止 and *ge* 戈 when put together form the character *wu* 武, the name of the clan of the Empress. "The generation of the clan of the Li cannot have their clan removed" refers to Emperor Zhongzong retaking the throne and renewing the realm. As for "the central tripod makes obvious its true appearance," it in fact refers to the temple name Zhenzong. Zhen was the honorary posthumous name of the sagely Emperor Ruizong. How could you not believe this? "Long live Ji" refers to Emperor Xuanzong, whose name was Li Longji. "Long live" simply suggests a long amount of time. Afterwards when Zhongzong took over the throne, the Baron of Fanwen, Qin Fen, took the volume of engravings and presented them to those above. His Highness ordered it be written into the national history.

#### XSZ 9.2

滎陽鄭又玄，名家子也。居長安中，自小與鄰舍閻丘氏子偕讀書於師氏。又玄性驕，率以門望清貴，而閻丘氏寒賤者，往往戲而罵之曰：「閻丘氏，非吾類也，而我偕學於師氏，我雖不語，汝甯不愧於心乎？」閻丘子嘿然有慚色。後數歲，閻丘子病死。

Zheng Youxuan of Xingyang<sup>182</sup> was the son of a famous family. He lived in Chang'an and as child studied with the same teacher as the son of the neighboring Lüqiu clan. Youxuan was by nature arrogant and, because his family's reputation was pure and honored while the Lüqiu clan was poor and

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<sup>181</sup> This is a troubling passage, as Fanwen appears to be either the name of a place or the name of a specific individual. However, I could not clearly identify it as either of these. The end of the passage would suggest that it is in fact a place name, given that the earl of the area appears to be mentioned. However, that passage is also problematic, as I could not find Qin Fen as a full or personal name for an individual outside of this anecdote either.

<sup>182</sup> This tale is the primary reference for Zheng Youxuan. Xingyang corresponds to present day Xingyang County in Zhengzhou, Henan.

lowly, he often jokingly teased: "The Lüqiu clan is not even in the same class as me, yet we study with the same teacher. Even if I said nothing, how could you not be ashamed in your heart?" The son of the Lüqiu clan would sigh with shame. After several years passed, the son of the Lüqiu clan died of illness.

及十年，又玄以明經上第，其後調補參軍於唐安郡。既至官，郡守命假尉唐興。有同舍仇生者，大賈之子，年始冠，其家資產萬計。日與又玄會，又玄累受其金錢賂遺，常與燕遊。然仇生非士族，未嘗以禮貌接之。嘗一日，又玄置酒高會，而仇生不得預。及酒闌，有謂又玄者曰：「仇生與子同舍，會燕而仇生不得預，豈非有罪乎？」又玄慚，即召仇生至。生至，又玄以卮飲之，生辭不能引滿，固謝。又玄怒罵曰：「汝市井之民，徒知錐刀爾，何為僭居官秩邪且吾與汝為伍，實汝之幸，又何敢辭酒乎？」因振衣起。仇生羞且甚，挽而退。遂棄官閉門，不與人往來。經數月，病卒。

After ten years passed, Youxuan became extremely well versed in the classics and was later appointed as an adjutant in the Tang'an commandery.<sup>183</sup> When he went to take up office, the head of the commandery ordered him to serve as an officer in Tangxing.<sup>184</sup> There was a Mr. Chou who shared the same living quarters. Mr. Chou was the son of a great merchant who had just begun serving that year. His family's wealth numbered in the millions, and each day he met up with Youxuan. Youxuan frequently received money and costly gifts from Chou, and they often went out leisure traveling together. However, Mr. Chou was not of the gentry class and never treated Youxuan with the proper courtesy and etiquette.

One day, Youxuan threw a magnificent banquet but did not notify Mr. Chou. When the banquet was about to conclude, someone said to Youxuan: "You share living quarters with Mr. Chou but did not notify him of your banquet, has he done something to offend you?" Youxuan was ashamed and called Mr. Chou to the banquet.

When Chou arrived, Youxuan raised a goblet to toast him but Chou declined, saying he couldn't drink a full cup. Youxuan cursed him angrily: "You are a commoner of the marketplace, knowing only of knife and awl. Whose oversight was it to give you official office? Even more, that you and I associate

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<sup>183</sup> Tang'an commandery was centered on present day Chongzhou, Sichuan.

<sup>184</sup> Tangxing was a county that changed locations over the course of the Tang. However, given the immediate reference to Tang'an, the most likely location for Tangxing County was its incarnation to the southeast of Chongzhou in Jiangyuan, Sichuan.

with one another is truly a stroke of luck on your part. How dare you decline my toast?" Youxuan shook his robes in disgust and arose. Mr. Chou was extremely ashamed and withdrew from the party.

Thereupon, Chou gave up his office and shut himself away, not associating with anyone. After several months passed, he died of illness.

明年，鄭罷官，僑居濛陽郡佛寺。鄭常好黃老之道，時有吳道士者，以道藝聞，廬於蜀門山。又玄高其風，即驅而就謁，願為門弟子。吳道士曰：「子既慕神仙，當且居山林，無為汲汲於塵俗間。」又玄喜謝曰：「先生真有道者。某願為隸於左右，其可乎？」道士許而留之。凡十五年，又玄志稍惰。吳道士曰：「子不能固其心，徒為居山林中，無補矣。」又玄即辭去。燕遊濛陽郡久之。

The next year, Zheng Youxuan was dismissed from office and went to live abroad in a Buddhist temple in Mengyang commandery.<sup>185</sup> Zheng had long been fond of the way of Laozi and the Yellow Emperor. At the time there was a Daoist adept by the name of Wu whose skill in the Daoist arts was renowned, and he lived in a hut in the Shumen Mountains. Youxuan thought him of a noble air and so rode off to pay him a visit, desiring to become his disciple. Wu said to him: "If you truly desire divine transcendence, you should live amongst the mountains and forests, giving up any eagerness to live amongst the dusty mortal plane."

Youxuan thanked him and replied: "Sir, you are really one who has obtained the Dao. I wish to devote myself to serving as your attendant, might you permit it?" Wu allowed it and let him stay.

After fifteen years had passed, Youxuan's ambition grew lazy. Wu said to him: "You are unable to set your heart. To be a disciple and live amidst the mountains and forests is of no use to you."

Youxuan then took his leave and departed, idly wandering in Mengyang commandery for some time.

其後東入長安，次褒城，舍逆旅氏。遇一童兒，十餘歲，貌甚秀，又玄與之語，其辯慧千轉萬化，又玄自謂不能及。已而謂又玄曰：「我與君故人有年矣，君省之乎？」又玄曰：「忘矣。」童兒曰：「吾嘗生閻丘氏之門，居長安中，與子偕學於師氏，子以我寒賤，且曰：『非吾類也。』後又為仇氏子，尉於唐興，與子同舍，子受我金錢賂遺甚多，然子未嘗以禮貌遇我，罵我市井之民。何吾子驕傲之甚邪」又玄驚，因再拜謝曰：「誠吾之罪也。然子非聖人，安得知三生事乎？」童兒曰：「我太清真人。上帝以汝有道氣，故生我於人間，與汝為友，將授真仙之訣。而汝以性驕傲，終不能得其道。籲，可悲乎！」言訖，忽亡所見。又玄既寤其事，甚慚恚，竟以憂卒。

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<sup>185</sup> Mengchang commandery was centered on present day Pengzhou, Sichuan.

Thereafter he traveled east to Chang'an and then on to Baocheng,<sup>186</sup> where he took up residence at an inn. There he met a boy a bit over ten years old whose appearance was extremely refined. When Youxuan spoke with the boy, the child was skilled in debate and had knowledge of all things. Youxuan himself admitted that he couldn't match up to the boy. Shortly afterwards, the boy said to Youxuan: "I have been old friends with you for a number of years, do you recognize me?"

Youxuan replied: "I have forgotten."

The child responded: "I was once born into the household of the Lüqiu clan. I lived in Chang'an and studied with the same teacher as you. Because I was poor and lowly, you once said: 'You are not of my class.' Thereafter, I was born as a son of the Chou clan and served in Tangxing. We shared the same living quarters, and you received a great deal of money and gifts from me. However, saying that I never showed you any courtesy upon meeting, you cursed me as a commoner of the marketplace. How could you be so extremely arrogant!"

Youxuan was startled and bowing twice, apologized: "I am truly guilty. However, you are not a sage, how do you know of the affairs of three lives?"

The boy replied: "I am a Perfected Being of Highest Purity. The August on High took you to be imbued with the energy of the Dao and so had me born into the mortal realm. I was to become your friend and confer upon you the formulas of the perfected transcendents. However, you were by nature arrogant and conceited and in the end were unable to obtain the Dao. Alas, how unfortunate!" When he had finished speaking, the boy suddenly disappeared from view. Awakened to the error of his ways, Youxuan was extremely ashamed and troubled. In the end, he died of his worries.

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<sup>186</sup> Baocheng was located in present day Hanzong, Shaanxi.

清河公房建。居於含山郡。性尚奇。好玄元之教。常從道士授六甲符及九章真籙。積二十年。後南遊衡山。遇一道士。風骨明秀。與建語。述上清仙都及蓬萊方丈靈異之事。一一皆若涉歷。建奇之。後旬餘。建自衡山適南海。道士謂建曰。吾嘗客於南海。迨今十年矣。將有寺官李侯者護其軍。李侯以玉簪遺我。我以簪賜君。君宜寶之。建得其簪。喜且甚。因而別去。是歲秋。建至南海。嘗一日獨遊開元觀。觀之北軒。有磚塗為真人狀者二焉。其位於東者左玄真人。及視左玄之狀。果衡山所遇道士也。奇而歎者且久。及觀左玄之冠。已亡簪矣。時有觀居道士數輩在焉。建具以事言次。出玉簪示之。道士驚曰。往歲有寺官李侯。護兵於南海。嘗以二玉簪飾左右真人。迨今且十年。其左玄之簪。亡之十年。今君所獲果是焉。建奇之。因以玉簪歸道士。

Fang Jian, Duke of Qinghe, lived in Mount Han Commandery.<sup>187</sup> By nature, he esteemed the marvelous and was fond of the teachings of the Mysterious Prime.<sup>188</sup> Jian once received the Talisman of the Six Jia and the Perfected Register in Nine Sections from a Daoist adept.<sup>189</sup> After twenty years had passed, he then traveled south to Mount Heng.<sup>190</sup> There, he chanced upon a Daoist adept whose style and character were bright and refined. The man spoke with Jian and told him of the divine and wondrous affairs of the transcendent capital of Upper Purity, Penglai, and Fangzhang.<sup>191</sup> The man spoke of each in turn as though he had been there firsthand, and Jian thought this quite fantastic.

After a bit more than ten days had passed, Jian went from Mount Heng down to the Nanhai.<sup>192</sup> [Before Jian departed,] the adept said to him: "I once visited the Nanhai. From then until now, ten

<sup>187</sup> This appears to be the primary anecdote in which Fang Jian appears. Mount Han Commandery was located in the mid-eastern section of Anhui near the town of Ma'an. Qinghe can refer to numerous locations, including sections of the Qi, Si, and Yellow Rivers. It is unclear exactly where it is referring to in this context given that it was Fang Jian's original hometown and not where he is currently living.

<sup>188</sup> This is a general reference to Daoism and points to the origin of the myriad things.

<sup>189</sup> The "six jia" generally refers to the six combinations of the Chinese heavenly stems and earthly branches beginning with the *jia* character. It also refers to a Daoist method of calculation based off these combinations. Interestingly, the "six jia talismans" is a term that appears roughly forty-seven times in the Daoist canon under a number of different headings and usages, yet the "perfected register in nine chapters" only appears once in the context of this tale. While they both refer to specific Daoist terms, I believe their primary usage here is simply to show Fang Jian's progression in the study of Daoist arcana.

<sup>190</sup> Mount Heng is located in present day central Hunan and is one of the five sacred marchmounts.

<sup>191</sup> These three locations are all mythical capitals of transcendence.

<sup>192</sup> While Nanhai can refer to the South China Sea, it also refers to a commandery encompassing much of present day Guangdong. Because of the numerous references to this land area over a number of tales, it seems to be referring to the area of Guangdong.

years have passed. At that time, there was the temple official, Marquis Li,<sup>193</sup> who was military protector of the area. Marquis Li gave me his jade hairpin, and now I pass along this hairpin to you. Please treasure it appropriately." Jian was extremely delighted to receive the hatpin and thereupon set off.

That fall, Jian arrived in Nanhai. One day, he was wandering alone at the Kaiyuan Temple.<sup>194</sup> In the northern chamber of the temple, there was a mosaic of two perfected beings. The one positioned to the east was the Mysterious Perfected Being of the Left.<sup>195</sup> Looking upon the image of the Mysterious of the Left, Jian suddenly realized that it was the very same Daoist adept that he had encountered on Mount Heng. Jian sighed and marveled over this for some time. Then, looking at the cap of the Mysterious of the Left, he realized that it was lacking its hatpin. At that time, there were a number of adepts present who lived in the temple. Jian told them the whole matter in order and pulled out the jade hatpin to give them a look. One of the adepts said with surprise: "In the past, there was a temple official by the name of Marquis Li who served as military protector in Nanhai. He once took two jade hairpins and adorned the images of the Left and Right Perfected Beings. From then until now, ten years have passed, but the Mysterious of the Left's hairpin has been lost that whole time. Now, the one that you were given is indeed it!" Jian marveled at this and, taking the jade hairpin, returned it to the Daoist adept.

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<sup>193</sup> Because of the general nature of the name, it is very difficult to identify Marquis Li as a specific individual despite the geographical information given. The honorific name only occurs once in either of the Tang histories and does so in comparative praise of one of the sons of Emperor Daizong but does not state it as a specific reference to him. See *JTS* 116.3394.

<sup>194</sup> As seen in previously in *XSZ* 9.3, a number of Kaiyuan temples were built throughout the realm during the Tang. I was not able to locate such a temple in this area however.

<sup>195</sup> The Left and Right Perfected Beings are Daoist deities that are called upon dozens of times in a wide variety of scriptures throughout the Daoist canon.



## Talismanic Arts

### XSZ 3.11

通州有王居士者，有道術。會昌中，刺史鄭君有幼女，甚念之，而自幼多疾，若神魂不足者。鄭君因請居士，居士曰：「此女非疾，乃生魂未歸其身。」鄭君訊其事，居士曰：「某縣令某者，即此女前身也。當死數歲矣，以平生為善，以幽冥佑之得過期。今年九十餘矣。今歿之日，此女當愈。」鄭君急發人馳訪之，其令果九十餘矣。後月，其女忽若醉寤，疾愈。鄭君又使往驗，令果以女疾愈之日無疾卒。

There was a Hermit Wang<sup>196</sup> of Tongzhou<sup>197</sup> who possessed the Daoist arts. During the Huichang reign period of Emperor Wuzong, there was a prefectural governor by the name of Lord Zheng<sup>198</sup> who had a young daughter. He cherished her greatly but from a young age she had often been sick. It was as though her spirit and soul were deficient. Therefore, Lord Zheng called upon Hermit Wang, who told him: "Your daughter is not ill, so it must be that her mortal *hun* soul has yet to return to her body." Lord Zheng questioned him further on the matter, to which the Hermit replied: "A certain county magistrate of a certain name is your daughter's former incarnation. He should have already been dead a number of years but, because he was virtuous his entire life, he received the protection of the gods of the netherworld and his allotment was extended. Presently, he is already more than ninety years old. Now, on the day of his death, your girl should get better."

Lord Zheng urgently sent out a rider to find the man, and this magistrate was indeed more than ninety. The next month, Zheng's daughter suddenly seemed as though she had woken from a drunken stupor and her illness was healed. Lord Zheng once more dispatched a rider to check on the magistrate, and he had in fact died without illness on the day that Zheng's daughter was healed.

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<sup>196</sup> A "Hermit Wang" can be found referenced in a number of stories in various sources, including the *TPGJ*. Unfortunately, because of the nondescript nature of the name, it is difficult to locate the figure as a specific individual. This is especially true given that it often does not appear that it is the same Hermit Wang appearing in all references. For another example, see *TPGJ* 84.542.

<sup>197</sup> Tongzhou refers to present day Nantong, Jiangsu.

<sup>198</sup> Again, because of the nondescript nature of Lord Zheng's name, he is also difficult to pin down as a specific historical figure. It is possible that this refers to Zheng Junxiong 鄭君雄, who was a prefectural governor of Suizhou, but this does not seem certain given the discrepancy in location of his position. References to Zheng Junxiong can be found in *XTS* 9.278.

#### XSZ 5.5

大和中，有江夏從事者，其官舍嘗有怪異。每夕見一巨人，身盡黑，甚光，見之即悸而病死。後有許元長者，善視鬼。從事命元長以符術考召。後一夕，元長坐於堂西軒下，巨人忽至，元長出一符飛之，中其臂，割割然有聲，遂墮於地。巨人即去。元長視其墮臂，乃一枯木枝。至明日，有家童謂元長曰：「堂之東隅有枯樹焉。先生符今在其上。」即往視之。其樹有枝稍折者，果巨人所斷臂也。即伐而焚之。宅遂無怪。

During the Dahe reign period of Emperor Wenzong, there was a retainer serving in Jiangxia whose office quarters were often the site of strange occurrences. Every evening a giant, whose body was entirely extremely luminous would appear. Upon seeing the creature, one would tremble with fear and then die of illness.

Sometime thereafter, there was a man by the name of Xu Yuanzhang<sup>199</sup> who was skilled at seeing ghosts. The retainer ordered Yuanzhang to use the talismanic arts to summon and interrogate the creature. The next night, Yuanzhang sat beneath the balcony to the west of the hall. The giant suddenly appeared, and Yuanzhang cast out a talisman, striking it on the arm. Crish-crash, the creature's arm then fell severed to the floor. The giant immediately departed and, picking up the severed arm, Yuanzhang saw that it was a withered tree branch. The next day, a servant boy told Yuanzhang: "There is a withered tree at the eastern corner of the hall. Sir, today your talisman was found stuck upon it." Thereupon, they went to take a look. The tree had a branch that had been partially cut off, and this was in fact the giant's arm that had been severed. They then cut the tree down and burnt it, and the residence was thereafter without incident.

#### XSZ 5.7

有醴泉縣民吳偃，家於田野間。有一女十歲餘，一夕，忽遁去，莫知所往。後數餘日，偃夢其父謂偃曰：「汝女今在東北隅，蓋木神為崇。」偃驚而寤。至明日，即於東北隅窮其跡，果聞有呻吟之事，偃視之，見其女有一穴內。口甚小，然其中稍寬敞。傍有古槐木，盤根極大。於是挈之而歸，然兀若沈醉者。會有李道士至，偃請符術呵禁。其女忽瞬而語曰：「地東北有槐木，木有神，引某自樹腹空入地下穴內，故某病。」於是伐其樹。後數日，女病始愈。

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<sup>199</sup> Though he does not appear in the standard histories, Xu Yuanzhang 許元長 appears as a Daoist adept exercising similar skills in several other stores. For example, see *TPGJ* 74.466.

There was a man of Liquan County<sup>200</sup> by the name of Wu Yan,<sup>201</sup> whose household was located out in the open country. He had a daughter who was a bit older than ten. One night, she suddenly ran off and no one knew to where she had gone. After several days had passed, Yan dreamt of his father, who said to Yan: "Your daughter is out to the northeast of your property, and it is likely that she has been entranced by a tree spirit." Yan suddenly woke with a start.

The next day, he went out to the northeast to search for traces of his daughter and indeed came upon the sound of groaning. Going to take a look, Yan saw his daughter inside a cave. The mouth of the cave was extremely small but it opened up slightly on the inside. Next to it was an ancient locust tree whose gnarled roots were enormous. Thereupon Yan gathered up his daughter to return home, but she suddenly seemed as though dead drunk. Calling upon Daoist adept Li,<sup>202</sup> Yan requested that he use the talismanic arts and curses. In a flash, Yan's daughter suddenly said: "In the area to the northeast, there is a locust tree. The tree contains a spirit that led me from an opening in the belly of tree into a cave beneath the earth. Then, I became ill." Thereupon they cut down the tree, and after several days the girl was healed.

*TPGJ* 72.451

貞元中。有袁隱居者。家於湘楚間。善陰陽占訣歌一百二十章。時故相國李公吉甫。自尚書郎謫官東南。一日。隱居來謁公。公久聞其名。即延與語。公命算己之祿仕。隱居曰。公之祿真將相也。公之壽九十三矣。李公曰。吾之先未嘗有及七十者。吾何敢望九十三乎。隱居曰。運算舉數。乃九十三耳。其後李公果相憲宗皇帝。節制淮南。再入相而薨。年五十六。時元和九年十月三日也。校其年月日。亦符九十三之數。豈非懸解之妙乎。隱居著陰陽占訣歌。李公序其首。

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<sup>200</sup> Liquan County 醴泉縣 is an alternate name for what appears more commonly as Liquan County 禮泉縣, located in present day Xianyang, Shaanxi.

<sup>201</sup> This story appears to be the primary source of reference to Wu Yan.

<sup>202</sup> Again, given the general nature of Daoist adept Li's name, it is difficult to pinpoint him as a specific historical individual. However, the name does appear in several other stories in a variety of sources. For example, see *XSZ* 9.11 and *TPGJ* 395.3157.

During the Zhenyuan reign period of Emperor Dezong, there was one Recluse Yuan, whose household was located between Xiang and Chu.<sup>203</sup> He was skilled in the *Songs and Verses of Yin-yang Fortune Prognostication in 120 Chapters*.<sup>204</sup> At the time, Prime Minister Li Jifu<sup>205</sup> was demoted from his position of attendant in the Secretariat to one in the southeast. One day, Recluse Yuan came to pay his respects to Li Jifu. Jifu had long heard of Yuan's fame and spoke with him for quite a while. Li Jifu ordered that Yuan foretell his emolument and office. Recluse Yuan told him: "Your emolument is truly that of a general or minister of state and you will live to ninety-three."

Li Jifu replied: "My ancestors never exceeded the age of seventy, how could I dare hope to reach ninety-three?"

Recluse Yuan replied: "My calculations support this number, and so it will be ninety-three!" Thereafter, Li Jifu indeed served as a minister to Emperor Xianzong and was put in control of the area of Huainan. After once more returning to serve as a minister, he died at the age of 56. At that time, it was the third day of the tenth month of the ninth year of the Yuanhe reign period of Emperor Xianzong (Saturday, Nov. 18, 814). Adding up the day, month, and year, then the date is indeed in accordance with Recluse Yuan's calculation of ninety-three. Does this not unlock the mystery? Recluse Yuan wrote the *Songs and Verses of Yin-yang Fortune Prognostication* and Li Jifu composed the preface at its beginning.

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<sup>203</sup> This tale appears to be the primary reference to Recluse Yuan. Xiang and Chu generally refers to the area between present day Hubei and Hunan.

<sup>204</sup> While this and the title given at the end of the tale appear to be the name of a specific text, this tale is the only reference to them.

<sup>205</sup> Li Jifu 李吉甫 (758-814) served in the position of prime minister under Emperor Xianzong. Jifu began his official service under Emperor Dezong but was eventually demoted to the minor position of prefect of Zhongzhou, which is probably the capacity in which we see him serving here. He was later promoted to the head of several different prefectures before being called back to court and ultimately made prime minister. See *JTS* 148.3992.

上党有程逸人者，有符術。劉悟為澤潞節度，臨沼縣民蕭季平，家甚富，忽一日無疾暴卒。逸人嘗受平厚惠。聞其死，即馳往視之，語其子云：「爾父未當死，蓋為山神所召，治之尚可活。」於是朱書一符，向空擲之，僅食頃，季平果蘇。其子問父：「向安適乎？」季平曰：「我今日方起，忽見一綠衣人云：霍山神召我。由是與使者俱行，約五十餘里，適遇丈夫朱衣，仗劍怒目，從空而至，謂我曰：『程斬邪召汝，汝可即去。』於是綠衣者馳走，若有懼。朱衣人牽我複偕來，有頃忽覺醒然。」其家驚異，因質問逸人曰：「所謂程斬邪者，誰邪？」逸人曰：「吾學於師氏歸氏龍虎斬邪符籙。」因解所佩籙囊以示之，人方信其不誣。逸人後遊閩越，竟不知所在。

In Shangdang there was one Recluse Cheng.<sup>206</sup> He was skilled in the talismanic arts [and lived when] Liu Wu was was the area commander of Zelu.<sup>207</sup> There was a person of Linzhao County named Xiao Jiping.<sup>208</sup> His household was extremely wealthy. Suddenly one day he died unexpectedly without illness. In the past, Recluse Cheng had received great kindness from Ping. Upon hearing of his death, Cheng immediately rode off to see him. He said to Jiping's son: "Your father is not yet dead. He has likely gone on account of a summons from a mountain spirit. If I can contain the spirit, it is still possible for him to live." Thereupon, he wrote a cinnabar talisman and cast it out into the air.

Shortly thereafter, Jiping was suddenly revived. His son asked him: "Where did you go to father?"

His father replied: "Today when I was getting up, I suddenly saw a man clad in blue who said that the Huo mountain spirit had summoned me. Subsequently, I went along together with the envoy. After a little more than fifty *li*, we encountered a burly man in vermillion clothing as we progressed. He carried a sword and glared angrily, having arrived out of nowhere. The man said to me, 'Cheng, Chopper of Evil, has summoned you. You may now depart.' Thereupon, the man in blue clothing sped off as though frightened. The man in vermillion led me back again in his company. Soon after, I suddenly thus awoke."

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<sup>206</sup> Shangdang commandery was the name given to Luzhou during the Tang. Additionally, this story is the only reference to Recluse Cheng.

<sup>207</sup> Zelu is located in present day Shanxi, Changzhi.

<sup>208</sup> I could not find any reference to a Linzhao County; however, there was a Linze County that is located in present day Jiangsu province. Given both *ze* 澤 and *zhao* 沼 refer to marshy areas, this may be a character substitution that in fact refers to Linze.

His family was astounded. On account of the story, they asked Recluse Cheng: "Who was the one called Cheng, Chopper of Evil?" He responded: "[It was I, for] I have studied the dragon and tiger talismanic register of chopping down evil." Cheng undid the bag of talismanic writings he was wearing and showed it to them. They then believed he was not lying. Thereafter, Recluse Cheng wandered to Min and Yue and, in the end, his whereabouts were unknown.<sup>209</sup>

TPGJ 73.459

趙州昭慶民駱玄素者。為小吏。得罪於縣令。遂遁迹而去。令怒。分捕甚急。遂匿身山谷中。忽遇老翁。衣褐衣。質狀凡陋。策杖立于長松之下。召玄素訊之曰。爾安得至此耶。玄素對得罪於縣令。遁逃至此。幸翁見容。翁引玄素入深山。僅行十餘里。至一巖穴。見二茅齋東西相向。前臨積水。珍木奇花。羅列左右。有侍童一人。年甚少。總角衣短褐。白衣緯帶革舄。居於西齋。其東齋有藥竈。命玄素候火。老翁自稱東真君。命玄素以東真呼之。東真以藥十餘粒。令玄素餌之。且曰。可以治飢矣。自是玄素絕粒。僅歲餘。授符術及吸氣之法。盡得其妙。一日又謂玄素曰。子可歸矣。既而送玄素至縣南數十里。執手而別。自此以符術行里中。常有孕婦。過期不產。玄素以符一道。令餌之。其夕即產。於兒手中得所吞之符。其他神效。不可具述。其後玄素犯法。刺史杖殺之。凡月餘。其尸如生。曾無委壞之色。蓋餌靈藥所致。於是里人收瘞之。時寶曆元年夏月也。

Amongst the people of Zhaoqing in Zhaozhou,<sup>210</sup> there was a man by the name of Luo Xuansu.<sup>211</sup>

Serving as a petty clerk, he displeased the county magistrate. Thereupon, Xuansu fled into hiding.

Angry, the magistrate sent an arresting party after him with great haste. Xuansu, hiding himself

amongst the mountains and valleys, suddenly chanced upon an old man. The man wore coarse cloth

and was foul of appearance and temperament. Leaning on a walking stick, the old man stood beneath

the tall pines. Summoning Xuansu, he questioned him: "How did you come upon this place?" Xuansu

explained that he had offended the county magistrate and, while fleeing, had arrived at the area. The

old man accepted his account and then led Xuansu deep into the mountains. After travelling nearly a

dozen *li*, they arrived at a rocky cave. Xuansu saw that there were two grass huts facing one another on

either side to the east and west. In front they overlooked a pond, and precious trees and rare flowers

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<sup>209</sup> Min and Yue are located in the vicinity of present day Zhejiang and Fujian provinces respectively. They also denote minority groups of the same name residing within the regions.

<sup>210</sup> Zhaozhou was centered on present day Zhao County, Hebei.

<sup>211</sup> This tale appears to be the primary reference for Luo Xuansu.

spread out to the left and right. There was a single servant boy of a very young age. He wore his hair in a child's topknot and was clad in a coarse skirt with white robes, a belt, and leather sandals.

They lived in the western hut, while the eastern hut contained an alchemical furnace. The old man ordered Xuansu to attend to the furnace flame. He also called himself "Perfected Lord of the East" and ordered that Xuansu call him the "Eastern Perfected." The Eastern Perfected took out about a dozen medicinal tablets and ordered that Xuansu eat them. He then said: "These can cure hunger." From then on, Xuansu stopped eating. Barely more than a year had passed before Xuansu was taught the ways of the talismanic arts and breathing vapors, completely mastering all their subtleties.

One day, the old man told Xuansu: "You may return." He then accompanied Xuansu several dozen *li* south of the county line. Hand in hand, they said their goodbyes. From that point on, Xuansu made his way by practicing the talismanic arts within the village. Once, there was a pregnant woman whose baby was past term but had not been born. Xuansu cast a single talisman and ordered the woman to eat it. That night, she gave birth, and the baby held in its hand the talisman which she had swallowed.

Xuansu carried out many other marvelous feats, too many to recount here. Later on, Xuansu broke the law and the prefectural governor had him caned to death. A number of months passed, yet his corpse appeared as though still alive and had no foul appearance. It is likely that this was caused by the divine medicine that he had consumed. Thereafter, the villagers encoffined and buried his body. This occurred during the summer months of the inaugural year of the Baoli reign period of Emperor Jingzong (825).

尚書王公潛節度荆南時。有呂氏子。衣敝舉策。有飢寒之色。投刺來謁。公不為禮。甚怏怏。因寓於逆旅。月餘。窮乏益甚。遂鬻所乘驢於荆州市。有市門監俞叟者。召呂生而語。且問其所由。呂生曰。吾家于渭北。家貧親老。無以給旨甘之養。府帥公吾之重表丈也。吾不遠而來。冀哀吾貧而周之。入謁而公不一顧。豈非命也。叟曰。某雖貧。無資食以賙吾子之急。然向者見吾子有飢寒色。甚不平。今夕為吾子具食。幸宿我宇下。生無以辭焉。呂生許諾。於是延入一室。湫隘卑陋。摧簷壞垣。無牀榻茵褥。致敝蓆於地。與呂生坐。語久命食。以陶器進脫粟飯而已。食訖。夜既深。謂呂生曰。吾早年好道。常隱居四明山。從道士學卻老之術。有志未就。自晦迹於此。僅十年。而荆人未有知者。以吾子困於羈旅。得無動於心耶。今夕為吾子設一小術。以致歸路裹糧之費。不亦可乎。呂生雖疑誕妄。然甚覺其異。叟因取一缶合於地。僅食頃。舉而視之。見一人長五寸許。紫綬金腰帶。俛而拱焉。俞叟指曰。此乃尚書王公之魂也。呂生熟視其狀貌。果類王公。心默而異之。因戒曰。呂乃汝之表姪也。家苦貧。無以給旦夕之贍。故自渭北不遠而來。汝宜厚給館穀。盡親親之道。汝何自矜。曾不一顧。豈人心哉。今不罪汝。宜厚貲之。無使為留滯之客。紫衣僂而揖。若受教之狀。叟又曰。呂生無僕馬。可致一匹一僕。縑二百疋。以遺之。紫衣又僂而揖。於是卻以缶合於上。有頃再啟之。已無見矣。明旦。天將曉。叟謂呂生曰。子可疾去。王公旦夕召子矣。及歸逆旅。王公果使召之。方見且謝曰。吾子不遠見訪。屬軍府務殷。未果一日接言。深用為愧。幸吾子察之。是日始館呂生驛亭。與宴遊累日。呂生告去。王公贈僕馬及縑二百。呂生益奇之。然不敢言。及歸渭北。後數年。因與友人數輩會宿。語及靈怪。始以其事說於人也。

At the time when Duke Wang Qian of the Secretariat was serving as circuit governor of Jingnang, there was a man of the Lü Clan.<sup>212</sup> His clothing was shabby, and he carried a staff<sup>213</sup> and had the look of hunger about him. Sending along his calling card, he wished to pay a visit to Wang Qian, but Qian thought it inappropriate. The man was very dispirited and then went to stay at an inn. After a bit more than a month had passed, he grew even more destitute. Thereupon, he sold his riding donkey at the Jingzhou market. Old Man Yu, the market gatekeeper, called Mr. Lü over to have a word with him. Yu asked where he had come from, and Mr. Lü told him: "My family is from north of Wei."<sup>214</sup> Our household is poor and my relatives old. I have no delicacies to treat them with. The Duke, who is county commander, is an elder relative of mine. Ignoring the distance, I came. I hope that he might

<sup>212</sup> Wang Qian was a major official during the later years of the Tang and was related by marriage to the imperial family. He appears only as an official in the *JTS* with no personal biography but several references in terms of positions that he received. See *JTS* 17.531 for reference to the official capacity in which he is mentioned here. He also receives mention in the biography of his father in the *XTS*, see 116.5508. Jingnan was located in present day Hunan province.

<sup>213</sup> While this line literally reads that he was carrying a whip, I read it as an abbreviation for *ce zhang* 策杖, to lean on a walking stick.

<sup>214</sup> Wei refers to the river located in present day Shanxi.



take sympathy on my poverty and aid me. Going to pay him a visit, he would not even give me one look. Is this not then my fate?"

Old Man Yu said: "Though I may be poor and without resources to feed and aid you in your time of need; yet, seeing you in this state of hunger and necessity, I am very unsettled. Tonight, we will dine together and you may sleep under my roof. Do not even think of declining my offer." Mr. Lü agreed and was then invited into Yu's room. Yu's home was small and humble with broken rafters and bad walls. There was no bed, couch, mattress, or wadding, only a worn out mat on the floor. Yu sat with Mr. Lü and, after chatting for some time, they ate. Using earthenware dishes, they ate unhusked rice and nothing more.

When they had finished eating, it was already late at night. Yu said to Mr. Lü: "In my younger years, I was fond of the Dao. I once lived as a recluse in the Siming Mountains<sup>215</sup> and studied the art of putting off old age from a Daoist adept. I had the will but not the way. Since that time, I have fallen into this dark obscurity. It has been almost ten years, yet there is no one in Jing who truly comprehends. Seeing you live in such hardship at an inn, unable to move the hearts of others, tonight I will set up a small trick for you so that you will have money for a bag of provisions on your return. How does that sound?"

Although Mr. Lü suspected that Yu was just boasting, yet he perceived that the man was somehow unique. The old man then set an amphora on the ground. In but an instant, he held it up and had Mr. Lu take a look in it. Inside, he saw a small man about five *cun* tall. He was clad in the purple ribbon of an official and a yellow waistband. The little man bowed and saluted them from within. Old man Yu pointed and said: "This is the *hun* soul of Duke Wang of the Secretariat." Mr. Lü took a hard look at the little man's appearance and form, and he indeed resembled Wang Qian. Mr. Lü stood silent, thinking this quite strange. Yu thereupon admonished the little man, saying: "Mr. Lü is your nephew

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<sup>215</sup> The Siming mountain chain is located in eastern Zhejiang and runs along the area by Ningbo

and his family is bitterly poor. They haven't even enough provisions for a single day. Therefore, ignoring the distance, he came from north of Wei. It would have been right for you to generously give him lodging and grain, doing your utmost in accordance with family etiquette. How could you be so selfish? You didn't even give him a single glance! How could you have the heart of a man? Now, Mr. Lü has been offended by you, it is only suitable that you richly reward him and do not detain him here any further as a visitor." The little man in purple robes immediately bowed and appeared as though he was receiving orders. Old Man Yu also said: "Mr. Lü has no servant or mount. You should send a horse and attendant and also give to him two-hundred bolts of fine silk." The man in purple instantly bowed again. Thereupon, Yu covered up the amphora. After a short while, he opened it again and the little man was gone.

The next morning when daybreak was approaching, Old Man Yu said to Mr. Lü: "You may depart immediately. Duke Wang will summon you before the day is over."

Mr. Lü returned to the inn, and Wang Qian had indeed sent a messenger to summon him. Qian then gave audience to Mr. Lü and, thanking him, said: "Ignoring the distance, you came to pay me a visit. I am assigned to the military offices and serve with dedication, and so I was unable to find a day to welcome you. I am extremely ashamed by this and hope for your understanding." That day, Mr. Lü began staying at the courier station and banqueted and traveled with Wang Qian for a number of days. Mr. Lü then took leave and Wang Qian gave him a servant and horse, along with two hundred bolts of fine silk. Mr. Lü was even more astounded by this, yet dare not say a word. Thereafter, he returned to northern Wei. After a number of years, because a number of his friends had gathered to stay with him, Mr. Lü spoke of this unusual affair. Since then, this affair began to circulate among people.

有石旻者。不知何許人也。浪迹江湖之間。有年數矣。道術玄妙。殆不可測。長慶中。客于宛陵郡。有雷氏子。常為宣城部將。一日與友人數輩。會飲於郡南別墅。旻亦在座。其家僮網得一魚。長數尺。致于舍。是日。雷生與客俱深醉。諸客盡去。獨旻宿雷氏別墅。時夏暑方甚。及明日視其魚。已敗爛不可食矣。家童將棄之。旻謂之曰。此魚雖敗。吾有良藥。尚可活之。安可棄耶。雷生笑曰。先生妄矣。誠有良劑。安能活此魚耶。曰。吾子幸觀之。于是衣中出一小囊。囊有藥數粒。投於敗魚之上。僅食頃。其魚鮮潤如初。俄而搖鬣振鱗。若在洪流中。雷生驚異。再拜謝曰。先生之術。可謂神矣。某輩塵俗聾瞽。望先生高踪。若井鮒之與雲禽。焉得而為伍乎。先是雷生有癩疾積年。既而求旻衣中之丹餌。欲冀瘳其久苦。旻不可。且曰。吾之丹至清至廉。爾曹俗人。嗜好無節。臟腑之內。腥羶委集。設使以吾丹餌求置其中。則臟腑之氣。與藥力相攻。若水火之交戰。寧有全人乎。慎不可食。旻又言。神仙不難得。但塵俗多累。若檻猿籠鳥。徒有騫翔超騰之心。安可致乎。會昌中。卒于吳郡也。

There was a man by the name of Shi Min.<sup>216</sup> It isn't known where he was from and he wandered about all corners of the country for a number of years. His mastery of the Daoist arts was mysterious, subtle, and almost beyond comprehension. During the Changqing reign period of Emperor Muzong, he was residing in Yuanling Commandery. There was a man of the Lei clan who once served as divisional commander in Xuancheng.<sup>217</sup> One day, he gathered together with a number of his friends at his villa in the south of the commandery. Shi Min was also present. His boy servant caught a fish in his net. It was several *chi* in length, and the boy had it sent back to the lodgings.

That day, Mr. Lei and his guests were all dead drunk. All of the guests departed, and only Shi Min and Mr. Lei remained at the villa. At the time, it was the height of summer. The next day, they took a look at the fish and saw that it was already rotten to the point that it could no longer be eaten. The boy servant was going to throw it out when Min said to him: "Although this fish is rotten, I have a special medicine that can bring it back to life. Why throw it away?"

Mr. Lei laughed and said: "You are being a bit presumptuous! Supposing there was such a medicine, how could it bring this fish back to life?"

<sup>216</sup> Though he lacks official records, Shi Min does appear as a character in other fantastic tales concerning his mastery of the Daoist arts, some of which appear as renditions of this tale. For example, see TPGJ 78.497 and 84.545.

<sup>217</sup> As seen in XSZ 4.7, Xuancheng was located in present day southeastern Anhui, also encompassing the old city of Yuanling. It would seem that these names are being used interchangeably for the commandery in these two sentences.

Min replied: "Please take a look." He thereupon took out a small bag from within his robes. There were a number of pills in the bag, and he took one and tossed it on the rotten fish. In an instant, the fish brightened up like it had been in the beginning. In another blink of an eye, it was shaking its whiskers and shifting its scales as though swimming amidst a mighty current.

Mr. Lei was astounded and, bowing twice, thanked Shi Min: "Your arts can truly be called divine. My generation is deaf and blind amidst the dust of the mortal world. I look upon your lofty traces and it is like a carp in a well as compared to the birds up in the clouds. How could I hope to associate with you?"

Prior to all this however, Mr. Lei had been ill for a number of years. After this occurred, he asked for one of the cinnabar pills from within Shi Min's robes. He wished to be cured of his lingering pain. Min would not allow it and said to him: "My cinnabar is most pure and clear, yet you are but a common man. Your cravings have no limit, and the stench of fish and mutton hangs about your viscera. Supposing that I sought to put one of my cinnabar pills within you, then the pneumas in your viscera and the strength of the medicine would contend with one another. It would be like water and fire warring against one another. It is better that you just remain intact! It really cannot be eaten."

Min also said: "Divine transcendence is not difficult to obtain, but the mortal world is so tiring. You are like the captive gibbon or the caged bird. You have the heart of one who wants to rise up into the sky or jump too high, but how could you accomplish this?" During the Huichang reign period of Emperor Wuzong, he died in Wu Commandery.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Wu Commandery encompassed present day Suzhou.

南海<sup>219</sup>郡有楊居士。亡其名。以居士自目。往往遊南海枝郡。常寄食於人。亦不知其所止。謂人曰。我有奇術。汝輩庸人。固不得而識矣。後常至郡。會太守好奇者。聞居士來。甚喜。且厚其禮。命飲之。每宴遊。未嘗不首召居士。居士亦以此自負。一日使酒忤太守。太守不能容。後又會宴於郡室。閱妓樂。而居士不得預。時有數客。亦不在太守召中。因謂居士曰。先生嘗自負有奇術。某向者仰望之不暇。一日遇先生於此。誠幸矣。雖然。今聞太守大宴客於郡齋。而先生不得預其間。即不能設一奇術以動之乎。必先生果無奇術耶。居士笑曰。此末術耳。君試觀我。我為君召其妓。可以佐酒。皆曰。願為之。居士因命具酒。使諸客環席而坐。又命小童閉西廡空室。久之乃啟之。有三四美人自廡下來。裝飾華煥。攜樂而至。居士曰。某之術何如。諸客人大異之。殆不可測。乃命列坐。奏樂且歌。客或訊其術。居士但笑而不答。時昏晦。至夜分。居士謂諸妓曰。可歸矣。于是皆起。入西廡下空室中。客相目駭歎。然尚疑其鬼物妖惑。明日。有郡中吏曰。太守昨夕宴郡閣。妓樂列坐。無何皆仆地。瞬息暴風起。飄其樂器而去。迨至夜分。諸妓方寤。樂器亦歸于舊所。太守質問眾妓。皆云黑無所見。竟不窮其由。諸客皆大驚。因盡以事對。或告於太守。太守歎異。即謝而遣之。不敢留于郡中。時開成初也。

In Nanhai Commandery there was a Retired Scholar Yang.<sup>220</sup> His name has been lost but he fancied himself as retired scholar.<sup>221</sup> He often travelled about the Nanhai Commandery and frequently sponged off others, not knowing when to stop. He said to others: "I have special abilities. You people are just ordinary folks and so you don't recognize them in me."

Later, he often came to the commandery. It happened that the commandery Prefect was fond of the marvelous and heard that a retired scholar had arrived. He was extremely pleased and richly rewarded Yang with all the ceremonial trappings. He ordered that Yang be given drink and whenever there was a travelling banquet, he always first summoned Retired Scholar Yang. Yang became especially conceited as a result. One day under the influence of drink, Yang was rude to the Prefect, who could then no longer bear his behavior.

Thereafter, the Prefect once more called a banquet in the commandery offices. There were entertainer girls and music, yet Retired Scholar Yang was not notified. At the time, there were a number of guests who were also not among those summoned by the Prefect. Therefore, one of them said to

<sup>219</sup> Though it appears as Hainan 海南 in the *TPGJ*, I have amended this location to Nanhai based on the *BH* edition of *XSZ*. I have done so given that all editions clearly refer to Nanhai elsewhere within this tale.

<sup>220</sup> This tale appears to be the primary reference to Retired Scholar Yang.

<sup>221</sup> Though *ju shi* 居士 can also mean a religious layman, as I have translated it in other contexts, here Yang seems to be giving himself a more honorific title.

Yang: "You once boasted of your special abilities. In the past, I looked up to you unceasingly. To encounter you on this occasion, I am truly fortunate. However, I have heard that the Prefect is entertaining guests at a great banquet in the commandery offices and yet you received no advanced notice. Were you not able to work your magic to move him? It must be that you have no special abilities at all!"

Retired Scholar Yang laughed and said: "This requires but trifling skill. You are trying to test me out, and so I will summon the Prefect's entertainer girls for you. They can help us with our drinks."

Everyone said: "Make it so."

Retired Scholar Yang then ordered that wine be served and had his guests sit in a circle on the mat. He also ordered the boy servant to close the empty western chamber. After some time, he again had it opened. Three or four beautiful women descended from the room. Their clothing and adornments were glowing and magnificent, and they came playing music. Yang said: "What do you think of my abilities now? All the guests thought this quite remarkable and almost couldn't believe their eyes. The ladies were then ordered to sit in a row and played music and sang. Some of the guests questioned Yang about his abilities. Yang did not reply and only smiled.

At the time it was dusk and getting dark. When midnight arrived, Yang said to all the women: "You may return." Thereupon, they all rose and entered the western room, sinking beneath the empty chamber. The guests looked at one another and sighed with astonishment. Then they became rather suspicious that Yang was some kind of ghost or demon.

The next day, there was a clerk from the commandery who said: "Yesterday evening the Prefect was hosting a banquet in the commandery chambers. The entertainer girls sat in a row and made music. Shortly thereafter, they all fell forward to the floor. In a flash a gale arose and, floating up, the ladies' musical instruments flew off. When it became midnight, the ladies suddenly awoke and their musical instruments also returned to their original location. The Prefect questioned all the entertainer girls, and

they all said it had been black and they could not see. In the end, he could not figure out what had happened."

The group of guests was all amazed as this was exactly as it had happened. Someone told the Prefect, and he gasped with surprise. Thanking the man who told him, he sent him off and did not dare remain in the commandery any longer. At the time, it was the outset of Kaicheng reign period of Emperor Wenzong (836-841).

*TPGJ* 75.470

河東馮漸。名家子。以明經入仕。性與俗背。後棄官隱居伊水上。有道士李君以道術聞。尤善視鬼。朝士皆慕其能。李君後退歸汝潁。適遇漸於伊洛間。知漸有奇術。甚重之。大曆中。有博陵崔公者。與李君為僚。甚善。李君寓書於崔曰。當今制鬼。無過漸耳。是時朝士咸知漸有神術數。往往道其名。別後長安中人率以漸字題其門者。蓋用此也。

Ping Jian of Hedong was the son of a famous household.<sup>222</sup> He was well versed in the classics and entered service as an official but had the nature of a commoner. Later on, he abandoned his official position to live as a recluse on the waters of the Yi. There was a Daoist adept named Lord Li<sup>223</sup> who was well known for his command of the Daoist arts. He was especially skilled at seeing ghosts. The scholars of the court all envied his abilities. Lord Li later went back to Ruying.<sup>224</sup> It happened that he chanced upon Ping Jian while travelling between the Yi and Luo rivers. He knew that Jian had special abilities and greatly respected him.

During the Dali reign period of Emperor Daizong (766-780), there was a Duke Cui of Boling.<sup>225</sup> He was a colleague and good friend of Lord Li. Lord Li wrote a letter to Duke Cui saying: "My present

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<sup>222</sup> This tale appears to be the primary reference to Ping Jian, despite the claim here that he was the son of a famous household.

<sup>223</sup> Lord Li is far too general a name to pinpoint down with accuracy to a particular individual. It is worth noting that a figure of the same name does appear in a number of tales in the *TPGJ* but does not appear to be referring to the same individual. See for example 157.1129.

<sup>224</sup> This is most likely a compound that refers to the bordering areas of Ruyin and Yingzhou commanderies, which were respectively centered on present day Hefei, Anhui, and Yuzhou, Henan.

<sup>225</sup> Duke Cui is likewise too general a figure to determine with any degree of accuracy, though the name likewise appears in the *TPGJ* in a number of different contexts. It is worth noting however that the Cui clan of Boling was a wealthy and renowned family during the Tang. Boling was located in present day Anping, Hebei.

ability to control ghosts does not exceed that of Jian." At that time, the scholars of the court all knew that Jian had a number of divine abilities. They often spoke his name. Later on, the people of Chang'an often wrote the character for *jian* 漸 on their doorways. It is probably as a result of this.

TPGJ 75.471

有王先生者。家于烏江上。隱其跡。由是里人不能辨。或以為妖妄。一日里中火起。延燒廬舍。生即往視之。厲聲呼曰。火且止。火且止。於是火滅。里人始奇之。長慶中。有弘農楊晦之。自長安東遊吳楚。行至烏江。聞先生高躅。就門往謁。先生戴玄綃巾。衣褐衣。隱几而坐。風骨清美。晦之再拜備禮。先生拱揖而已。命晦之坐其側。其議論玄暢。迥出意表。晦之愈健慕。於是留宿。是日乃八月十二日也。先生召其女七娘者。乃一老嫗也。年七十餘。髮盡白。扶杖而來。先生謂晦之曰。此我女也。惰而不好道。今且老矣。既而謂七娘曰。汝為吾刻紙狀今夕之月。置於室東垣上。有頃。七娘以紙月施於垣上。夕有奇光自發。洞照一室。纖毫盡辨。晦之驚歎不測。及曉將去。先生以杖擊之。畢。俄有塵起。天地盡晦。久之塵歛。視其庭。則懸崖峻險。山谷重疊。前有積石盡目。晦之悸然背汗。毛髮豎立。先生曰。陵谷速遷。吾子安所歸乎。晦之益恐。洒泣言曰。誠不知一旦有桑田之變。豈仙都瞬息。而塵世已千歲乎。先生笑曰。子無懼也。所以為娛耳。於是持簞掃其庭。又有塵起。有頃塵歛。門庭如舊。晦之喜。即馳馬而去。

There was a Mr. Wang whose household was located on the Upper Wu River. He hid his traces and so the people of the village were unable to find him. Some thought him a strange demon. One day a fire arose in the middle of the village. The fire spread amongst the huts and cottages. Mr. Wang went to take a look and, in a stern voice, shouted: "Fire, be stopped!" Thereupon, the fire stopped and was shortly thereafter extinguished. The villagers all thought this quite wondrous.

During the Changqing reign period of Emperor Muzong, there was a man of Hongnong by the name of Yang Huizhi.<sup>226</sup> From Chang'an, he traveled east to Wu and Chu. On his way, he came to the Wu River. He had heard of Mr. Wang's lofty conduct and so he went to pay his respects. Mr. Wang wore a dark silk kerchief and was clad in coarse robes. He sat hidden at a small table, and his style and character were pure and refined. Huizhi bowed twice and conducted himself with proper ceremony. Mr. Wang bowed with hands clasped and nothing more. He ordered Huizhi to be seated beside him,

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<sup>226</sup> This tale appears to be the primary reference for Yang Huizhi. Hongnong Commandery encompassed much of present day western Henan.



and his words were mysterious and unimpeded, far exceeding the bounds of normal imagination. Huizhi became even more impressed and so arranged to stay for the evening.

That day was the twenty-third day of the eighth month. Mr. Wang summoned his seventh daughter and an old woman over seventy years old appeared. Her hair was completely white, and she came in leaning on a staff. Mr. Wang said to Huizhi: "This is my daughter. She is lazy and not fond of the Dao. Now she has already become old."

Then he said to the seventh daughter: "Cut a piece of paper into the shape of this evening's moon and hang it on the eastern wall of the chamber for me." In a short while, the seventh daughter had hung the paper moon on the wall. The darkness then shone with a rare gleam that arose on its own, thoroughly illuminating the room. Even the smallest details could be distinguished. Huizhi let out a cry of surprise and could not figure it out.

At daybreak, the illumination went away. Mr. Wang took a bamboo staff and beat it all about. Suddenly a dust arose and the heaven and earth turned completely dark. After a while the dust settled and, looking about the courtyard, a stern cliff arose. Its peaks and valleys piled up and before them were rocks stacked as wide as the eye could see. Huizhi trembled with fear, his back broke out in a sweat, and his hair stood on end. Mr. Wang said: "The hills and valleys are quickly altered. How do you propose to return?"

Huizhi became even more afraid and, dripping tears, said: "I honestly did not know that in a single morning there could occur the transformations of the mulberry fields.<sup>227</sup> How could the

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<sup>227</sup> The Wu River is a tributary of the Yangzi River that originates in northwestern Guizhou and drains into the Yangzi near Fuling. The transformations of the mulberry fields refers to the phrase *sang tian cang hai* 桑田沧海 (the mulberry fields and blue sea), which connotes the great cyclical changes in nature. The phrase arises from the story of the mystic maiden, Ma Gu 麻姑, who said: "I have already seen the Eastern Sea turn to mulberry fields three times. As one goes towards Penglai, the water turns shallow and only comes up to about one's waist. I wonder when it will again turn to hills." 接待以來。已見東海三為桑田。向到蓬萊。水又淺于往者會時略半也。豈將復還為陵陸乎。 See *TPGJ*, 60.370.

transcendent capital appear in but the blink of an eye or a single breath, while the mortal world is already thousands of years old?"

Mr. Wang laughed and said: "You needn't be afraid; I merely do this for my amusement."

Thereupon, he took a broom and swept his courtyard. Once more, dust arose. After a bit, the dust settled, and the entrance and courtyard were just as before. Huizhi was delighted and, galloping off on his horse, departed.

*TPGJ 75.472*

唐太和中。有周生者。廬於洞庭山。時以道術濟吳楚。人多敬之。後將抵洛穀之間。途次廣陵。舍佛 寺中。會有三四客皆來。時方中秋。其夕霽月澄瑩。且吟且望。有說開元時明皇帝遊月宮事。因相與歎曰。吾輩塵人。固不得至其所矣。奈何。周生笑曰。某常學於師。亦得焉。且能挈月致之懷袂。子信乎。或患其妄。或喜其奇。生曰。吾不為明。則妄矣。因命虛一室。翳四垣。不使有纖隙。又命以筋數百。呼其僮。繩而架之。且告客曰。我將梯此取月去。聞呼可來觀。乃閉戶久之。數客步庭中。且伺焉。忽覺天地曠晦。仰而視之。即又無纖雲。俄聞生呼曰。某至矣。因開其室。生曰。月在某衣 中耳。請客觀焉。因以舉之。其衣中出月寸許。忽一室盡明。寒逼肌骨。生曰。子不信我。今信乎。客再拜謝之。願收其光。因又閉戶。其外尚昏晦。食頃方如初。

During the Taihe reign period of Emperor Wenzong (827-836),<sup>228</sup> there was a Mr. Zhou. He had a hut on Mount Dongting.<sup>229</sup> At the time, he used the Daoist arts to aid those in Wu and Chu, and many people respected him. Later, he wished to travel between the Luo and Gu rivers and stopped over in Guangling.<sup>230</sup> He stayed at a Buddhist temple, where three or four guests had all arrived to stay. At the time, it was almost mid-autumn. That night, the moon was clear and unclouded, and the guests all chanted as they viewed it. Someone spoke of Emperor Xuanzong traveling to the lunar palace at the outset of the Kaiyuan reign period.<sup>231</sup> They all sighed to one another and said: "We are mere mortals, and so we can't go where he went. Alas!"

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<sup>228</sup> Note that this reign period appears as Dahe 大和 elsewhere in the *XSZ*.

<sup>229</sup> Mount Dongting is located in present day southeastern Taihe.

<sup>230</sup> The famous Luo River flows through Luoyang in Henan, while the Gu River flows through Yanggu County, Shandong.

<sup>231</sup> This tale refers to an account by Emperor Xuanzong in which he imagined himself travelling to the moon and viewing the beautiful ladies who resided there while he was in actuality viewing mountains in Henan. He later had music composed to describe his fanciful journey. For an abbreviated version, see *TPGJ* 204.1552.

Mr. Zhou laughed and said: "I once studied from a master who had also accomplished this. I can take the moon and put it in my sleeve, do you believe me?" Some worried he was being a bit rash, while others delighted in his marvelous ability. Mr. Zhou told them: "If I didn't make it evident [I could do this,] then I would be but rash." Thereupon, he ordered the room emptied. He covered each of the walls in a feather screen, not allowing for any fine cracks to show through. He ordered that several hundred chopsticks be brought and, calling out to his boy servant, they bound them up into a frame. He then said to his guests: "I will use this ladder to fetch the moon. When you hear my shouts, you may enter in and take a look." Then, he ordered the door be shut for some time.

Several guests stepped into the courtyard and waited therein. Suddenly, they perceived that the heavens and earth were becoming dim and dark. Taking a look up, they saw that there were no fine obscuring clouds. After a brief moment, they heard Mr. Zhou calling out: "I've come back!" Thereupon, they opened up the room and Mr. Zhou said: "The moon is in my sleeve, I invite my guests to take a look." Then, he raised his sleeve and took out a moon about a *cun* in diameter from his sleeve. Suddenly the whole room was completely bright and they felt a chill in their muscles and bones. Mr. Zhou said: "You didn't believe me but now you have proof!" The guests bowed twice and thanked him. He wished to gather up the brightness, and so he once more closed the door. Outside it was quite dim and dark, but after a short while it was again as it had been originally.

## Alchemy

### XSZ 7.9

寶歷中，有京兆韋思玄，僑居洛陽。性尚奇，嘗慕神仙之術。後遊嵩山，有道士教曰：「夫餌金液者，可以延壽。吾子當先學煉金，如是，則可以肩赤松、駕廣成矣。」思玄於是求煉金之術。積十年，遇術士數百，終不能得其妙。

During the Baoli reign period of Emperor Jingzong (825-827), there was one Wei Sixuan of Chang'an, who was living abroad in Luoyang.<sup>232</sup> He was by nature fond of the marvelous and had always envied the arts of the divine transcendents. Sometime thereafter, he was travelling on Mount Song<sup>233</sup> when a Daoist priest instructed him: "If you take the golden elixir, you can obtain longevity. You should first study alchemy and, in this fashion, you will come shoulder to shoulder with Chi Songzi and ride with Guang Chengzi."<sup>234</sup> Sixuan thereupon sought to study the alchemical arts. However, after ten years had passed, Sixuan had encountered hundreds of practitioners yet was unable to master its subtleties.

後一日，有居士辛銳者，貌甚清瘦，愀然有寒色，衣弊裘，叩思玄門，謂思玄曰：「吾病士，窮無所歸。聞先生好古尚奇，集天下異人方士。我故來謁爾，願先生納之。」思玄即止居士於舍。其後居士身疾，癰盡潰血且甚。韋氏一家盡惡之。思玄嘗詔術士數人會食，而居士不得預。既具膳，居士突至客前，溺於筵席上，盡濕，客怒皆起，韋氏家僮亦競來罵之。居士遂告去，行至庭，忽亡所見。思玄與客甚異之。回視其溺，乃紫金液也，奇光璨然，真曠代之寶。思玄且驚且嘆。有解者曰：「居士，紫金精也。徵其名氏，信矣。且『辛』者，蓋『西方庚辛金』也。而『銳』字，『兌』從金，『兌』亦西方之正位。推其義，則吾之解若合符然。」

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<sup>232</sup> The term *jingzhao* 京兆 refers to the capital city of Chang'an and its surrounding environs. Luoyang was located in the western section of present day Henan. This is the earliest mention of Wei Sixuan which I could locate, and his name only reappears in later retellings of this tale.

<sup>233</sup> Mount Song is located in present day Gaofeng County, Henan. It is part of a chain of five mountains, of which it forms the central peak.

<sup>234</sup> Chi Song 赤松 refers to Chi Songzi 赤松子, a mythic figure who appears in a variety of Chinese sources. He is frequently associated with the Rain Master deity and was said to have ended a severe drought during the reign of the mythic emperor Shen Nong (attr. 2838-2698 B.C.E.). Chi Songzi is an important figure in a number of Daoist scriptures in this context. He is also associated with Huang Chuping 皇初平, a Jin 晉 dynasty figure said to have attained transcendence through alchemy. Given the context of this tale, it could be referring to Chi Songzi in either or both of these roles. For an overview of the figure in each of these roles, see *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, ed. Ouyang Xun (557-641) et al. (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 2.26 and TPGJ 7.44.

Likewise, Guang Chengzi 廣成子 is another mythic transcendent attributed to the time of the Yellow Emperor. He is first featured in a dialogue with the Yellow Emperor that appears in chapter 11 of the *Zhuangzi* in which the Yellow Emperor asks Guang Chengzi about matters such as managing the *yin* and *yang* and correcting one's body to prolong longevity. See *Zhuangzi ji shi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 4.364.

One day thereafter, there was a layman by the name of Xin Rui<sup>235</sup> who came knocking on Wei Sixuan's door. He appeared frail and thin with a sad look of hunger about him and was clothed in nothing more than rags. Xin Rui said to Sixuan: "I am a sick man with nowhere to go. I have heard that you sir are fond of the ancients, esteem the marvelous, and have set about gathering up the extraordinary men and method masters of the realm. I have thus come to pay my respects and hope that you will receive me." Sixuan then provided the man with lodging. However, after that, the man fell ill and was completely covered in sores bursting with blood. The entire Wei clan was all utterly disgusted by him.

At one point, Sixuan convened a number of occult practitioners for a meal, yet did not notify the retired scholar. Then, when they were all eating, the retired scholar suddenly appeared before the guests and urinated all over the banquet, soaking everything. The guests all rose in a rage and the boy-servants of the house fought to curse out the old man. The retired scholar was told to get out, and he then walked into the courtyard and suddenly disappeared. Sixuan and his guests thought this quite extraordinary. Going back to examine the man's urine, they discovered it was all purple-gold elixir, beaming with a rare glow.<sup>236</sup> It was truly a priceless treasure, and Sixuan cried out in surprise and delight.

Someone explained: "The retired scholar was the essential spirit of purple-gold. Taking his family name as proof, it is quite believable. The character *xin* 辛 indeed refers to the 'geng xin 庚辛 gold of the western direction.' The character *rui* 銳 is derived from the other character *rui* 兌, which

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<sup>235</sup> This is also the earliest mention of Xin Rui which I could locate, and he also only appears later in retellings of this same tale.

<sup>236</sup> What I refer to as "purple-gold elixir" is more literally a very high grade alchemical mercury. I have chosen to translate it as "elixir" given that it often appears in tales such as this as a stand-in for the elixir of transcendence.

refers to gold and also occupies the central seat of the western direction.<sup>237</sup> Putting forth these explanations, it appears that my account here is quite plausible."

#### XSZ 8.11

吳郡蔣生，好神仙，弱歲棄家，隱四明山下。嘗從道士學煉丹，遂葺爐鼎，爨薪鼓鞴，積十年，而煉丹卒不成。其後寓遊荊門，見有行乞於市者，膚甚悴，裸然而病，且寒噤不能語。生憐其窮困，解裘衣之，因命執侍左右。徵其家，對曰：「楚人，章氏子，全素其名。家於南昌，有沃田數百畝，屬年饑，流徙荊江間，且十年矣。田歸於官，身病不能自振。幸君子憐而容焉。」於是與蔣生同歸四明山下。而全素甚惰，常旦寐自逸。蔣生惡罵而捶者不可計。生有石硯在几上，忽一日，全素白蔣生曰：「先生好神仙者，學煉丹且久矣。夫仙丹，食之則骨化為金，如是，安有不長生耶！今先生神丹能化石硯為金乎？若然者，吾為先生有道術士。」生自度不果，心甚慚。而以他詞拒之曰：「汝，傭者，豈能知神仙事乎？若妄言，自速笞罵之辱。」全素笑而去。

Mr. Jiang of the Wu Commandery<sup>238</sup> was fond of the divine transcendents. When he was still a boy, he abandoned his family and lived as a recluse at the foot of the Siming Mountains. At one point, he learned how to refine elixirs from a Daoist adept and then built a furnace and crucible. Stoking the fires and pumping the bellows, he toiled for ten years but in the end failed to refine the elixir of transcendence.

Thereafter, he went traveling in Jingmen. While there, he saw a beggar in the marketplace whose skin was extremely sallow going about ill and unclothed, shivering so hard that he could not even speak. Mr. Jiang took pity on the man's hardship and, taking off his furs, clothed him in them. He then asked the man to join his attendants. Questioning the beggar about his family, the man replied: "I am from Chu, a son of the Zhang clan, and Quansu is my name.<sup>239</sup> My family is from Nanchang,<sup>240</sup> and they had several hundred *mu* of irrigated farmland. However, famine struck, and I traveled about the Jingjiang region for ten years. Our land was repossessed by the government, and I became so ill that I

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<sup>237</sup> *Geng* 庚 and *xin* 辛 are both days associated with the Chinese sexagenary cycle. Each day of the sexagenary cycle, along with the cardinal directions, is likewise associated with an element of the Five Phases. *Geng*, *xin* and the western direction are referenced here because of their correspondence with metal.

<sup>238</sup> As with other tales featuring names of his sort, Jiang Sheng (Mr. Jiang) is too general of a name to identify with any specificity. The Wu Commandery covered most of the present day area of Suzhou.

<sup>239</sup> This tale is the only reference to Zhang Quansu.

<sup>240</sup> Nanchang corresponds to present day Nanchang, Jiangxi.

couldn't even move myself. I am fortunate that you Sir have taken pity on me and brought me into your fold."

Thereupon, Quansu and Jiang returned to the foot of the Siming Mountains. However, Quansu was extremely lazy, often sleeping during the day and idling away his time. Mr. Jiang scolded and beat the man more times than he could count.

Jiang had an ink stone atop his table. Suddenly one day, Quansu said to him: "You are fond the divine transcendents and have studied the refining of elixirs for a long time. If you had transcendent cinnabar, when you ate it your bones would turn to gold. Were this to happen, how could you not achieve longevity! Now, can you use your divine abilities to transform this ink stone into gold? If so, I would admit that you had indeed mastered the Daoist arts."

Jiang could not accomplish the feat himself and so was extremely ashamed. However, he ignored Quansu's words and said: "You're just a lowly servant, how could you possibly comprehend the affairs of the divine transcendents? If you are going to talk wild nonsense, I'll answer you quickly with a good beating and humiliation." Quansu laughed and went off.

後月餘，全素於衣中出一瓢甚小，顧謂蔣生曰：「此瓢中有仙丹，能化石為金。願得先生石硯，以一刀圭傳其上，可乎？」蔣生性輕果，且以為誕妄，詬罵曰：「吾學煉丹十年矣，尚未能窮其妙。傭者何敢與吾喋喋議語耶！」全素佯懼不對。明日，蔣生獨行山水間，命全素守舍，於是鍵其門而去。至晚歸，則見全素已卒矣。生乃以簣蔽其屍，將命棺而瘞於野。及徹其簣，而全素屍已亡去，徒有冠帶衣履存焉。生大異，且以為神仙得道者。即於几上視石硯，亦亡矣。生益異之。

After a bit more than a month had passed, Quansu pulled out a tiny dipper from within his robe. Looking at it, he said to Jiang: "There is an elixir of transcendence on this dipper that can transform stone into gold. Please give me your ink stone, and I will measure out a dose on it."

Mr. Jiang was by nature a bit rash and, taking Quansu for nothing but a boasting braggart, cursed at him: "I've studied the refining of elixirs for ten years, and I still have yet to uncover its mysteries. How dare a lowly servant like you chitter chatter such nonsense!" Quansu pretended to be afraid and said nothing. The next day, Mr. Jiang went to take a walk alone amongst the mountains and

rivers and ordered Quansu to stay behind and guard the house. Thereupon, he locked his gate and left. When evening arrived, he returned home and saw that Quansu had already died. Jiang then covered his corpse in a bamboo mat and went to order a coffin with which to bury Quansu in the fields. When he went to retrieve the body from the mat, Mr. Jiang discovered that Quansu's corpse had already disappeared. Only Quansu's cap, belt, robe, and shoes remained within. Jiang thought this extremely strange and took Quansu to be a divine transcendent who had achieved the Dao. Then, he saw that the ink stone was also missing from his table and thought this even stranger.

後一日，蔣生見藥鼎下有光，生曰：「豈非吾仙丹乎？」即於爐中探之，得石硯，其上寸餘化為紫金，光甚瑩徹，蓋全素仙丹之所化也。生始悟全素果仙人，獨恨不能識，益自慚恚。其後蔣生學煉丹卒不成，竟死於四明山中。

The next day, Mr. Jiang saw a glow beneath the furnace crucible. Jiang said to himself: "I wonder if this is my elixir of transcendence?" He then poked about in the embers and found his ink stone. About a *cun* of its surface had been transformed into the finest gold. Its luster shone like jade, and it had probably been transformed by Quansu's transcendent elixir. Jiang began to realize that Quansu was in fact a transcendent being but, regretting that he had not recognized this, was even more ashamed. Thereafter, Mr. Jiang never succeeded in his study of refining elixir and in the end died at the foot of the Siming Mountains.

#### XSZ 9.1

河中永樂縣道淨院，居蒲中之勝境，道士寓居，有以十數。唐文宗時，道士鄧太玄煉丹於藥院中，藥成，疑功未究，留貯院內，人共掌之。太玄死，門徒周悟仙主院事。時有蒲人侯道華事悟仙以供給使。諸道士皆奴畜之，灑掃隸役，無所不為，而道華愈欣然。又常好子史，手不釋卷，一覽必誦之於口。眾或問之：「要此何為」答曰：「天上無愚懵仙人。」咸大笑之。蒲中多大棗，天下人傳，歲中不過一二無核者，道華比三年輒得啖之。一旦，道華執斧斫古松枝垂，且盡如削，院中人無喻其意。明日味爽，眾晨起，道華房中亡所見，古松下施案，致一杯水，仍脫雙履案前，道華衣挂松上。院中視之，中留一道詩云：



In Yongle County in Hezhong there was a Daojing Cloister located on scenic land in Puzhong and several dozen Daoist adepts resided there.<sup>241</sup> During the time of Emperor Wenzong of the Tang, there was a Daoist adept by the name of Zheng Taixuan who refined cinnabar at the elixir courtyard [located there].<sup>242</sup> After he had completed an elixir of transcendence, he doubted that the work had been a success and so didn't bother to take another look. He set it aside in the courtyard with people free to handle it of their own accord.

After Taixuan had died, his disciple Zhou Wuxian was left in charge of matters concerning the courtyard.<sup>243</sup> At that time, there was a man of Pu by the name of Hou Daohua who was in service to Wuxian.<sup>244</sup> All the Daoist adepts treated him like a beast of burden, putting him to work sweeping and sprinkling the floor. They stopped at no task, yet Daohua only become more and more delighted. He was also fond of the histories and literary masters, always with a book in hand, reciting each line aloud as he read. Someone asked him: "Why do you do this?" Daohua replied: "The heavens contain no stupid transcendents." Everyone laughed at him.

There were many large jujube trees in Puzhong. It was said by the people of the realm that not more than one or two years would pass before they would bear nuts, and so Daohua would collect and eat them every three years.

One morning, Daohua took his axe and chopped down an old pine branch, peeling the bark off the whole thing. Those in the compound couldn't explain his behavior. The next morning at daybreak,

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<sup>241</sup> This sentence is somewhat confusing in its construction. If *dao jing yuan* 道淨院 is the proper name of a temple, it does not appear to be locatable to Yongle County (present day Fuyang, Yingzhou). However, there is further geographical confusion, as Pu 蒲 was located near present day Xi County, Shanxi. Additionally, the term *jing yuan* 淨院 typically refers to a Buddhist cloister rather than a Daoist temple. However, in the context of this tale, it clearly refers to a Daoist temple.

<sup>242</sup> Despite the renown which is attributed here to Zheng Taixuan and the conclusion of this tale, this seems to be the earliest source for him. Taixuan also appears in a small handful of sources but only in the context of this tale.

<sup>243</sup> Again, Zhou Wuxian is only referred to in this tale. A slightly different rendition of the tale featuring only Zhou Wuxian and Hou Daohua appears in the *QTW*. See *QTW* 790.8276.

<sup>244</sup> Though appearing in no official histories, Hou Daohua does appear in a wider variety of sources than either Zhou Wuxian or Zheng Taixuan. He most often appears in some variation of this tale, with this being the earliest source of the story. However, he is referenced most frequently in the *Daozang*. See *ZTDZ* 295.8.273B. Note that citations refer to the Schipper number, fascicle, and page number.

the adepts all awoke and discovered that Daohua was nowhere to be seen. He had set up an altar table beneath the old pine branch and placed a single cup of water on it. Then, taking off his shoes, he had placed them before the altar and hung his robes on the branch. Taking a look about temple, they discovered that Daohua had left a poem that read:

帖裏大還丹， Obediently bound to the cinnabar elixir for Great Return,  
多年色不移。 For many years I was steadfast and determined.  
主前宵盜吃卻， Last night I secretly partook of it,  
今日碧空飛。 Today I fly amidst the blue sky.  
慚愧深珍重， Ashamed by this profound treasure,  
珍重鄧天師。 The profound treasure of the Celestial Master Deng.  
他年煉得藥， Another time he refined the elixir,  
留著與內芝。 Leaving it with Neizhi.  
吾師知此術， My master knew this art,  
速煉莫為遲。 Sharp at refining and never tardy.  
三清專相待， The Three Purities specially wait,  
大羅的有期。 For his appointed time in the Great Net Heaven.<sup>245</sup>

下列細字，稱：「去年七月一日，蒙韓君賜姓李，名內芝，配住上清善進院。」以次十數言。時唐大中五年五月二十一日。院中人方驗道華竊太玄藥仙去，因相率白節度使尚書鄭公光。按視蹤跡不誣，即以其事聞奏。詔齋絹五百匹，並賜御衣，修飾廊殿，賜名「升仙院」。

In fine writing below, it contained the following dozen or so characters: "On the first day of seventh month of last year, I encountered Lord Han<sup>246</sup> and was granted the imperial surname of Li and

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<sup>245</sup> The Three Purities refers to the three Daoist heavens of *yu qing* 玉清, *shang qing* 上清, and *tai qing* 太清. The Great Net Heaven refers to the highest of heavens amongst the 36 layers of Daoist heavens.

<sup>246</sup> This likely refers to Han Zhong 韓忠 (d. 184), who was a leader of the Yellow Turban revolt during the Eastern Han. See *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, comp. Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 71.2309.

the name of Neizhi. I was deemed worthy of living in the Temple of Beneficent Advancement in the heaven of Highest Purity."

At the time, it was the 21st day of the fifth month of the fifth year of the Dazhong reign period of Emperor Xuānzong (851). Those at the temple verified that Daohua had secretly taken Taixuan's elixir and become a transcendent, and so they went one after the other to tell the military circuit governor, Duke Zheng Guang.<sup>247</sup> Examining the remaining evidence and seeing nothing in error, he then notified the Emperor of the affair. The Emperor convened a vegetarian feast and granted five hundred bolts of fine silk gauze and imperial robes to the temple. He also had its halls decorated, granting it the name of "Ascending to Transcendence Temple."

### **VIII. The Role of Religion: Problematizing Tales**

Having now had the opportunity to examine firsthand the full fifty-eight tales identified as Buddhist and Daoist within the *Xuanshi zhi*, I would like to return to the idea of whether or not the *Xuanshi zhi* should be considered a collection primarily religious in motivation. By this I mean to ask, is the ultimate goal of these tales to expound upon Buddhist and Daoist religious doctrines either directly or indirectly through the action that occurs? The sheer number of stories within the collection focusing on aspects of these two religions would seem to suggest that there were indeed religious motivations being taken into consideration during the initial compilation of tales. At fifty-eight tales, this corpus makes up nearly thirty percent of the total tales attributed to the collection. While it might be easier to answer this question having the entire set of translated tales available for examination, I believe that it can be effectively answered in terms of the religious tales themselves.

In addition to the Buddhist and Daoist tales that have already been provided, I have selected an additional five tales that raise some interesting concerns with regard to the role of religion in the

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<sup>247</sup> Given the date provided here, Zheng Guang 鄭光 (d. 857) most likely refers to the younger brother of the Empress-dowager Zheng 鄭太后 (d. 865), who was first concubine to Emperor Xianzong and then became Empress-dowager when her son took the throne as Emperor Xuānzong. See *JTS* 187.4891 and *XTS* 206.5853.

*Xuanshi zhi*. The initial impression that the following tales give would lead the reader to believe that they would easily fall into the categories assigned to the previous tales we have seen. However, upon closer examination, they contain features that problematize the idea of any sort of simple classification according to individual religious doctrine, and we will now examine them case by case according to theme.

### Injunction against Killing Animals?

#### XSZ 8.9

唐汾州景雲觀道士王洞微者，家於孝義縣。初為小胥，性喜殺，常釣弋漁獵，自弱冠至壯年，凡殺狼狐雉兔泊魚鱉飛走，計以萬數。後為里尹，患熱病月餘，忽覺室內有禽獸魚鱉萬數，環其榻而噬之。瘡痂被身，殆無完膚。中夕之後，其父母兄弟俱聞洞微臥內有群鳥啁啾。應然可辨。凡數年，疾益甚。或有謂洞微父曰：「汝子病且亟，宜遷居景雲觀。」於是卜日徙居。月餘，會群道士修齋授籙，是夕洞微瘳。後十年，竟以疾卒。

During the Tang there was a Daoist adept of the Jingyun temple in the Bin region named Wang Dongwei.<sup>248</sup> His household was in the village of Xiaoyi.<sup>249</sup> In the beginning, he was a petty official and was by nature fond of killing. He often went fishing and hunting using hook and bow.<sup>250</sup> By the time he had entered adulthood and the prime of his life, he had already killed tens of thousands of all manner of bird, beast, fish and fowl that moved by foot or flight.<sup>251</sup>

Later after he became a village administrator, he fell ill with fever for more than a month. Suddenly he felt as though there were tens of thousands of birds, beasts, and aquatic creatures within his room, surrounding his bed and biting him.<sup>252</sup> Sores and bruises covered his body, leaving nearly no

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<sup>248</sup> The Bin region during the Tang denoted present day Chen County in Shaanxi province. Though finding reference to other Jingyun temples, I had difficulty pinpointing a reference to one within this region. This anecdote is also the only reference I located regarding Wang Dongwei.

<sup>249</sup> Though there is some discrepancy regarding location, given the mention of the Bin region, Xiaoyi likely refers to the vicinity of present day city of Weinan in Shaanxi province.

<sup>250</sup> *Diao* 釣 literally refers to fishing by means of a line and hook, while *yi* 弋 refers to shooting fowl with an arrow that is attached to a line so that it may be retrieved.

<sup>251</sup> The line literally includes: "...wolves, foxes, pheasants, fish, soft-shelled turtles, and anything that flew or ran."

<sup>252</sup> Again, the line literally includes: "...birds, beasts, fish, and soft-shelled turtles..."

patch of skin unscathed. Later in the middle of the night, his entire family heard and could distinguish the tweeting and twittering of a flock of birds from within Dongwei's room.

After a number of years the illness got progressively worse. Someone said to Dongwei's father: "Your son's illness is quite serious. You ought to move him to live in the Jingyun temple." Thereupon they selected a day to move his residence. After more than a month, they gathered a group of Daoist adepts to put in order the purification rites and award him the Daoist registers.<sup>253</sup> That evening, Dongwei was healed. After ten years, he finally died of illness.<sup>254</sup>

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There is no question that the primary theme of the tale above concerns an injunction against killing animals. Wang Dongwei is clearly punished with illness for all the animals that he killed by means of hunting and fishing as a youth. Yet, the obvious manner in which this tale problematizes the thematic category as a whole is that the answer to Wang Dongwei's karmic problems here has nothing at all to do with Buddhism. Wang Dongwei is relieved of his illness only by means of moving into a Daoist temple and being awarded the Daoist registers. This is the only example of a tale within the collection that provides a Daoist solution to absolving the sin of having harmed animals. Although this is the only tale of this type within the collection, it immediately eliminates the possibility of identifying this category as firmly Buddhist in nature.

### **Effectiveness of Buddhist Scriptures?**

#### **XSZ 8.6**

乾元初，會稽民有楊叟者，家以資產豐贍聞於郡中。一日，叟將死，臥而呻吟，且僅數月。叟有子曰宗素，以孝行稱於里人。迨其父病，罄其產以求醫術。後得陳生者，究其原：「是翁之病心也。蓋以財產既多，其心為利所運。故心已離去其身。非食生人心，不可以補之。而天下生人之心，焉可致耶！如是，則非吾之所知也。」宗素既聞之，以為生心，故不可得也，獨修浮圖氏法，庶可以間其疾。即召僧轉經，命工圖鑄其像，已而自齋食，詣郡中佛寺飯僧。

<sup>253</sup> These actions indicate Wang Dongwei's initiation into the Daoist order.

<sup>254</sup> Given the moral of reformation in the story, I take this illness as one distinct from that which he was earlier afflicted. However, it could be read that he dies of the same illness and merely extended his lifespan by ten years by virtue of his reformation.

During the first years of the Qianyuan reign period of Emperor Suzong (758-760), there was an Old Man Yang of Kuaiji<sup>255</sup> whose household was famous throughout the commandery for its wealth and plenty. One day, Old Man Yang was on his deathbed. He lay groaning, having lingered on for several months. Yang had a son by the name of Zongsu,<sup>256</sup> whose filiality was renown amongst the people of the village. When Yang took ill, Zongsu spent all his money attempting to have his father cured.

Sometime thereafter he obtained the services of a Mr. Chen, who diagnosed the origin of the illness and said: "This old man has a sickness of the heart. It is probably a result of his heart revolving around profit due to his extreme wealth, and now his heart has already left the body. Unless he consumes the heart of a living man, there is no way to heal him. Yet, how could you obtain the heart of a living man anywhere within the realm! Apart from doing this, I know no other way to heal him." When Zongsu heard the diagnosis, he thought that a living heart was truly unobtainable and only through cultivating the doctrines of the Buddha might he hope to cure the illness. Thereupon, he summoned monks to turn prayer wheels, commissioned a statue of Buddha to be cast, and shortly thereafter ordered up a vegetarian feast and had it taken to the temple monks throughout the commandery.

一日，因挈食去，誤入一山徑中，見山下有石龕，龕有胡僧，貌甚老而枯瘠，衣褐毛縷成袈裟，踞於磐石上。宗素以為異人，即禮而問曰：「師，何人也獨處窮谷，以人跡不到之地為家，又無侍者，不懼山野之獸，有害於師乎？不然，是得釋氏之術者耶！」僧曰：「吾本是袁氏。祖世居巴山，其後子孫，或在弋陽，散遊諸山谷中，盡能紹修祖業，為林泉逸士，極得吟嘯。人好為詩者，多稱其善吟嘯，於是稍聞於天下。有孫氏，亦族也，則多遊豪貴之門。亦以善談謔，故又以之遊於市肆間，每一戲，能使人獲其利焉。獨吾好浮圖氏，脫塵俗，棲心巖谷中不動，而在此且有年矣。常慕歌利王割截身體及菩提投崖以伺餓虎，故吾啖橡栗，飲流泉，恨未有虎狼噬吾。吾亦甘受之。」

One day as Zongsu was going to deliver food, he mistakenly took a mountain path. From the path, he saw a stone grotto at the base of the mountain. There was a foreign monk within the grotto who appeared very old and wan. His kaśaya was made of coarse cloth and ragged fur, and he was

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<sup>255</sup> The commandery of Kuaiji corresponds to the present day areas of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.

<sup>256</sup> This tale appears to be the only reference to a Zongsu of the Yang clan.

squatting atop a boulder. Zongsu thought that he was a remarkable man and so ceremoniously called out: "Master, who are you that lives alone in this cut-off valley, taking a place not touched by the tracks of man for his household? And more, you have no attendants yet fear not that the beasts of the mountain wilds might harm you? Nay, it must be that you have obtained the Buddhist arts!"

The monk replied: "I am originally from the Yuan clan. My ancestors lived for generations upon Mount Ba.<sup>257</sup> Some of their descendants lived in Yiyang,<sup>258</sup> while others spread about and traveled amongst the mountains and valleys. They were all able to continue to cultivate the ways of their forefathers, becoming recluses amongst the forests and streams and were most-skilled at whistling. Because most were good at whistling, they were praised by men of poetry and so they gained some renown within the realm. Some of my ancestors were also of the Sun clan and traveled amongst the households of the wealthy and powerful. They were also good at cracking jokes and went about the shops and markets. Whenever they put on a show, people enjoyed it. Only I was fond of the Buddhist ways, cast off the dust of the vulgar world, nested my heart amongst the cliffs and valleys and did not move, and so have already resided here a number of years. I have always admired the story of King Kalinga,<sup>259</sup> who dismembered the Buddha piece by piece, but the Buddha merely cast his body parts off the cliffs to feed the tigers. And so I eat chestnuts, drink of flowing springs, and remain frustrated that the wolves and tigers have not yet feasted on me. Indeed, I would welcome them."

宗素因告曰：「師真至人，能捨其身而不顧，將以飼山獸，可謂仁勇俱極矣。雖然，弟子父有疾已數月，進而不瘳，某夙夜憂迫，計無所出。有醫者云，是心之病也，非食生人之心，固不可得而愈矣。今師能棄身於豺虎以救其餒，豈若捨命於人以惠其生乎？願師詳之。」僧曰：「誠如是，果吾之志也。檀越為父而求吾，吾豈有不可之意。且吾以身委於野獸，曷若惠人之生乎？然今日尚未食，願致一飯而後死也。」宗素且喜且謝，即以所挈食置於前。僧食之立盡，而又曰：「吾既食矣，當亦奉教，然俟吾禮四方之聖也。」

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<sup>257</sup> Mount Ba refers to the Daba mountain chain that forms a boundary between Sichuan and Shaanxi, even stretching as far east as Hubei.

<sup>258</sup> Yiyang corresponds to present day Yiyang, Jiangxi.

<sup>259</sup> It is worth mentioning given the reference to the Diamond Sutra later on in the tale that this story of the testing of Buddha by King Kalinga also appears in the Diamond Sutra.

Zongsu responded to him: "Master, you are truly an ultimate man, able to give up your body without a second glance, willing to feed the mountain beasts, and it could be said that you have the utmost bravery and benevolence. Alas, my father has already been stricken ill for a number of months and has yet to be healed. Worry weighs upon me day and night, and I can think of no way out. A doctor told us that it is an illness of the heart and, unless he eats the heart of a living man, he has no way of being healed. Now Master, you are capable of abandoning yourself to the dholes and tigers to rescue them from hunger—might you be willing to sacrifice yourself to another man to save his life? Please think it over."

The monk responded: "If it is indeed as you say, then this is my wish. Almsgiver, you have sought me on behalf of your father, how could I possibly think to refuse you? I would have given my body to the wild beasts, is it not better to benefit a man's life? However, I have not yet had a meal today. I wish to take a meal and afterwards may go to my death."

Zongsu was overjoyed and thanked the monk, placing the food he carried before the man. The monk ate until everything was gone and then once more said: "Now that I have finished eating, and I should offer up the teachings for the day. Please wait while I prepare the ceremonies for the sages of the four directions."

於是整其衣，出龕而禮。禮東方已畢，忽躍而騰上一高樹。宗素以為神通變化，殆不可測。俄召宗素，厲而問曰：「檀越向者所求何也？」宗素曰：「願得生人心，以療吾父疾。」僧曰：「檀越所願者，吾已許焉。今欲先說《金剛經》之奧義，且聞乎？」宗素曰：「某素尚浮圖氏，今日獲遇吾師，安敢不聽乎？」僧曰：「《金剛經》云：『過去心不可得，見在心不可得，未來心不可得。』檀越若要取吾心，亦不可得矣。」言已，忽跳躍大呼，化為一猿而去。宗素驚異，惶駭而歸。

Thereupon, the monk arranged his robes, went out of the grotto, and offered up the ceremonies. When the ceremony to the east was completed, the monk suddenly sprang up and leapt into a lofty tree. Zongsu thought the man was a divine being experiencing transformation, and it was nearly beyond his comprehension. Shortly after, the monk summoned Zongsu and asked him in a fearsome voice: "Almsgiver, what did you just seek to obtain?"



Zongsu responded: "I wish to obtain the heart of a living man in order to heal my sick father."

The monk replied: "I have already promised that which the almsgiver wishes. Now I wish to convey the profound message of the Diamond Sutra, will you listen?"

Zongsu told him: "I am fond of the Buddhist ways. Today I by chance encountered my master, would I dare not listen?"

The monk stated: "The Diamond Sutra reads: 'The bygone heart cannot be obtained, the present heart cannot be obtained, the future heart cannot be obtained.' Almsgiver, if you wish to take my heart, it also cannot be obtained!" When the monk finished speaking, he suddenly leapt about and let out a great shout. Transforming into a gibbon, he ran off. Zongsu was dumbstruck and returned home shocked and worried.

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This tale is even more intriguing in terms of the questions that it raises for the category of the effectiveness of Buddhist scriptures. Throughout the vast majority of the tale, it reads as a story of filial piety and Buddhist devotion that will be rewarded by the compassion of a monk extraordinarily devoted to his scriptures. The Diamond Sutra and the tale of King Kalinga are the motivating force behind the monk's compassion and appear as though they will resolve Yang Zongsu's search for a human heart. However, despite the seemingly serious nature of the majority of the tale, it ends on a rather amusing note in which the monk humorously twists the Diamond Sutra and then turns into a gibbon and runs off. Not only has the gibbon denied Yang Zongsu of the heart that would have saved his father, he has also taken advantage of Zongu's faith in Buddhism, made a mockery of the Diamond Sutra, and robbed Zongsu of the food that he had prepared for Buddhist monks.

While tales concerning the effectiveness of Buddhist scriptures still clearly exist as a grouping within the *Xuanshi zhi*, the story seen here does question whether or not there was any sort of religious motivation in including such tales in the collection in the first place. I would argue that the primary

purpose of the above tale is humor. It contains humorous wordplay, including the twisting of lines from the Diamond Sutra and the name of the strange monk. The monk is from the Yuan 袁 clan and has relatives in the Sun 孫 clan, a pun on the homophonous characters for gibbon, *yuan* 猿, and monkey, *sun* 狒. Furthermore, the passage concerning the tale of King Kalinga and the willingness of the monk to sacrifice his body to the wild animals is also humorous in that, as a gibbon, the monk was in reality already prey for wild animals. Given that a tale containing so much overt Buddhist imagery seems to have been included as a humor piece, I would doubt any sort of specific religious context for this category as a whole.

### Extraordinary Monk?

#### XSZ 1.14

浮屠氏契虛者，本姑臧李氏子，其父為御史於玄宗時。契虛自孩提好佛氏法律，年二十七，髡髮衣褐，居長安佛寺中。及祿山破潼關，玄宗西幸蜀門，契虛遁入太白山，採柏葉而食之，自是絕粒。

There was a Buddhist monk by the name of Qixu,<sup>260</sup> who was from the Li clan of Guzang<sup>261</sup> and whose father was an Imperial Censor during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong. Since the time he was a young lad, Qixu was fond of the Buddhist methods. When he was twenty seven, he shaved his head and took on the Buddhist *kaśaya*, residing in a Buddhist temple in Chang'an. During the time when An Lushan was causing destruction in the Tong Pass and Xuanzong fled westward to the Shumen Mountains,<sup>262</sup> Qixu retreated into Mount Taibai. He collected cypress needles to eat and from that point on cut off grains.

嘗一日，有道士喬君，貌清瘦，鬚鬢盡白，來詣契虛。謂契虛曰：「師神骨甚孤秀，後當邀遊仙都中矣。」契虛曰：「吾塵俗之人，安能詣仙都乎？」喬君曰：「仙都甚近，師可力去也。」契虛因請喬君導其徑。喬君曰：「師可備食於商山逆旅中，遇擇即犒於商山而饋焉。或有問師所詣者，但言原遊稚川，當有擇子導師而去矣。」契虛聞其言，喜且甚。

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<sup>260</sup> This appears to be the primary reference concerning the monk, Qixu 契虛.

<sup>261</sup> Guzang was located in Wuwei, Gansu.

<sup>262</sup> The Shumen Mountains are located in Liange County, Sichuan. These actions occurred roughly over the course of 756.

One day, a Daoist adept by the name of Lord Qiao<sup>263</sup> went to pay a visit to Qixu. Qiao's appearance was pure and lean and his hair and beard were completely white. He said to Qixu: "Master, you have the excellent and peerless bones of a divine being, later on I think you will wander about the Transcendent Capital."

Qixu replied: "I am a person of the mortal world, how would I be able to visit the Transcendent Capital?"

Lord Qiao responded: "The transcendent capital is very close, expend some effort and you can get there." Qixu asked Lord Qiao to instruct him about the route. Lord Qiao said to him: "You can prepare gifts of food at the inn on Mount Shang.<sup>264</sup> If you happen to encounter wood gatherers<sup>265</sup> on Mount Shang, you should present the gifts to them. Some may ask you where you are headed, but only tell them that you are wandering afar to Zhichuan and a wood gatherer should be willing to guide you there." When Qixu heard this, he was extremely pleased.

及祿山敗，上自蜀門還長安，天下無事。契虛即往商山，舍逆旅中，備甘潔以伺揜子饋焉。僅數月，遇揜子百餘，俱食畢而去。契虛意稍怠，且謂喬君見欺，將歸長安。既治裝，是夕，一揜子年甚少，謂契虛曰：「吾師安所詣乎？」契虛曰：「吾願遊稚川有年矣。」揜子驚曰：「稚川，仙府也。吾師安得而至乎？」契虛對曰：「吾始自孩提好神仙，常遇至人，勸我遊稚川。路幾何爾？」揜子曰：「稚川甚近。師真能偕我而去乎！」契虛曰：「誠能遊稚川，死不悔。」

Later on, An Lushan was defeated and the Emperor returned to Chang'an from the Shumen Mountains and the realm was pacified.<sup>266</sup> Qixu then went to Shang Mountain and, staying at the inn, he prepared sweets to serve and present to the wood gatherers. Before only a few months had passed, Xu encountered over a hundred wood gatherers and all the food he had prepared was gone. Qixu began to lose sight of his goal and, thinking that Lord Qiao had fooled him, Xu prepared to return to Chang'an. On

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<sup>263</sup> Lord Qiao 喬君 appears as a legendary Daoist figure in several other anecdotes in the *Daozang*. For example, see *ZTDZ* 294.8.268A.

<sup>264</sup> Mount Shang is located in Danfeng County in Shangluo, Shaanxi.

<sup>265</sup> *Pengzi* 揜子 is generally glossed as an individual who hauls goods in baskets on their back. Though this anecdote is cited in defining the term, it would seem to suggest a mountain wood gatherer given the context.

<sup>266</sup> This appears to refer specifically to the recapture of Chang'an by Tang forces in 757. However, Xuanzong did not return to Chang'an until 758.

the very same night he began to pack for his return, a very young wood gatherer encountered him and said: "Where are you headed Master?"

Qixu replied: "For many years now, I have wished to travel to Zhichuan."

Surprised, the wood gatherer responded: "Zhichuan is the capital of the transcendents. Master, how do you plan on getting there?"

Qixu then said: "Since the time I was a young lad, I have been fond of the divine transcendents. I once encountered an Ultimate Man who advised me to travel to Zhichuan. How far away is it?"

The wood gatherer replied: "Zhichuan is very near. Master, you may in fact travel there in my company."

Qixu responded: "If I really could travel to Zhichuan, I would die without regret."

於是撻子與契虛俱至藍田上，治具。其夕，即登玉山，涉危險，逾巖巘，且八十里。至一洞，水出洞中，撻子與契虛共挈石填洞口，以壅其流。三日，洞水方絕。二人俱入洞中，昏晦不可辨，見一門在數十里外，遂望門而去。既出洞外，風日恬煦，山水清麗，真神仙都也。又行百餘里，登一高山，其山攢峰迴拔，石徑危，契虛眩惑不敢登，撻子曰：「仙都且近，何為彷徨耶！」即挈手而去。既至山頂，其上坦平，下視川原，邈然不可見矣。又行百餘里，入一洞中。及出，見積水無窮，水中有石徑，橫尺餘，縱且百里餘。撻子引契虛躡石逕而去。至山下，前有巨木，煙影繁茂，高數千尋。撻子登木長嘯久之，忽有秋風起於林杪，俄見巨繩繫一行囊，自山頂而縋，撻子命契虛瞑目坐囊中。僅半日，撻子曰：「師可寤而視矣。」契虛既望，已在山頂。見有城邑宮闕，璣玉交映在雲物之外。撻子指語：「此稚川也！」

Thereupon, the wood gatherer and Qixu together came to Upper Lantian<sup>267</sup> and prepared all of their provisions. That night they ascended Mount Yu,<sup>268</sup> facing danger and pushing on through peaks and crags. After some 80 *li*, they arrived at a cavern. Water flowed forth from the cavern and, gathering up rocks, Xu and the wood gatherer dammed the mouth of the cavern to block the water's flow. After three days, the water ceased flowing and the two men could safely enter into an exposed opening that had been covered by the flowing water.<sup>269</sup> It was pitch dark, and they could barely distinguish what was

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<sup>267</sup> Lantian was a county located near the southeastern gate of the old city in Chang'an.

<sup>268</sup> Mount Yu is the mythical abode of the Queen-mother of the West.

<sup>269</sup> This passage is somewhat opaque, as the caverns are simply referred to as *dong* 洞. I believe however that it must be referring to two separate openings, one hidden by the water flow, as it would otherwise make no sense that they should block the mouth of a single cavern with rocks in order to be able to enter into it.

before them. Making out an opening some dozen *li* ahead, they kept their eyes focused on it and pushed forward. Eventually they passed through the far side of the cavern into the warm sunlight and tranquil breeze. The mountains and waters were clear and majestic, and it truly appeared to be the capital of the divine perfected.

They once more pushed forward over a hundred *li*, ascending another lofty mountain whose peaks piled high above. The rocky path was paved with danger and, struck with vertigo, Qixu didn't dare climb further. The wood gatherer encouraged him, saying: "The Transcendent Capital is very near, why do you hesitate!" The wood gatherer grabbed Qi's hand and pulled him onward. Shortly, they arrived at the mountain summit. The summit spread out flat and level, below them they could see the rivers stretching out from their headwaters and disappearing into the distance.

After continuing on another hundred *li* or so, the two men entered into another cavern and, coming out on the other side, a vast pool of endless water unfolded before them. In the middle of the pool a stone path about a foot wide was laid out for several dozen miles. With the wood gatherer guiding Qixu, the two men carefully trod across the stone path. Arriving at the foot of a mountain, an enormous tree, lush and clouded in vapor, rose up thousands upon thousands of feet in front of the two men. The wood gatherer climbed the tree and let out a long whistle. Suddenly, an autumn wind kicked up at the edge of the [mountain] forest, and a huge rope with a bag tied to the end descended down from the mountain summit. The wood gatherer ordered Qixu to close his eyes and sit in the bag. Before barely half a day had passed, the wood gatherer said to Xu: "You may open your eyes and take a look." Qixu took a look around and saw that they were already at the mountain summit. Qixu saw that there was a walled city with an imperial palace. The light rebounded off its surfaces of pearly jade, reflecting back out beyond the clouds. The wood gatherer pointed and exclaimed: "That is Zhichuan!"

於是相與詣其所，見仙童百輩，羅列前後。有一仙人謂撻子曰：「此僧何為者，豈非人間人乎？」撻子曰：「此僧常願遊稚川，故挈而至此。」已而至一殿，上有具簪冕者，貌甚偉，憑玉几而坐，侍衛環列，呵禁極嚴。撻子命契虛謁拜，且曰：「此稚川真君也。」契虛拜。真君召契虛上，訊曰：「爾絕三彭之仇乎？」不能對。真君曰：「真不可留於此！」因命撻子登翠霞亭。其亭互空，居檻雲臺，見一人袒而瞬目，髮長數十尺，凝膩黯黑，洞瑩心目。撻子謂契虛曰：「爾可謁而拜。」契虛既拜，且問：「此人為誰何瞬目乎？」撻子曰：「此人楊外郎也。外郎，隋氏宗室，為外郎於南宮。屬隋末，天下分磔，兵甲大擾，因避地居山，今已得道。此非瞬目，乃徹視也。夫徹視者，寓目於人世爾。」契虛曰：「請寤其目，可乎？」撻子即面請，外郎忽寤而四視，其光益著若日月之照。契虛悸背汗，毛髮盡勁。又見一人臥石壁之下，撻子曰：「此人姓乙，支潤其名，亦人間之人，得道而至此。」已而撻子引契虛歸。其道途皆前時之涉應。

Thereupon, the two men traveled there and saw a hundred transcendent lads arrayed in ranks before them. A transcendent being asked the wood gatherer: "Who is this monk? Is he not of the mortal world?"

The wood gatherer replied: "This monk has always wished to travel to Zhichuan, and so I have guided him here."

Shortly thereafter, they arrived at a palace hall. Above presided a grand official, sitting and leaning on a jade armrest. He was surrounded by his retinue of bodyguards who, with a stern bark, ordered Xu and the wood gatherer to halt. The wood gatherer told Xu to go forward and pay his respects, saying to him: "This is the Perfected Lord of Zhichuan."

Qixu bowed and the Perfected Lord summoned Xu up onto his dais, questioning: "Have you cut off the Three Peng that seek to destroy your body?" Xu did not know how to respond. The Perfected Lord then said: "You really cannot remain in this place." Thereupon, he ordered the wood gatherer to ascend to the Pavilion of the Kingfisher's Glow.

This Pavilion was located out in the cosmos, its threshold resting on a pillar of upright clouds. The two men saw a man with his upper body exposed and lustrous dark hair several feet long, who was winking his eye and concentrating with penetrating intensity. The wood gatherer said to Qixu: "You may go bow and pay your respects to him."

Qixu went and bowed and then asked the wood gatherer: "Who does this man wink his eye at?"

The wood gatherer replied: "This man is Palace-attendant Yang.<sup>270</sup> He was a palace-attendant to the Sui royal family and attended to the Southern Palace. He lived at the end of the Sui when the realm was being torn apart and harassed by soldiers, and so he fled and lived in the mountains and has now already obtained the Dao. What you see him doing is not winking but, rather, a penetrating stare. He stares with penetration to look down into the mortal world."

Qixu asked: "Would it be possible to waken him from his observations?" The wood gatherer went to make the request in person. Palace-attendant Yang startled to his senses and looked around to all four sides, his luster increasing to point that he shone like the sun and moon. Qixu trembled with fear, perspiration rolled down his back, and his hair was completely soaked.

Additionally, they saw a man lying beneath a stone wall and the wood gatherer said: "This man's family name is Yi and his personal name is Zhirun.<sup>271</sup> He was also of the mortal world but obtained the Dao and arrived at this place." Shortly thereafter, the wood gatherer guided Xu back to where they had come from, taking the same path as before.

契虛因問擇子曰：「吾向者謁見真君，真君問我三彭之仇，我不能對。」曰：「彭者，三屍之姓，常居人中，伺察其罪，每至庚申日，籍於上帝。故學仙者，當先絕其三屍，如是則神仙可得，不然，雖苦其心，無補也。」契虛悟其事。

Qixu then asked the wood gatherer: "Before when I paid my respects to the Perfected Lord, he asked about the Three Peng of my body, but I did not know how to respond."

The wood gatherer replied: "Peng is the family name of the Three Corpses that always reside within the human body. They investigate one's crimes and every time the *gengshen* day<sup>272</sup> comes about, they send up their report to the August on High. As such, one who studies transcendence must first cut off the Three Corpses and is thereby able to obtain spirit transcendence. Otherwise, though you may work hard at it, it will be of no avail."

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<sup>270</sup> I could not identify Palace-attendant Yang beyond his reference in this anecdote.

<sup>271</sup> I also could not identify Yi Zhirun as either legendary or historical.

<sup>272</sup> The fifty-seventh day of the sexagenary cycle.

Qixu then understood what this business was all about.

自是而歸。因廬於太白山，絕粒啄氣，未嘗以稚川之事語於人。貞元中，徙居華山下。有滎陽鄭紳與吳興沈聿俱自長安東出關，行至華山下，會天暮大雨，二人遂止。契虛以絕粒，故不致庖爨。鄭君異其不食，而骨狀豐秀，因徵其實。契虛乃以稚川之事告於鄭。鄭好奇者，既聞其事，且歡且驚。及自關東回，重至契虛舍，其契虛已遁去，竟不知所在。鄭君常傳其事，謂之《稚川記》。

Thereupon they returned home. As a result of his experience, Qixu went to live in a hut on Mount Taibai, cutting off food and supping on pneumas, never speaking about Zhichuan with other people.

During the Zhenyuan reign period of Emperor Dezong, he moved to the foot of Mount Hua.<sup>273</sup> Zheng Shen of Xingyang<sup>274</sup> and Shen Yu of Wuxing<sup>275</sup> went out of Chang'an through the eastern pass and travelled to the foot of Hua Mountain. At dusk there was a great downpour and, encountering Qixu's hut, the two men then stopped for a rest. Because Qixu had stopped eating, he did not have a kitchen or hearth. Lord Zheng thought it strange that Xu did not eat, yet his bones were sturdy and his appearance vigorous and so Zheng wanted to know why. Qixu then told Zheng of Zhichuan. Lord Zheng was fond of the fantastic and, upon hearing Xu's story, Zheng was surprised and delighted. Later on, Zheng again returned to the area east beyond the pass and once more went to Qixu's home. However, Qixu had already left the place and no one knew where he had gone. Lord Zheng eventually passed on Xu's story, calling it *The Record of Zhichuan*.<sup>276</sup>

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Ostensibly, this tale is an account of a Daoist adept who is guided through the Daoist heavens and capital of transcendence by a common Daoist motif, the woodcutter. Qixu encounters numerous Daoist deities and transcendent beings; such as the Perfected Lord of Zhichuan, Palace-attendant Yang,

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<sup>273</sup> Mount Hua is a sacred mountain located in present day Huanyin, Shaanxi.

<sup>274</sup> The *JTS* mentions Zheng Shen 鄭紳 once in the official annals where he receives an appointment, see 13.396. Additionally, Xingyang was located in present day north-central Henan province.

<sup>275</sup> Shen Yu 沈聿 does not appear in the official histories of the Tang but does appear in one additional anecdote in the *TPGJ*, see 307.2428. Additionally, Wuxing was located in present day Zhejiang, Huzhou.

<sup>276</sup> A very similar anecdote in a slightly abbreviated version appears in the *Daozang* under this exact title. This leads me to believe that the anecdote here was taken to be the actual record itself. See *ZTDZ* 1032.38.145A.



and Yi Zhirun. Upon his return from the Transcendent Capital, Qixu even cuts off grains and retreats to Mount Taibai to live life as a recluse. As was the case with the category of injunctions against animals, the main problematizing issue in identifying this tale as Daoist in motivation is the fact that Qixu is clearly identified as a Buddhist monk in the opening line. This point would suggest that the overt religious identification of characters is actually irrelevant to action of the plot within the tale. In this case and others, it is not in any way a problem for a Buddhist monk to travel to the Daoist capital of transcendence and take on the quest for longevity. Once more, I am inclined to doubt any specific religious motivations or affiliations behind the inclusion of this tale.

### Common Religion?

#### XSZ 2.10

故相李回，少時常久疾，兄駟召巫覡，於庭中設酒食以樂神。方面壁而臥，忽聞庭中喧然，回視，見堂下有數十人，或衣黃衣綠，競接酒食而啖之。良久將散，巫欲徹其席，忽有一人自空而下，左右兩翅。諸鬼皆辟易而退，且曰：「陸大夫神至矣。」巫者亦驚曰：「陸大夫神來。」即命致酒食於庭。其首俯於筵上，食之且盡，乃就飲其酒，俄頃，其貌頽然，若有醉色，遂飛去。群鬼亦隨而失。後數日，回疾愈。

When the former chancellor, Li Hui,<sup>277</sup> was young, he was sick for a long period of time. His elder brother, Ping, summoned a shamaness, who then set up food and wine in the courtyard to please the spirits. Li Hui was lying down facing the wall when he suddenly heard a commotion from the courtyard. He went to back to take a look and saw that there were some dozen beings within his hall. Some were clothed in yellow while others wore green, and they fought with one another to get at the food and wine. After a while they were about to disperse, and the shamaness wished to conclude the banquet. Suddenly a being descended from the sky with wings spread out to its left and right. All of the

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<sup>277</sup> Li Hui 李回 (dates unclear) was a descendent of the Tang imperial family and served as a chancellor during the reign of Emperor Wuzong. He was later demoted during the reign of Emperor Xuānzong for his ties to the political clique of Li Deyu 李德裕 (787-850) and ultimately died while holding minor office. See *JTS* 173.4501 and *XTS* 131.4517.

demons retreated back in fright and shouted: "The spirit of the Grandee Lu<sup>278</sup> has arrived!" The shamaness also exclaimed with a start: "The spirit of the Grandee Lu has come!" She then ordered that food and wine be brought to the courtyard. Grandee Lu bowed his head before the banquet and, when finished eating, he took up his wine. Shortly thereafter, his face grew red as though drunk and he flew off. The crowd of demons also disappeared in his wake. After several days had passed, Li Hui's illness was cured.

#### XSZ 3.4

婁師德布衣時，常因沈疾，夢一人，衣紫，來榻前再拜曰：「君之疾且間矣，幸與某偕去。」卻引公出。忽覺力甚捷，自謂疾愈。行路數里，見有廡署，左右吏卒，朱門甚高，曰：「地府院。」驚曰：「何地府院而在人間乎？」紫衣者對曰：「冥道固與人接跡。世人又安得而知之？」公入其院，吏卒辟易四退。見一空室曰「司命署。」問：「職何如？」對曰：「主世人祿命之籍也。」公因竊視之，有書數千幅在几上，傍有綠衣者，稱為按掾。公命出己之籍，按取一軸以進，公閱之，書己名，載其祿位年月，周應清貫，出入台輔，壽至八十有五。鑒之喜，謂按掾曰：「某一布衣爾，無饑凍足矣。又安敢有他望乎？」言未畢，忽有一聲沿空而下，震砌簷宇。按掾驚曰：「天鼓且動，君宜疾歸，不可留矣。」聞其聲，遂驚悟，始為夢遊爾。時天已曙，其所居東鄰有佛寺，擊曉鍾，蓋按掾所謂天鼓者也。是日，疾亦間焉。

During the time before Lou Shide<sup>279</sup> had taken up the robes of an official, he once fell deeply ill and dreamt of a man clad in purple, who came to the foot of his bed and bowed twice, saying: "You have been ill for some time, please come with me now." He then led Lou Shide away. Suddenly, Shide felt his strength rejuvenated and said that his illness had been cured. They had walked together for several *li* when they saw a suite of government offices with clerks and soldiers arrayed to the left and right. Its vermilion gate was very tall and read: "The Courtyard of the Earth Offices."

Startled, Lou Shide said: "Why has the Courtyard of the Earth Offices appeared in the mortal realm?"

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<sup>278</sup> Grandee Lu refers to Lu Jia 陸賈 (ca. 240-170 B.C.E.) of the Western Han, who was a major statesman, author, and philosopher during the reigns of Han Gaozu and Han Wendi. He was particularly valued as an envoy to the feudal lords and was known for helping to pacify the areas of Vietnam. See *Han Shu* 漢書, comp. Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 43.2111.

<sup>279</sup> Lou Shide 婁師德 (630-699) was a high official during the Tang, serving most prominently as chancellor on two separate occasions during the reign of Wu Zetian. See *JTS* 93.2975 and *XTS* 108.4092.

The man in purple robes replied: "The shadowy path in fact connects to the route of mankind. How could the people of the world know this?"

Lou Shide entered into the courtyard, and the clerks and soldiers retreated back from him on all sides. He saw an empty room that read: "Office of the Arbiter of Destiny." Lou Shide asked: "What position is this?"

The man answered: "They are in charge of the register recording the fate and fortune of the people of the world." Lou Shide took a peek and saw a book thousands of pages long sitting on a table. Beside it was a man in green robes whose title was Judicial Administrator. Lou Shide ordered that the register be opened up, and the administrator took out a scroll and presented it to him. He took it and read it over, seeing his own name written, along with his age, official rank, and salary. Lou Shide saw that in time he would become a court academician, go about as a high official of the state, and would live to the age of eighty-five. Looking closely, Lou Shide was delighted by what he saw and said to the Judicial Administrator: "To wear a cotton robe and be without hunger and cold would be enough. How could I dare have had any other hope than this?"

When Lou Shide had finished speaking, he suddenly heard a sound come ringing down from the sky that shook the steps and rocked the eaves. The Judicial Administrator cried out with surprise: "Heaven's drum has been sounded! You must return immediately and cannot linger here." After hearing the sound, Lou Shide suddenly awoke with a start and began to realize that he had taken a spirit journey in his dreams and nothing more. The sky was already growing bright with dawn, and there was a Buddhist temple neighboring Lou Shide's home to the east that was sounding the morning bells. This is probably what the Judicial Administrator had been referring to as heaven's drum. That day, Lou Shide's sickness indeed dissipated.

後入仕，應官咸如所載者。及為西涼帥，一日，見黃衣使者至閣前曰：「冥途小吏，奉命請公。」公曰：「吾嘗見司命之籍，紀吾之位，當至上臺，壽凡八十有五，何為遽見命耶！」黃衣人曰：「公任某官時，嘗誤殺無辜人，位與壽為主吏所降，今則窮矣。」言訖忽亡所見。自是臥疾，後三日而薨。

Later on, Lou Shide became an official, and everything turned out just as had been recorded in the Earth Offices. Thereafter he became Commander of Western Liang,<sup>280</sup> and one day received an envoy clad in yellow robes who arrived at his offices and said: "I am a minor clerk from the shadowy path, I have been sent on orders to request your presence."

Lou Shide replied: "I once saw the register of the Arbiter of Fate, and it recorded my position, saying I should reach a high rank and live to the age of eighty-five. Why have you come so early with these orders?"

The man in yellow robes answered: "Since the time when you were assigned your specific office, you have had an innocent man executed. Therefore, the officer in charge has demoted your position and reduced your lifespan. Today, it has been used up." When he finished speaking, the man suddenly disappeared from view. That day, Lou Shide took ill and after three days' time passed away.

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I have included the above two tales because they feature plot patterns that appear in both Buddhist and Daoist tales but here lack any particularly overt religious signifiers. In the case of the first tale, neither a Buddhist monk nor a Daoist priest is called upon to resolve Li Hui's illness. Instead his brother calls upon a shamaness to perform a ritual, and it is the spirit of the minister, Lu Jia, who ultimately dispels the illness after being satiated through the offerings provided. In the case of Lou Shide, the story is told as a more general version of a spirit journey to the underworld. No deities are mentioned by name, a general picture of the underworld bureaucracy is presented, and he is not given any sort of warning concerning his behavior before returning to the mortal realm. It does deal somewhat with the issue of karmic retribution, as Lou Shide's lifespan is cut short through the unjust execution of an innocent individual. However, the plot is not couched in the Buddhist terms seen in earlier stories and contains no overt Buddhist moral or warning to conclude the tale. Therefore, while

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<sup>280</sup> Western Liang was one of the sixteen kingdoms formed following the retreat of the Eastern Jin dynasty, and its territories corresponded to present day Gansu province.

the plot themes found in these tales can be coopted to put forward overtly religious messages when used in Buddhist or Daoist contexts, when found side by side with tales that do not strongly feature anything other than indigenous tradition, it again calls into question any strict religious identification of these themes.

Returning again to the question of whether or not the primary thematic concern of the *Xuanshi zhi* is as a whole religious, I would have to say that the answer is clearly no. Although I have identified fifty-eight tales addressing various aspects of Buddhism and Daoism as the largest corpus of unified themes, I do not believe that these numbers are indicative that the collection as a whole can in anyway be considered as primarily religious in motivation. While this is also born out in light of the fact that many other themes appear in the collection in smaller numbers, it is also evident through the manner in which themes are played with in terms of the context of certain “problematic” tales. In fact, I do not believe that the tales in this section are problematic in any sense of the word above and beyond bringing into question the effectiveness of strict thematic categories. Rather, what is most striking about this collection is the dialogue that is created between tales through the sharing of thematic features. Elements such as humor can be brought in to play on expectations that a reader has for the format of a particular tale type precisely because these features can be employed in different contexts.

A final practical concern is the fact that the collection as it exists today is most likely a reconstruction not representative of an original work. There is no evidence concerning Zhang Du’s motivations in selecting the texts for the *Xuanshi zhi* and nothing much more can be done beyond speculate about any sort of actual influence he had on the compilation of the text. The evidence from the tales themselves however would indicate that no strict labels can be applied to the *Xuanshi zhi*, and one must look at the broader concerns raised by the interactions between the tales within the collection and the purposes of anomaly accounts as a whole.

## IX. Concluding Thoughts: Comments on the Genre of Anomaly Accounts

By way of concluding, I would like to reiterate and discuss several ideas put forward by Robert Campany and Sarah Allen in their work on Tang stories and anomaly accounts. In the sixth chapter of his book specifically on the origin, features, and purpose of anomaly accounts as a genre, Campany discusses their concerns based on frequently encountered modes of tales. After addressing the manner in which the vast majority of anomaly accounts employ some sort of crossing of boundaries, be it animal/human, human/spirit, or otherwise, he makes the point:

...the early anomaly account genre as a whole remains fundamentally humanistic in nature. The overriding, if not exclusively, important concern addressed in the texts is humankind's place in the cosmos and among the other kinds of beings who inhabit the cosmos above and below us... The texts show relatively slight interest in the nature or workings of the cosmos per se when compared to their great interest in human encounters with other beings.<sup>281</sup>

Campany sees anomaly accounts as a way in which people sought to explore the role of human beings in the world as they relate to the rest of the cosmos. Extraordinary events are also explanatory events that help address the uncertainties of the world, which gives readers a better understanding and control over any otherwise inexplicable encounters that fill their lives. Sarah Allen expands on this concept concerning the development of anomaly accounts and stories into the Tang, noting that there are tales dealing more or less completely with interactions between humans. She points out a tendency in scholarship to set apart these tales as a category of their own, distinct from those featuring the supernatural. However, Allen notes that many of the same story structures and concerns are addressed even in those tales which do not feature the supernatural.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> See *Strange Writing*, 270.

<sup>282</sup> See "Tang Tales," 5-7.

I find both of the above ideas appealing in explaining how such a large corpus of religious tales functions within the *Xuanshi zhi* when the compiler in question did not ascribe to any particular religious motivations. As Campany notes above, these stories detail encounters with the supernatural and seek to explore the relationship between human characters and the extraordinary. Within the *Xuanshi zhi*, these explorations include direct interactions with deities, humans crossing the boundary into the divine or infernal realms, human interaction with animals, and the source of illness and misfortune within the world. Because we have seen such interactions couched in both religious and non-religious terms in the collection as a whole, I believe that they function in a broader sense to grasp all types of human encounters that occur within the world.

Before my translations of Buddhist tales, I brought up the concept of *gan ying* 感應 as discussed by Campany in the context of an explicitly Buddhist collection of miracle tales. I nevertheless also find this term useful as it can be applied to both the religious and non-religious tales I have translated here. The vast majority of the tales we have seen in the *Xuanshi zhi* deal with the consequences of human actions. Be it the results of killing an animal, murdering a human, slandering a colleague, betraying a close friend, or belittling another, these stories have shown the manner in which our actions have a direct effect on the greater cosmos. Although many of the stories deal with these reactions in specific religious contexts and resolve them through religious means, we have also seen problematizing tales that show these themes were not the purview of any specific religion and occasionally appear in nonreligious contexts as well. Furthermore, many of the tales I have ascribed to Buddhism or Daoism also engage in a dialogue between religions within the action of their plots. In many cases, the methods of one or another religion are shown to be more effective in mediating between the human world and the cosmos. Beyond the obvious concern of which religion is superior, the main focus still remains on dealing with the interaction between the mundane world and the divine.

I believe that Allen's point about the blurred relationship between human and supernatural in Tang stories is also of use in understanding another function of the religious tales in the *Xuanshi zhi*. Even in tales dealing primarily with supernatural religious occurrences, a great deal of emphasis is also placed on human to human interaction. The importance of these interactions in tales concerning alchemical practices is particularly evident. In many of these tales, humans fail in their efforts to interact with the divine world precisely because of discriminatory behavior toward other humans. In most cases, human conceit that results from class boundaries causes direct repercussions with the divine world. Individuals who cannot transcend such human emotions and concerns cannot effectively transcend to interact with the divine.<sup>283</sup> For this reason I believe that the tales we have seen not only seek to explain the extraordinary, they also seek to clarify appropriate types of human emotion and interaction within the mundane realm.

Lastly, I would like to address two other greater concerns that Sarah Allen brings up with regard to Tang tales. The first is the issue of the personal nature of Tang tales. She argues:

In saying that these stories deal with private lives, I mean that they recount events from the subject's personal and non-official experiences, rather than matters of public importance...The events related in them are usually not subject to public verification, but purport to recount information that could only be known by an eye-witness. When significant historical events are treated, it is always the individual's perspective or the private story which is the focus...<sup>284</sup>

I no doubt agree with Allen's position that the vast majority of these tales are told from a personal perspective. As she states, they are also not typically subject to any sort of outside verification and, furthermore, outside narrators often interject at the conclusion of tales in order to provide further

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<sup>283</sup> See for example, XSZ 8.11.

<sup>284</sup> "Tang Tales," 4-5.



evidence for their veracity.<sup>285</sup> However, I would like to clarify the question of whether or not anomaly accounts typically detail matters of public importance. Allen devotes a section of her dissertation to discussing historical approaches when analyzing anomaly accounts, pointing out that much work has been done relating tales to the broader history of the Tang and social movements that were occurring at the time. She even points out that many important political and social events figure strongly in anomaly accounts.<sup>286</sup> However, she still places her emphasis on the personal nature of the tales themselves rather than on the public events that occur.

I would suggest that even in the case of the religious tales that we have seen here, there is in fact a great deal of emphasis placed on matters of public importance and that they are typically of far greater significance than the personal lens through which a tale is told. Take for example XSZ 9.8. The story ostensibly concerns the negative effects that consuming animals has on Li Deyu's life. However, it is a very historically tantalizing tale given that Li Deyu was the main leader of the political faction that vied for power with Zhang Du's relative, Niu Sengru. In light of the historical circumstances surrounding the story, it seems that the larger issue at stake is explaining Li Deyu's downfall in a way related to his personal conduct. It is his appetite for mutton that leads to his unfortunate exile and not even a belated effort to change his behavior can stop his slide.

There is, needless to say, a long history of interpreting omens in China and many of the tales read simply as a post-hoc analysis of an omen explaining a major public event. Many anomaly accounts that deal with the An Lushan rebellion, including those in the *Xuanshi zhi*, also take a similar perspective.<sup>287</sup> As a result, I am more inclined to recognize that anomaly accounts do typically take a personal perspective through which to tell their tales but that the overarching plots are often subsumed by issues of great social and political importance, whether or not they are mentioned overtly. In these

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<sup>285</sup> For example, see explanation included in the conclusion of XSZ 7.9.

<sup>286</sup> See "Tang Tales," 47-48.

<sup>287</sup> See for example XSZ 10.15 concerning An Lushan's relationship with the flood dragon.

cases, rather than using human interaction with the divine realm to explain the cosmos at large, I believe that cosmic interactions are used to portend human events in such stories.

Finally, there remains the greater issue of whether or not anomaly accounts and supernatural tales can be seen in the context of the development of Chinese fiction. While this viewpoint was popular amongst Chinese scholars for much of the twentieth century<sup>288</sup> and was also argued by certain western scholars,<sup>289</sup> the idea of there being any concern with actively creating fictional literature within the anomaly account genre has come under great scrutiny in the past two decades. Company has spent a great deal of space debunking this idea amongst the early development of anomaly accounts, pointing out that such a notion both diminishes many of the functions of anomaly accounts.<sup>290</sup> Perhaps most importantly, early accounts are written *as history*. The tales are not being made up per se but are instead being recorded by observers that actually believed the event to have occurred. In the context of the Tang, the tales that are used to show a development of fictionality are a small handful of the longest and most involved *chuanqi*, and Sarah Allen has argued against fictionality within these tales and others. Her main point of contention that forms much of the bulk of her dissertation is whether or not there was any sort of conscious creation on the part of a specific author to construct a work of fiction. Her own research points out that while there was certainly creativity on the part of writers in the construction of the stories, tales existed in a wide variety of formats and editions and were read as true stories “probably not presumed to be one author’s particular invention.”<sup>291</sup>

I share the views of both Company and Allen when it comes to the issue of authorship and fictionality. In the case of the *Xuanshi zhi*, there is no claim that Zhang Du wrote any of the stories

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<sup>288</sup> Lun Xun was one of the primary originators of theories concerning Tang *chuanqi* as early examples of Chinese fictional narrative, and he was also influential in creating the notion of a distinction between *zhiguai* and *chuanqi*. See Lu Xun 鲁迅, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* 中国小说史略, ed. Guo Yushi 郭豫适 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 44.

<sup>289</sup> See for example Kenneth DeWoskin, “The Six Dynasties Chih-kuai and the birth of fiction,” in *Chinese Narrative Critical and Theoretical Essays*, ed. A.H. Plaks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 21-52.

<sup>290</sup> See *Strange Writing*, 156-164.

<sup>291</sup> “Tang Tales,” 56.

included in the collection. No one was “authoring” these collections, they were writing down and compiling tales most likely not of their own creation. The majority of tales were also likely still taken to be true accounts. However, I find that a certain type of tale found within the *Xuanshi zhi* and elsewhere to be of interest concerning the question of literary innovation in Tang dynasty tales. In the fifth chapter of Sarah Allen’s dissertation, she focuses on variation between tales employing the same plot pattern. She also examines a particular tale allegedly concerning an event from Niu Sengru’s youth as an adaptation of an adventure plot to humorous ends. She notes that even though innovation most likely occurred in the creation of the story, it still is only a variation of a commonly used plot structure that would call to mind a specific set of expectations within the readers’ minds. Furthermore, in the case of the tale that she examines, she argues that it is still being related in a historical fashion and meant to be taken as a true event.<sup>292</sup>

While I agree with Sarah Allen based on the example that she provides, I view XSZ 8.6 concerning Yang Zongsu’s quest for a human heart as functioning perhaps slightly differently. There is still no authorship being ascribed to this tale. Additionally, it is clearly playing off a familiar plot type. However, I wonder whether or not this tale is actually meant to be read in a primarily historical or religious context. Ultimately, I see the construction of an elaborate joke as the main motivation for this tale. While I cannot say with certainty what a Tang readership would have found humorous, I have already discussed the running wordplay that occurs throughout the tale. Furthermore, the conclusion of the tale basically functions as a punch line. After the reader realizes the monk was in fact a gibbon and has humorously twisted Buddhist passages in order to get a free meal, the tale immediately ends. The joke has been cracked and there is no need for any further development within the story.

Whereas the tale concerning Niu Sengru in Allen’s dissertation is clearly centered on a historical character, the characters featured in XSZ 8.6 are very general. We only have an Old Man Yang, Yang

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<sup>292</sup> Allen also briefly addresses several short tales structured around word play but comes to the conclusion that such tales may have functioned as a sort of parlor game. See *ibid.*, 332-334.

Zongsu, and the foreign monk. I have discussed the wordplay in the monk's family name, but even the filial son, Zongsu 宗素 has a name meaning something along the lines of "ancestral purity" that seems more indicative of his character within the tale than as representative of an actual personage. Like the use of the plot structure itself to set up the expectations of the reader, the names of the characters also seem to function to set up our expectations. In such a case, I do not see any major motivations in this tale apart from humor and wonder how a Tang readership would have viewed it. If the primary motivation of this tale was humor, even if the tale had a broad body of oral storytelling tradition to draw upon and existed in other iterations, it still takes a great deal of effort to sustain such a lengthy and involved joke in written format through to the end. I might suggest that although there is no specific author, to put such an involved tale into a humorous context requires an act of creation. Furthermore, divorced of a specific historical context and with a large focus placed on the humor itself, I might argue that that this tale's true motive is in fact fictional entertainment. And in this fashion, it might be seen as coming closer to a notion of fictionality.

As mentioned in my introduction, the primary motivation of this thesis was at heart a translation project to familiarize myself and a broader readership with a body of tales that has received almost no attention in Western scholarship and little beyond textual analysis in China. It has been my goal to explore some of the purposes and ramifications of encountering a large body of seemingly religious tales within a larger collection. I have also sought to point out the fashion in which some of the more involved tales within the *Xuanshi zhi* might affect our notions of religion, narrative, and fictionality within Tang tales. If nothing else, I hope that my translations have provided a more accessible window through which to approach the *Xuanshi zhi* and that they might inspire additional attention to the collection in the future.

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