# The *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan:*
# A Study of Utopia and the Perception of the World in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Discourse

In Two Volumes

Volume I

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*To*

*Gert Berg*

*and*

*Irina Berg, née von Scheffel*

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# *Romanisation*

The spelling of Chinese words throughout follows the *pinyin* system of romanisation.

# *Note on Bibliographical References*

The term 'section' in the footnotes refers to sections in the present thesis. A colon separates a volume number and a page number; a period separates a *juan* 卷 (section) or *hui* 回 (chapter) number and a page number. In the *List of Works Cited* the symbol '§' means that a subsequent item is contained in the work cited.

# *Abstract*

**The *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan:***
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The present project sets out to discover what the *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* ('A Tale of Marriage Destinies that will Bring Society to its Senses'), an anonymous novel of manners from seventeenth-century China, can tell us about life in the world out of which it emerged. Seventeenth-century records depict China on the verge of modernity as a world torn between the traditional agricultural society and the new challenges of urban life, commerce and a money economy. The shifts from conventional norms and values gave rise to concepts of utopia and anti-utopia: to nostalgia for the lost paradise of the past and to apocalyptic satire on present conditions. Scholars have noted the prominence of utopianism in seventeenth-century fiction but no detailed study has been undertaken so far. Utopianism is here explored in terms of the indigenous Chinese traditions. The text of the *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* is analysed to see how it perceives and reflects the seventeenth-century Chinese world. Utopia serves as an analytical construct to recreate a glimpse of society and the moral evaluation of the world through the eyes of a contemporary observer. The body of the thesis analyses three major motifs in the *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*: the healers, the elite and the mother. Critical comparison with other contemporary literary and historical sources attempts to place the novel into its context. The visions of utopia and anti-utopia provide insight into the dreams and nightmares as seventeenth-century Chinese minds may have perceived them, shedding light on the vernacular culture as opposed to the officially recognised and imperially ordained culture of China.

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# *Introduction*

# I

# Text and Context

## 1. Shandong Province in the Seventeenth Century

A local gazetteer perceives life in a market town in central Shandong 山東 province in the seventeenth century[1] thus:

> Nowadays (...) customs turn ever more extravagant. Countless amounts of money are lavishly poured into worship and sacrificial offerings. Soaring sums are wasted on foods and clothes. (...) The common people from villages deep in the mountains and dales lead simple and secluded lives. Their womenfolk weave while the men till the soil. They wear short and simple coats and coarse clothes without any pretence whereas the urban dwellers go to extremes dressing in long robes and fine silks. Commoners adorn their heads with scholar-officials' hats. Rare delicacies fill the dining tables and even servants wine and dine like the gentry. Nobody can acquire social status without extravagant expense.[2]

Like this gazetteer from Shandong, many texts that have come down to us from the late Ming 明 (1368-1644)/early Qing 清 (1644-1911) era record the picture of a society in crisis and transformation. In trying to recover a glimpse of the historical situation from texts the modern-day scholar confronts various and different kinds of perception. Each record has its own story to tell. Shandong province provides

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[1]The seventeenth century in China spans the era from the late Wanli 萬曆 (AD 1573-1619) to the early Kangxi 康熙 (AD 1662-1722) reign peroids. This is the period of time most relevant to the present study (cf. section I.3.c-d).

[2]*Yanshen zhenzhi* 顏神鎮志 (1670), repr. in *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng, xianzhenzhi zhuanji* 中國地方志集成縣鎮志專集, vol. 29, Nanjing: Jiangsu guji, 1992, 2B.1b, 5b. All translations are my own except where otherwise indicated.

the backdrop to some of the most spectacular visions of society in seventeenth-century Chinese written discourse.[3]

The province covers a peninsula to the east and an inland zone to the west centring on a hilly region around Mount Tai (Taishan 泰山), one of China's five sacred mountains.[4] The climatic seasons range from cold, frosty winters to hot, dry summers. In winter and spring severe dust storms sweep across the inland region. In the summer droughts and floods frequently plague the people. In the seventeenth century the Huanghe 黃河 still followed the bed of the Huai 淮 river along the southern border of Shandong province. The fertility of the soil probably accounted for the dense human settlement across the region.

Shandong was a part of China since her beginning as an organised state. One of the ancient states in Shandong was Lu 魯, the birthplace of Confucius (Kongzi 孔子) and another was Zou 鄒, the birthplace of Mencius (Mengzi 孟子). Shandong was thus the cradle of China's most powerful state philosophy. The small town of Qufu 曲阜 not far south of Mount Tai houses the temple and tomb of Confucius. Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 206-194 BC) was the first monarch to make a pilgrimage to Qufu towards the end of his reign.[5] In the late seventeenth century (i.e. in 1684) the Kangxi emperor, second sovereign of the Qing dynasty, visited Qufu and met Confucius' descendant in the sixty-fourth generation, the poet and

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[3]On seventeenth-century Chinese literature see e.g. Chun-shu Chang and S. Hsueh-lun Chang, *Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century China. Society, Culture, and Modernity in Li Yü's World*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992; R. E. Hegel, *The Novel in Seventeenth-Century China*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981; R. K. McMahon, *Causality and Containment in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Fiction*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988; A. Plaks, 'After the Fall: *Hsing-shih yin-yüan chuan* and the Seventeenth-Century Chinese Novel', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2, 1985, 543-580; G. Dudbridge, 'A Pilgrimage in Seventeenth-Century Fiction: T'ai-shan and the *Hsing-shih yin-yüan chuan*', *T'oung Pao* 77.4/5, 1991, 226-252.

[4]See e.g. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia*, vol. 16, ed. P. B. Norton, Chicago, 1992, 168-171.

[5]See *Qufu xianzhi* 曲阜縣志, by Pan Xiang 潘相, 1774 edn., repr. Taibei: Xuesheng, 1968, 18.3a.

playwright Kong Shangren 孔尚任 (1648-1718).[6] Since Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 140-86 BC) Chinese emperors visited Mount Tai to offer sacrifices to heaven and earth.[7] In the seventeenth century the heartland of Shandong was a famous destination for travellers and pilgrims. They came to pay homage to the mother goddess at the Bixia 碧霞 Temple on the summit of Mount Tai. The goddess would - so they prayed - bestow children and family blessings.[8] Seventeenth century Shandong thus boasted a glorious past and magnificent cultural treasures.

With the coastline to the east, Shandong represented a leading maritime centre since the time of the Six Dynasties (Liuchao 六朝, 220-589). The Grand Canal running north to south through the western part of Shandong province connected Beijing 北京 to Hangzhou 杭州 by waterway since the early Ming. By 1600 the towns Linqing 臨清 and Jining 濟寧 on the Grand Canal in Shandong had grown into important commercial centres of around 100,000 inhabitants.[9] The market towns in the central inland region of the province were rapidly developing during

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[6]For Kong Shangren's account of the imperial visit see 'Chushan yishu ji' 出山異數記, in *Kong Shangren shiwenji* 孔尚任詩文集, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962, 6.425-438. See also R. Strassberg, *The World of K'ung Shang-jen. A Man of Letters in Early Ch'ing China*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

[7]Traditionally dated back to 110 BC, see Ying Shao 應劭, *Hanguan* 漢官, Ma Dibo 馬第伯, *Fengchan yiji* 封禪儀記, in a commentary to *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, by Fan Ye 范曄 et al., ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1973, *Zhi* 志 7.3168, note 1; cf. Dudbridge, 1991, 227.

[8]Cf. Dudbridge, 1991, 249.

[9]On the economic conditions see Jing Su 景甦 and Luo Lun 羅崙, *Qingdai Shandong jingying dizhu di shehui xingzhi* 清代山東經營地主底社會性質, Jinan: Renmin, 1959; Luo Lun and Jing Su, *Qingdai Shandong jingying dizhu jingji yanjiu* 清代山東經營地主經濟研究, Jinan: Qilu, 1985; Fu Yiling 傅衣凌, *Ming Qing nongcun shehui jingji* 明清農村社會經濟, Beijing: Sanlian, 1961; Fujita Keiichi 藤田敬一, 'Shindai Santôshô keiei jinushitei shakai seishitsu' 清代山東省経営地主底社会性質, *Atarashii rekishigaku no tame* 新しい歴史学のため 111, 1966, 11-22; Yamane Yukio 山根幸夫, 'Min Shin jidai kahoku ni okeru teikishi' 明清時代華北における定期市, *Shiron* 史論 8, 1960, 493-504; E. Wilkinson, 'Introduction', in Jing Su and Luo Lun, *Landlord and Labor in Late Imperial China. Case Studies from Shandong*, trans. E. Wilkinson, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978, 1-38; S. Mann, *Local Merchants and the Chinese Bureaucracy, 1750-1950*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987, esp. 52-69.

the seventeenth century. For example sixteen market towns existed in Zhangqiu 章丘 district north of Mount Tai in 1600. The number had risen to 27 by 1700.[10] Neither before nor afterwards did market towns spring up so fast. Seventeenth-century Shandong primarily flourished on a textile industry producing cotton and silk. One source describes the customs of Linqing in Dongchang 東昌 prefecture:

> Merchants from all directions come by waterway or overland to stock up their goods and open shops to sell their merchandise. This place clothes high and low in the empire and its people live on the profits.[11]

Similarly the seventeenth-century scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682) remarked on the commercial attraction of Shandong within the empire:

> Merchants from Jiangsu 江蘇 and Anhui 安徽 set up shops and trade in the cotton from Gaotang 高唐, Xiajin 夏津, and Enxian 恩縣. This accounts for the great wealth of the locals.[12]

The local industry moreover comprised coal-mining, glass-making and various handicrafts such as cotton towels, silk scarves, felt, fur clothes, velvets, sugar and yeast.[13] Twentieth-century scholars count Shandong among China's three relatively advanced economic regions in the seventeenth century.[14] Historians of economics describe the process Shandong was undergoing as the commercialisation of agriculture.[15] In the words of one seventeenth-century observer of Jining: 'The main concern of the people revolves around business and they live on the profits. They do not engage in ploughing the land or growing

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[10]See *Zhangqiu xianzhi* 章丘縣志, editions of 1596, 1691, 1833, 1907; cf. Wilkinson, 1978, 5.

[11]*Dongchang fuzhi* 東昌府志, 1600 edn., 2.31b-34b. *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成, ed. Jiang Tingxi 蔣廷錫, repr. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1934, 254.13b.

[12]*Zhaoyu zhi* 肇域志, by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, incomplete MS in Guoxue-Library Nanjing, *juan* 32; cited in Luo and Jing, 1985, 47.

[13]Luo and Jing, 1985, 21.

[14]The others being the Jiangnan 江南 area and the south-east coast, see Fu Yiling, 1961, 72.

[15]Luo and Jing, 1985, 44-52; Wilkinson, 1978, 77.

mulberry trees [for silk].'[16] This historical process however entailed severe tensions in contemporary life and substantial shifts from traditional society.

The late Ming boom in commerce gave rise to new cultural trends among the growing mercantile circles. The upstart urban dwellers broke the old sumptuary regulations and traditional taboos without qualms. One seventeenth-century gazetteer observed that Linqing was

> a place at which people from all directions gather. Here the four classes [i.e. scholars, farmers, artisans and merchants] mix and mingle. It is the hub of the universe for the merchants. You can see scholar-officials and their womenfolk go for outings and the affluent ones display their jewellery. At home they give banquets and feasts and entertain with song and dance.[17]

The scene in Jining looked similar according to a local history:

> Jining is a thoroughfare of waterways and overland routes and the hub of the universe for boats and carriages from every direction. It is a place that attracts the most ingenious skills and cunning tricks. (...) The gentry and high officials sojourn at its inns on their journey through. Vagrant people hire dwellings and live in temporary residences. People from every walk of life take lodgings in this place. The foolish ones swim with the tide abandoning themselves to conspicuous consumption. The covetous ones haggle over trifling amounts and deceive by crooked ways. This has caused the loss of most traditional moral principles in this place.[18]

Qiu Xinni 丘心尼, a resident of Jining in the late seventeenth century, provides details on the extravagance that characterised the place:

> Dress and food, marriage ceremonies and social occasions turn ever more extravagant. So do funerals in particular. (...) The palls made of paper in the past soon turned into cotton lustring, then silk gauze and now even damask and brocade. Tens or hundreds of strings of cash go into expenses for extraordinary adornments, rare flowers, the splendour and magnificence of square

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[16]*Gujin tushu jicheng*, 230.15b. See also *Jining zhili zhouzhi* 濟寧直隸州志, 1859 edn., 2.39a-41b.

[17]Preface (1673) to *Linqing zhouzhi* 臨清州志, 1674 edn., repr. in *Xijian Zhongguo difangzhi huikan* 希見中國地方志彙刊, Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1992, 1033-1184, 1044 (4a).

[18]*Jining zhili zhouzhi*, 3.20b.

towers and rotund pavilions, phoenix ornaments and beautiful motifs of birds. A host of artisans is required for the carvings and many months are needed for the paintings and ornaments.[19]

The high life of seventeenth-century Shandong had a reverse side however. Natural disasters coincided with political turmoil through internal warfare and foreign invasion. Floods, droughts, locust plagues and the ensuing famines and epidemics appeared as familiar phenomena in Shandong. Amongst series of disasters some of the worst catastrophes in seventeenth-century China occurred in Shandong province. An exceptionally severe plague swept over China in 1641 and killed thousands of people in Shandong.[20] In the same year the Grand Canal dried out at Linqing. One record from Chiping 茌平 county observed that 'the earth was barren for a thousand miles' (*li* 里).[21] In 1638, 1639 and 1642 the Manchu armies invaded Shandong.[22] In early 1639 they penetrated as far as the provincial capital Jinan 濟南.[23] The seventeenth-century observer Zheng Yuqiao 鄭與僑 recorded that the Manchu devastated more than eighty places in Shandong during those years.[24] After the fall of Beijing and the end of Ming sovereignty in early 1644 the rebel leader Li Zicheng 李自成 stationed his troops in Shandong.[25] Fearing for their life-styles and privileges the gentry soon joined forces to drive Li Zicheng out. By August 1644 the new Qing rulers in turn had taken control of Shandong province. At the end of the century Hu Xining 胡悉寧 (fl. 1686), a writer from

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[19]'Guangjian qishuo' 廣儉戚説, by Qiu Xinni 丘心尼, in *Qiewen zhai wenchao* 切問齋文鈔, 1775 edn., 5.3a.

[20]Cf. H. Dunstan, 'The Late Ming Epidemics: A Preliminary Survey', *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3.3, 1975, 1-59.

[21]Dunstan, 1975, 10.

[22]Cf. I Songgyû 李成珪, trans. Joshua A. Fogel, 'Shandong in the Shun-chih reign: The Establishment of Local Control and the Gentry Response', Part One, *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 4.4, Dec. 1980,1-34; Part Two, *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 5.4, June 1981, 1-31.

[23]*Mingshi* 明史, comp. by Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974, 24.326.

[24]'Shouyu ji' 守禦記, by Zheng Yuqiao 鄭與僑, in *Jining zhili zhouzhi*, 4.9a.

[25]On Li see A. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943, 491-493.

Linqing, looked back on the long-term repercussions of natural disasters and political destruction in Shandong:

> Originally Linqing was a commercial centre. Since the soldiers set fire to it, it has daily become more desolate. (...) In the recent past the merchants have scattered like stars. The pomp and prosperity of the place have shrunk to a tiny fraction.[26]

Towards the end of the seventeenth century Shandong was reviving from the political and economic shocks of the mid-century. Qing dynasty magistrates made efforts to relocate rural markets and to revitalise local trading systems.[27] They rebuilt the inns and business structures of devastated market towns. They donated tax funds and allocated other county resources for market reconstruction. But economic expansion and social ferment entailed counter-reactions. Local records tell that contemporaries perceived the past - the time before the boom of market towns and money economy - as the idyll of a golden age that seemed irretrievably lost. As the Jining gazetteer reminisced about the lost paradise with nostalgia:

> The chronicles praise the state of Lu in the Zhou 周 [dynasty] as refined by nature.[28] Its people were punctilious. They produced silk and hemp. They still retained the pure and honest deportment tradition had taught them. Its gentlemen regarded book-learning, the striving for morality and the understanding of statecraft as virtue. Moreover they all studied the pertinent literature to succeed in the state examinations and rise in the civil service. The families of government officials felt ashamed to adorn their chariots and horses with conspicuous ornaments. The aged people retired from official life. They went on foot about the villages and wore coarse clothes. They looked composed and dignified. On the occasion of marriages the eminent families would feel ashamed to discuss money. On the death of a friend even poor people would arrange the funeral for him and give support to his descendants. The peasants would stick to agriculture and not engage in business. Those who paid their taxes first were considered as good people. Everybody despised young men who did not pursue their proper profession but instead gave themselves over to

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[26]'Huomian tushui beiji 豁免土税碑記' (1686), by Hu Xining 胡悉寧, in *Linqing zhili zhouzhi* 臨清直隸州志, 1784 edn., 9.12b-13b.

[27]See Mann, 1987, 54.

[28]Cf. the description of the Duke of Zhou's perfect customs i.e. a Confucian's utopia and its decline with the beginning of trade in *Shiji* 史記, by Sima Qian 司馬遷, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959, repr. 1972, 129.3266.

gambling and drinking. The womenfolk diligently attended to weaving and spinning, working from early in the day and resting at night. The daughters of renowned families and respectable households would not attend banquets or travel for pleasure to temples and go out beyond the city. All this we can praise as traditional customs and good manners.[29]

Thus the local history defined the concepts of virtue, morality and goodness and located them in a utopia of the past. The yearning for the idealised past as a model world implied the desire for a better future. For the present with its trends of commercialisation and industrialisation appeared as a deteriorated and fallen world. In an attempt - however groping and incomplete - to retrace these dreams and desires we may turn to the contemporary monuments of popular imagination and artistic expression, as for example literature.

The provincial capital Jinan was one of the cultural centres of Northern China in the seventeenth century. The famous native poet Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711) turned it into a Mecca in the world of poetry during the later years of his life. In the late Ming and early Qing, an era scholars have described as a burst of creative energy and artistic activity,[30] Shandong produced some major works of fiction. One major novel about the milieu of the northern nouveaux riches at the turn of the century - the *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 - is set mainly around Linqing.[31] Its sequel, the novel *Xu Jin Ping Mei* 續金瓶梅 by Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢 (ca. 1599-1670) from Zhucheng 諸城 in eastern Shandong reflects the dissipation of the new merchant elite and the trauma of foreign invasion in the mid-seventeenth century.[32] In the latter half of the seventeenth century Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715) from Zichuan north-east of Mount Tai in central Shandong wrote the classical Chinese

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[29]*Jining zhili zhouzhi*, 3.20b-21a.

[30]See J. Cahill, *The Compelling Image. Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1982, 1-2; McMahon, 1988, ix.

[31]*Jin Ping Mei cihua* 金瓶梅詞話, ed. Hong Kong: Xinghai wenhua, 1987 (hereafter: *JPMCH*).

[32]*Xu Jin Ping Mei* 續金瓶梅, by Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢, in *Jin Ping Mei xushu sanzhong* 金瓶梅續書三種, vol. 1, ed. Jinan: Qilu, 1988, 1-656.

tales of the *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋志異.[33] The vernacular novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳 ('A Tale of Marriage Destinies that will Bring Society to its Senses') ranks among the longest works of Chinese traditional fiction (containing about one million characters). Its depiction of Shandong society presents one of the most panoramic and grand-scale explorations of the world in fiction.[34]

## 2. Fiction as Historical Source Material

But can we use fictional narratives as source material for historical inquiry? For fiction is art and never reality as the literary critic Todorov argues:

> Art (...) is not the reproduction of a given 'reality', nor is it created through the imitation of such a reality. It demands quite different qualities; to be 'real' can even (...) be harmful. In the realms of art there is nothing preliminary to the work, nothing which constitutes its origin. It is the work of art itself that is original; the secondary becomes primary.[35]

The present study aims to explore how the literary text communicates to us from the past, how the fictional artefact relates to 'reality'. The 'reality' of seventeenth-century China that we can know today exists only as a narrated or perceived reality, in the voices and visions of various observers. Recent literary criticism abandons the distinction of historical and literary sources in textual analysis. Twentieth-century literary theory rests on the assumption that all texts can equally be decoded and deconstructed. Bakhtin for example postulates the intrinsic relation between fiction and history:

> The boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, between literature and nonliterature and so forth are not laid up in heaven. Every specific situation is historical. And the growth of literature is not

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[33]*Liaozhai zhiyi: huijiao huizhu huiping ben* 聊齋志異會校會注會評本, by Pu Songling 蒲松齡, ed. Zhang Youhe 張友鶴, Shanghai: Guji, 1962, rev. edn. 1978.

[34]*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳, by Xi Zhou sheng 西周生, 3 vols., ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1981, repr. 1985 (hereafter: *YYZ*). All subsequent references refer to this edition unless stated otherwise.

[35]T. Todorov, *Poétique de la prose*, Paris: Seuil, 1971, 93. Cf. A. Jefferson and D. Robey, eds., *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, London: Batsford Academic, 1982, 106.

merely development and change within the fixed boundaries of any given definition; the boundaries themselves are constantly changing.[36]

Gearhart describes in her literary-historical approach to the French Enlightenment period the boundary separating history and fiction as 'open'.[37] Gearhart points out that the study of the relationship of history and fiction is one of the most important critical tasks. Structuralist critics such as Genette, Barthes and Todorov discard the older distinction between historical 'evidence' and fictional 'narrative' that Gallie and Collingwood proposed.[38] Barthes has questioned the traditional opposition between history and fiction maintaining that history is essentially a form of narrative.[39] Barthes argues that fictional discourse has an arbitrary relationship to historical reality but historical narratives are also arbitrary in this sense. Todorov regards both history and fiction as types of narrative. For Todorov neither history nor fiction exists outside of language. Both constitute forms of discourse. He argues that *l'histoire* (in the meaning of both history and story) is always a convention: 'It does not exist at the level of events themselves.' It is 'an abstraction because it is always perceived and narrated by someone. It does not exist "in itself".'[40]

The concept of perception is of crucial importance to our analysis. How does a text perceive the world? How can it communicate perceived reality? How does it relate to its context? One of the new historicists, a recent school in literary criticism, describes the problem of perception in textual analysis in terms of voices: Greenblatt embarks on his study of literary texts from the English Renaissance

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[36]M. Bakthin quoted in S. Gearhart, *The Open Boundaries of History and Fiction. A Critical Approach to the French Enlightenment Period*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, i.

[37]Gearhart, 1984, 5-8.

[38]W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, New York: Schocken Books, 1964.

[39]R. Barthes, 'Historical Discourse', in M. Lane, ed., *Introduction to Structuralism*, New York: Basic Books, 1970; cf. Gearhart, 1984, 204.

[40]T. Todorov, 'Les Catégories du recit litteraires', *L'Analyse structurale du récit, Communications* 8, 1966, 127. See also C. Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama*, London: Methuen, repr. 1985, ix.

period and their historical contexts with the 'desire to speak with the dead'.[41] He cautions that this involves not one single voice of the other but many voices including one's own: the voices within the literary text, those from its contexts, and finally the critic's own voice that poses questions to the text and searches for answers.[42] In this sense literary-historical analysis aims to reconstruct a dialogue linking past and present with the reservation that the result presents a construct in itself as the critic perceives the past through the filter of the present.

The present study focuses on the literary text. The text reflects voices that communicate to us from the past. Our interpretative task is to identify them and reconstruct their meaning within the contemporary context. Both fictional and historical forms of written discourse are used for analysis. The present study will compare and contrast texts to examine their consistencies and differences. Several compelling reasons exist for doing so. Chinese orthodox historiography as in the government records may represent the official version of history. Official sources may leave us with a version of history that projects self-images in accordance with the current state ideology or tendentious bias. Fictional accounts, too, represent versions of perceived history. But they may speak out where other sources remain silent. They may focus on people, actions or situations that have not merited the attention of other records. They may provide insight into the realm of private thoughts and personal emotions. They may give access to both the bright and the dark aspects of life, the obverse and reverse sides of historical events. They may deal with a sub-culture as opposed to officially recognised culture, with vernacular history in contrast to the official version of history.[43]

However fictional texts clearly mark their representations of the world as images of artistic perception. Following the recent literary criticism of Brockmeier et al., the present study offers the concept of historical experience to tackle the

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[41]S. Greenblatt, *Representing the English Renaissance*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988, 1.

[42]See Greenblatt, 1988, 20. The concept of the multi-voiced or polyphonic novel also appears in Bakhtin's literary criticism. See M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. C. Emerson, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 5-46.

[43]On the concept of vernacular culture see G. Dudbridge, *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China. A Reading of Tai Fu's 'Kuang-i chi'*, in press, 74-75, 134.

problem of mimesis in fiction.[44] The novel does not mirror 'historical reality'; rather it presents a version of perceived history. It reflects an account of 'historical experience' through the art of fiction. Our interest in one specific work of seventeenth-century Chinese fiction will focus on this very issue: how written discourse communicates historical experience.

## 3. The Novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*

The main object of attention in the present study is one fictional narrative, the novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* (hereafter abbreviated as *Yinyuan zhuan*).

### a) *Macrostructure*

The *Yinyuan zhuan* is an extended narrative in vernacular Chinese prose interspersed with verse. The linguistic form and structure characterise the novel as a *zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說, chapter-linked novel. In this respect the novel follows the tradition of the 'four masterworks', *sida qishu* 四大奇書 (i.e. *Sanguozhi yanyi* 三國志演義, *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 and *Jin Ping Mei*). As a novel of manners comprising one hundred chapters, the *Yinyuan zhuan* adopts narrative conventions primarily from the *Jin Ping Mei*. Like the *Jin Ping Mei*, the *Yinyuan zhuan* sets its place of action mainly in Shandong Province. Unlike the 'four masterworks', however, the action takes place during the mid-Ming dynasty. The story sets its action in the period between the 1440s and the 1490s, from the Zhengtong 正統 reign period (1436-1449, Emperor Yingzong 英宗, r. 1436-1449, 1457-1464) to Hongzhi 弘治 (Xiaozong 孝宗, 1488-1505). However the novel confuses its chronology in the course of the plot action. The use of time indicates the fictional conception of the historical framework and draws attention to a narrative convention in the traditional Chinese novel i.e. to use 'fictional garb' for the depiction of contemporary realities at the time of composition.[45]

As the present title of the book '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*' ('A Tale of Marriage

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[44]See P. Brockmeier, 'Literatur als erfahrene Geschichte. Überlieferung und Erklärung erlebter Gegenwart bei Montaigne, Meslier, Voltaire und Primo Levi', in H. Eggert, U. Profitlich and K. R. Scherpe, eds., *Geschichte als Literatur*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990, 40-55, esp. 41.

[45]Cf. Hegel, 1981, 67-103.

Destinies to Bring Society to its Senses') and an earlier title '*E yinyuan*' 惡姻緣 ('Horrific Marriage Destinies') announce, the principle of *yuan* 緣, 'destiny' or 'affinity' in Buddhist terminology, governs a network of relationships in human society. *Yuan* mainly functions in the specific usage of *yinyuan* 姻緣, the affinity that brings men and women together. It works in both its positive sense as the source of love and marriage and its negative sense as predestined enmity and a bond of tragedy. As a panoramic view of society, the novel depicts more than a dozen major protagonists, several hundred minor characters and masses of anonymous inhabitants of its world.

The principle of *yuan* intertwines with the concept of karmic retribution, *yinguo baoying* 因果報應, the corresponding relation of cause and effect in the moral realm. Karmic retribution can occur as reward or punishment, through one's fellow men or heaven, as a response to one's actions or thoughts, in this life or the next one (through reincarnation, *zhuanshi* 轉世/*toutai* 投胎/*tuosheng* 托生). Retribution links with the ancient theory of moral determinism: Heaven encourages virtue and punishes evil; therefore man can determine his reward and punishment through moral action.[46]

The principle of *yuan* divides the plot into two parts i.e. two sets of marriage destinies. The first major protagonist Chao Yuan 晁源 kills with his arrow a fox demon on a hunt in chapter 1. Later Chao Yuan and the fox demon reappear in their next incarnations as the protagonist Di Xichen 狄希陳 and his shrewish wife Xue Sujie 薛素姐 to play out the tale of revenge for the fox's slaughter. Finally in chapter 100 Xue Sujie shoots back the arrow at Di Xichen wounding him fatally. *Yuan* binds Chao Yuan to the fox demon, the masochist Di Xichen to his sadistic wife Xue Sujie, and also links the first major protagonist Chao Yuan to his counterpart Di Xichen, the fox demon to Sujie across two sets of different characters. This is where the paradox of *yuan* in the *Yinyuan zhuan* lies: it links characters but it also divides them into two sets of actors that do not share anything throughout the narrative until they appear on the same stage for the first and last

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[46]See *Mengzi*, 7A.1. In *Mengzi yinde* 孟子引得, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series 17, ed. William Hung et al., Beijing: Hafu-Yanjing xueshe, 1941. Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, repr. 1973, 78.

time in the final chapter 100. Chapter 100 eventually reveals the bonds of *yuan*, karma and reincarnation.

The present study identifies the plot strand about Chao Yuan and the Chao family as the 'Chao plot' and the plot strand about Di Xichen and the Di family as the 'Di plot'. The action of the Chao plot centres around Wucheng 武城 county on the Grand Canal in north-west Shandong. Geographically it also takes us to Huating 華亭 in South Zhili 南直隸, Tongzhou 通州 in North Zhili 北直隸, Beijing and the north-western frontier region. The action of the Di plot centres around Mingshui Village 明水鎮 near Xiujiang 繡江 river in the central inland region of Shandong north-east of Mount Tai.[47] It also moves to Jinan, the area around Mount Tai and as far as Beijing and Chengdu 成都 in Sichuan 四川.

Apart from the final epiphanies in chapter 100, the two strands never mix, its respective characters and actions never mingle. Whilst remaining confined within different chapters, the two strands however intertwine and alternate throughout the narrative. The first and most abrupt change from the Chao plot to the Di plot happens in the beginning of chapter 23 as the reader is caught unawares. The narrating voice explains that plot, actors and place of action have suddenly changed as we now deal with the reincarnation of the previous set of characters. Paradoxically the rupture in the narrative is not clear-cut. The Chao plot later resumes its threads and its story carries on at intervals up to chapter 100. Paradoxes abound: some characters of the Chao clan 'survive' despite the announcement of the reincarnation scheme. Whilst some Chao plot characters reincarnate into the new Di plot, others reincarnate and remain within the Chao plot. Reincarnation in this novel can also effect change of personality, thus creating a new character rather than reincarnating a previous one. The Di plot moreover contains various side-plots that seem entirely disconnected from both the Chao and the Di plots.

While most side-plots may count as variations of themes from the main plot, chapters 23 and 24 represent the most detached part of the narrative. They sketch a blueprint of utopia in paradoxical antithesis to the other ninety-eight chapters of the novel. Although the good place (*eu topos)* is right here and now, in the midst of the action and in chronological order, it exists nowhere (*ou topos*) except in blurred

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[47]See Appendix A.1.

memories of a distant past.[48] Chapters 23 and 24 depict an antithetical counter-world to the worlds of both the Chao and the Di plots. The contrast throws new light on these worlds: they emerge as visions of nightmares, dominated by the principle of negative morality. The sudden change of perspective invokes a moral shock in the reader as his perception changes and he recognises the dichotomy of utopia and anti-utopia. The graph illustrates the plot division in the novel with its apparent lack of balance.[49] As a paradoxical principle of bondage and discord, *yuan* thus defines two plot strands in the narrative that break the unity of action, disrupt the flow of the story and disturb the harmony of the novel.

Chapters 23 and 24 appear as a pivotal point in the novel as they fill the space between incarnation and reincarnation, life and new life within the story. When the narrative closes with the final revelations about the scheme of destiny (*yuan*), reincarnation and karmic retribution at the end of chapter 100, it directs the reader's attention yet again back to chapters 23 and 24 as the watershed between the destiny (*yuan*) of Chao Yuan and his reincarnation as Di Xichen. Literary criticism has pointed out that the name of the first protagonist Chao Yuan (源) indicates the origin (*yuan* 原/元) of the drama in the novel.[50] However the character also puns on destiny (*yuan* 緣), the framework of structure, theme and action in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. The concern with *yuan* as the governing principle of the world opens up the broader question of human morality and individual responsibility for the good and the bad worlds in the novel.

### b) *Themes*

The novel describes the worlds of the Chao and the Di families as visions of manners and morals turned inside out and topsy-turvy. The title *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* already proclaims a moral message to mankind - a tale of marriages for the benefit of didactic insight. It remains questionable how much importance we can

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[48]Thomas More's neologism utopia connotes a place that is both good and nowhere, playing on the Greek words for 'no place' and 'good place'. Cf. David Miller, ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell Reference, 1987, 533-538; W. von Koppenfels, '*Mundus Alter et Idem*. Utopiefiktion und mennipeische Satire', *Poetica* 17, 1982, 16-66.

[49]See Appendix B.1.

[50]E.g. cf. Plaks, 1985, 566.

attach to the expression *xingshi* 醒世 - 'to bring society to its senses', a title not uncommon in Chinese fiction.[51] Yet the prelude (*yinqi)* 引起 to the narrative begins with the very issue of human nature and moral determinism. The discussion opens with the problem of human happiness and immediately plunges into paradox: the narrating voice questions and inverts Mencius' concept of man's three greatest sources of happiness in life ( - which include first having one's parents' alive and one's brother's well; second not being ashamed to face Heaven or man; third having the most talented pupils in the Empire under one's care; whilst explicitly excluding being ruler over the Empire).[52] The narrating voice places the relationship of husband and wife supreme as the ultimate source of happiness. Thus the traditional order of the five ethical relations in the Confucian understanding of society (ruler and subject, father and son, older and younger brother, husband and wife, friend and friend) also suffers inversion.[53] The narrating voice expounds its concept of the perfect society and its contrary: the highest form of happiness lies in a harmonious marriage and vice versa an ill-fated marriage makes the world the worst hell. Both positive and negative marriages result from destiny and karmic retribution.

Paradoxically the bulk of the narrative does not focus throughout on the framework of marriage destinies and retribution. As the first and second main protagonists Chao Yuan and Di Xichen play out their dramas of marital discord and retribution, tensions in human relationships and destinies of desire or repulsion exceed the axis of husband and wife. Rulers and subjects, fathers and sons, elder brothers and younger brothers, and friends enter into the focus of attention as the narrative traces the lives of other inhabitants of its worlds. We watch on the national level emperors and the people, powerful court eunuchs and their subordinates, ministers and subjects; on the local level district magistrates and the locals, masters and servants. We follow the lives and careers of fathers and sons such as the major protagonists Chao Sixiao 晁思孝, Chao Yuan, Squire Di

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[51]E.g. Feng Menglong's *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言; *Xingshi dier qishu* 醒世第二奇書 (another title for *Shidiantou* 石點頭).

[52]*Mengzi*, 7A.20.

[53]On the five relations see 'Zhongyong' 中庸, *Liji* 禮記, Song edn. reprinted by Ruan Yuan 阮元 in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, 1816, repr. Kyoto, 1971, 52.18b. *Mengzi*, 3A.4.

狄員外 (Zongyu 宗羽), Di Xichen, Professor Xue 薛教授, Xue Rubian 薛如卞, Xue Rujian 薛如兼 and many more among their relatives and other minor characters. We observe Chao Yuan first congregate with his peers and later slight his old friends, Di Xichen grow up in mischievous brotherhood with his cousins and friends, as well as other brothers in harmonious unison or as spiteful enemies. We also see much more in sharp detail: doctors, patients, teachers, students, merchants and clients. We moreover enter into the world of women: we meet not only virtuous and shrewish wives but also a multitude of mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, maids, cooks and servants. We encounter women inside the house and also out on the streets as nuns, match-makers, charlatans, tourists and pilgrims. In sum - a panoramic grand view of society unfolds before us and explodes the thematic frame of marriage destinies.

Retribution itself ceases to apply systematically. Some cases of crime entail punishment that seems grotesquely out of proportion (such as Chao Yuan's slaughter of a fox and the subsequent retribution on him and his reincarnation Di Xichen). Other cases do not receive any retribution. Nor is reward distributed in fair justice. Crime abounds, corruption proliferates, power rests on malpractice and misgovernment. Quack doctors flourish and healers do not heal but blackmail. Buddhist and Daoists do not renounce profane desires but pursue women, wine and wealth. National and local rulers do not execute good government but abuse their positions of power to gratify their greed and personal desires. Scholars appear as illiterate and the literati elite lacks sophistication and refinement. Teachers do not teach but extort money and kill. Students do not study but play. Few of them receive their due retribution. There are also positive examples of doctors, healers, religious men, rulers and literati but not all of them receive their due reward. As the narrative focus traces human follies, vices and virtues as if under the satirical magnifying glass, the structural framework of karmic retribution crumbles. As the narration engages in social observation, the patterns of crime/punishment, retribution/reward, good/bad, vice/virtue, ideal/anti-ideal dissolve. It is in these very loopholes of the plot, its incongruities and open ends that we may look for the most 'realistic' glimpses of perceived reality in fiction.

Although the title announces marriage destinies as its central theme, this represents only one instance within the large-scale satire on society. Di Xichen's wife Xue Sujie, the reincarnated fox demon, personifies the type of the shrew *par excellence*. Her violence, her cruel sadism and Di Xichen's masochism (as a henpecked husband) invert the traditional conjugal hierarchy as wife subjugates husband. Chao Yuan's wife Ms Ji 計氏, his concubine Zhen'ge 珍哥, Di Xichen's

second wife Tong Jijie 童寄姐 and other minor characters also appear as shrews varying in degrees. However this is not the only kind of collapse in social hierarchies. The narrative also shows how other social relationships such as sovereign and subject, master and servant succumb to ironic inversion and moral breakdown. The world in both the Chao and the Di plots appears as a *mundus perversus* reflecting the moral fall of mankind. By contrast, the utopian chapters 23 and 24 depict the idyll of a blissful world in social and cosmic harmony. In the portrayal of the utopian paradise, the narrative yet again loses sight of the concern with marriage destinies and retribution. The construction of a perfect society and an ideal state focuses on other matters. Chapter 23 describes the exemplary official, the rich local landlord who patronises scholarship, the competent teacher, and studious pupils. Chapter 24 depicts the idyll of nature, the harmony of the seasons and the perfect balance in the rhythms of family life. The model family centres on the type of the self-sufficient farmer-scholar who lives in a pastoral paradise free from the troubles of a money economy and power politics. All these themes form a rich survey of humanity and fill the plots on the lives, marriages and destinies of the Chao and Di families.

### c) *Authorship*

All we know about the author of the *Yinyuan zhuan* is that he presents himself as a utopianist. His ambiguous penname Xi Zhou sheng 西周生, scholar of the Western Zhou, has been interpreted as a nostalgic reference to the Golden Age of the Western Zhou 西周 dynasty (traditionally BC 1122, historically ca. BC 1050 - 770) as a Confucian utopia.[54] This allusion to the utopian paradise also suggests an awareness of its deplorable loss to the writer's present.

As the *Yinyuan zhuan* focuses on Shandong province and uses Shandong dialect, scholars have credited two famous seventeenth-century writers from Shandong, Pu Songling and Ding Yaokang, respectively with its authorship.[55] Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) was the first scholar to propose Pu Songling as the man

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[54]See *YYZ*, 26.378; cf. Wu, 1986, 40.

[55]On other theories proposed and rejected see Wu, 1986, 82; Marlon Kau Hom, "The Continuation of Tradition: A Study of *Liaozhai zhiyi* by Pu Songling (1640-1715)", Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington 1979, 90-91.

behind the mask of Xi Zhou sheng.[56] He mainly bases his argument on the similarities in plot between the *Yinyuan zhuan* and both the story *Jiangcheng* 江城 in Pu Songling's *Liaozhai zhiyi* and his play *Rangdu zhou* 禳妒咒. Hu Shi's claim has provoked controversy among scholars. His supporters include Sun Kaidi 孫楷弟,[57] Matsueda Shigeo 松枝茂夫,[58] Liu Dajie 劉大杰,[59] Xu Beiwen 徐北文[60] and Li Yongxiang 李永祥[61]. Since the 1950's first Lu Dahuang 路大荒[62] and then scholars such as Liu Jieping 劉階平,[63] Kong Lingjing

[56]Hu Shi 胡適, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* kaozheng' 醒世姻緣傳考證, 1931, repr. in *YYZ*, 3:1448-1495.

[57]Sun Kaidi 孫楷弟, 'Yifeng kaozheng *Xingshi yinyuan* de xin' 一封考證醒世姻緣的信, (1931) repr. in *YYZ*, 3:1500-1527; *idem*, *Zhongguo tongsu xiaoshuo shumu* 中國通俗小説書目, repr. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1991, 238-239.

[58]Matsueda Shigeo 松枝茂夫, '*Seisei innen den* no hanashi' 醒世姻緣伝の話, in *Chûgoku no shôsetsu* 中国の小説, Tokyo, 1948.

[59]Liu Dajie 劉大杰, *Zhongguo wenxue fazhanshi* 中國文學發展史, vol. 3, 1962, repr. Shanghai: Guji, 1982, 1231-1234.

[60]Xu Beiwen 徐北文, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* jianlun' 醒世姻緣傳簡論, in *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳, vol. 1, repr. Jinan: Qilu, 1980, 1-12.

[61]Li Yongxiang 李永祥, 'Pu Songling yu *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*' 蒲松齡與醒世姻緣傳, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 1, 1984, 163-175.

[62]Lu Dahuang 路大荒, '*Liaozhai quanji* zhong de *Xingshi yinyuan* yu *Guci ji* de zuozhe wenti' 聊齋全集中的醒世姻緣與鼓詞集的作者問題, *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, Sept. 1955, repr. in *Ming Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu lunwen ji* 明清小説研究論文集, ed. Zhongguo yuwen xueshe, 1970, 57-63.

[63]Liu Jieping 劉階平, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* de zuozhe yiwen' 醒世姻緣傳的作者疑問, *Zhongguo yizhou* 中國一周 141.1, 1953, 22-23; *idem*, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* zuozhe Xi Zhou Sheng kaoyi' 醒世姻緣傳作者西周生考異, *Shumu jikan* 書目集刊 10.2, 1976, 3-10.

孔另境,[64] Arita Tadahiro 有田忠弘,[65] Cao Zhengyi 曹正義,[66] Chen Bingzao 陳炳藻,[67] Ge Xianning 葛賢寧[68], Jin Xingyao 金性堯,[69] Lu Xiaolei 魯肖雷,[70] Yenna Wu 吳燕娜[71] and Zhang Qingji 張清吉[72] have seriously questioned Hu Shi's claim.

Liu Jieping, Wang Sucun 王素存,[73] Marlom Kau Hom[74] and Tian Pu 田璞[75] interpret Xi Zhou sheng as an allusion to Xi sheng 西生, the style of Ding Yaokang and attribute the *Yinyuan zhuan* to the author of the novel *Xu Jin Ping*

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[64]Kong Lingjing 孔另境, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shiliao* 中國小説史料, Shanghai, 1959, repr. 1962, 162-163.

[65]Arita Tadahiro 有田忠弘, '*Seisei innen den* no kotoba' 醒世姻緣伝のことば, *Ryûkoku daigaku bukkyô bunka kenkyûjo kiyô* 竜谷大学仏教文化研究所紀要 14, 1975, 19-28.

[66]Cao Zhengyi 曹正義, 'Jindai wenxian yu fangyan yanjiu' 近代文獻與方言研究, *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 3, 1984, 43-48, 68; and '*Liaozhai* liqu yuci zhengshi' 聊齋俚曲語詞證釋, *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan* 蒲松齡研究集刊 1, 1980, 213-228.

[67]Chen Bingzao 陳炳藻, 'Pu Songling ye shi Xi Zhou sheng ma?' 蒲松齡也是西周生嗎, *Zhongbao yuekan* 中報月刊 69, 1985, 64-70; 70, 1985, 45-48.

[68]Ge Xianning 葛賢寧, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shi* 中國小説史, Taibei: Zhonghua wenhua, 1956, 166-168.

[69]Jin Xingyao 金性堯, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* zuozhe fei Pu Songling shuo' 醒世姻緣傳作者非蒲松齡説, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 4, 1980, 307-317.

[70]Lu Xiaolei 魯肖雷, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* zhong de dianshi' 醒世姻緣傳中的典史, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 41.1, 1987, 62.

[71]Yenna Wu, "Marriage Destinies to Awaken the World: a literary study of *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*", Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University 1986, 19-58.

[72]Zhang Qingji 張清吉, *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan xinkao* 醒世姻緣傳新考, Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji, 1991, 1-32.

[73]Wang Sucun 王素存, '*Xingshi yinyuan* zuozhe Xi Zhou sheng kao' 醒世姻緣作者西周生考, *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 17.3, 1958, 7-9.

[74]M. K. Hom, 1979, esp. section 2.2: 76-106.

[75]Tian Pu 田璞, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* zuozhe xintan' 醒世姻緣傳作者新探, *Henan daxue xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue)* 河南大學學報哲學社會科學 86.5, 1985, 77-82.

*Mei*. Kôsaka Jun'ichi 香坂順一[76] and Yenna Wu[77] have in turn refuted this attribution by means of comparative analysis of language and style in the *Yinyuan zhuan* and the *Xu Jin Ping Mei*. Nevertheless most recently in the People's Republic of China Zhang Qingji has at great length attempted to establish Ding Yaokang as the author of the *Yinyuan zhuan* (without acknowledging the researches of Kôsaka and Wu however).[78] Xu Fuling 徐復岭 has attributed the *Yinyuan zhuan* to Jia Fuxi 賈凫西 (1589-1675), a literatus from Qufu.[79] His evidence is not conclusive however.[80]

After a thorough survey of the different theories on the authorship of the *Yinyuan zhuan* Yenna Wu concludes that the author probably came from Shandong province and had detailed knowledge of the area, its dialects and customs. He must have been well acquainted with Zhangqiu district in Shandong and also with Beijing.[81] Zhang Qingji however claims that the geographical descriptions of rural Shandong in the *Yinyuan zhuan* describe Zhucheng district (Ding Yaokang's birthplace) and not Zhangqiu.[82] It would need further research on the local histories of Shandong to test the topographical (and historical) identity of the fictional landscape. Poetic licence however suggests that the text may create an idiosyncratic version of the Shandong landscape to fit its ideas about man and nature on the moral map in fiction.

So far then no hard evidence reveals the identity of the author or his whereabouts. The search for the writer seems as fanciful and fruitless as for example in the case of the *Jin Ping Mei*.[83] Considering the sheer multitude of

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[76]Kôsaka Jun'ichi 香坂順一, '*Seisei innen* no sakusha no kotoba', 醒世姻緣の作者のことば, *Min Shin bungaku gengo kenkyûkai kaihô* 明清文学言語研究会会報 5, 1964, 22-38.

[77]Wu, 1986, 58-68.

[78]Zhang Qingji, 1991, 33-62.

[79]Xu Fuling 徐復岭, *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan zuozhe he yuyan kaolun* 醒世姻緣傳作者和語言考論, Jinan: Qilu, 1993, 56-76.

[80]See Yuan Shishuo 袁世碩, 'Xu' 序, in Xu Fuling, *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan zuozhe he yuyan kaolun*, Jinan: Qilu, 1993, 1-5.

[81]Wu, 1986, 86.

[82]Zhang Qingji, 1991.

[83]On *Jin Ping Mei* see A. Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, 55-72.

highly literate men in the late Ming/early Qing who represent potential authors it seems unjustified to restrict the choice to a few famous names.[84] The 'four masterworks' of the Ming novel (*sida qishu*) for example represent milestones in the history of Chinese culture notwithstanding their anonymity. It seems impossible to name one single individual as the author of the novel. But we can retrace how the text transmits voices from within a specific cultural system and historical situation. It is a text that conveys across the centuries a forceful discourse on the perception of the world in its times.

**d) *Dating***

The dating of the novel also poses serious problems. By means of internal evidence Sun Kaidi has suggested the year 1628 as the early limit for the composition of the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Sun found that the fictional character Li Cuiran 李粹然 from chapter 31 of the *Yinyuan zhuan* derives from the historical scholar-official Li Zhengxiu 李政修, *zi* 字 (style): Cuiran 粹然, who - similar to his fictional counterpart - held the post of Assistant Surveillance Commissioner and served as head of the General Surveillance Circuit of Jinan between 1628 and 1634.[85] Until recently scholars regarded the year 1728 as the late limit when the title appeared in a catalogue of Chinese books imported into Japan.[86] Xu Fuling's most recent discovery of external evidence pushes the late limit almost half a century back:[87] a letter (dated ca. 1681) by Zhou Zaijun 周在浚 (b. 1640)[88] to the scholar-official

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[84]Gu Yanwu estimated the number of *shengyuan* 生員 (first degree students) in his days to about half a million; see *Tinglin wenji* 亭林文集, by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, in *Gu Tinglin xiansheng yishu shizhong* 顧亭林先生遺書十種, Pengyingge edn., 1.17b; cf. Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese Gentry. Studies in Their Role in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Society*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955, 99; Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China. Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911*, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962, repr. 1967, 173-178.

[85]Sun Kaidi, in *YYZ*, 1521-1522. For further debate see Zhu Yanjing 朱燕靜, "*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* yanjiu" 醒世姻緣傳研究, M.A. dissertation, Taiwan University 1978, 9; Wu, 1986, 47-49.

[86]*Hakusai shomoku* 舶載書目, ed. Ôba Osamu 大庭修, Suita, 1972, 30/31.28b-29a.

[87]Cf. Xu Fuling, 1993, 26-27.

[88]On Zhou see Hummel, 1943, 173.

Yan Guangmin 顏光敏 (*jinshi* 1667, d. 1686) contains a reference to a novel entitled *E yinyuan* (i.e. *Yinyuan zhuan*).[89] Thus the novel must have been composed sometime between ca. 1630 and ca. 1680, the transition period from the Ming to the Qing dynasty.

Despite this decisive watershed in Chinese history scholars are not agreed whether the novel is a product of the Ming or the Qing dynasty. The defenders of the late Ming theory are Wang Shouyi 王守義,[90] Jin Xingyao[91] and Cao Dawei 曹大為.[92] In opposition Wang Sucun,[93] Chua Siewteen,[94] Zhu Yanjing 朱燕靜,[95] Li Yongxiang,[96] Yenna Wu,[97] and Xu Shuofang 徐朔方[98] argue in favour of the early Qing as the most likely date of composition. Scholars have used a battery of methodologies searching for internal, external, historical, textual, linguistic, stylistic and thematic clues to the origins of the novel without having reached any unanimous conclusion as yet.[99]

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[89]See *Yanshi jiacang chidu* 顏氏家藏尺牘, by Yan Guangmin 顏光敏, repr. Shanghai: Shangwu, 1935, 3.128-129.

[90]Wang Shouyi 王守義, '*Xingshi yinyuan* de chengshu niandai' 醒世姻緣的成書年代, *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, 28 May 1961.

[91]Jin Xingyao, 1980.

[92]Cao Dawei 曹大為, '*Xingshi yinyuan* de banben yuanliu he chengshu niandai' 醒世姻緣的版本源流和成書年代, *Wenshi* 文史 23, Nov. 1984, 217-238; *idem*, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* zuo yu Mingmo bian' 醒世姻緣傳作于明末辨, *Beijing shifan daxue xuebao* (*shehui kexue*) 北京師範大學學報社會科學 4.88, 1988, 64-71.

[93]Wang Sucun, 1958.

[94]Chua Siewteen, "Die Probleme im *Hsing-shih yin-yüan* und seine literarische Stellung", Dr. Phil. dissertation, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München 1966, 56-73.

[95]Zhu Yanjing, 1978.

[96]Li Yongxiang, 1984.

[97]Wu, 1986, 85.

[98]Xu Shuofang 徐朔方, 'Lun *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* yiji ta he *Jin Ping Mei* de guanxi' 論醒世姻緣傳以及它和金瓶梅的關系, *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社會科學戰線 34.2, 1986, 278-287.

[99]Nevertheless some publications still cite Pu Songling as the author, e.g. Liu Ts'un-yan, 'Introduction: "Middlebrow" in Perspective', *Renditions* 17/18, 1982, 1-40, and Wang Chi-chen, 'Translator's Preface', *Renditions* 17/18, 1982, 41-45; and the Taiwanese edition *Xingshi yinyuan*

One incident in the novel singles out the character Chao Sicai 晁思才 as exceptional because he wears a queue.[100] Already in 1645 the new Manchu regime made the queue obligatory for the majority of Chinese citizens.[101] This detail seems to suggest late Ming composition.[102] Another incident compares the character Wang Weilu 汪為露 to the palace eunuchs (*neiguan* 內官) who walk about Zhengzhou 鄭州 (in Henan 河南 province) and Xiongxian 雄縣, Xianxian 獻縣 and Fucheng 阜城 (in North Zhili, modern Hebei 河北 province) begging for food.[103] Xu Fuling claims that this detail suggests composition after the fall of the Ming. He quotes a historical record stating that thousands of eunuchs fled from the imperial palace when Li Zicheng invaded Beijing in the spring of 1644.[104] However this image can also be read as a reference to late Ming events: after his fall from power at the imperial court in the autumn of 1627 the palace eunuch Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568-1627) and a large retinue travelled to Fucheng where Wei committed suicide.[105] Vagabond palace eunuchs seem to have been very much a part of the late Ming landscape.[106]

The attribution of the novel to either dynasty remains enigmatic. All early editions observe the taboo characters on the Ming imperial names and some editions also observe the taboos of the Kangxi reign.[107] But the observation of taboo characters applies inconsistently within the text.[108] This may point to the date of editions rather than composition. References to historical events and imperial institutions in the text do not reveal the position of the text without ambiguity. The text remains silent about the fall of the Ming - evidence not exclusive of

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醒世姻緣, 2 vols., ed. Taibei: Lianjing, 1986 (hereafter: *T-YYZ*).

[100]*YYZ*, 57.823.

[101]Cf. Wakeman, 1985, 646-650.

[102]Cf. Wu, 1986, 76.

[103]*YYZ*, 39.569. On Wang see also sections V.2, IX.1.

[104]See *Jiashen chaoshi xiaoji* 甲申朝事小記, ed. Bao Yangsheng 抱陽生, repr. Beijing: Shumu wenxian, 1987, B10.470. Cf. Xu Fuling, 1993, 28.

[105]See Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China. The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644*, vol. 7, Part I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 612.

[106]See James W. Tong, *Disorder under Heaven. Collective Violence in the Ming Dynasty*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991, 80.

[107]Wu, 1986, 3-4, Chapter 1 and Appendix I.

[108]Cf. Wu, 1986, 69-71.

composition under the Qing.[109] The narrative does not shirk topics relating to state politics and foreign invasion - evidence not conclusive enough to prove Ming composition. Rhetorical empathy and imagery seem to suggest that the text reflects the voice and vision of a Ming citizen but referential details also seem consistent with usage under the Qing. Interpretation of the moralist's voice in the text as the expression of Ming loyalism after the fall of the dynasty has proven a dubious undertaking. In sum research so far has failed to date the composition to either the late Ming or the early Qing in a convincing way.

We cannot exactly pinpoint the actual time of writing but internal evidence provides a historical landmark for what the narrative refers to as 'present'. The text refers to the Ming woman leader Qin Liangyu 秦良玉 (ca. 1574-1648) as a contemporary personage.[110] Qin Liangyu, a native of Zhongzhou 忠州 in Sichuan, first gained military fame alongside her husband, a local chieftain, when quelling a local rebellion in 1600.[111] After his death (ca. 1615) the widow Qin Liangyu herself gained national fame and honours as a military leader. In 1620 and 1630 she received imperial orders to defend the nation against the Manchu invaders. She suppressed several local rebellions in her native province but failed to defeat Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 in 1640.[112] Qin received rank and titles (such as brigade-general, Marquis Zhongzhen 忠貞侯, Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent) for her services to the empire. The Chongzhen 崇禎 emperor (Sizong 思宗, r. 1628-1644) wrote four poems in praise of her bravery and loyalty. She died of illness in 1648. The text of the *Yinyuan zhuan* mentions the glorious widow Qin Liangyu through the filter of Mme Chao's (Chao Furen 晁夫人) consciousness, another brave widow and one of the most reliable and serious characters in the novel.[113] The textual references to Li Cuiran and Qin Liangyu thus suggest that the 'present' in narrative time refers to the years after 1628 and before 1648, roughly spanning the 1630s and 1640s.

The most important implication for the present purpose is that the text itself

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[109]See e.g. Xu Shuofang, 1986, 279.

[110]*YYZ*, 49.720.

[111]On Qin see Hummel, 1943, 168-169; Zhang Qingji, 1991, 211-212.

[112]On Zhang see Hummel, 1943, 37-38.

[113]See section XII.

reflects a world closely focused on late Ming concerns as well as some broader issues of seventeenth-century China. The voices and visions in the text appear fixed on the late Ming state and society and engrossed in its joys and troubles. The text seems to reflect the world through a late Ming mind - even if the author may have composed his art after the dynastic fall yet in a world of his own, a world still pervaded by the atmosphere of the late Ming, a world remote from foreign dominion and the end of the last native dynasty.[114] The present study sets out to explore and reconstruct this very part of seventeenth-century China as a perceived world in contemporary discourse, to recover its voices and visions, dreams, desires and nightmares as they appear in the art of fiction.

**e) *Early Editions***

No editio princeps of the *Yinyuan zhuan* has yet been discovered. All extant editions are clearly marked as re-collated editions (*chongding* 重訂) of an earlier one. No Ming dynasty edition of the *Yinyuan zhuan* is extant today nor has any such bibliographical record come to light as yet. In 1924 the writer Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) mentioned that he had heard of a Ming edition but did not give any further evidence.[115]

Scholars have dated all extant editions to the Qing dynasty.[116] The earliest extant editions divide into two groups: those with a preface dated the cyclical year *wuzi* 戊子 (either 1648, 1708 or 1768) and those with a preface dated *xinchou* 辛丑 (either 1661, 1721 or 1782). One *wuzi* edition comes from the Huaidetang 懷德堂 publishing house, one *xinchou* edition from the Tongdetang 同德堂 publishing house. Scholarly opinion divides as to which of the two is the earlier one. Liu Ts'un-yan suggests that the Tongdetang edition is the earliest extant one

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[114]Like the print 'Writing a Book', dated summer 1644, which conveys an odd sense of serenity and detachment, considering the political conditions of that time. See Appendix C.1.

[115]Letter to Qian Xuantong 錢玄同, dated 26 November 1924, repr. in *Lu Xun shuxin ji* 魯迅書信集, by Lu Xun 魯迅, vol. 2, Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1976, 63.

[116]Cf. Wu, 1986, 'Appendix I: Editions', 284-296; *idem*, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* de banben wenti' 醒世姻緣傳的版本問題, *Zhongwai wenxue* 中外文學 17.2, 1988, 97-107.

and dates it to circa 1725.[117] Yenna Wu speculates that the Huaidetang edition is the earliest extant one and stems from an original printed in 1708 or 1768.[118] She does not date any of the two editions earlier than the *wuzi* year 1708 or the *xinchou* year 1721.

More recently the bibliographer Ôtsuka Hidetaka 大塚秀高 has mentioned in his additional catalogue of Chinese popular fiction an edition he tentatively dates to the Shunzhi 順治 reign period (1644-1661)[119] while cautioning that it may be identical with the Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1736-1795) edition of 1769.[120] According to Wang Shouyi's description this edition observes the late Ming taboos (albeit somewhat inconsistently) but not the Qing dynasty Kangxi emperor's taboos.[121] If this conjecture is correct and the first edition stems from the Shunzhi period, these findings could make a case in support of the theory of late Ming composition. Unfortunately we lack further details as to Ôtsuka's methods of dating to ascertain his claim.[122]

In his letter of ca. 1681 Zhou Zaijun asked Yan Guangmin to return the borrowed manuscript copy of the novel as a publishing house in Wumen 吳門 (Suzhou 蘇州) had prepared a woodblock print edition of the novel for publication and wished to double-check the woodblocks with Zhou's manuscript version before printing. This implies that at least two copies of the novel were circulating in the Jiangnan area by 1681. It is possible, then, that the earliest extant editions stem from 1648 or 1661.[123]

The lack of Ming editions does not exclude composition under the Ming.

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[117]Liu Ts'un-yan, *Chinese Fiction in Two London Libraries*, Hong Kong: Lung Men, 1967, 179, 332-333.

[118]Wu, 1986, 284-296.

[119]A 10x25 edition; see Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良, *Shaoliang conggao* 紹良叢稿, Jinan: Qilu, 1984; cf. Ôtsuka Hidetaka 大塚秀高, *Zôho Chûgoku tsûzoku shôsetsu shomoku* 増補中国通俗小説書目, Tokyo: Kyûko, 1987, 124. Jin Xingyao (1980, 314) also estimates that the earliest edition was printed during the first years of the Qing.

[120]In Tianjinshi renmin tushuguan.

[121]Wang Shouyi, 1961. Wang also estimates that the edition stems from the Shunzhi era.

[122]See Ôtsuka, 1987, 124-125. Ôtsuka moreover notes another 12x25 edition which he dates as pre-Qianlong, in Dalianshi tushuguan and Ôtani Daigaku, Kyôto, Japan.

[123]Xu Fuling, 1993, 21-31.

Wood-carving was a lengthy and expensive task and it would often take years or decades to complete the first edition. Due to financial or other difficulties a writer may not necessarily have lived to see his book finally in print.

### f) *Recent Editions*

Repeated reprints of the *Yinyuan zhuan* in the People's Republic of China since the 1980s seem to reflect a renewed interest in this book. Publishing houses in Jinan, Shanghai 上海 and Henan 河南 issued modern typeset punctuated editions of the novel.[124] Simultaneously a new typeset punctuated edition appeared in Taibei 臺北.[125] Moreover a publishing house in Beijing issued a photographic reprint of the Tongdetang edition in 1988.[126]

### g) *Editions Used for the Present Study*

The present study mainly uses the Shanghai guji 上海古籍 reprint of 1985 as this edition represents the most carefully edited and most inclusive modern edition. As some passages are expurgated without notice, comparison with other editions is necessary. Therefore the present study also uses a recent edition by the Lianjing 聯經 publishing house in Taibei, Taiwan, published in 1986 which contains most of the passages expurgated in the Shanghai guji edition. The Taibei edition however also deletes words and passages with and without notice (mostly different from Shanghai guji). The Taibei and the Shanghai editions differ slightly in punctuation. In addition the present study also refers to the Tongdetang edition (this being the earliest edition of least uncertainty about its dating) which is most complete in contents (but more textually corrupt than the Shanghai guji edition).

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[124]*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, 3 vols., ed. Jinan: Qilu, 1980; *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, 3 vols., ed. Shanghai: Guji: 1981, repr. 1985; *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, 3 vols., ed. Henan: Zhongzhou guji, 1982, repr. 1987.

[125]*Xingshi yinyuan*, 2 vols., ed. Taibei: Lianjing, 1986.

[126]*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, Tongdetang edn., 20 vols., repr. Beijing: Wenxue guji, 1988 (hereafter: *TDT*).

## 4. The Reception of the Novel and the Current Trends in Research

The earliest extant editions contain a preface, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* bianyu' 醒世姻緣傳弁語, (dated *wuzi* and *xinchou* respectively in the different editions) by Huanbi zhuren 環碧主人 (Master of Encircling Emerald) and a prologue, 'yinqi', compiled and written by Xi Zhou sheng and collated by Ranli Zi 然藜子. Not all *wuzi* editions but all *xinchou* editions and later editions contain the guidelines to the novel, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* fanli' 醒世姻緣傳凡例, (8 items)[127] presumably by Xi Zhou sheng[128] followed by a foreword by Dongling xuedaoren 東嶺學道人 (Daoist Student of the Eastern Peak).

These records represent the earliest known discourse on the novel. We do not know much about the identity of the writers except that Huanbi zhuren was the Qing scholar Shen Henghui 沈亨惠.[129] Huanbi zhuren refers to the novel as *Yinyuan qizhuan* 姻緣奇傳 (The Strange Story of Marriage Destinies). Dongling xuedaoren records that an earlier title of the novel was *E yinyuan*. He moreover notes that a certain Ge Shouzhi wrote comments at the end of some chapters. He states that the novel was handed down from Wulin 武林 (Hangzhou) and collated in Baixia 白下 (Nanjing 南京). The scholar Liu Ts'un-yan suggests that the publisher may have fabricated these references to obscure the origins of the book and that the manuscript entitled *E yinyuan* changed its title with the publication of the book.[130] Yenna Wu conjectures that the original edition entitled *E yinyuan* was printed in Hangzhou and then re-collated, perhaps by Ranli Zi, and published in Nanjing.[131]

This raises the question about the geographical origins of the novel. The text predominantly reflects the atmosphere and linguistic environment of Shandong but it also contains descriptions of other parts of China and linguistic expressions from Beijing and southern dialects. It may count as the art of the text to mimic the

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[127]The entry on the *YYZ* in the *Hakusai shomoku* includes only 7 items from the Guidelines.

[128]As Wu conjectures, 1986, 6.

[129]See Chen Naiqian 陳乃乾, *Shiming biehao suoyin* 室名別號索引, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1957, 313; cf. Wu, 1986, 3.

[130]Liu Ts'un-yan, 1967, 332-333.

[131]Wu, 1986, 5.

topography of its plot by the respective linguistic characteristics.[132] It is not altogether inconceivable that the author may have lived outside Shandong at certain times of his life and even may have written his novel on Shandong from across the distance. It is possible that the novel was first printed in the southern regions of the Yangzi river 揚子江. In the late Ming the cities of the Jiangnan area in particular Nanjing, Suzhou and Hangzhou developed into the new centres of a flourishing publishing industry.[133]

During the Qing dynasty the novel appears shrouded in silence (although the mid-Qing editions still extant today suggest a certain popularity of the novel). The title did not make it into the lists of prohibited books during the literary inquisition of the Qianlong reign.[134] The late Qing era seems to have rediscovered the novel.[135] The scholar-official Li Ciming 李慈銘 (1830-1894) mentioned the *Yinyuan zhuan* in his diary *Yuemantang riji bu* 越縵堂日記補 as a realistic masterpiece.[136] The archaeologist and literary critic Li Baoxun 李葆恂 (1859-1915) praised the *Yinyuan zhuan* for its narrative art more highly than the novel *Rulin waishi*.[137] The poet Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (1848-1905) emphasised in a letter to the reformer Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) the importance of the *Yinyuan zhuan* along with the *Shuihu zhuan* and the *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 as a model for China's future writers.[138] These references in the writings of late Qing literati show that the *Yinyuan zhuan* attracted the attention of scholars before the

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[132]For example Mme Tong in Beijing talks in Beiing dialect. *YYZ*, ch. 54, 55, 70, 71, 75, 77, 79, 81, 84, 85.

[133]See Ôki Yasushi 大木康, 'Minmatsu kônan ni okeru shuppan bunka no kenkyû' 明末江南における出版文化の研究, *Hiroshima daigaku bungakubu kiyô* 広島大学文学部記要 50, Jan. 1991, 156-176.

[134]It is not mentioned in e.g. L. Carrington Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-lung*, rev. ed., New York: Paragon, 1966.

[135]See *Qizhuiji* 七綴集, by Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1985, 95.

[136]Entry for 8 March 1860, in *Yuemantang riji bu* 越縵堂日記補, by Li Ciming 李慈銘, repr. Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936, 7.20b.

[137]*Jiuxue an biji* 舊學盦筆記, by Li Baoxun 李葆恂, in *Yizhou Lishi congkan* 義周李氏叢刊, cited in Qian Zhongshu, 1985, 95.

[138]*Yu Liangren gong lun xiaoshuo shu* 與梁任公論小説書, by Huang Gongdu 黃公度, cited in Qian Zhongshu, 1985, 95.

May Fourth Movement.

Although Lu Xun failed to include the *Yinyuan zhuan* in his influential history of Chinese fiction *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe* 中國小説史略,[139] he mentioned the novel in his correspondence.[140] Lu Xun compared the style of the *Yinyuan zhuan* to the early Qing novel *Pingshan lengyan* 平山冷燕.

In 1931 the poet Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1895-1931) and the scholar Hu Shi, one of the leading voices in the May Fourth Movement, drew attention to the *Yinyuan zhuan* as an important cultural monument of China's past.[141] In their search for literary and linguistic models to shape a modern medium for expression they welcomed the *Yinyuan zhuan* as a traditional novel in the vernacular. Since Hu Shi's attribution of the novel to Pu Songling research on the *Yinyuan zhuan* has predominantly been absorbed with the debate over authorship and problems of dating.

More recently scholars tend to place greater emphasis on the textual criticism of the *Yinyuan zhuan* and on its literary and historical significance. In 1985 Plaks published an article on the *Yinyuan zhuan* with special reference to problems of rhetoric, realism and its relation to trends in intellectual history.[142] He has shown how the *Yinyuan zhuan* reflects many aspects of Neo-Confucian syncretism in late-Ming literati culture similar to the four masterworks of the Ming novel.

Some studies have examined the place of the *Yinyuan zhuan* in literary history. Ying Bicheng 應必誠 has compared the *Yinyuan zhuan* and the *Hongloumeng* while mainly resorting to the critical jargon of Marxist literary criticism.[143] Ying and other Chinese Marxist critics regard the text as an image of

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[139]Different theories exist as to Lu Xun's motives, see Huang Suqiu 黃肅秋, 'Zaiban qianyan' 再版前言, in *YYZ*, 1:1-2; M. Motsch, '*Ehegeschichten zur Erleuchtung der Welt*. Ein Roman aus der Qing-Dynastie', *Orientierungen* 1, 1991, 79-98, 96. As to subsequent scholarly interest in the novel, Lu Xun's neglect had disastrous consequences.

[140]Letter to Qian Xuantong (26 November 1924), repr. in *Lu Xun shuxin ji*, 2:63.

[141]Xu Zhimo 徐志摩, '*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* xu' 醒世姻緣傳序 (1931), repr. in *YYZ*, 3:1435-1447; Hu Shi 胡適, in *YYZ*, 3:1448-1495.

[142]Plaks, 1985.

[143]Ying Bicheng 應必誠, '*Hongloumeng* yu *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*' 紅樓夢與醒世姻緣傳, in Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan wenxue yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院文學研究所, ed., *Hongloumeng yanjiu jikan* 紅樓夢研究集刊, vol. 12, Shanghai: Guji, 1985, 203-220, *idem*, 'Lun *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*' 論醒世姻緣傳, in Zhao Jingshen 趙景深, ed., *Zhongguo gudian*

society that mirrors the contemporary 'feudal system'. Their political jargon glosses over the difficulties of evaluating and interpreting the novel as a literary text. Recently Cao Yibing compared the *Yinyuan zhuan* to the early Qing novel *Linlanxiang* 林蘭香.[144]

Xu Junhui 徐君慧 has described the place of the *Yinyuan zhuan* within the literary-historical development from the *Jin Ping Mei* to the *Hongloumeng* as an important bridge between the two.[145] Xu Shuofang has discussed some aspects of the *Yinyuan zhuan* and its debt to the *Jin Ping Mei*.[146] Thus research so far has examined the *Yinyuan zhuan* mainly in view of the two most famous works of fiction that flank its time of composition, the *Jin Ping Mei* and the *Hongloumeng*. It has been pointed out above that the *Yinyuan zhuan* adopts the main narrative conventions of the *Jin Ping Mei* and contains narrative traits that find further development in the *Hongloumeng*. However its relation to contemporary fiction within the seventeenth century still awaits further discussion.

Scholars have mentioned similarities between the *Yinyuan zhuan* and Ding Yaokang's *Xu Jin Ping Mei* from the year 1662.[147] Although certain moral themes such as the concept of karmic retribution play major roles in both books, they differ radically with regard to perspective and moral outlook. The present study finds that greater similarities exist between the *Yinyuan zhuan* and other kinds of late Ming fiction from the 1620s and 1630s such as Feng Menglong's 馮夢龍 (1574-1646) *Sanyan* 三言 story collection and Ling Mengchu's 凌蒙初 (1580-1644) *Erpai* 二拍. Intertextual references to these and other works tightly bind the *Yinyuan zhuan* into the literary context of late Ming writings.[148]

Yenna Wu's detailed studies on the *Yinyuan zhuan* have mainly emphasised

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*xiaoshuo xiqu lunji* 中國古典小說戲曲論集, vol. 2, Shanghai: Guji, 1987, 306-326.

[144]Cao Yibing 曹亦冰, *Linlanxiang he Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 林蘭香和醒世姻緣傳, Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu, 1993.

[145]Xu Junhui 徐君慧, *Cong Jin Ping Mei dao Hongloumeng* 從金瓶梅到紅樓夢, Nanning: Guangxi, 1987.

[146]Xu Shuofang, 1986.

[147]E.g. Huang Lin 黃霖, 'Ding Yaokang jiqi *Xu Jin Ping Mei*' 丁耀亢及其續金瓶梅, *Fudan xuebao* (*shehui kexue*) 復旦學報社會科學 4, 1988, 55-60, 56.

[148]Cf. present study, Parts 1-3.

internal aspects of textual analysis.[149] She has investigated the theme of the shrew and the device of repetition. Research on narrative technique such as the device of repetition provides insight into the formal ways of literary expression in seventeenth-century Chinese fiction. An article by Motsch reviews the *Yinyuan zhuan* with respect to the image of the shrew and compares Xue Sujie to Lin Daiyu 林黛玉 from the *Hongloumeng*.[150] Ôsawa Noboru 大沢昇 regards the literary reflections of the shrew as an indigenous trait of Chinese culture that did not capture the Japanese imagination.[151] The research on the image of the shrew describes one popular phenomenon of traditional Chinese fiction and interprets one aspect of its cultural implications.

Hu Shi has pointed out in his pioneer research on the *Yinyuan zhuan* that the novel ought to become obligatory reading for any future historian of social customs, education, economics, politics, and for anyone with an interest in the history of corruption in the institutional system, the sufferings of the common people and religious life of seventeenth-century China.[152] However the historical implications of the novel, a mine of information on life in Shandong in the seventeenth century, still remain under-researched to a large extent. The brief articles of Chen Keng 陳鏗 and Isobe Yûko 磯部祐子 examine the image of the gentry as reflected in the *Yinyuan zhuan*.[153] The historians of economics Jing and Luo have used the novel as historical source material in their study of landlord and

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[149]Wu, 1986; *idem*, 'The Inversion of Marital Hierarchy: Shrewish Wives and Henpecked Husbands in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48.2, 1988, 363-382, *idem*, 'Repetition in *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51.1, 1991, 55-87.

[150]Motsch, 1991, 97-98.

[151]Ôsawa Noboru 大沢昇, *Chûgoku no seiai tekunorojî* 中国の性愛テクノロジー, Tokyo: Seikyû, 1992, 160-174.

[152]Hu Shi, in *YYZ*, 3:1495.

[153]Chen Keng 陳鏗, 'Cong *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* kan Ming Qing zhiji de difang shishen' 從醒世姻緣傳看明清之際的地方士紳, *Xiamen daxue xuebao* 廈門大學學報 78.4, 1984, 91-99; Isobe Yûko 磯部祐子, 'Chûgoku shôsetsu, gikyoku ni arawareta kyôshinzô. Omoni Minmatsu kara Shinchûki ni kakete' 中国小説戯曲にあらわれた郷紳像、主に明末から清中期にかけて, *Tôhôku daigaku Nihon bunka kenkyûjo kenkyû hôkoku* 東北大学日本文化研究所研究報告 23, 1987, 175-193.

labour in Shandong province in the late imperial age.[154] Their approach however leaves one question open: can we neglect the art of fiction altogether? The novel after all represents a literary construct that conveys its own particular perception of the world. Dudbridge discusses the difficulties of using literary texts as a source of sociological information in his analysis of the *Yinyuan zhuan* with special reference to the Taishan pilgrimage in seventeenth-century China:

> We shall never be in a position to repose simple trust in the author's statements. But neither can we dismiss them as random fantasy bearing no relation to real human experience. Our insights will emerge somewhere between those two positions, and we must find them out through critical study.[155]

The present study aims to open further windows on the world of seventeenth-century China through the critical analysis of the narrative and the way it perceives the world and communicates historical experience. The present study will attempt to reconstruct the cultural contexts as other versions of perceived reality. Critical comparison of the *Yinyuan zhuan* with contemporary literary and historical sources will attempt to place the novel into its context.

## 5. Style of Research

In analysing the *Yinyuan zhuan* the first task is to investigate the characteristics of this text. The text presents itself as a novel, a fictional story. Its subject-matter defines the narrative as a novel of manners. Wu describes the *Yinyuan zhuan* as a 'novel of social realism'. However the 'realism' of the novel has proven a major dilemma for its critics. Plaks for example observes:

> Although in much of the book we get the sense of a thoroughgoing realism that is almost cinematographic in detail (...) this mimetic treatment gives way to various levels of unreality or distortion at many key points.[156]

Critics have been battling with the generic classifications of the novel. Labels for the novel range from 'photographic realism', 'not mimetic but rather stylised

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[154]Jing and Luo, 1959.

[155]Dudbridge, 1991, 230.

[156]Plaks, 1985, 564.

realism,' to 'a conventional Buddhist tale of moral retribution' that fails 'to achieve realistic integrity'.[157] The guidelines to the *Yinyuan zhuan* reflect the paradox of fiction and realism within the text:

> First, Chao Yuan, Di Zongyu, Miss Tong and Miss Xue in this tale are not the real names for I do not wish to let the facts expose the people.
> Second, for all the people with flawless moral conduct I use their real names...[158]

According to this claim the fictional and the historical coexist within the narrative as complementary parts rather than opposites. The narrative even becomes explicit in erasing the borders of history and fiction, reality and illusion by means of paradox. The introductory poem to chapter 9 for example states: 'Virtue becomes vice, fiction becomes truth.'[159] In another example, the narrative shows that the character *zhen* 珍 (precious) in the name Zhen'ge 珍哥 puns on *zhen* 真 (real) and creates a joke as *zhen* is substituted by *jia* 假 (false), so that the name turns out to be a pun on Jiage 假哥.[160] This anticipates the eighteenth-century novel *Hongloumeng* which develops this paradox further. As the reader enters into the realm of the novel the text declares:

> Truth becomes fiction when the fiction's true,
> Real becomes not-real when the unreal's real.[161]

In the *Yinyuan zhuan* the key notion *yuan* 緣 (destiny) itself takes part in the paradoxical play on reality and illusion appearing as *jiayuan* 假緣, a false form of destiny.[162] The *Yinyuan zhuan* links its play on history and fiction, reality and

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[157]Ch'en Shouyi, *Chinese Literature - A Historical Introduction*, New York: Ronald, 1961, 573; Yenna Wu, 1986, 170; C. T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel. A Critical Introduction*, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968, 204-205.

[158]*YYZ*, 3:1537.

[159]*YYZ*, 9.127.

[160]See *YYZ*, 10.146.

[161]*Hongloumeng* 紅摟夢, by Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, ed. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1957, 1.5; translated by D. Hawkes, *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 1, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, 55.

[162]See *YYZ*, 80.1134.

illusion, with a positive/negative axis as in good and bad, virtue and vice, the ideal and its antithesis. The contrast of positive and negative morality in the world becomes most clear-cut in chapters 23 and 24. These chapters explicitly declare themselves as sketches of utopia. They draw on the ancient utopian thought and tradition of China mixing literary antecedents with contemporary images. Chinese and Western critics have both used the term 'utopia' to describe these two chapters.[163] Although critics have pointed to the importance of utopian visions in seventeenth-century fiction, no detailed and critical analysis of this phenomenon has been undertaken so far. It would contribute towards a deeper understanding of this novel and the culture from which it emerged if we knew more about this 'utopia' in fiction and its relation to history.

The present study proposes to trace the concept of utopia within the narrative of the *Yinyuan zhuan* to see what it can reveal about the text and its meaning, the perception of the world and the construction of historical experience in written discourse. Utopia serves as an analytical construct to recreate a glimpse of the perception of the world and its moral evaluation through the eyes of a contemporary observer. In the artistic construction of utopia we encounter ideas about the moral universe, desires and fears, hope and dismay as they may have existed in seventeenth-century Chinese imagination.

The neologism 'utopia' has entered into the generic repertoire since Thomas More's *Utopia,* first published in 1516. Here we must identify and explain utopia in Chinese terms. The present study discusses the Chinese utopian *topoi* and themes of chapters 23 and 24. The concept and conventions of utopia are explored in terms of the indigenous Chinese traditions of earlier philosophical and literary writings and in view of their cultural background.[164] The advantage of using generic terms (such as utopia and anti-utopia) does not lie in classification but rather in dealing with the processes of reconstruction, interpretation and the evaluation of a text. As the literary critic Fowler states:

> In literary communication, genres are functional: they actively form the experience of each work of literature. (...) When we try to decide the genre of a work, then, our aim is to discover its

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[163]K. McMahon, 'Review: *Margins of Utopia: Shui-hu hou-chuan and the Literature of Ming Loyalism* by Ellen Widmer', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48.2, 1988, 545-550, esp. 548-549; Xu Shuofang, 1986, 282.

[164]See section III.

meaning.[165]

Instead of defining and classifying, genres have to do with identifying and communicating. Following Fowler we identify genre to interpret the exemplar. We use the concept of utopia as a subgenre/mode which structurally depends on a genre/kind[166] such as here the *zhanghui xiaoshuo*, chapter-linked novel. Utopia functions as a mode borrowing other kinds as vehicles while retaining its own modal repertoire.

The focus on utopia in a critical study of the *Yinyuan zhuan* represents one possible way of reading the text. However the present study aims to show that the analysis of utopianism serves well to identify some of the major themes in the novel, to interpret its imagery and to reconstruct its significance in the contemporary understanding.

The guidelines to the *Yinyuan zhuan* declare that the tale tries to exalt the virtuous by highlighting their moral conduct, and to warn against vice by presenting as brief an account of the wicked as possible.[167] Paradoxically this message turns out to be blatant irony. The novel renders a tortuous account of physical pain, moral trauma and cosmic collapse - with the exception of chapters 23/24. By contrast the bulk of the narrative appears as the antithetical counter-world to utopia. Its emphasis lies on evil as the dominating force in the world. State and society succumb to satirical inversion and hyperbolic perversion. The notions of utopia and satire overlap for 'the very notion of utopia entails a negative appraisal of present conditions'.[168] Utopia works through the paradox of antithesis i.e. the presentation of a world and its counter-image. Antithesis functions as an ironic figure of identity. Utopia and anti-utopia primarily constitute meaning through their (ironic) relationship to 'reality' - the perception of the world in the text.

Recent research on the literary genre of utopia draws particular attention to the close link between utopia and history. In a study on European literature Vosskamp for example argues that the literary utopia represents a 'response to history'. He claims that utopias do not come into existence in a nowhere place, they are

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[165]A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature. An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, 38.

[166]Cf. Fowler, 1982, 107.

[167]See *YYZ*, 3:1537.

[168]R. C. Elliot, *The Shape of Utopia. Studies in a Literary Genre*, Chicago, 1970, 24.

intricately linked to a specific historical situation and refer to historical contexts more directly than other literary texts.[169] The seventeenth-century Chinese text and its contemporary context that we can know today consist in reconstructed images from surviving sources. Each textual source represents a construct in itself and communicates its particular perception of the past, its specific version of historical experience. We tackle the concepts of perception and historical experience by identifying voice and vision in textual analysis. The text consists of several agents that reflect perceived reality by speaking and seeing: the speakers/narrators and the perceivers/focalizors.[170] The terms narrator and focalizor refer to a linguistic function and not a person. As the literary critic Bal defines, they represent the agent that utters the linguistic signs which constitute the text. Consequently both narrator and focalizor represent an 'it', a linguistic subject and not a 'he' or 'she', a male or female person.[171] This also illustrates their difference to the biographical author or the implied author.[172] Narrator(s) and focalizor(s) can appear as either identical or different agents. In addition the text reflects another layer of voices and visions: those of the fictional characters/actors who also perform by speaking and perceiving.

The voice of the narrator in the *Yinyuan zhuan* frequently interferes in the action as an omniscient agent. It also intrudes into the story announcing its presence as a visible 'I' (*wo* 我). The 'I' in the story is but one version of the narrator, one

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[169]W. Vosskamp, 'Utopie als Antwort auf Geschichte. Zur Typologie literarischer Utopien in der Neuzeit', in H. Eggert, U. Profitlich and K. R. Scherpe, eds., *Geschichte als Literatur*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990, 273-283, 274.

[170]Genette distinguishes between narration and focalization (also: point of view, points of perception, narrative perspective), see G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980, 189-191. Bal introduces the concept of the focalizor next to the narrator to distinguish between 'those who see' and 'those who speak', see M. Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen, Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1988, 119-120.

[171]While Scholes defines the narrator like a *histor* as a 'man of authority', (see R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, 266) Bal (1988, 118-121) points out that the narrator is not a story-teller but an 'it'.

[172]On the concept of the implied author see W. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 1961, repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983, 151. Bal defines the term as the 'result of investigation of the meaning of the text, and not the source of that meaning.' Bal, 1988, 120.

of the several different possibilities of its manifestation. The narrator in the *Yinyuan zhuan* appears in many guises - telling and commenting while shifting its tone of voice and parading once as the moralist, then as the preacher, teacher, satirist, humorist and caricaturist. It assumes the voices of an epic poet, scribe, reporter, commentator and eye-witness. Addressing both fictional characters and the implied reader direct, it functions as a mediator between the actors and the narratee. The focalizor also appears as a flexible agent that shifts the narrative focus from the narrator to the actors reflecting various angles of vision and portraying different personalities.

One striking feature of the narrating voice is to stress the topicality of events in the story. By referring to 'nowadays' (*jin* 今), it fabricates the illusion of topical references linking the world in the story to the contemporary present time of narrating.[173] Moreover the narrating voice frequently juxtaposes the 'present' of the story and the past. It projects past and present as antithetical images. Perceived past and present divide according to moral criteria. The present represents a fallen world in contrast to a morally intact past. But the perceived present also embeds positive visions in a series of negative scenes. Here - if we are to believe the claim of the guidelines - fiction and history both divide and converge: the good characters retain their 'real' names and the bad characters assume pseudonyms. Some events masquerade as 'real' and others as unreal. Grotesque and carnivalesque imagery introduces a layer of surrealism in the story. Ultimately both reality and illusion exist in written discourse solely in the perception of the narrator, focalizor and actors. Fiction and history, past and present, utopia and anti-utopia blur and interweave in the textual orchestration of voices and visions. It is the task of critical analysis to reconstruct what they have to tell and to show.

## 6. Three Motifs

Utopia as a vision of humanity centres on considerations of the state and of society. Its main themes present men and women in various social roles, as personified by the fictional characters. Chinese tradition defines society in terms of the four classes: the scholar-officials, the farmers, the artisans and the merchants.[174] Many

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[173]E.g. *YYZ*, 20.304. There are numerous other references; Chapters 23 to 29 depict the most important contrast of 'then' and 'now'.

[174]Earliest reference in the book of *Guanzi* 管子 (ca. 3rd century BC), see *Guanzi jijiao* 管子集校, ed. Guo Moruo 郭沫若 et al., Beijing: Kexue, 1956, 8.138.

ways of categorising social groups exist. In the *Yinyuan zhuan* the shrewish wife has been regarded as the most prominent theme. But despite its declared theme the text reflects much more. It focuses sharply on a grand-scale depiction of society. The panoramic view bears a certain resemblance to Chinese painting as even the most minute detail still appears in focus. A multitude of other major and minor characters receive close attention to detail. The grand vision of humanity puts the single theme of the shrewish spouse in perspective. A critical reappraisal of the novel is needed to see the richness of the text, and to grasp how much more there is to explore.

The present study sets out to explore the units of figurative language in the text that build up imagery - the motifs in the story and their ironic relationship to reality. The following analysis will identify and interpret some of the most prominent motifs in the text. In the analysis of the world in the *Yinyuan zhuan* the following groups appear as most important and interesting in terms of quantity (sheer numbers), attention to detail in literary treatment and quality (as salient figures, outstanding characters both in its positive and negative sense): the healers, the elite and the mother-figure. None of these motifs in the *Yinyuan zhuan* has received detailed critical attention as yet.[175]

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[175]Some aspects of the gentry have been discussed in brief in Chinese and Japanese criticism, see above section I.4. These discussions however cover only a fraction of the motif.

# II

# The Economic Climate

When Di Xichen and his friends travel to Jinan city to take the first public examination they feel 'as if they have ascended to Heaven.'[1] They find the streets full of bookshops, food stores and shops selling various goods. They enjoy the tourist attractions of the city which include restaurants, famous sites on hills, temples, boat trips on the lake and picnics.[2] Di Xichen moreover meets Sun Lanji 孫蘭姬, a singing-girl from the pleasure quarters.

Like Di Xichen and his friends, late Ming citizens would marvel at the wonders of the metropolis. Market towns developed into commercial and cultural centres, increasingly attracting the rural population. The material culture and prosperity of imperial Chinese cities would stun all those - Chinese as well as foreigners - who saw them for the first time. The Korean official Ch'oe Pu 崔溥 (1454-1504)[3] found himself stranded on the shores of China in 1488 after a stormy sea voyage. On his way home he passed through Linqing in Shandong:

It is an important junction between the two capitals[4] and a place where travelling merchants congregate. Areas densely covered with towers and pavilions, an abundance of markets, a wealth of possessions and a vast assembly of boats at anchor [stretch across] dozens of miles (*li*) inside and outside the city. Although the place is inferior to Suzhou and Hangzhou, it is still the grandest in

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[1]*YYZ*, 37.545.

[2]*YYZ*, 37.545-548. See Appendix A.2.

[3]On Ch'oe see L. C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368-1644*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, 257-259; John Meskill, *Ch'oe Pu's Diary: A Record of Drifting Across the Sea*, Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 1965, 1-24.

[4]Nanjing and Beijing.

Shandong and famous throughout the empire.[5]

When the Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) visited Nanjing in the late Ming he praised it as superior to the cities of Europe.[6] Through the eyes of another visitor from Korea, Hong Taeyong 洪大容 (1731-1783), who recorded his impressions of a diplomatic mission to Beijing in 1765/66 in his diary *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi* 湛軒燕記,[7] we can see what a market in an imperial Chinese city would have looked like:

There are many bookshops. Bookcases with more than a dozen shelves are hung up on three walls. The books are neatly arranged in cases with ivory clips and labels. There must be thousands of volumes in each bookshop. Even if you looked up for a long time you could never read all the labels as you would feel dizzy and your sight would blur. (...) I could not tell how many millions of shops there are in these lanes. I could not tell how many myriads of taels the merchandise and labour are worth. But if you looked for something that would be necessary for the livelihood of the people, either in daily life or on a funeral cortège, you would not find a single thing. Nothing is sold but items of strange skills and clever contrivance, extravagant trumpery and things that possess your mind and make you weak.[8]

Like the protagonists of the *Yinyuan zhuan*, the visitors of seventeenth-century Chinese cities would seek distractions. Travelling and tourism became a distinctive

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[5]*Kŭmnam sŏnsaeng p'yohaerok* 錦南先生漂海錄 (1488), by Ch'oe Pu 崔溥, repr. in *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip* 燕行錄選集, 2 vols., Seoul: Taedong Mun-hwa Yŏn'guwŏn 大東文化研究院, Sŏnggyun-gwan University 成均館大學校, 1960-62, vol. 2, 2.50ab.

[6]Louis J. Gallagher, trans., *China in the Sixteenth Century: the Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, New York: Random House, 1953, 268-269. On Ricci see Goodrich, 1976, 1137-1144; Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, London: Faber and Faber, 1985.

[7]On Hong see Gari Ledyard, 'Korean Travelers in China over Four Hundred Years, 1488-1887', *Occasional Papers on Korea*, March 1974, 1-42; *idem*, 'Hong Taeyong and His Peking Memoir', *Korean Studies* 6, 1982, 63-103.

[8]*Tamhŏn yŏn'gi* 湛軒燕記, by Hong Taeyong 洪大容, in *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip*, vol. 1, 3.319ba-bb.

feature of late Ming life.[9] Scenic places throughout the central provinces developed into tourist spots. Guidebooks for travellers emerged as a new genre of writing.[10] In the *Yinyuan zhuan* the pilgrimage to Mount Tai appears as an enterprise in the tourist industry.[11] Taian 泰安, a town at the foot of Mount Tai, grew into a centre for entertainment in the seventeenth century. According to the writer Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597-1684),[12] the place boasted over twenty playhouses, innumberable quarters for storytellers and singers, more than twenty restaurants with one to two hundred employees and inns with courtesans. There were five or six more such centres in the vicinity. They were so popular that customers had to put their names on waiting lists.[13]

Tourism and fun had to be paid for however. When Di Xichen receives four taels from his mother for his trip to Jinan he complains that it is not enough. His father gives him another six taels for books, paper, brushes and ink, warning him not to waste the money.[14] Di Xichen however spends it on his adventures with Sun Lanji. The heroes of the *Yinyuan zhuan* join in the lavish life-style and conspicuous consumption that so many late Ming writers observed and described. At the end of the sixteenth century the scholar-official and artist Zhang Han 張瀚 (1511-1593)[15] reflected on contemporary conditions: 'With the passing of generations customs have changed. Everybody has their minds set on worshipping mammon and

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[9]E.g. *Chuke Pai'an jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇, by Ling Mengchu 凌濛初, ed. Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957, 18.324-325, describes an extravagant boat trip on the West Lake (Xihu 西湖) in Hangzhou; see also the discussion in F. W. Mote, 'Yuan and Ming', in K. C. Chang, ed., *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, 195-257, 245.

[10]See Timothy Brook, *Geographical Sources of Ming-Qing History*, Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1988, 38-42; *idem*, 'Guides for Vexed Travelers. Route Books in the Ming and Qing', *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 4.5, June 1981, 32-76.

[11]Cf. Dudbridge, 1991.

[12]On Zhang see Hummel, 53-54; Pei-yi Wu, 'An Ambivalent Pilgrim to T'ai Shan in the Seventeenth Century', in Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1992, 65-88, esp. 72ff.

[13]*Taoan mengyi* 陶庵夢憶 (written before 1665), by Zhang Dai 張岱, ed. Hangzhou: Xihu, 1982, 54.

[14]*YYZ*, 37.544.

[15]On Zhang see Goodrich, 1976, 72-74.

luxury.'[16] Tian Yiheng 田藝蘅 (1524-ca. 1574)[17] fretted over the amounts of money spent on gambling and sexual pleasures in Hangzhou, Suzhou, Changzhou 常州 and Beijing.[18]

The late Ming appears as an era characterised by the 'commoditisation' of culture: objects became available for buying and selling on an unprecedented scale. Entertainment, pleasure, and women counted among such commodities. In his recent study of late Ming material culture the art historian Clunas points out that even knowledge became a new kind of commodity:

> The almanacs and encyclopaedias, the route books of Ming merchants, the collections of model essays for the civil service examinations and the very guides to elegant living themselves are commodities which make a commodity out of kinds of knowledge which had existed in earlier centuries but which had not been bought and sold. Then, the merchant had learned the route from Nanjing to Suzhou by experience, the son of an elite family had learned the approved style for examination essays from his tutor, and the rules of taste in things had been learned through social intercourse with a peer group. By 1580 all of this knowledge, or a version of it at least, could be bought.[19]

This environment created a craving for possessing things. As not everyone had enough cash available, pawn-broking and money-lending became the business of the day. According to one estimate, around 20,000 pawnshops existed in late Ming China.[20] Later in life Di Xichen also opens a pawnshop.[21] As Hong Taeyong describes ...

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[16]*Songchuang mengyu* 松窗夢語 (1593), by Zhang Han 張瀚, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1986, 7.123.

[17]On Tian see Goodrich, 1976, 1287.

[18]*Liuqing rizha* 留青日札 (1573), by Tian Yiheng 田藝蘅, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1992, 3.60-63.

[19]Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things. Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, Oxford: Polity, 1991, 118; see also p.167.

[20]On pawnshops in late Ming China and in late Ming fiction see Peng Xinwei 彭信威, *Zhongguo huobi shi* 中國貨幣史, Shanghai: Renmin, 1958, repr. 1988, 741-746; on pawnshops in Feng Menglong's stories see Huang Renyu 黃人宇, 'Cong *Sanyan* kan wan Ming shangren' 從三言看晚明商人, *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 中國文化研究所學報 7.1, Dec. 1974, 133-153, 136, 147.

[21]See *YYZ*, 75.1072; 77.1092.

Pawnshops are stores where you can mortgage things for money on interest. The monthly interest rate is two percent. If you exceed the deadline for redeeming your things, then the mortgaged things are sold to make up for the loss. When you enter these stores, you will see that they have absolutely everything, from clothing and jewellery to all kinds of utensils for daily life. All items are labelled and neatly arranged on shelves. (...) Every little village inside and outside the frontier passes that has a street with shops will also have a pawnshop. Its ornamented walls and lofty buildings will moreover mark [the pawnshop] as distinctly different from all other shops. The profit will certainly be sufficient to pay for all its items. The poor depend on [pawnshops] to relieve their misery and lack of money. The wealthy do not dare to sell things for large profits. [A pawnshop] is a must in every market town.[22]

The *Yinyuan zhuan* shows in many ways how monetary transactions reflect the national economic climate. The late Ming state operated on a bimetallic monetary system using silver traded by weight and copper coins issued by the government.[23] Paper currency had been in use in the first half of the Ming reign. By the mid-fifteenth century it had become so inflated that it had fallen into disuse except for ceremonial purposes. In the sixteenth century silver counted as the best medium for business transactions because it was durable, easy to carry and difficult to counterfeit.[24] At the end of the sixteenth century Matteo Ricci mentioned only copper coins and silver as China's monetary currency. He noted that silver was 'used as legal tender in all commercial transactions.'[25] Silver was mined in China to a limited extent. The greater bulk of bullion flowed in from Spanish-America and Japan after 1530. The modern historian Atwell has pointed to the impact of foreign bullion as '*the* most significant factor in the vigorous economic expansion' in late

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[22]*Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, 4.337ab-ba.

[23]On the Ming economy see R. Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1974, esp. 69-74; Peng Xinwei, 1988, esp. 632-752; Chan, 1982, 129-148; W. S. Atwell, 'Notes on Silver, Foreign Trade, and the Late Ming Economy', *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3.8, Dec. 1977, 1-33; *idem*, 'International Bullion Flows and the Chinese Economy *circa* 1530-1650', *Past and Present* 95, 1982, 68-90; *idem*, 'Some Observations on the "Seventeenth-Century Crisis" in China and Japan', *Journal of Asian Studies* 45, 1986, 223-244.

[24]Cf. Chan, 1982, 133.

[25]Gallagher, 1953, 14.

Ming China.[26] The late Ming era, the so-called 'Silver Age',[27] witnessed a rapid growth in the number of periodic markets in rural areas - such as Mingshui in the *Yinyuan zhuan* - alongside the expansion in traditional industries, the development of new industries and the introduction of new food and cash crops.[28] The modern historian Mote notes how urban society changed in consequence:

> Late Ming writers in Nanking and other cities were quite aware of changes in urban life-styles and social attitudes. They relate some of this change to the reform of the tax system, the "Single Whip System" that was progressively developed and applied throughout several decades. Some feature of the reformed fiscal system, particularly those involving commutation of labour services and special exactions, are said by writers of the time to have been conducive to ostentatious consumption in the cities. Urban commoners who had money were no longer under great pressure to conceal that fact; they could display their wealth in elegantly enlarged houses, gardens now free of restrictions of size, gaudier entertainment. A pleasure-loving elite came to be identified with the city by late Ming times.[29]

Life in the city became more luxurious and extravagant.[30] The late Ming writer Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛 (1567-1624) observed this trend in Northern China too:

> When I was a young man I would go to Beijing and not find much in its markets. Getting one fish apart from chicken, goose, mutton and pork would count as a rare delicacy. After twenty years however fish and crabs are cheaper there than in the Jiangnan area and piles of clams, whitebait, razor clams, blood clams, and crabs fill the markets. This also shows how such fashions have spread from the South to the North.[31]

In the *Yinyuan zhuan* we watch this very kind of conspicuous consumption in Northern China for example when Sun Lanji, now married to a pawn-broker in Jinan, prepares a feast for Di Xichen. With satirical hyperbole the narrating voice

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[26]Atwell, 1977, 5.

[27]Atwell, 1982, 83, n.54.

[28]Atwell, 1977, 7.

[29]F. W. Mote, 'The Transformation of Nanking, 1350-1400', in G. W. Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977, 101-153, 151.

[30]Cf. Mote, 1977, 244.

[31]*Wuzazu* 五雜俎, by Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛, 1608 edn., repr. Taibei: Xinxing, 1971, 9.39b.

enumerates the abundance of exotic delicacies she has at hand in the provincial capital of Shandong:

> She took duck eggs from Gaoyou, ham from Jinhua, pickled fish from Huguang, mussels from Ningbo, crabs from Tianjin, diving beetles from Fujian, marinated shrimps from Hangzhou, grapes from Shanxi, candied crab apple balls from Qingzhou, fish in bamboo sprouts from Tianmushan, dried small shrimps from Dengzhou, crisp pancakes from Datong, salted fragrant olives from Hangzhou, carambola from Yunnan, and amber-coloured candies from Beijing and arranged these foods in an exquisite box for fifteen dishes. She moreover prepared four dishes of peeled fruits: one plate of litchis, one plate of air-dry chestnuts, one plate of stir-fried gingko, one plate of walnut meat in *yangwei* 羊尾 bamboo shoots. She furthermore prepared four dishes of savouries: one plate of ginger sprouts steeped in vinegar, one plate of savoury soya beans, one plate of asparagus lettuce, and one plate of sprouts from the tree of heaven.[32]

The new abundance of silver in China and the ensuing extravagance make such scenes typical of the late Ming. This state of affairs was not to last however. The government failed to provide an adequate supply of copper coins. This entailed changes in the silver-copper exchange rate.[33] In theory one tael of silver equalled in value 1,000 copper coins (*qian* 錢/*wen* 文).[34] Coins of larger denominations were rarely minted. The first Ming emperor minted some coins in denominations of up to 10 *qian*. Similar coinage produced during the Tianqi 天啟 period (1621-1628) turned out a total failure and had to be retrieved for recasting.[35] When Di Xichen purchases an academic degree he has to pay for it in copper currency in accordance with a new imperial decree. He has to exchange his father's silver taels (*liang* 兩) into ten-*qian* copper coins (*dangshi zheziqian* 當十折子錢/*zheqian* 折錢). The historian of economics Peng Xinwei conjectures that this unit refers to the copper currency of the Tianqi period.[36] According to the modern scholar Cao Dawei the historical records from the Ming and Qing dynasties mention only one such

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[32]*YYZ*, 50.731.

[33]Cf. Atwell, 1982, 83.

[34]Cf. Quan Hansheng 全漢昇, *Zhongguo jingji shi luncong* 中國經濟史論叢, Hong Kong: Xinya yanjiusuo, 1972, 355-367; Huang, 1974, 74-81. Xie Zhaozhe mention this as the current rate, see *Wuzazu*, 12.34a.

[35]*Mingshi*, 81.1968.

[36]Peng Xinwei, 1988, 693, n. 42.

incident: struggling to cope with increasing economic difficulties and inflation in the last years of the Tianqi reign the Ming government decided to mint copper coins of larger denominations. This soon proved a failure. The government then ordered taxes and other services to be paid in *dangshi zheziqian* in order to retrieve this copper currency for recasting into smaller units.[37] Such details link Di Xichen's adventures firmly to the historical context of the last Ming decades.

Moreover Di Xichen finds himself faced with a sudden drop in the exchange rate. Whereas only a few days earlier 1 tael could be exchanged for 91 to 92 copper cash, the rate has dropped to 77 to 78 cash. The highest rate Di Xichen can get is 80 cash for 1 tael.[38] Throughout the Ming dynasty the value of silver steadily decreased against copper: in 1368, one tael of silver bought 320 copper coins, in 1453 266 coins, in 1577 229 coins, twenty years later only 152 coins and in the years between 1621 and 1627 merely 112.[39] The price of silver has plummeted further when Di Xichen sets out to buy his degree. This detail places Di Xichen into a specific moment of history depicting him at the peak of late Ming prosperity just before the decline when a world-wide economic depression made bullion imports drop sharply in the 1630s.[40] This entailed an abrupt reversal in the silver-copper exchange rate: in 1638 one tael of silver was equal in value to about 1100 copper coins. Its value soared to 2000 coins in 1640 and to 5880 coins after the fall of the dynasty in 1646.[41] The last years of Ming rule represented, in Atwell's words, an

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[37]See 'Qianbi kao' 錢幣考, in *Xu Wenxian tongkao* 續文獻通考, ed. Shanghai: Tushu jichengju, 1901, 11.1a-16b.

[38]*YYZ*, 50.728-729.

[39]Peng, 1988, 715.

[40]See W. Atwell, 'Ming Observers of Ming Decline: some Chinese Views on the "Seventeenth-Century Crisis" in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1988, 316-348; S. A. M. Adshead, 'The Seventeenth-Century General Crisis in China', *Asian Profile* 2.1, 1973, 271-280, esp. 276. See Appendix B.2.

[41]See *Qizhen jiwen lu* 啟禎記聞錄, by Ye Shaoyuan 葉紹袁, *Tongshi* 痛史 edn., repr. Shanghai: Shangwu, 1911, 2.6a; 'Tongxiang zaiyi ji' 桐鄉災異記, by Zhang Lüxiang 張履祥, in Chen Hengli 陳恆力, ed., *Bu nongshu jiaoshi* 補農書校釋, Beijing: Nongye, 1983, 174-175. See also Nakayama Mio, 'On the Fluctuations of the Price of Rice in the Chiang-nan Region during the First Half of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1795)', *Memoirs of the Research Department of Tôyô Bunko* 37, 1979, 55-90, 74.

'economic nightmare'.[42] Silver disappeared from circulation, counterfeit copper coins flooded the market and the silver-copper ratio widened sharply. Modern scholarship has pointed out that regional, interregional and international factors were involved in the complex processes ushering in the fall of the Ming. Amongst these Atwell has singled out the crucial role of money: 'The Ming dynasty fell, in part, because it simply did not have the funds to continue its operations.'[43] These economic conditions form the backdrop to the world of the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Each of its motifs - the healers, the elite and the mother - dramatises one facet of the turbulent years of extravagance, corruption and bankruptcy in government that heralded the end of the last native Chinese dynasty.

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[42]Atwell, 1986, 229.

[43]*Ibid.*

# III

# Mapping the Landscape of Utopia

Let us follow Li Yanzhong 李言忠 on the journey that leads to the discovery of paradise:

During the Tang dynasty in 805 AD the heir apparent Shunzong ascended the throne. One night he dreamt about a man with a strange appearance who said he was the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea. The Dragon King gave Shunzong a pill to swallow. In his dream the Emperor felt a sharp pain in his throat. When he woke up, he wanted to call for the lady-in-waiting on night duty to bring him tea to drink. But he was not able to utter a single word.

Since then he was mute and incapable of holding court. Thus no more memorials to the throne received any reply or endorsement from the Emperor. The Empress thought to herself: "Since the Dragon Spirit from the Eastern Sea administered to the Emperor in his dream a medicine that blocked his throat it must be either a case of bad karma or he must have committed an offence. In such cases the solution will be to do penitence."

The emperor ordered his personal attendant, the eunuch Li Yanzhong, to take from the imperial store-house famous incense, precious candles and imperial robes woven in Suzhou and Hangzhou. He sent him to go and pray at the temples of the Sea Spirit in the two prefectures Deng[zhou] and Lai[zhou] in Shandong. He was to pray at all the famous mountains and grand rivers on his way and ask for the Emperor's voice to return to normal.

Li Yanzhong received the imperial edict and set out on horseback. When he passed through the Xiujiang area he learnt that Mount Huixian was one of the empire's famous resorts. Complying with his orders he prepared cattle for sacrifice. He [planned to] climb the mountain a day before and stay overnight fasting to make the sacrificial offering the next morning during the fifth night-watch [3am-5am]. That day happened to be the Double Ninth Festival [i.e. the ninth day of the ninth month]. Li Yanzhong got up at the fourth night-watch [1am-3am]. He was ready washed and combed when the fifth night-watch began. He was just about to perform the ceremony when he heard music loud and clear from the peak of the mountain. Looking up into lanterns as

bright as daylight he saw innumerable Daoist immortals clad in feathers wandering around above there. After a while he saw them ride tigers, deer and phoenixes rising up into the air. Li Yanzhong reported this incident back to the Emperor who subsequently renamed the place Mount Huixian (Assembly of the Fairies).[1]

The plot of Li Yanzhong's mission has no denouement. The text abandons the Tang dynasty characters after Li Yanzhong has reported his discovery. The narrating voice instead turns the reader's attention to the many springs of Mount Huixian 會仙山.[2] It focuses on one of its springs that erupts at the Dragon King's temple in a village called Mingshui 明水. We have landed in paradise: Mingshui unfolds before our eyes in chapters 23 and 24 as a 'world of utmost happiness' (*jile de shijie* 極樂的世界).[3] The narrating voice compares it to the 'hidden realm behind the peach [blossom] spring' (*tao*[*hua*]*yuan* 桃花源), the *locus classicus* for the Chinese utopia from the fifth century AD and ever since a favourite theme with poets and painters.[4] Like the fisherman in Tao Yuanming's 陶淵明 (*alias* Tao Qian 陶潛, 365-427) poem *Taohuayuan ji* 桃花源記,[5] Li Yanzhong first leads the reader to the origin of a river and the narrating voice then takes the reader along through a spring into utopia.

At first sight the Tang dynasty episode seems oddly placed. But the political backdrop to Li Yanzhong's story strikes a keynote in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Shunzong 順宗 (761-806, r. 805), the twelfth Tang dynasty emperor, was indeed mute and therefore incapable of governing. But the eunuch functioning as his personal attendant was Li Zhongyan 李忠言, not Li Yanzhong. Modern scholarship has pointed out that this might suggest more than a slip of the narrator's

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[1] *YYZ*, 23.339-340.

[2] See Appendix A.3.

[3] *YYZ*, 24.353. *Jile shijie* means *Sukhâvatî*, the 'Western Paradise', or 'Pure Land of Amitâbha in the West.'

[4] *YYZ*, 23.341. On Tao see A. R. Davies, *T'ao Yuanming (AD 365-427). His Works and their Meaning*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. On utopianism in Tang fiction see G. Dudbridge, 'Three Fables of Paradise Lost', *Bulletin of the British Association for Chinese Studies*, 1988, 27-36. For visions of utopia in late Ming/early Qing dynasty paintings see Appendix C.2-5.

[5] 'Taohua yuanji' 桃花源記, by Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, in *Tao Yuanming ji* 桃淵明集, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979, 165-168.

tongue.[6] Li Yanzhong rhymes with Zhang Sizhong 張思忠, a eunuch in the service of the thirteenth Ming dynasty monarch, the Wanli 萬曆 emperor (Shenzong 神宗, r. 1573-1620). During the Wanli reign incidents occurred that bear a certain resemblance to the story of Li Yanzhong. In 1602 the empress dowager contracted an eye disease. A Buddhist monk from Mount Jiuxian 九仙山 (traditionally an abode of Daoist immortals) in south-eastern Shandong succeeded in curing her. Delighted, the Wanli emperor commissioned the eunuch Zhang Sizhong to travel to Mount Jiuxian and build a temple there.[7] He moreover gave a new name to one of Mount Jiuxian's peaks. In this light we can read the story of Li Yanzhong's mission in the *Yinyuan zhuan* as an allegory for late Ming events.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the Wanli emperor had long stopped holding court and meeting his ministers. Abandoning himself to the pursuit of pleasure he turned mute in his role as the supreme ruler.[8] His neglect of government affairs caused political breakdown. With hindsight modern historians attribute the collapse of the Ming state 'less to misgovernment than to non-government' and regard the administration as suffering 'less from tyranny than from paralysis'.[9] Ever since the end of Ming rule have historians blamed Wanli for the decline of his dynasty.[10] But late Ming literati still believed at the time that immediate reform could save the state. As the grand secretary Shen Yiguan 沈一貫 (1531-1615)[11] memorialised in 1604:

> Nowadays whenever I contemplate at night the political situation of the empire, I feel like sleeping on a mat full of needles or like sitting on burning firewood. How can we wait one moment longer? It is not that Your Majesty's ministers do not wish to wait. But the empire is in such a state of crisis and chaos that I fear it is impossible to wait any longer. Your Majesty still

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[6]Cf. Zhang Qingji, 1991, 139-141.

[7]*Shandong wenxian* 山東文獻, *juan* 4, cited in Zhang, 1991, 140 (original has been unavailable to me).

[8]Cf. Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline*, New Haven and London, 1981.

[9]Cf. John K. Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer, *China. Tradition and Transformation*, rev. edn., Sydney, London and Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1989, 209.

[10]Cf. Mote and Twitchett, 1988, 584.

[11]See Goodrich, 1976, 1179-1182; *Mingshi*, 218.5755-5759.

has the power to save the empire and to avert rebellion. If Your Majesty would only issue an edict then the empire will be in order. But if Your Majesty waits until a rebellion occurs then power will be in the hands of the plebs. Once the plebs have ganged up it will be most difficult to do anything about it.[12]

Wanli did not respond.[13]

In the *Yinyuan zhuan* Li Yanzhong sets out to help his sovereign recover from his speechlessness. The imagery of the emperor's sickness here symbolises the suffering state; vice versa healing appears as a metaphor for restoring good government. Figurative comparisons of medicine and politics have a long tradition in Chinese thought. The character *zhi* 治, meaning both 'to heal' and 'to govern', expresses this analogy. We can trace the idea of the body politic as a physical organism in the philosophical and political written discourse from the pre-Han era to modern times.[14] In the *Yinyuan zhuan* the search for a cure of the mute emperor and his ailing government results in the discovery of a utopian landscape with Mingshui in its midst. The historical village of Mingshui near Xiujiang 繡江 river in Zhangqiu 章丘 county lies in hilly terrain north-east of Mount Tai in Shandong.[15] Legend has it that its name derives from its clear springs having the power to purge impurities. The locals used the water from its springs to cleanse their eyes from nebulae and blinding specks. Hence they called the place 'Clear Water' (*mingshui* 明水) village.[16] Tradition thus associates Mingshui village with the power of healing.

Seventeenth-century visitors perceived the place as an idyll. Travelling through Mingshui in 1650 the scholar-official and writer Ding Yaokang appreciated its scenery in a poem:

A hundred springs converge here coiling around the mountain village.
Weeping willows droop and bamboo throws its shadow on the gates.

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[12]*Mingshi chaolüe* 明史鈔略, by Zhuang Tinglong 莊廷鑨, Sibu congkan edn., 3.2b.

[13]*Mingshi*, 218.5758.

[14]For a detailed study see E. Rosner, *Die Heilkunst des Pien Lu. Arzt und Krankheit in bildhaften Ausdrücken der chinesischen Sprache*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991.

[15]See Appendix A.4.

[16]*Zhongguo diming dacidian* 中國地名大辭典, ed. Liu Junren 劉鈞仁, Beijing: Guoli Beiping yanjiuyuan, 1930, 418.a.

In this place the paddy fields cannot be ploughed by horses.
But wheels for husking grain revolve like whirlpools to the humming sound of water.[17]

Modern scholarship has noted that the *Yinyuan zhuan* confuses the topographical description of Mount Huixian and the springs, lakes and rivers of Zhangqiu. This has led scholars to conclude that the author was not familiar with the area and hence cannot have been a local.[18] But none of them has taken into account that the *Yinyuan zhuan* does not even *pretend* to get it right, giving Zhangqiu the fictional name Xiujiang county. Poetic licence allows the passage through the spring of Mount Huixian into Mingshui on the model of the fisherman's entry into the peach blossom utopia. The narrating voice here introduces the reader to a spot on the *moral map*. Mingshui combines the beauty of nature and balance of climate with harmony in human society. Microcosm and macrocosm strike the balance by their mutual influence: beautiful nature produces good people while good morality causes cosmic harmony - a concept deriving from ancient Chinese cosmology.[19] The inhabitants of Mingshui have never heard of rebellion. As loyal subjects they willingly submit to the authority of their sovereign. In daily life they follow the Confucian code of human relationships. Mingshui knows no illiteracy, no lack of education, no idleness, no theft, no murder, no inversion of social or sexual hierarchies, no breach of social decorum. No vices such as extravagance, excess, or covetousness exist.[20] In sum Mingshui lacks the sins and sicknesses that plague society in the Chao and Di plots.

Mingshui in the *Yinyuan zhuan* boasts a hyperbolic catalogue of the classic Chinese *topoi* of utopia.[21] Not only does Mingshui resemble the land behind the

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[17]'Su Mingshui cun huai Hu Kuntian guju' 宿明水村懷胡昆田故居, by Ding Yaokang, cited in Zhang, 1991, 87 (original has been unavailable to me).

[18]Xu Beiwen, 1980, Zhang Qingji, 1991, 86-87. See also Sun Kaidi, 1931, 1501.

[19]See J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2, Cambridge: University Press, 1956, 378-382; cf. section XI.3.

[20]*YYZ*, 23.340-341.

[21]On Chinese utopianism see Wolfgang Bauer, *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück. Paradiese, Utopien, Idealvorstellungen in der Geistesgeschichte Chinas*, repr. München: Carl Hanser, 1974; D. N. Voskresenskii, trans. J. Kelly, 'Utopian Motifs in Chinese Fiction of the Seventeenth Century: The Theme of the Search for a Blissful Land', *Tamkang Review* 8.2, 1977, 133-146.

peach blossom spring (*taohuayuan*). It also represents *taiping* 太平, the realm of Supreme Harmony first depicted in the *Lüshi chunqiu* and in the *Zhuangzi*.[22] Mingshui moreover illustrates *datong* 大同, the utopia of the Great Sharing which stems from the *Liji* 禮記.[23] Mingshui furthermore compares to Huaxucheng 華胥城, the paradise sketched in the *Liezi* 列子, a book from the fourth century AD named after a historically obscure Daoist philosopher.[24] The country of Ms Huaxu (Huaxu *shi zhi guo* 華胥氏之國)[25] in the *Liezi* is a realm of prosperity and perfect order without leaders or teachers. It cannot be reached by boat or carriage or on foot, only by the journey of the spirit. The *Liezi* shows how the journey to Huaxu land in a dream reforms the Yellow Emperor who subsequently strives to govern his empire on its model. These allusions and comparisons suggest the potential of Mingshui as a plan for the ruler.

Clear and cleansing springs in particular stand out as one frequent theme in Chinese visions of utopia. Mingshui can compete with Huaxu land where 'clouds and mist do not obscure people's sight'.[26] Sweet and clear springs also grace another paradise of mild climate and no epidemics in the *Liezi*, the land of Northend (Zhongbei 終北),[27] as well as the utopias described by the Han dynasty Confucianist Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179-104 BC)[28] and the philosopher Wang Chong 王充 (27-91).[29] Such springs moreover belong to the isles of immortals Yingzhou 瀛洲, Shengzhou 生洲 and Fangzhangzhou 方丈洲 as

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[22]*YYZ*, 24.358, 359. *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋校釋, ed. Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷, Shanghai: Xuelin, 1984, 1.44-45; *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, ed. Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961, 13.471.

[23]*YYZ*, 24.357. *Liji*, 21.3a-3b.

[24]*YYZ*, 24.354. *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋, ed. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979, repr. 1985, 2.41-43. On Liezi see A. C. Graham, *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, repr. New York: Mandala, 1990, iv-viii.

[25]Huaxu is the mother of Fuxi 伏羲, the legendary first Emperor (trad. 2852-2738 BC) and the goddess Nüwa 女媧.

[26]*Liezi jishi*, 2.42.

[27]*Liezi jishi*, 5.163.

[28]*Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露, by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, Siku quanshu edn., 4.1a-2a.

[29]*Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋, by Wang Chong 王充, ed. Huang Hui 黃暉, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990, 17.752-767, 766.

depicted in the fourth and fifth centuries AD.[30] The Tang dynasty writer Zheng Huangu 鄭還古 (fl. early 9th century) includes the springs in his depiction of a paradise inside the earth.[31] The *Yinyuan zhuan* links the image of springs to the theme of healing as a metaphor for the implementation of good government:

> There is the Spring of Sir Fan to the west of the prefectural capital [Jinan in Shandong]. When Fan Zhongyan was a minister and there was good government suddenly a sweet spring gushed forth. It was subsequently named after Sir Fan. Nowadays physicians tap this spring to make a pill called the 'White Pill of Qingzhou'. This medicine has no effect in its place of origin. Yet once taken out of the province, it proves an effective cure for inflammations.[32]

The Song dynasty scholar-official and philanthropist Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052) appears in the Chao and Di plots as a model of good government.[33] Contrary to the Chao and Di plots, no suffering, illness or epidemics occur in chapters 23 and 24 or in the brief reminders of a *taiping* state interspersed in the Chao and Di plots.[34] The utopia of a world without illnesses and epidemics stems from the book of *Liezi*.[35] While healers abound in the Di and Chao plots here the narrating voice mentions them only as a metaphor for the ruler: in old Mingshui the good official

> ...
>
> behaved towards the rich families just as an enlightened physician (*mingyi* 明醫) stores up the panacea cinnabar to save people in acute illnesses and to nurture their primal energy. How different from today! When an official hears that there is a rich family in a village he will certainly extort something from them. He will resort to brutal means of oppression and he will certainly strip them of everything. The inhabitants of Mingshui village in the past could not even imagine such

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[30]*Hainei shizhou ji* 海內十洲記, by Dong Fangshuo 東方朔, in *Shuoku* 説庫, ed. Wang Wenru 王文濡, repr. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 1986, 1b, 2b, 4a. See also *Shiyi ji* 拾遺記, by Wang Jia 王嘉, Zishu baijia 子書百家 edn., 10.2a-3b.

[31]'Yinyinke' 陰隱客, in *Boyizhi* 博異志, by Zheng Huangu 鄭還古, ed. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 1984, 28-31, 28.

[32]*YYZ*, 24.362.

[33]See sections XI.2, XII. On Fan see Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung Biographies*, 4 vols., Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976, 1:321-330.

[34]*YYZ*, 12.171; 75.1064.

[35]*Liezi jishi*, 5.164.

cruelty in their dreams.[36]

Li Yanzhong and the reader find no physician or medicine in the happy world. But chapters 23/24 offer a political panacea: the blueprint of utopia, dramatising in fiction the ideal state and society. The name of Mingshui 明水 village can be read as a pun on the name of the reigning Ming 明 dynasty. It suggests the vision of an ideally functioning Ming world.

In the foreground of the landscape of utopia we find a list of ideal citizens: Chancellor Yang 楊尚書, a minister living in retirement, represents the ideal local gentry elite.[37] Mr Li 李大郎, a patron of scholarship, demonstrates how society can benefit from the philanthropy of a rich commoner.[38] His sons show how students (even if they come from a commoner family) can make good progress in their studies and embark on a career in the imperial civil service.[39] Their first teacher Shu Zhong 舒忠 devotes himself to his profession in an exemplary way.[40] Mr Li's sons and Shu Zhong's daughters prove that the marriage between a commoner and a scholar family can work.[41] The peasant Zhu Qisong 祝其嵩, exemplifies honesty and lack of greed while the magistrate of Xiujiang county tries a case of fraud in fairness and justice.[42] All these characters in chapter 23 contribute to the harmony of society and illustrate how human relationships should ideally function.

The list climaxes in chapter 24: the narrating voice tells the brief story of the scholar-commoner You Xizuo 游希酢 amidst a song of praise on the natural beauty and cosmic harmony of Mingshui and surroundings.[43] You Xizuo holds the status of licentiate (*xiucai* 秀才, 'Fine Talent'). A government student who has passed the first public examination, he counts as a Confucian scholar but has to pass further examinations before qualifying for civil service. The narrating voice records the

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[36]*YYZ*, 24.354.

[37]*YYZ*, 23.341-346; see section XI.1.

[38]*YYZ*, 23.346-349; see section X.2.

[39]*YYZ*, 23.347-348, compare section VII.1-6.

[40]*YYZ*, 23.347-348; see section VIII.1.

[41]*YYZ*, 23.348; compare section X.2.

[42]*YYZ*, 23.349-351.

[43]*YYZ*, 24.358-359.

diurnal rhythm of Licentiate You and his family's life. We see them only in one moment in time: Licentiate You, around forty years of age, is married with two sons (Xun 詢, aged sixteen, and Yong 詠, aged twelve) and one daughter (Shugu 淑姑, aged fourteen). He lives in a cottage in the countryside, farming and studying. He pursues his studies according to a daily curriculum, in summer sitting at a table in the garden under weeping willows. His wife Ms Luo 駱氏 manages the household affairs. His sons go to school while his daughter receives instruction in needle-work at home. Every evening in summer the family dine in the garden, chatting and laughing. Licentiate You discusses literature and philosophy with his sons and the classic examples of female virtue with his daughter, or he plays chess with his wife. On winter nights they sit by the stove, reading, studying and weaving by candlelight.

The story of Licentiate You presents a pastoral vision of life. He lives in a self-sufficient utopia on the model of *datong* and in an era of *taiping* in which nothing threatens the social and cosmic order. The Confucian concept of a world in harmony here blends with Daoist ideals of self-emancipation, return to simplicity and integration with nature. We see no change, no movement in time. As in a freeze-frame the picture remains static. But it is not timeless. Licentiate You's acts and ambitions tie him into a specific historical background.

In his forties Licentiate You is still a 'government student', an eternal licentiate, remaining but a would-be member of the literati elite - like many of his historical counterparts in seventeenth-century China. Though living in the countryside Licentiate You has not renounced the world, as some seventeenth-century literati did. Frustrated social ambitions or disappointment with the political situation drove some late Ming and early Qing scholars and officials to become 'mountain dwellers' (*shanren* 山人).[44] Licentiate You has not abandoned his ambitions in public life for the sake of artistic pursuits or pleasure. Licentiate You continues his Confucian studies and educates his children in preparation for the civil service examinations. A career in the imperial bureaucracy still matters to him and to his sons. Different from the Ming loyalists, remnants of a lost empire, who after the fall of their dynasty retreated to the mountains refusing to serve the Manchu government, Licentiate You strives for the qualification to serve his sovereign - a Ming monarch. He lives in times of the Ming empire still intact.

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[44]For a late Ming comment on *shanren* see *Wanli yehuobian* 萬曆野獲編, by Shen Defu 沈德符, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959, repr. 1980, 23.584-587.

What ties Licentiate You into the seventeenth-century background of expanding market-places, commerce and consumption is his state of obliviousness to it. On the horizon of his pastoral there lurks the city. Licentiate You makes a point of keeping away from it. The narrating voice stresses that Licentiate You never enters the city except when attending the public examinations. His life dramatises a popular saying of the seventeenth century that lists the four basic requirements for the ideal life:

To live at a time of peace,
To grow up in a district of lakes and mountains,
To be privileged with a virtuous wife and clever children,
In a family of more than adequate resources.[45]

A similar kind of utopianism pervades the early seventeenth-century novels *Chanzhen yishi* 禪真逸史 and *Chanzhen houshi* 禪真後史 by Fang Ruhao 方汝浩 (fl. 1620s/1630s).[46] Fang's writings share many themes with the *Yinyuan zhuan*.[47] *Chanzhen yishi* and *Chanzhen houshi* celebrate the return to a self-contained agricultural community in which life runs according to the natural rhythms while abandoning any concern for the urban money economy.[48] The country cottage to which the hero's father Qu Tianmin 瞿天民 retires after life in the city presents a miniature version of *datong*.[49] As the modern scholar McMahon summarises:

The perspective of the karmic cycle grounds the author's didacticism, that is, his diagnosis of social ills. The mythic and religious aspects of his works project "cures" in the form of utopia and

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[45]Translated in Wai-kam Ho, 'Late Ming Literati: Their Social and Cultural Ambience', in Chu-tsing Li and James C. Y. Watt, eds., *The Chinese Scholar's Studio. Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987, 23-36, 25.

[46]*Chanzhen yishi* 禪真逸史, by Fang Ruhao 方汝浩, ed. Jinan: Qilu, 1986; *Chanzhen houshi* 禪真後史, by Fang Ruhao 方汝浩, ed. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 1987.

[47]E.g. karmic retribution, reincarnation, and the Four Vices; see also *Dongyou ji* 東游記 (1635), by Fang Ruhao, ed. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 1988.

[48]Cf. Keith McMahon, 'Eroticism in Late Ming, Early Qing Fiction: The Beauteous Realm and the Sexual Battlefield', *T'oung Pao* 73, 1987, 217-264, 262; *idem*, 1988, 106-129.

[49]*Chanzhen houshi*, 7.50.

spiritual enlightenment. For example, he frequently pits the rural against the urban, where social ills are the worst, and has the rural win; his final social vision is that of an agricultural utopia like the *Datong* (大同) community idealized since early times in China.[50]

Many aspiring scholars and literati of the seventeenth-century however did find themselves entangled in city life. They seemed torn between escapism and an addiction to the cosmopolitan world. Another eternal licentiate, the writer and painter Mo Shilong 莫是龍 (fl. 1552-1587), longed for a cottage in the countryside away from the 'vulgarity and noise' of the city; nonetheless he admitted that his social responsibilities prevented him from retreating into forests and mountains.[51] The poet and scholar Gui Zhuang 歸莊 (1613-1673) held a position as a government official but he later opted for a rural and self-sufficient life style.[52] His writings of 1641 celebrate his country cottage while condemning the extravagance and wastefulness of urban life.[53] The scholar-official and artist Li Rihua 李日華 (1565-1635)[54] dreamt of a pastoral similar to Licentiate You's:

The bedroom would lie in the inner apartments near a grotto.
The study table would stand in a peaceful place under pine trees.
Fragrant plants would overgrow each step up to the porch.
Famous flowers would cover the railings of the balcony. (...)
Feeling passionate I would brandish my sword in the air,
Shouting: "A man follows his inclinations. How long should he wait for fame and for gain?"...[55]

Most of Li Rihua's contemporaries spent their lives striving for riches and honours. The dream of retreating to a cottage in the countryside appears as a counter-reaction to political chaos, conspicuous consumption and the new social hierarchies that the late Ming economic boom had produced. As money rather than learning became the

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[50]McMahon, 1988, 109.

[51]*Bizhu* 筆麈, by Mo Shilong 莫是龍, Qijinzhai congshu 奇晉齋叢書 edn., 3a. On Mo see Goodrich, 1976, 1073.

[52]On Gui see Hummel, 1943-44, 427.

[53]*Gui Zhuang ji* 歸莊集, by Gui Zhuang 歸莊, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1984, 6.350-351.

[54]On Li see Goodrich, 1976, 826-830.

[55]*Zitaoxuan zazhui* 紫桃軒雜綴, by Li Rihua 李日華, Guoxue zhenben wenku edn., 1.32.

key to success the scholar-official and poet Yuan Hungdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610)[56] envisaged a better world without it. In 1603 he composed this poem:

Life in my country cottage makes me feel contented and happy.
Flowers on wattlefence grace the riverbanks. (...)
With mullet and pure wine
We can make merry
Without ever talking of money.[57]

Yuan Hongdao found inspiration and sought refuge in the utopia of the peach blossom spring. It appears as a frequent theme in his poetry written during the first years of the seventeenth century.[58] The imagery conveys his displeasure at officialdom and his desire to withdraw into a pastoral. In 1604 he proclaimed:

... I now have time to enjoy reading [Tao] Yuanming's [works],
I shall spend the last penny to buy the brook of the household to the East,
In the western corner a grove of trees will grow around my cottage.[59]

Yuan however found that paradise existed nowhere. When living in his retreat among hills and willows he soon confessed to boredom.[60] He too remained ambivalent about the choice of his perfect place.

The theme of utopia also features in the stories written and retold by Feng Menglong in the 1620s and 1630s. The story *Zhang Gulao zhong gua qu Wennü* 張古老種瓜娶文女 depicts how Wei Yifang 韋義方 , the son of a scholar-official, enters across a river at the foot of Mount Mao 茅山[61] into a land of immortals

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[56]On Yuan see Goodrich, 1976, 1635-1638; Chih-p'ing Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[57]'Zhouxing Huangjinkou tong Sanmu Wang Hui yin' 舟行黃金口同散木王回飲, by Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, in *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao* 袁宏道集箋校, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1981, 29.962.

[58]See e.g. *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 31.1009-1013.

[59]'Oucheng' 偶成, in *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 30.992.

[60]See e.g. *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 747, 1274.

[61]In Jiangsu. There Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) received the revelation texts of Maoshan Daoism.

called Peach Blossom Estate, Taohuazhuang 桃花莊.[62] As Wei arrives there the narrating voice comments:

The ultimate source of happiness is life on the country estate,
In my cottage among bamboo fences in deep seclusion. (...)
Outside my door I plant many elm and willow trees.
Willow catkins drop and fill the brook.
I know no dejection or worry.
I laugh at those who hanker after fame and gain
- the slaves to the marketplaces and shops.[63]

Utopia here too appears as a peach blossom paradise. It resembles Licentiate You's pastoral but here the cottage in the countryside connotes withdrawal from all public ambitions.

Another story by Feng Menglong, *Li daoren du bu Yunmen* 李道人獨步雲門, tells how the merchant Li Qing 李清 from Qingzhou 青州 in Shandong becomes a healer.[64] After a visit to the realm of immortals and the Mother Goddess Xiwangmu 西王母 he returns to earth but nobody remembers him. A gift from the immortals, a book of panaceas, enables Li to practise medicine and save the children during an epidemic. He also becomes a spiritual saviour who helps people to find the Way. The emperor sends for Li to cure him from paralysis but Li has already left the world. Even after Li's death his aura helps to protect Qingzhou from an epidemic that plagues the whole world. Here the utopia of the Daoist immortals implies the power of healing. The healer comes from an unconventional background: neither a scholar nor a physician, he is but a merchant with a philanthropic spirit. The elements of this story also appear in the figures of the religious specialists, the charitable merchants and Mme Chao in the *Yinyuan zhuan*.[65] Like the *Yinyuan zhuan*, Feng Menglong's story shows that the merchant and commoner can have the potential to become a saviour.

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[62]*Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言, by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, ed. Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 1965, 33.487-500.

[63]*Yushi mingyan*, 33.497.

[64]*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言, by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, ed. Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1984, 38.840-869.

[65]See sections VI.1-3; X.1,2; XII.

The late Ming scholar-official and writer Tu Long 屠隆 (1542-1602) described in his *Mingliaozi you* 冥寥子游 the travels of an official-turned-Daoist who roams China far and wide but considers the journey to the abodes of the immortals impossible.[66] He finally finds happiness when he builds his cottage on Mount Siming 四明山 in Zhejiang province and settles there never to leave again.[67] His utopia suggests a mood of indifference and resignation. Although Licentiate You remains less detached from worldy ambitions his story shares with *Mingliaozi you* the same dream of a rural idyll.

The scholar and novelist Dong Yue 董説 (1620-1686)[68] expressly linked the theme of escapism to political conditions. In 1642 he claimed: 'Since China sank into gloom and bitterness all men with insight have been turning to the land of dreams.'[69] Dong Yue envisaged seven dream lands, among them Shanshuixiang 山水鄉, the land of 'lofty mountains and grand rivers'.[70] Around the year 1643 he wrote on the power of dreaming:

> Dreams are what the wealthy and noble, those who live in comfort and happiness, and those who live in times of peace and harmony (*taiping*) do not desire. They are what the poor and humble, those in distress and the inhabitants of a world in disorder pray for and seek after. When the wealthy and noble dream of poverty and humbleness they lose their wealth and nobility. When those who live in comfort and happiness dream of distress they lose their comfort and happiness. When those who live in times of peace and harmony dream of a world in disorder they lose their peace and harmony. But the poor and humble, those in distress and the inhabitants of a world in disorder ought to dream.[71]

Dong Yue also regarded his novel *Xiyou bu* 西游補 (written in 1640) as a dream for the inhabitants of a world in disorder. In his fiction the dream would impose

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[66]*Mingliaozi you* 冥寥子游, by Tu Long 屠隆, ed. Shanghai: Shangwu, 1937, A.3. On Tu Long see Goodrich, 1976, 1324-1327.

[67]*Mingliaozi you*, B.14.

[68]On Dong see Frederick P. Brandauer, *Tung Yüeh*, Boston: Twayne, 1978.

[69]*Fengcaoan qianji* 豐草菴前集, by Dong Yue 董説, in *Wuxing congshu* 吳興叢書, 2.12a.

[70]*Fengcaoan qianji*, 2.12b.

[71]*Fengcaoan qianji*, 2.15b-16a.

order, justice, and revelation on a chaotic age.[72]

The late seventeenth-century novel *Shuihu houzhuan* 水滸後傳 by Chen Chen 陳忱 (1613-after 1666) describes the flight of the surviving *Shuihu* heroes across the borders of China into utopian realms abroad.[73] The modern scholar Widmer has shown how the theme of Ming loyalism after the fall of the dynasty here engenders utopianism.[74] In *Shuihu houzhuan*, a product of the early Qing (published 1664), the entry into an idyll on the model the peach blossom spring implies the theme of escape from China's wartime devastation.[75] The mid-Qing novel *Jinghuayuan* 鏡花緣 by Li Ruzhen 李汝珍 (1763-ca. 1830) further develops the theme of the journey into utopian other-worlds across the sea.[76] The depictions of mythical realms can be traced back to ancient works such as the *Shanhaijing* 山海經[77] and the geographical and ethnographic descriptions in the *Bowuzhi* 博物志 by the statesman Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300) from the Western Jin 西晉 era (265-313).[78] The increasing possibility of travel and trade outside China may have further contributed to the popularity of such themes in Qing dynasty fiction.

In the *Yinyuan zhuan* by contrast the vision of an ideal world remains within the boundaries of the Chinese empire. Utopia happens right here and now. Its place lies in the heartland of China. The golden age of Mingshui paradoxically belongs to the narrative present, not a distant past. It is set in 1457, the year the Emperor Yingzong 英宗 (r. 1436-1449, 1457-1464) resumes government after his release from captivity in the camp of Mongol invaders. Order returns to the empire as Yingzong restores his reign after the Tumu 土木 incident which belongs to the era

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[72]See Dong Yue's preface (*xu* 序) to *Xiyou bu* 西游補, by Dong Yue 董説, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1983, 1-2. Cf. Hegel, 1981, 141-166.

[73]*Shuihu houzhuan* 水滸後傳, by Chen Chen 陳忱, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1981.

[74]Ellen Widmer, *Margins of Utopia*: Shui-hu hou chuan *and the Literature of Ming Loyalism*, Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1987, esp. 51-77, 157-182.

[75]*Shuihu houzhuan*, 22.197.

[76]*Jinghuayuan* 鏡花緣, by Li Ruzhen 李汝珍, ed. Beijing: Zuojia, 1953. Cf. Ono Kazuko 小野和子, '*Kyôkaen* no sekai - Shinchô kôshôgakusha no yûtopia zô' 鏡花緣の世界 一 清朝考証学者のユートピア像 一, *Shisô* 思想, July 1984, 40-55.

[77]*Shanhaijing jiaoyi* 山海經校譯, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1985; attributed to Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324), material dated to third and second century BC.

[78]*Bowuzhi jiaozheng* 博物志校證, by Zhang Hua 張華, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980.

depicted in the first part of the Chao plot (chapters 1-22).[79] Utopia thus occurs in the very midst of the temporal setting of the novel.[80] The painter Shitao 石濤 (1642-1707) used a similar technique in his vision of the Peach Blossom Spring (*taoyuantu* 桃源圖).[81] He presents utopia neither as a nowhere place nor as an otherworld removed from the world of the observer - in contrast to paintings of utopia by earlier and later artists. As the modern art historian Edwards points out, Shitao has turned the story of the peach blossom spring around. He does not lead the spectator into the grotto and through the passage. The spectator is right from the beginning there, in the midst of the peach blossom realm. The painting emphasises that utopia lies in China, the world around Shitao.[82] In Shitao's vision, as in the *Yinyuan zhuan*, utopia and contemporary (i.e. seventeenth-century) China appear as one and the same. Kong Shangren expressed a similar sentiment in 1678 after travelling to Mount Shimen 石門山 near Qufu:

I understand that nobody wanted to listen to the fisherman's story. But the Peach [Blossom] Spring does not lie in Heaven. How come people forgot where the original path was?[83]

The utopia depicted in chapters 23 and 24 of the *Yinyuan zhuan*, like other late Ming visions of the perfect world, remains static rather than kinetic. It does not take the reader on a journey to the heights of heaven (as in Chinese utopias of earlier ages) or into foreign countries (as in Qing dynasty fiction). Rather it represents the search for a lost paradise and the desire to revive the utopian past. The vision of life in a country cottage appears as a return to the perceived simplicity of antiquity and the idyll of a pastoral world. Bauer summarises the ideals of late Ming utopianism thus:

An die Stelle der Eroberung des Himmels trat das Naturerlebnis des Pensionisten, der "seine Hütten gebaut hat". In seinen Idealen verschmelzen Konfuzianismus, Taoismus und Buddhismus zu jener amorphen Masse, die auch für die Staatsführung die optimale Weltanschauung des Volkes

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[79]See section VII.1.

[80]*YYZ*, 24.354.

[81]See Appendix C.2.

[82]See R. Edwards, *The World around the Chinese Artist. Aspects of Realism in Chinese Painting*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1989, 136-139.

[83]'You Shimenshan ji' 遊石門山記, in *Kong Shangren shiwen ji*, 6.416-422, 416.

darstellte, weil sich in ihr das konfuzianische Gebot der Loyalität mit der taoistischen Lebensliebe und der buddhistischen Elendsverachtung zu einer zwar unlogischen, aber ungemein praktikablen Mischung verbinden ließ.[84]

The urge to follow the Confucian call to public service dominates Licentiate You's utopia. But he never leaves his retreat. The country cottage here appears not only as the would-be scholar's dream but also as his fate.

Urban dwellers and merchants have no place in the utopian chapters of the *Yinyuan zhuan* while playing a major role in the Di and Chao plots. Late Ming fiction such as Feng Menglong's *Sanyan* trilogy and Ling Mengchu's *Erpai* story collections frequently focus on merchants and city life. But even these stories imply that it would be better to stay on the farm.[85] They reflect similar trends as the *Chanzhen yishi* and *Chanzhen houshi*. The urban way of life, commerce and consumer society appear as inverting the traditional social hierarchies and creating social and sexual imbalances. In the *Yinyuan zhuan* too microcosm and macrocosm succumb to such influences.

The setting of Mingshui's Golden Age of the Past within the narrative present also suggests that the *ideal place* really exists *nowhere*: as soon as we enter the Chao and Di plots paradise has vanished. The pastoral dream systematically undergoes inversion and turns into dystopia. Mingshui has lost its rural and idyllic nature. The village expands its business and commerce and becomes a booming market town. The ills of urban civilisation soon follow: sin, sickness, violence, crime and disregard for traditional values and ethics engulf the city. But the spectacle of human depravity also provides entertainment. Life in the city - in contrast to You Xizuo's country cottage - has action and amusement. The narrating voice dissects human follies under the satirical magnifying glass. The faces of the characters in the world of fallen Mingshui have more individualistic features than the inhabitants of utopia. The narrating voice provides a detailed account of their actions and lets the actors speak in their own words. Details, dialogue and action (which are lacking in You Xizuo's story) make their world come alive much more than the schematic sketch of the ideal world. You Xizuo's world epitomises eutopia but paradoxically it also turns out to be boring. Didacticism here thrives at the

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[84]Bauer, 1974, 362.

[85]Cf. Huang Renyu, 1974, 133-153; compare Aida Hiroshi 相田洋, '*Sangen* no sekai' 三言の世界, *Fukuoka daigaku kiyô* 福岡大学紀要 28.2, 1978, 1-23.

expense of entertainment. This effect in turn undermines the didactic message: suspense grips the reader only when watching how paradise crumbles.

The episode of Li Yanzhong's discovery of the immortals' paradise on Mount Huixian comes full circle when the immortals of Mount Huixian release a flood to purge Mingshui of evil.[86] The image of the flood derives from an ancient Chinese myth. Describing the Great Flood Mencius cites a lost part of the *Shangshu*: 'The deluge warned us.'[87] Mencius shows that civilisation and order in government started only when the legendary emperor Yü 禹 tamed the flood.[88] The modern scholar Teiser has shown that the flood in *Mengzi* symbolises a state in disorder.[89] In this respect it resembles the flood in the *Yinyuan zhuan.* The image of the flood in *Mengzi* however has no connotations of retribution, contrary to the *Yinyuan zhuan.* The deluge that drowns Mingshui dramatises the apocalypse - as Ming/Qing sectarian writings depicted divine punishment for human depravity at the end of an era before the coming of the millennium.[90] The historian of religion Mircea Eliade notes that the deluge has a dual function: to disintegrate the old forms of one era in disaster, and to create new forms by a regenerative power.[91] In the *Yinyuan zhuan* paradoxically the flood fulfils neither function: it fails to cleanse the fallen world and the bad state of affairs continues just as before. The paradise of Mingshui remains gone forever. But throughout the Chao and Di plots we occasionally catch brief glimpses of characters and situations on the model of the lost utopia, suggesting that the potential for reform still exists. The vision of the landscape of utopia in the *Yinyuan zhuan* thus offers, as McMahon says of the *Chanzhen yishi* and *Chanzhen houshi*, a 'millenarian' solution: 'how to save a world on the brink of disaster.'[92]

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[86]*YYZ*, 29.419-433.

[87]*Mengzi*, 3B.9.

[88]See also *Mengzi*, 3A.4.

[89]Cf. S. F. Teiser, 'Engulfing the Bounds of Order: The Myth of the Great Flood in *Mencius*', *Journal of Chinese Religions* 13/14, 1985/86, 15-43.

[90]See Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China. The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976, 12-17. Cf. section XII.

[91]Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, New York, 1963, 210-211.

[92]McMahon, 1987, 262.

# *Part One*

# *The Motif of the Healer*

# IV

# Medical Doctors

We shall examine as the first group of healers the medical doctors in the *Yinyuan zhuan*.[1] We identify medical doctors by evidence in the text that they practise medicine as an occupation and that their society recognises them as such.[2] The *Yinyuan zhuan* deals in detail with four medical doctors. More medical doctors appear occasionally, but receive only little attention. They remain shadowy figures as the narrative mentions them in passing.[3] Therefore the present section focuses on the four major doctors Yang Taiyi 楊太醫, Xiao Beichuan 簫北川, Ai Qianchuan 艾前川 and Zhao Xingchuan 趙杏川. They appear in two pairs: Yang and Xiao at the beginning of the Chao plot[4] and Ai and Zhao towards the end of the Di plot.[5]

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[1]On healers in Chinese fiction see W. Idema, 'Diseases, Doctors, Drugs and Cures. A very preliminary list of passages of medical interest in a number of traditional Chinese novels and related plays', *Chinese Science* 2, 1977, 37-63; L. Thompson, 'Medicine and Religion in Late Ming China', *Journal of Chinese Religions* 18, Fall 1990, 45-59; and most recently C. Cullen, 'Patients and Healers in late Imperial China: Evidence from the *Jinpingmei*', *History of Science* 31, 1993, 99-150. Thompson and Cullen focus on the *Jin Ping Mei*. Idema has mentioned the *YYZ* but no detailed study of this aspect is known so far.

[2]Cf. R. Hymes, 'Not Quite Gentlemen? Doctors in Sung and Yuan', *Chinese Science* 8, 1987, 9-76, 13-14.

[3]E.g. *YYZ*, 11.165,168; 13.199; 17.244; 88.1261; 90.1289; 91.1305; 95.1349.

[4]*YYZ*, ch. 2, 3, 4, 18.

[5]*YYZ*, ch. 66, 67.

## 1. Yang Taiyi

The first of the medical doctors in the *Yinyuan zhuan* is Yang Taiyi. He appears several times within the first part of the Chao plot before the eutopian chapters. Yang is a *taiyi* 太醫, a Grand Physician.[6] The term *taiyi* refers to palace physicians since the Former Han 前漢 dynasty (206 BC-8 AD). In the days of the Yuan 元 dynasty (1280-1368), the *taiyi* distinguished themselves from other medical practitioners through official examinations in the Imperial Medical Academy, *taiyiyuan* 太醫院. Since the mid-Ming, the term widely applied to specialists we would generally call 'doctor'.[7] The late Ming novel *Jin Ping Mei* nevertheless shows first, that a *taiyi* traditionally evokes the association with academic training and professionalism and second, that a doctor who has not graduated from the Imperial Medical Academy should not really be called a *taiyi*.[8]

Yang Taiyi appears twice in chapter 2 to treat Chao Yuan, twice in chapter 3 for Chao Yuan and his concubine Zhen'ge, in chapter 4 for Zhen'ge, and in chapter 18 for Chao Yuan's father Chao Sixiao. The need for the doctor first arises at the very outset of the narrative. The Chao plot opens with incidents of moral corruption and excess: marital breakdown, the killing of living beings and over-indulgence in women and wine. This smacks of vice, in particular as Chinese tradition defined it: contextual records refer to excessive indulgence in wine, women, wealth and wrath (*jiu se cai qi* 酒色財氣) as the 'four vices of excess', *sitan* 四貪.[9] When Chao Yuan's excesses - that in view of contextual writings can be read in terms of the four vices as his greed (*cai*), lust for killing (*qi*), desire of women (*se*) and indulgence in wine (*jiu*) - result in physical collapse, he calls for Yang Taiyi. Next Chao Yuan and Zhen'ge both fall ill after their celebrations of New Year's Eve and

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[6]On the historical background of the *taiyi* see C. O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford, 1985, 478; R. Hymes, 1987, 13-14; J. Rall, *Die Vier Grossen Medizinschulen der Mongolenzeit. Stand und Entwicklung der chinesischen Medizin in der Chin- und Yuan-Zeit*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1970, 25; A. Ki Che Leung, 'Organized Medicine in Ming-Qing China: State and Private Medical Institutions in the Lower Yangzi Region', *Late Imperial China* 8.1, June 1987, 134-166, 150. On medical ethics see P. U. Unschuld, *Medical Ethics in Imperial China. A Study in Historical Anthropology*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1979.

[7]Hucker, 1985, 478.

[8]*JPMCH*, 17.178.

[9]See also section VI.

Chao Yuan again calls for Yang. Later he summons Yang when Zhen'ge suffers a miscarriage in consequence of physical exhaustion due to excess that took her to the limits of decorum and propriety: she rode along on a hunt with Chao Yuan and his male friends when she was already pregnant. Moreover she and Chao Yuan over-indulged in the use of aphrodisiacs. The last incident involving Yang Taiyi takes place when Chao Yuan's father Chao Sixiao takes a new concubine in his old age and falls ill after his wedding banquet. In each case illness follows a merry-making event in Chao Yuan's family involving various instances of over-indulgence in one or the other vice. The narrating voice points out at Yang's first appearance that the doctor has one vice, lechery (*se*):

> Moreover his conduct was not at all respectable and he was bigoted by nature. When he visited people, he would want to gossip about their women, so everybody avoided him. [10]

The historical physician and first Chinese writer on medical ethics Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (ca. 581-682) admonishes physicians already in the days of the Tang dynasty against this very misbehaviour. He writes that the ideal physician 'must not gossip but should talk about the medical teachings exclusively. Only then will he not blunder.'[11] Thus Sun sketches the ideal he propagates in opposition to what may have been the real picture. Yang, then, is not ideal in terms of Sun's ethics.

The narrating voice furthermore reveals that Yang's motives for examining sick Chao Yuan are not at all professional ones. Rather Yang hopes to get a chance to meet his previous mistress Zhen'ge, now Chao Yuan's new concubine. Therefore the doctor's diagnosis is an absent-minded decision: 'Yang Taiyi did not in the least put his mind to investigating the origin of the illness, for he was only immersed in his depraved thoughts.'[12] Yang's behaviour yet again contrasts with Sun Simiao's ethical code for the ideal physician:

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[10] *YYZ*, 2.23.

[11] *Qianjinfang yanyi* 千金方衍義, by Sun Simiao 孫思邈, ed. Zhang Lu 張璐, Shanghai: Saoye shanfang, 1801, 1.2a-2b.

[12] *YYZ*, 2.23.

When a Grand Physician (*dayi* 大醫) treats an illness, his mind must be calm and his disposition firm. He should not have wishes or desires. Above all, he has to develop kindness and a sense of compassion. He should pledge to relieve the suffering of all living beings.[13]

Yang twice gets the opportunity to flirt with Zhen'ge. The ancient *topos* of the flirt through a hole in a wall of a window makes the scene heavy with erotic intimations and symbolic for amorous encounters.[14] The repeated use of this *topos* suggests that the characterisation of the doctor follows a literary cliché that marks him as a symbolic type rather than an individual.[15] Yang moreover exploits his medical examination of Zhen'ge for physical contact and furtive flirtation.[16] The reader witnesses in his act an outrageous breach of decorum in an age of prudery. Male doctors in imperial China traditionally had to resort to dolls or ivory statuettes to locate the ailments of their female patients.[17] Nevertheless the physician and scholar Chen Shigong 陳實功 (fl. 1605) finds it necessary in the early seventeenth century to advise doctors on how to examine prostitutes:

When prostitutes and the people from the brothels summon a physician, he should treat them like children of honourable families. He should not harbour other intentions or behave in a childish and silly way as this would harm his reputation. He should return home at once when he has finished the examination. (...) Once the illness is over, he must not go there again.[18]

The satire at the expense of the doctor consists in Yang's systematic inversion of the traditional standards of medical ethics. Comparison with contextual sources shows that Yang's vice, lechery, one of the four traditional vices of excess, marks him as the very antithesis of the ideal doctor as historical writers perceive him. The description of Yang's medical proficiency further confirms this point.

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[13]*Qianjinfang yanyi*, 1.2b.

[14]This *topos* stems from: *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 2/3.12b, 4/4.8a; *Mengzi*, 3B.3.

[15]See *YYZ*, 2.27; 3.36.

[16]See *YYZ*, 3.34.

[17]Cf. R. van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974, 319.

[18]*Jiaozheng Waike zhengzong* 校正外科正宗, by Chen Shigong 陳實功, 1860 edn., 12.34b.

Yang displays a kind of behaviour as a doctor that further characterises him as an anti-ideal figure in moral terms. Yang brags unblushingly when he examines Chao Yuan for the first time:

It is nothing serious but if you happen to get a quack (*yongyi* 庸醫) who makes a mistake in palpation and regards it as a disease caused by external factors and prescribes sudorifics, then do you think that anybody would be able to stop the sweating any more? Nine out of ten would be done for. But now we shall prescribe the proper medicine and give him four or five doses of the Great Tonic Broth (*shiquan dabutang* 十全大補湯) plus the two superior medicines ginseng and the tuber of elated gastrodia. I assure you that he will have recovered by New Year. [19]

The problem of charlatans is obviously ancient. In the Yuan for example the following imperial edict of 1271 tried to deal with this problem: 'Charlatans (*jia yi* 假醫)'

understand neither the medical literature not the properties of medicines. They cheat and take advantage of the common people. They falsely assume the title of medical doctor and strive for material profit. They treat people at random with acupuncture and medicines and blunder with the lives of people. (...) We order a ban against them. If anybody disregards this ban, the authorities should take up a lawsuit to investigate the matter and punish the offender accordingly. We respectfully plead to put this proposal into operation.[20]

The term *yongyi* distinguishes the common physician from the scholar-physician (*ruyi* 儒醫) since the twelfth century. By the time of the late Ming the term *yongyi* has come to denote a dangerous quack as for example in the perception of the scholar-physician Gong Xin 龔信 (fl. 1600):

The common physicians (*yongyi*) of our days show off with the strange and expose the extraordinary. They neither study the classics nor understand their meaning. They show off in order to take advantage of our society. (...) They presume on their abilities and flatter people sedulously. (...) They muddle the issue of prognosis and treatment without examining the root of the illness.

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[19]*YYZ*, 2.25.

[20]*Tongzhi tiaoge* 通制條格, Beijing: Guoli Beiping tushuguan, 1930, repr. Taibei: Xuehai, n.d., 21.6b-7a.

They neither distinguish deficiency and excess nor fear [the decision between] life or death. They are both rough in manners and careless in speech.[21]

Gong Xin's perception of the quack exactly matches the image of Yang Taiyi in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. The *Yinyuan zhuan* inverts the traditional distinction between common physician and scholar-physician by satirising the *taiyi* as a *yongyi*:

Although Yang Guyue was a medical officer (*yiguan* 醫官) by name, this was nothing but a title. Do you think he had ever seen [any medical classics such as] the *Suwen* 素問[22] or *Nanjing* 難經[23]? Or that he knew about Wang Shuhe's 王叔和 *Maijue* 脈訣[24]? When it came to other diseases than a cold, he muddled himself through blindly.[25]

The narrating voice shows that Yang Taiyi lacks diagnostic or prognostic abilities. Traditional Chinese medicine bases diagnosis on the doctor's examination of the patient by the four methods of looking, listening, questioning and feeling the pulse (*wang wen wen qie* 望聞問切). Yang by contrast inverts this order as he makes up his diagnosis before the examination of the patient. When he comes to examine the patient, he merely relies on feeling the pulse. The narrating voice calls his examination a farce and describes it as *huluan* 胡亂, random.[26] Authorial irony reveals that Yang Taiyi's full name, Yang Guyue 楊古月, accordingly puns on *hu* 胡, random. The telling name Hu 胡 is not uncommon for quack doctors in Ming and Qing fiction, as for example in the *Jin Ping Mei*, *Linlanxiang*, and

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[21]'Yongyi zhen' 庸醫箴, in *Gujin yijian* 古今醫鑑, by Gong Xin 龔信, ed. Gong Tingxian 龔廷賢, rev. Wang Kentang 王肯堂, repr. Shanghai: Shangwu, 1958, 16.519-520.

[22]Part of the oldest Chinese medical classic *Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經, second century BC; cf. Yamada Keiji, 'The Formation of the *Huangdi neijing*', *Acta asiatica* 36, 1979, 67-89.

[23]A commentary to the *Huangdi Neijing*, attributed to Bian Que 扁鵲 (5th century BC), probably 1st century AD, cf. P. Unschuld, *Nan-ching. The Classic of Difficult Issues*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1986, 29-34.

[24]A work of uncertain authorship, often falsely attributed to Wang Shuhe (210-285), author of the first monograph on palpation, *Maijing* 脈經.

[25]*YYZ*, 4.52.

[26]*YYZ*, 2.24; 4.52.

*Hongloumeng*.[27] The pun on *hu* places Yang in the tradition of the quack as a stock figure in Chinese fiction and drama since the Yuan. A quack called Hu 胡 appears in a comic scene in the *yuanben* 院本 play *Jiangsangshen Caishun fengmu zaju* 降桑椹蔡順奉母雜劇 attributed to Liu Tangqing 劉唐卿 (late 13th/early 14th century).[28] A quack gynaecologist from the Ming play *Lin Chong Baojianji* 林沖寶劍記 (preface 1547) by Li Kaixian 李開先 (1501-1568), a playwright from Zhangqiu in Shandong, reappears in the *Jin Ping Mei* in the Wanli period.[29] In the 1620s Feng Menglong included a burlesque comedy on quacks in the story '*Wuyanei linzhou fuyue*' 吳衙內鄰舟赴約 of his anthology *Xingshi hengyan*.[30]

In the early seventeenth century many writers raised their voices against charlatans such as Yang. Gong Xin and also his son Gong Tingxian 龔廷賢 (fl. 1615) required physicians to master the Confucian teachings and consult the relevant books.[31] The remarks of the narrating voice on Yang also correspond to the observation of the third degree graduate Lin Qilong 林起龍 (fl. 17th century) in 1666: 'Many people practise medicine, yet only very few study medicine.'[32] The contemporary reader of the *Yinyuan zhuan* may have recognised a familiar face in the quack Yang.

Yang's diagnosis implies satirical comment on the characters and effects comical amusement. Yang diagnoses excess of wine and erotic adventure, *jiu* and *se*, each time he examines any of his patients i.e. Chao Yuan, Zhen'ge, and Chao Sixiao. It was not uncommon in traditional Chinese medicine to diagnose these excesses as the root of illnesses.[33] Here it adds to the value of satirical entertainment as the reader watches how the characters indulge first and suffer later.

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[27]*JPMCH*, 14.145, ch. 16, 17.178, 61.740-741, 79.1055, ch. 85; *Linlanxiang*, ch. 52; *Hongloumeng*, 69.770-771.

[28]In *Yuanqu xuan waibian* 元曲選外編, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961, 428-431.

[29]*JPMCH*, 61.742-745. Cf. P. Hanan, 'Sources of the *Chin P'ing Mei*', *Asia Major* 10.1, 1963, 23-67, 50-54.

[30]*Xingshi hengyan*, 28.598-618.

[31]*Gujin yijian*, 16.519-520; *Wanbing huichun* 萬病回春 (1587), by Gong Tingxian 龔廷賢, repr. Beijing: Renmin weisheng, 1988, 8.489.

[32]Preface by Lin Qilong 林起龍, in *Yixue qimeng huibian* 醫學啟蒙彙編, by Zhai Liang 翟良, Wenchengtang edn., 1b.

[33]Cf. Rall, 1970, 75.

Satirical comedy also characterises the doctor's prognosis and his medicines. The narrating voice derides Yang:

> Yang Taiyi was actually a notorious charlatan. He was the type of doctor who would prescribe the Broth of Four Ingredients (*siwutang* 四物湯) [a medicine for blood disorders] for toothache and the Powder of Three Yellows (*sanhuangsan* 三黃散) [a laxative] for diarrhoea.[34]

Yang resorts to the Great Tonic Broth (*shiquan dabutang*)[35] as his main prescription in each of his appearances to treat patients. Ironic inconsistency proves its inefficacy: it seems effective twice with Chao Yuan but the narrating voice merely attributes its success to sheer luck. It subsequently proves devastating in Zhen'ge's case and fatal with Chao Sixiao. But the problem does not lie with the tonic but rather with the physician's prognostic abilities, for later in the *Yinyuan zhuan* the ideal physician Zhao administers the same prescription with perfect results. The narrating voice reveals the background to Yang's prognosis with biting sarcasm:

> [Yang Taiyi] often told people: "My medical practice has one single trick. It is truly succinct: when treating people from wealthy households, I mainly rely on prescribing *xiaoshi qinghuo* 消食清火 [a medicine for digestion and reduction of heat]. When treating people with many concubines, no matter what illness they have, I mainly rely on prescribing *shiquan dabutang* [the Great Tonic Broth]. When treating the poor, I mainly rely on prescribing *kaiyu shunqi* 開鬱順氣 [a medicine to stabilise the blood and vital energy]. This is a dependable set rule and there is no fear of going astray."[36]

Yang's trick of the trade may have shocked his contemporary audience. For it sarcastically inverts the ideals of medical ethics as we can reconstruct them through documents from the Tang to the Qing. Sun Simiao sets the rules for the ideal physician in the Tang:

> When people summon a physician to rescue them in illnesses or emergencies, a physician should not inquire whether they are noble or common, poor or rich, old or young, handsome or ugly, foe or friend, Chinese or foreigner, ignorant or wise. All are equal.[37]

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[34] *YYZ*, 2.23.

[35] A common medicament in late imperial China, see e.g. *Wanbing huichun*, 438.

[36] *YYZ*, 4.52-53.

[37] *Qianjinfang yanyi*, 1.2b.

The scholar-physician Zhu Huiming 朱惠明 (fl. 1590), a descendant of the Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), observes the divergence from this ideal in the late Ming:

People in the past had a saying: "Noblemen and commoners do not have two kinds of drugs; the poor and rich receive the same medicine." If people remembered this, Heaven would certainly not be without gratitude. Yet some [physicians] do not study the principles of the classics. Their words deceive people. They expound heterodox theories.[38]

Gong Tingxian criticises contemporary physicians in the early seventeenth century in a similar way:

In the past, the principles of medicine were called 'the principles of the immortals' (*xiandao* 仙道). Their original [purpose] was to keep people alive. Most physicians of our time do not know what this means. Each of them pays attention to the rich whilst neglecting the poor. This is not a general propensity for physicians; it is not the way of humaneness. (...) I should like to tell those who are like-minded that (...) we should not divide the poor and the rich; they are all living beings. This is also a secret merit.[39]

It is interesting to note that the scholar-recluse and physician Zhang Lu 張璐 (1627-1707) of the Ming-Qing transition period is the only medical writer to insist on different treatments for the rich and the poor. Yet his reasoning does not derive from medical ignorance as in Yang's case. Zhang Lu recognises that the physical constitution of the people in his time differs according to their social standing, life-styles and living conditions. He writes:

It is difficult to cure the wealthy. As they are tender and weak they suffer from a congestion of phlegm above and the exhaustion of energy below. (...) The illnesses of the common people are easy to cure. As they are strong and supple, evil influences from outside can easily be removed and

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[38]*Douzhen chuanxin lu* 痘疹傳心錄, by Zhu Huiming 朱惠明, in Cheng Yongpei 程永培, ed., *Liuli zhai yishu shizhong* 六醴齋醫書十種, Guangzhou: Cangxiutang, 1891, 16.2b.

[39]*Wanbing huichun*, 8.490.

internal troubles can swiftly be overcome. (...) This is because living conditions and habits mould the people.[40]

Zhang Lu's argument is interesting as it reflects the prevailing discrepancy between the social classes and the degeneration of the gentry in the seventeenth century. The late Qing writer Xu Yanzuo 徐延祚 (fl. 1895) reverts to emphasising social equality in medical treatment and insists that the physician should treat the rich and the poor, noblemen and commoners, close and distant patients alike without discrimination. Xu Yanzuo explains that he has observed the contrary practice in his days.[41] Yang Taiyi illustrates this kind of practice. Yang's principle is moreover to some extent consistent with Zhang Lu's differentiation between social classes and the implied picture of great class divisions in seventeenth-century China.

The motif of the quack doctor furthermore reflects on the role and the moral character of certain members among the local elite in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Yang appears each time at the summons of Chao Yuan. The narrating voice significantly links the quack doctor and the man from the gentry as mirror-images of each other with regard to their moral character: 'Everybody avoided Yang Taiyi. But as Chao Yuan was cast in the same mould, he would call for him when he was ill.'[42] The blame for Yang's antics and vices ultimately hits Chao Yuan as he adheres to the same vices and allows the quack to flourish. The narrating voice therefore criticises Chao Yuan whenever Yang fails as a doctor. In the case of Zhen'ge's miscarriage, the narrating voice comments:

Outside the Southern Gate there lived the gynaecologist Xiao, yet [Chao Yuan] did not summon him, but merely called for Yang Guyue to treat her at random.[43]

The narrating voice remarks along the same lines:

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[40]'Shiwan laoren yimen shijie' 石頑老人醫門十戒, in *Zhangshi yitong* 張氏醫通, by Zhang Lu 張璐, ed. Zhejiang guan, 1899, 3b.

[41]*Yicui jingyan* 醫粹精言, by Xu Yanzuo 徐延祚, Guangzhou: Tieru yixuan, 1896, 2.56b.

[42]*YYZ*, 2.23.

[43]*YYZ*, 4.52.

Matters of childbirth are only one step removed from the Gate of Death. If you falter, it means death. If you manage to retreat, it means life. How could one allow a quack to have a go at it? [44]

The narrating voice also accuses Chao Yuan when Yang's prescription kills Chao Sixiao:

If they had called for an enlightened physician, or if there had been a star of salvation, things might have been different. But Chao Yuan merely summoned Yang Guyue to treat him.[45]

Contemporary views would agree that the responsibility for Yang's blunders lies with Chao Yuan. Gong Xin warns against quacks: 'Such common physicians are shameful and despicable.'[46] Gong Tingxian too exhorts patients to choose enlightened physicians only for treatment.[47] Chao Yuan moreover fosters Yang's vice of lechery. The narrating voice points out that Yang entertains depraved thoughts for the very reason that Chao Yuan fails to order his household properly[48] - an offence against the most basic maxims for the Confucian ideal society as the *Daxue* 大學 expounds them.[49] The narrating voice here implicitly criticises in Chao Yuan's decadence and inability to distinguish real from false. It shows that such conditions must lead to social disorder and chaos.

One further incident in Yang's actions serves to expose the shortcomings of Chao Yuan's household with its pretensions to rank among the mandarinate. When Yang requests a book as a pad to feel the pulse, the narrating voice interrupts the action and lashes out against the philistine milieu of the gentry:

Had he asked for silver ingots, there would perhaps have been some in the chests of our hero, yet now that [Yang Taiyi] requested a book as a pad to feel the pulse, how could there have been any to be found in this room?[50]

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[44] *YYZ*, 4.52.

[45] *YYZ*, 18.265.

[46] *Gujin yijian*, 16.520.

[47] *Wanbing huichun*, 8.489.

[48] *YYZ*, 2.23.

[49] 'Daxue' 大學, *Liji*, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 60.1a-1b.

[50] *YYZ*, 2.24.

The only books that come to hand are copies of the erotic picture album *Chunxiao bixitu* 春宵秘戲圖[51] and the erotic novel *Ruyijun zhuan* 如意君傳.[52] The narrative makes the point that Chao Yuan does not possess a copy of the *Jinshen* 縉紳 (a record of officials' names) which Yang requests instead expecting that there should be one in the household of a mandarin. Chao Yuan's reaction shows that his book-holdings obviously cause him embarrassment. This incident satirically unmasks the moral depravity of his *nouveau riche* household. Erotic picture albums were particularly popular in late Ming China.[53] The *Ruyijun zhuan* appears as common currency in late Ming and early Qing novels such as *Jin Ping Mei* and *Xu Jin Ping Mei*.[54] As the *Yinyuan zhuan* centres attention on the reading audience, it exposes the philistine milieu of the fake and newly risen literati elite as represented by Chao Yuan and his family.

In sum, the narrating voice systematically constructs Yang as a vice-figure in the moral universe of the novel. In the pattern of morality which Chinese writers traditionally define as the four vices of excess, Yang primarily personifies lechery (*se*). The descriptions of Yang's morality and his medical proficiency read like a catalogue of negative points. Yang represents the anti-ideal as a doctor in the contemporary understanding. Comparison with contextual sources has shown that Yang functions as an ironic reflection of contemporary society and its shortcomings. The motif of the quack Yang on the one hand exposes medical malpractice and on the other, unmasks deficiencies in certain would-be members of the scholar-gentry class. The narrative conveys a didactic message in exposing a corrupt society and in warning of the disastrous consequences. Bawdy comedy and burlesque details reveal Yang as a negative figure in an anti-ideal society, but make him at the same time intriguingly entertaining. In this sense, Yang reflects the ironic paradox of utopian fiction.

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[51] A scroll picture without explanatory text, attributed to Zhou Fang 周昉 (fl. Tang dynasty); no longer extant. Cf. van Gulik, 1974, 201-202.

[52] A tale (dated ca. mid-sixteenth century) in classical Chinese about the Tang Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 648-705) and her lover Xue Aocao 薛敖曹; cf. Hanan, 1963, 43-47.

[53] See van Gulik, 1951, 105-204.

[54] *JPMCH*, 37.416; *XJPM*, 53.522. Cf. section V.2.

## 2. Xiao Beichuan

The medical specialist Xiao Beichuan appears as the antithesis to Yang Taiyi. When Yang fails to treat Zhen'ge's miscarriage, Chao Yuan's neighbour introduces Xiao, a specialist in women's diseases, as a more proficient healer.[55] The social background of Xiao is not altogether clear. Although Chao Yuan calls Xiao '*taiyi*',[56] the narrating voice throughout refers to the doctor by his full name Xiao Beichuan. The fictional character Xiao may have corresponded to the independent folk practitioner of medicine in late imperial China, in contrast to the officially recognised physician who had passed through the government examinations. Social status would rank such a healer between a servant and a teacher.[57] Although Xiao appears as a competent opposite to the quack doctor Yang, he is not without vice either. The narrating voice points out that Xiao excessively indulges in wine:

> Yet [Xiao Beichuan] had one flaw. When he went to see his patients at their homes he would want to drink wine even before examining them. Once he clutched his wine cup, he would be unwilling to enter the patient's room and feel the pulse. After making his diagnosis, he would again want to drink wine. Once he got attached to his wine cup, he would be unwilling to get up and fetch medicine. If nobody called him to see patients, he would take down his sign board as soon as it was noon, shut down his practice and retreat into his house for solitary drinking. He would in any case drink until he was dead drunk. Therefore, he often delayed other people's affairs. By this way, he would not do anything for his [own] household either. [58]

The etiquette for physicians in imperial China does not consider excessive indulgence in wine appropriate. Sun Simiao lists the maxim 'not to drink wine' among his five exhortations for the ideal physician in the days of the Tang.[59] He further explains:

> The physician should not mind dangerous mountain passes, day or night, heat or cold, hunger, thirst or fatigue. He should devote himself wholeheartedly to rescue people in illnesses. He should

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[55]*YYZ*, 4.53.

[56]*YYZ*, 4.57-58.

[57]Cf. W. Eberhard, *Social Mobility in Traditional China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962, 232.

[58]*YYZ*, 4.53.

[59]*Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方, by Sun Simiao 孫思邈, repr. Shanghai: Jiujingzhai, 1908, 29.19b.

not give the impression that his work is hard labour. If he acts like this, then he is a grand physician for the people. If he acts to the contrary, then he is a great scourge for living beings.[60]

In the seventeenth century, the scholar-physician Chen Shigong again warns contemporary physicians:

No medical doctor (*yi*) should abandon himself to pleasure or addiction. He should not let his mind be distracted or preoccupied. He should not get up late or go out without any particular business.[61]

These historical documents show that excessive indulgence in wine counts as undesirable in a physician. This marks Xiao as anti-ideal. Moreover in the traditional pattern of the vices, Xiao personifies gluttony, in particular, over-indulgence in wine (*jiu*).

Before Xiao appears, the narrating voice sketches him as a most proficient physician:

When Xiao Beichuan treated women in matters of childbirth, the illness would be gone the moment he took up treatment. At least ninety-nine percent of the women he treated would recover.[62]

This characterises Xiao as an ideal physician, for in imperial China the medical success rate commonly served as the yardstick for medical competence.[63] Accordingly, the narrating voice describes Xiao's medical examination and treatment of Zhen'ge as brief and accurate. Xiao's diagnosis is precise and proficient. He feels the pulse and then states: 'Don't worry, it is not so serious. It is lochia. You will see that she will have half recovered before I finish drinking my wine.'[64] His prognosis is perfectly accurate. He administers a medicinal broth to be mixed in boiling water and one pill the size of a Dragon-eye grape to be ground in warm millet wine.[65] Confident that his medicine will work, he gets drunk again.

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[60]*Qianjinfang yanyi*, 1.2b.

[61]*Jiaozheng Waike zhengzong*, 12.34b.

[62]*YYZ*, 4.53.

[63]See Rall, 1970, 25.

[64]*YYZ*, 4.56.

[65]An identical pill revives Di Xichen in 95.1349.

While Zhen'ge gradually recovers, Xiao gives her one more pill to be ground in warm wine and taken with brown sugar and millet wine. Xiao's medicine indeed works like a wonder drug and cures Zhen'ge speedily.[66] The details of Xiao's drugs remain obscure but the overall description of Xiao's treatment shows that he functions as a competent and efficient healer.

The episode concerning Xiao carries further meaning as social comment on the follies and deficiencies of his patients. Here the imagery of money and the rhetoric of hyperbole imply criticism of Chao Yuan and his household. The *Yinyuan zhuan* takes for granted the necessity of a monetary reward for medical services. Doctors in the *Yinyuan zhuan* as a matter of course receive two kinds of payments: before the treatment, the 'Money for Opening the Box of Medicines' (*kaixiang qian* 開箱錢) and, upon completion of the treatment, a larger sum as a reward. The text painstakingly records financial details: Chao Yuan pays Xiao 2 silver taels for opening the box of medicines.[67] Comparison with other episodes within the novel shows that this is excessive: a medical pedlar receives only 200 strings of cash,[68] and one Grand Physician (*taiyi*) receives 1 tael.[69] The amount of 2 taels suffices on another occasion to pay for the entire treatment by a medical pedlar.[70] This detail thus sheds light on Chao Yuan's economic behaviour: we watch how he recklessly overspends.

The matter of the final reward for Xiao's treatment again reflects on the theme of lavish extravagance among the gentry. On his way home, Xiao sarcastically informs Chao Yuan's servant of the price for having treated Zhen'ge: 'I cured a person from your household who is worth 800 taels of silver. If we deduct half, then you still owe me 400 taels as a reward.'[71] Xiao ironically echoes the theme of Zhen'ge as a commodity. We have seen earlier in the narrative how Chao Yuan fretted over Zhen'ge's health primarily because she was his investment of 800 taels, a luxury article in his household collection.[72] It is difficult to gauge exactly

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[66]*YYZ*, 4.57.

[67]*YYZ*, 4.56.

[68]*YYZ*, 8.114.

[69]*YYZ*, 66.949.

[70]*T-YYZ*, 39.510.

[71]*YYZ*, 4.58.

[72]*YYZ*, 4.52.

how wasteful this purchase appears in the contemporary context. Authorial irony may account for comic exaggeration but also reflects the atmosphere of extravagant living among the scholar-gentry class. Late Ming society indeed dealt with women, especially concubines and lower-ranking wives, as commodities.[73] The following examples from the historical context may reflect how much the amount of 800 taels Chao Yuan paid for Zhen'ge was worth: In 1572, the pawnbroker and art collector Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴 (1525-1590) paid 800 taels for a piece of calligraphy by Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1101).[74] In the 1640's, the poet and official Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳 (1616-1673) paid 1000 taels for the celebrated courtesan Gu Mei 顧眉 who (in contrast to Zhen'ge) possessed superior artistic skills.[75] At that time, 1000 taels constituted a considerable part of a grand estate.[76] A comparable example appears in the sixteenth-century novel *Jin Ping Mei*: Ximen Qing 西門慶 pays 700 taels for the palace of a eunuch.[77] The amount of 800 taels Chao Yuan pays for Zhen'ge represents merely one of Chao Yuan's extravagances.[78] Satire here targets his foolish and reckless wastefulness.

Xiao's appearance in the *Yinyuan zhuan* ends with burlesque comedy on the theme of financial excess. Xiao's astronomic claim (for half of Zhen'ge's price) is nothing but a joke. However Chao Yuan's servant chimes in with the theme saying that the doctor really ought to be rewarded 800 taels, or better 8,000 taels, or even 80,000 taels. True to the spirit of the ideal physician, Xiao does not covet money. All he requests is one big bottle of Chao Yuan's wine. The servant replies: 'Never mind one bottle, we can give you ten.'[79] This scene implies that the healer is not guilty of greed. Ironic hyperbole at the expense of Chao Yuan exposes the extravagance of his household.

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[73]Cf. Clunas, 1991, 132.

[74]Cf. Clunas, 1991, 180. On Xiang see Goodrich, 1976, 539-544.

[75]Cf. Hummel, 1943, 431; F. Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise. The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in 17th Century China*, vol. 2, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985, 871.

[76]Cf. Clunas, 1991, 118.

[77]*JPMCH*, 14.143.

[78]See also *YYZ*, 1.6, 4.51; 6.84-86.

[79]*YYZ*, 4.58.

The motif of Xiao unmasks the decadence in Chao Yuan, a new member of elite, but it conveys the didactic message in the tone of comedy on the theme of money and lavish over-spending. Imagery and rhetoric amuse and entertain. Comedy also characterises the theme of Xiao's excessive indulgence in wine. Xiao almost comes too late for Zhen'ge, as he is dead drunk when Chao Yuan's servant arrives to summon him. Subsequently the servant follows Xiao into inebriation and further delays the doctor's visit. But the episode is all light comedy. Xiao still makes it in time to save Zhen'ge and he cures her completely despite his addiction to wine. The text does not stress excess in wine as a serious vice - in contrast to the other three traditional vices. The didactic tone recedes in favour of entertainment as the reader watches the funny spectacle of intoxication.

Xiao represents the vice of over-indulgence in wine (*jiu*), but his medical proficiency and moral attitude towards money characterise him as an ideal healer. The construction of the gynaecologist Xiao as a positive antithesis to the quack doctor Yang ironically inverts an old Chinese bias. Traditional Chinese society displayed a strongly negative attitude towards specialists in women's diseases. The historians of medicine Wong and Wu note that the traditional code of moral laws generally forbade male doctors to attend on women in labour.[80] The Tang dynasty physician Sun Simiao lists the taboo not to watch processes of birth among his exhortations for ideal physicians.[81] In 1908, the foreign physician Dr. Ram Lall Sircar observed that 'the Chinese hate a person who attends on delivery cases. They consider him a very dirty and lowly person.'[82] Accordingly we see the gynaecologist Zhao Taiyi 趙太醫 in the *Jin Ping Mei* as a ridiculous quack.[83] The *Yinyuan zhuan* by contrast depicts Xiao as (almost) ideal whilst exposing the Grand Physician Yang Taiyi as a charlatan. The principle of inversion creates a world of topsy-turvy values inviting to question the accepted status quo.

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[80]Wong K. Chimin and Wu Lien-teh, *History of Chinese Medicine. Being a Chronicle of Medical Happenings in China from Ancient Times to the Present Period*, Shanghai: National Quarantine Service, 1936, 220.

[81]*Qianjin yifang*, 29.19b. Unschuld (1979, 33) conjectures that this part of Sun's book stems from an older shamanistic work.

[82]Ram Lall Sircar, in a report on the Health of Tengyueh, *Customs Med. Rep.*, 68-80:43. Quoted in Wong and Wu, 1936, 220.

[83]*JPMCH*, 61.742-745.

### 3. Ai Qianchuan

The medical doctor Ai Qianchuan appears within the Di plot in chapters 66 and 67. The need for a surgeon arises when Di Xichen engages in a masochistic act of self-mutilation. Di Xichen has joined his friend's banquet but his shrewish wife Sujie summons him home. Xichen is over-anxious to leave, yet his host grips his arm to keep him there. In a frenzied attempt to free himself, Xichen tries to hack off his arm. He returns home drenched in blood. As the wound deteriorates, he needs medical attention.[84] An onlooker suggests doctor Ai and Xichen's father Di Yuanwai calls for him. The narrative introduces the new doctor thus:

> Somebody mentioned a certain Muslim called Ai who lived outside the Western gate of the provincial capital, as an excellent and famous surgeon.[85]

Let us first attempt to reconstruct what image this introduction would evoke in a contemporary reader. Ai lives outside the city walls, similar to Xiao. Ai is obviously not a *taiyi* and nobody ever addresses him as such. Ai is a surgeon, *waike* 外科. Surgeons generally ranked lowest among physicians in public opinion. The Chinese believed that surgery violated the integrity of the human body, a value Confucians, Buddhists and Daoists honoured alike.[86] Ai is a Muslim. The text refers to him as Mohammedan Ai (*Ai huizi* 艾回子) and later also as Mullah Ai (*Ai manla* 艾滿辣). Muslims had been living in China since the days of the Tang. In the late Ming, they peacefully coexisted with the non-Muslim population in China. They had become partly sinicised but not totally assimilated into Chinese civilisation. They retained their identity and constituted a sizeable minority.[87] However, Ai is a Muslim surgeon. Since Tang times when Arabs and Persians brought their medical knowledge into China, the Chinese held Muslim

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[84]*YYZ*, 66.941-947.

[85]*TDT* 66.14.9b. *YYZ*, 66.947 changes Ai Huizi 艾回子 (apparently a derogatory term for Muslims) to Ai Qianchuan. On Chinese Muslim physicians see Rall, 1970, 27-31.

[86]See Rall, 1970, 11.

[87]On Muslims in China see M. Rossabi, 'Muslim and Central Asian Revolts', in J. D. Spence and J. E. Wills, Jr., eds., *From Ming to Qing. Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979, 167-199; esp. 180-191.

physicians in general and Muslim surgeons in particular in high esteem.[88] Historical documents from the Song dynasty 宋 (960-1278) record that the imperial family favoured Muslim physicians.[89] Under the Yuan, Muslim doctors rose to prominent positions as court physicians and heads of hospitals.[90] Consequently the reader would expect a proficient healer in the figure of Ai.

Ai reflects the image of the skilled Muslim surgeon with heavy irony. Ai consciously exploits his image as a good healer for material profit as the narrating voice indicates: 'Ai presumed that Di Yuanwai and his son believed that the Mullah Ai was an enlightened doctor (*mingyi* 明醫) without having the slightest idea of what kind of person he really was.'[91] Ai has proficient skills indeed, but his moral character prevents him from healing people. As one character comments:

> It must be granted that he does have good prescriptions and his skills are really all right. It is just that as a person, he is depraved and mean.[92]

Ai's arrival already signals to the reader that Ai does not behave as he should. Although Di Yuanwai sends for the doctor with the generous amount of three taels, Ai follows his summons reluctantly. When he sees Xichen, the doctor first gives a verbose account of previous casualties in his care. His lengthy tales aim at material profit and succeed in intimidating Di Yuanwai who reacts accordingly: he anxiously produces another tael as 'Money for Opening the Medical Box'.[93] After the examination, the doctor insists on returning home to fetch medicine. His act again aims at profit: Di Yuanwai offers three taels to cover the doctor's expenses. Although Ai earlier pretends that he does not require money for medicine, he betrays his covetousness. In the words of the narrating voice: 'While Ai declined in words, he had already pocketed the money.'[94] Once Ai has reached home, he

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[88]*Xin Tangshu* 新唐書, by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 et al., repr. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975, 221B.6261.

[89]Cf. Rall, 1970, 28.

[90]Cf. Leung, 1987, 137.

[91]*YYZ*, 67.957.

[92]*YYZ*, 67.956.

[93]*YYZ*, 66.949.

[94]*YYZ*, 66.950.

resorts to blackmailing Di Yuanwai. He demands ten taels at once and a pledge for another ten taels to be paid upon completion of the treatment.[95] Later Di Yuanwai's neighbour reveals Ai's identity: 'The name of the Mullah Ai is Ai Qianchuan 艾前川.'[96] Dramatic irony heightens the pun of the doctor's name on *ai qian* 愛錢, coveting money, as the reader has already anticipated what Di Yuanwai learns only then. Contemporary sources reveal the vice of covetousness in a healer as a common problem. In the seventeenth century the scholar and physician Zhang Lu warns physicians not to exploit situations when others are in danger, nor to accept rewards without justification. He states:

> It is not suitable for someone who should practise humaneness to exploit the dangerous situation [of others] for his own profit without having any qualms about it.[97]

Ai's covetousness not only characterises him as a moral vice-figure but also spurs his crimes in the medical profession. Despite Ai's reputation as a skilled surgeon, he does not heal his patients but he kills them. Di Yuanwai's neighbour Chen Shaotan unmasks the doctor's crimes:

> When he treats people, he will always use poison to aggravate the wound. Then he will negotiate money and extort it systematically. When he has aggravated a wound, nobody else can heal it any more just as "only the snake knows the hole it has dug."[98]

Consequently the doctor's diagnosis and prognosis resemble financial negotiations. The narrating voice informs us that Ai understands Xichen's case immediately. His diagnosis is brief and precise:

> He observed that Di Xichen had aggravated his wound by engaging in bedroom affairs. As the wound had no outlet, it had grown inside. What had to be done was to apply medicine to remove the dead skin on the outside and then use an ointment for the new skin. If it was not treated soon,

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[95] *YYZ*, 66.951; split payment was still a common practice in twentieth-century rural China, see C. Osgood, *Village Life in Old China: a community study of Kao Yao, Yünnan*, New York: Ronald, 1963, 258.

[96] *YYZ*, 67.954.

[97] 'Shiwan laoren yimen shijie', in *Zhangshi yitong*, 4a.

[98] *YYZ*, 67.955.

the arm would fester and fall off.[99]

Ai explains that he will first apply medicine to erode the dead skin - which will necessarily hurt a little - and then apply an ointment for the new skin. Ai's prognosis reveals his shrewdness, for it sounds plausible to the patient and his family whilst anticipating the effects of the poison. Ai starts treating Di Xichen's wound by washing it and applying eroding medicine as well as Five Tiger Cream. Xichen's pain increases but Ai confirms that this is the natural course of recovery and leaves for home. Ai pretends to go in order to fetch more medicine. Ai's parodistic verbosity in professional discourse gives weight to his argument as he enumerates various medicines and pharmacological activities.[100] Once Ai has reached home, he revises his diagnosis and prognosis for the purpose of blackmail. He addresses Di Yuanwai's servant thus:

That wound cannot be cured. I observe that your household is not willing to spend money. As this wound is difficult to treat, I shall not go there any more. You take that mule away.[101]

The narrating voice ironically contrasts Ai's argument with Di Yuanwai's generosity, thus emphasising Ai's greed. As the focus shifts back to Xichen whose condition deteriorates drastically, the narrating voice eventually reveals that Ai applied not medicine but poison.[102] The Tang dynasty physician Sun Simiao found it necessary to list the exhortation 'not to kill' as the first of his exhortations for physicians.[103] He repeated the warning 'not to kill nor hurt anyone' in his list of good conduct for physicians.[104] In the early thirteenth century the scholar and physician Zhang Gao 張杲 (fl. 1210) listed cases of covetous doctors that read like precedents to doctor Ai. In his medical compendium *Yishuo* 醫説, he tells about healers who treat patients half-way and then start negotiating material rewards. One anecdote describes a medical practitioner who, like Ai, proposes a treatment in several stages:

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[99]*YYZ*, 66.948.

[100]See *YYZ*, 66.949-951.

[101]*YYZ*, 66.951.

[102]See *YYZ*, 66.953.

[103]*Qianjin yifang*, 29.19b.

[104]*Qianjin yifang*, 29.20a.

In the first stages, the doctor did not appear reluctant. But when the colon of the patient had appeared outside [the first step in the doctor's proposed treatment], [the doctor] negotiated the details of his reward. The patient knew that his life was in the doctor's hands and he promised his entire luggage [that he had with him when he travelled to consult this doctor] as a reward. The doctor only then became willing to carry out the treatment.[105]

Zhang Gao records a similar case of two surgeons and shows what happens when the patient refuses to comply:

In the year 1138, the two surgeons Xu Loutai 徐樓臺 and Sun Dalang 孫大郎 of Dangtu treated the rich Jiang Shunming 江舜明 of Lashan in Lishui county for an ulcer on his back. Apart from a reward of 300,000 cash, they further demanded 25 silver taels. As the patient refused, the surgeons inserted a drug wrapped in paper into the wound. It was so painful that the patient died.[106]

Ai has previously killed one patient in a similar way to these surgeons.[107] According to Ai's version of the incident, the patient, Ma Yizhai 馬義齋, died from karmic causes and sexual indulgence during recovery, an act traditional Chinese doctors regarded as fateful. Di Yuanwai's neighbour Chen Shaotan 陳少潭 reveals in his version of the same incident that Ma Yizhai in fact died at the hands of Ai who poisoned him in the hope of extorting money.[108] Zhang Gao's anecdote about the surgeon Fu Zhujiao 符助教 sketches a similar case:

Fu Zhujiao of Fuli village in Xuancheng treated ulcers. He intentionally treated without any care. When the wounds of patients were free from poison, then he used drugs to poison them.[109]

About two centuries after the *Yinyuan zhuan*, the scholar Zhao Xuemin 趙學敏 (ca. 1730-1805) observes and denounces a practice among doctors called 'planting poison' (*zhong du* 種蠹) and 'planting diseases' (*zhong chuang* 種瘡) in healthy

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[105]*Yishuo* 醫說, by Zhang Gao 張杲, 1544 edn., 10.33a.

[106]*Yishuo*, 10.33b-34a.

[107]See *YYZ*, 66.948-949.

[108]See *YYZ*, 67.955.

[109]*Yishuo*, 10.34a.

persons in order to reap a profit from treating the resulting cases.[110] Ai, then, represents the extreme anti-ideal of a healer, the exact inversion of Sun's first commandment in medical ethics. Comparison with contextual documents suggests that this motif reflects a historical problem and an abiding one.

Di Yuanwai's neighbour Chen Shaotan recounts one more of Ai's previous attempts at blackmail. Ai's patient and victim in this case is the local magistrate, Sir Pei 裴大爺. This episode demonstrates how an official manages to control the vicious doctor. Sir Pei calls for Ai to treat an ulcer on his leg, but Ai almost kills Sir Pei with his poison. Sir Pei immediately uses torture on Ai. This effects Ai's moral reform. Ai pleads:

"Common wounds that hurt are easy to treat. The pain certainly comes from the eroding foul flesh. I can stop your pain at once, Sir. The next day, the wound will stop festering. On the second day, it will close up. On the third day, you will be well again. If it hasn't healed by then, there will still be time to torture me then, Sir."

Sir Pei replied: "Let us release him. If it has not healed in three days, it will be no problem to execute him then."[111]

Subsequently Ai takes pains to treat Sir Pei with various unspecified ointments. Sir Pei recovers within three days as Ai has predicted. This shows that Ai lacks not medical skills but morality. Sir Pei dismisses Ai under the threat of death penalty:

You have been so bold with me, a magistrate. It does not bear thinking how wicked you are with the common people. Should you kill anybody and I try the case, I shall not let you live any longer. Give him one tael and be gone![112]

This indicates a way of reward and punishment rather different from the Buddhist and Daoist concepts of spiritual or later retribution in a next life. Sun Simiao quotes the authority of the ancient philosopher Laozi 老子 to claim that physicians would

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[110] *Chuanya neiwaibian* 串雅內外編, by Zhao Xuemin 趙學敏, repr. Beijing: Zhongguo, 1987, 3a. Cf. P. U. Unschuld, 'Das *Ch'uan-ya* und die Praxis chinesischer Landärzte im 18. Jahrhundert', *Sudhoffs Archiv* 62.4, 1978, 378-405.

[111] *YYZ*, 67.955.

[112] *YYZ*, 67.955.

be rewarded by their fellow-men, or punished by the spirits.[113] Zhang Gao speaks of 'retributions for medical services' (*yigong baoying* 醫功報應) in terms of the Buddhist notions of reward and punishment.[114] The *Yinyuan zhuan* by contrast advocates here the strict rule of Confucian authority. A world in which murderers such as Ai flourish in turn implies the absence of a ruler to enforce the law and restore order. Sir Pei resolves the problem of the covetous doctor. This example suggests that order will return to society once the government organs function as they ought to. The late Ming observer Chen Shigong indicates that similar problems existed in the interactions of doctors and officials. He specially instructs doctors on how to treat officials:

> When a physician receives summons from a mandarin, he must go there immediately without delay. He should show sincerity and reverence. He should explain the cause of the illness and give a prescription. After curing the illness, he must not seek to get a plaque of merit or presents. Nor should he ask for favours, for this would occasion crime.[115]

Ai's covetousness and his conduct towards Sir Pei illustrate the very problem Chen Shigong addresses. The *Yinyuan zhuan* proposes drastic measures of authoritarian control on the model of Sir Pei to resolve the problem of the covetous doctor.

Ai personifies the vices of covetousness (*cai*) and anger (*qi* - as in his conduct towards others and his attempts at murder) within the pattern of morality in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. He appears as an anti-ideal healer who puts his skills into the service of vice. Satire derides doctor Ai. Ai turns into a laughing-stock when first his shrewish wife and later Di's servant bully him. Slap-stick comedy here plays on the themes of henpecked husbands, male cowardice and inverted domestic hierarchies.[116] Islamic religion here also serves satirical purposes. Ai readily concedes that he drinks wine, disregarding the Muslim principle of abstention.[117] In a study of Chinese attitudes towards Muslims in Ming and Qing China, the modern scholar Israeli notes contempt on the Chinese side in particular for those

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[113]*Qianjinfang yanyi*, 1.3b-4a.

[114]*Yishuo*, 10.31a.

[115]*Jiaozheng Waike zhengzong*, 12.36a-36b.

[116]For a detailed analysis of these themes, see Yenna Wu, 1986, and 1991.

[117]See *YYZ*, 67.959.

Muslims that 'misbehaved' in view of their indigenous principles.[118] The modern historian Rossabi maintains that the economic and political prominence of Muslims in China since the Yuan dynasty had formed a stereotype of Muslims as avaricious, aggressive and shrewd. The characterisation of Ai reflects these clichés and exploits them for satire and entertainment.

The denouement to the story of Ai culminates in the serious tone of didacticism. The local authorities arrest Ai, because Ai has failed to reform his moral conduct (as the case of poisoning Di Xichen and Ai's repeated attempts at blackmailing Di Yuanwai prove).[119] The thirteenth-century scholar-physician Zhang Gao solves the problem of the negligent doctor Fu Zhujiao - whom we mentioned earlier - by advocating supernatural retribution:

> Suddenly a messenger clad in yellow arrived and produced a note saying: 'The officials in the underworld want you.' He gave [Fu Zhujiao] a heavy beating with a cane. Fu screamed with pain. The messenger in yellow said: 'So you also know pain after all.' [Fu] at once got a big ulcer and died.[120]

Zhang Gao's tale closely resembles the *Yinyuan zhuan* as a messenger from the magistrate Sir Pei arrives with an official note to detain Ai. But the *Yinyuan zhuan* jettisons the imagery of supernatural retribution whilst declaring that law and order come only with an efficient ruler.

## 4. Zhao Xingchuan

The doctor Zhao Xingchuan appears in chapter 67 as the antithesis to Ai Qianchuan in the Di plot. Similar to the way the narrative introduces the doctor Xiao (as an antithetical image of Yang Taiyi) in the Chao plot, the patient's neighbour recommends a better doctor after the first has failed:

> The other day, you should have summoned Zhao Xingchuan who lives behind the Yue temple outside the Southern Gate. He is a medical officer (*yiguan*) from the Prince's palace. As a person, he is honest and sincere and has none of those crooked and vicious antics of the surgeons. But

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[118] R. Israeli, *Muslims in China. A Study of Cultural Confrontation*, London and Malmö: Curzon, 1978, 69.

[119] *YYZ*, 67.967.

[120] *Yishuo*, 10.34a.

those surgeons cannot blame him, for he is not prepared to play any tricks, yet people are not willing to spend their money on him either. He has excellent skills but lives in poverty.[121]

Di Yuanwai subsequently sends for Zhao to treat Di Xichen's wound, which Ai has failed to heal. The term *yiguan* 醫官, medical officer, normally denotes a professional, often hereditary specialist rather than a member of the civil service. It may also refer to members of the Imperial Medical Service (*taiyi ju* 太醫局) of the Imperial Academy of Medicine (*taiyi yuan* 太醫院). Since the Song it is an awarded prestige title that gives doctors honorific status comparable to the various ranks of civil officials.[122] However the medical officer Zhao never receives the title of *taiyi*. His exact status remains obscure although the location of his residence and his rhyming name associate him with the less orthodox doctors Ai and Xiao. Di's servant refers to Zhao as *mingyi*, enlightened doctor, in obvious antithesis to Ai.[123]

Zhao lacks any vice. The narrative systematically constructs Zhao as the virtuous antithesis to Yang who desires women (*se*), Xiao who craves wine (*jiu*) and Ai who covets money (*cai*) and kills his patients (*qi*). First, the description of Zhao does not allude to any sexual matters at all. Second, Zhao drinks only moderately.[124] Third, Zhao displays modesty with regard to money.[125] Fourth, even his looks mirror his kindness and virtuous character:

Zhao was of high and sturdy stature. He had a dark complexion and some pockmarks, a sparse beard and a square face. He was taciturn and amiable and looked like a sincere and kind man.[126]

Zhao's taciturn nature contrasts with Yang's predilection for gossip and his pseudo-professional discourse, Ai's wordiness and the boastfulness of both Yang and Ai. Zhao thus corresponds to the ideal physician as Sun Simiao envisages him:

According to the laws of medicine, [the physician] must not be talkative, poke fun, chat, mock, bawl, shout, gossip, criticise other people, show off with his reputation, revile all other

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[121]*YYZ*, 67.956.

[122]See Hucker, 1985, 267.

[123]See *YYZ*, 67.960; 67.957.

[124]See *YYZ*, 67.961.

[125]See *YYZ*, 67.962.

[126]*YYZ*, 67.961.

physicians or praise his own virtue.[127]

Zhao represents the ideal healer with regard to his morality. In contrast to Xiao, Zhao is morally flawless.

Zhao accurately diagnoses Di Xichen's affliction. His audience at once understands that Zhao is correct for he is able to guess the previous events in the narrative:

Is this not a wound inflicted by a knife? (...) In the beginning, [Di Xichen] was not cautious and aggravated the wound. Whom did you call to treat [him]? Moreover you allowed somebody to play a trick, that is why the wound got worse and started to fester.[128]

Zhao also gives a brief and precise prognosis:

This is not a malicious wound festering from within. However the skin got injured, that is why it is painful, but it is not serious. This wound is easy to heal.[129]

Zhao immediately embarks on treating Di Xichen. He first washes the wound and then applies medicine. Zhao's drug is an unspecified panacea. Di Xichen's pain stops instantly. Xichen's ensuing recovery takes place according to schedule: within three days, the wound starts to heal; after ten days, Xichen recuperates, and on the twentieth day, the wound has healed. Zhao Xingchuan stays with Xichen another ten days for the follow-up treatment. In contrast to Ai, Zhao does not once return home.

Zhao completes his treatment with twenty doses of the tonic *shiquan dabutang*, the Great Tonic Broth. Although we have seen Yang fail with this prescription, it works well with the efficient doctor. Zhao represents as an ideal healer with regard to his medical proficiency.

Most importantly, Zhao Xingchuan lacks the vice of covetousness in contrast to Ai. Zhao's story climaxes in his model behaviour with regard to money and reward. When the doctor prepares to leave upon completion of the treatment, Di Yuanwai offers generous gifts to him:

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[127]*Qianjinfang yanyi*, 1.3b.

[128]*YYZ*, 67.961.

[129]*YYZ*, 67.961.

On top of having entertained [Zhao] for one month, Di Yuanwai had [the following presents] sent to his house: 6 pecks of mung beans, 1 picul of wheat, 1 picul of millet and 4 pecks of husked rice. Apart from the reward for his services, he also gave 12 taels of silver, 2 rolls of silk fabric, 1 pair of socks made from fine floss, 1 pair of shoes with rims, 2 catties of cotton thread and 10 big towels from the Five Willow Hall.[130]

The narrating voice tells that the point of the detailed list lies in Zhao's virtuous response: 'Zhao accepted all these various gifts but he absolutely refused the 12 silver taels.'[131] Zhao explains his reaction:

If it were 2 or 3 taels, up to 4 at the most, I would accept it. But you give so much that I cannot accept it. The wound was really not very difficult to cure. It took only one month. With all the kind favours you shower on me, this is really too much.[132]

When Di Yuanwai exchanges the 12 taels for 4 Zhao reluctantly accepts them as a farewell gift. The serious tone of the narrating voice suggests that this amount may count as a reasonable rate for a doctor's services. Zhao's behaviour exhibits the modesty and moral soundness that characterise the ideal healer. The seventeenth-century scholar Zhang Lu finds nothing wrong in accepting some money for a successful cure as Zhao does. Zhang Lu argues:

When a physician has proved his merit, it does no harm to accept [a reward]. When he accepts [the reward] the patient will be happy. In such cases the physician should accept [the reward].[133]

But the narrating voice adds one further turn to the matter of Zhao's reward:

Later Di Yuanwai and Zhao Xingchuan became close friends. Whenever [Di] had wheat, he would give [Zhao] wheat as a present. Whenever [Di] had rice, he would give [Zhao] rice as a present. Over the years, this was worth several times as much as the amount of 12 taels that [Zhao] had declined.[134]

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[130] *YYZ*, 67.962.

[131] *YYZ*, 67.962.

[132] *YYZ*, 67.962.

[133] 'Shiwan laoren yitong shijie', in *Zhangshi yitong*, 4a.

[134] *YYZ*, 67.962.

This implies the moral that modesty entails a far greater reward than covetousness. But the *Yinyuan zhuan* does not advocate a spiritual or idealistic reward for the ideal healer. It does not promise other-worldly benefits or advantages in a future incarnation as in Daoism or Buddhism. It measures Zhao's reward in monetary currency and on the very scale of the amount Zhao has initially declined. By implication, the *Yinyuan zhuan* orientates the virtuous healer towards materialistic goals. It constructs the image of the ideal healer on the basis of a thoroughly this-worldly pragmatism.

As a successful doctor, Zhao gains privileges comparable to a teacher. The historian Hymes observes about successful doctors in the Song period:

> Like a teacher, a successful doctor gained frequent direct access to the household of his patients. Most important, a doctor, like a teacher, might form connections with the people he treated, might virtually be taken into the family.[135]

The seventeenth-century scholar Shen Jing 沈鏡 (*alias* Weiyuan 薇垣) associates a successful doctor with a scholar-official. He records his motives for taking up the medical profession instead of an official career:

> I said that a doctor had a profession of little value. How could I gain fame by that? Yet my father answered: "If you study the *Neijing* thoroughly, you can become a good doctor. And a good doctor is worth as much as a good official."[136]

Zhao, then, exemplifies the successful healer who eventually gains merit and wealth similar to a scholar and official.

Within the context of the *Yinyuan zhuan*, the model behaviour of Zhao echoes the example of the virtuous mother-figure Mme Li in a different episode in chapter 34. Mme Li finds a treasure chest buried in her garden but refuses to take this easy gain into her possession. She argues that she will receive that very amount of money in the future as a righteous gain when her sons earn salaries as scholar-

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[135]Hymes, 1987, 60-61.

[136]Shen Jing's preface to his edition of the *Nanjing*, quoted in F. Hübotter, *Die Geschichte der chinesischen Medizin zu Beginn des XX. Jahrhunderts und ihr historischer Entwicklungsgang*, Leipzig: Asia Major, 1929, 111. (Original has been unavailable to me.)

officials.[137] Both Mme Li and the doctor Zhao Xingchuan illustrate the idea that good morality will eventually translate itself into material benefit.

Zhao personifies the moral ideal of a healer who distinguishes himself by the lack of the four vices. The tone of the narrating voice remains serious throughout the episode on Zhao. The characterisation of Zhao lacks satire and irony. The positive image of Zhao does not expose, deride or criticise society. Zhao primarily embodies moral virtue and the ideal with respect to his social role. In the description of Zhao's model behaviour, the didactic mode dominates over comic entertainment. If the narrating voice advocates the ideal in contrast to the satirical depiction of the vices, it is by means of a serious reminder of the ideal, by showing its existence and its manifestation in the fictional world.

In sum, the four medical doctors at first sight seem to represent two antithetical pairs of positive and negative figures. Analysis of their moral characteristics and their medical proficiency suggests that they acquire further layers of meaning in context. The telling names Yang Guyue (*hu* 胡), Xiao (punning on *xiao* 效, efficiency, and *xiao* 笑, laughter) and Ai Qianchuan (*ai qian* 愛錢) signal that these doctors reflect certain aspects of human nature. The names Xiao Beichuan, Ai Qianchuan and Zhao Xingchuan all end in the same character *chuan* 川. These three doctors also share common backgrounds and social positions. As semi-orthodox specialists, they contrast with the government physician Yang Taiyi. The rhetorical devices seem to suggest that the four doctors personify ideas and types rather than individuality. But the pattern does not apply consistently: we see the four doctors as two antithetical pairs. But they form another pattern with regard to the four vices of excess: three doctors (Yang, Xiao and Ai) personify the four vices while one doctor (Zhao) personifies virtue.

The conception of the characters as types shows ambiguity. Comparison with contextual documents implies on the one hand that the doctors appear as plausible and realistic within their fictional world and also in contemporary society. The good and bad doctors mimetically reflect familiar faces in the perception of contemporary observers. They correspond to the positive and negative images of healers in Chinese writings on medical ethics. On the other hand, tendentious selection and hyperbole shape them larger than life.

The use of paradox inverts the expected characteristics of the four healers. The contemporary public would expect: first, that Yang Taiyi, the most orthodox

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[137]See *YYZ*, 34.498.

and officially recognised one among the four doctors, should be the most proficient doctor; second, that the less orthodox healers Xiao, Ai and Zhao, who do not distinguish themselves by academic graduation, would be less efficient than a *taiyi*; and third, that amongst these, the Muslim surgeon Ai would appear as the best healer. The *Yinyuan zhuan* however has it otherwise: Yang Taiyi is the only one among the four doctors who lacks medical skills. Xiao, Ai and Zhao have all far greater skills than Yang Taiyi. The Muslim surgeon Ai no less turns out the worst amongst them for he succumbs to his vice. Thus the *Yinyuan zhuan* ironically inverts expectations about the positive and negative ideals. This rhetoric suggests that traditional norms and the status quo beg the question.

The four healers represent figures of utopia in their positive and negative polarities. But they have yet another dimension. They also reflect back on the people they treat. The main patients of Yang, Xiao, Ai and Zhao are the major protagonists Chao Yuan and Di Xichen. This means that the healers deal with certain members of the gentry, the local ruling elite in the social and political system of China. Their medical cases imply that these people - a fringe group of newcomers among the old-established elite - suffer from physical as much as from moral sickness. In this way, dystopia dominates the society around the healers, too. The healers expose the decadence and inadequacy of the new 'elite'. In this way the motif of the medical doctors conveys social and political comment. The message has didactic and also ironically entertaining overtones.

Satire and comedy turn the descriptions of vice and anti-ideal into the burlesque. The narrating voice exposes vice under the satirical magnifying glass, dissecting depravity and deficiencies in close-up projection. Details, lengthy depictions and parodistic wordiness connote the domain of the negative world. The bulk of the narrative focuses on crime and evil, exposing the shortcomings of society. Satire and comedy effect entertainment as a paradoxical vehicle for the didactic message.

By contrast, the narrating voice depicts the virtuous and ideal aspects in the medical doctors without irony. Brevity also contrasts the positive phenomena with the negative world: the narrating voice sketches Xiao's and Zhao's acts of perfect healing only cursorily. Their methods and panaceas remain obscure. These positive images flare up as brief reminders of a eutopian counter-world. The tone of the narrating voice remains serious as it affirms a didactic message through the positive ideal. This technique of point and counter-point imagery suggests one way of looking at the fictional world: as a vision of positive and negative figures in a satirical anti-utopia. Breaks and flaws however spoil the construction of patterns

(vice/virtue, ideal/anti-ideal) and conceptual frameworks (such as *sitan*). Such loopholes in the plot may provide insights into the least processed visions of perceived reality, the most 'realistic' glimpses of the world.

# V

# Medical Pedlars

The medical pedlars represent another type of healer in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. We encounter two of them, one in the Chao plot and the other in the Di plot. As both remain anonymous, we shall for the sake of convenience refer to them as medical pedlar No. One (appearing in chapter 8 within the Chao plot) and medical pedlar No. Two (appearing in chapter 39 within the Di plot).

## 1. Medical Pedlar No. One

The first medical pedlar belongs to a short sub-plot within the story of Chao Yuan before the eutopian chapters.[1] The *Yinyuan zhuan* refers to this kind of healer as an 'itinerant doctor jingling a bell', (*yao xianghuan de guolu langzhong* 搖響環的過路郎中).[2] Chinese society identifies the medical pedlar as a male itinerant doctor who roams the country-side jingling a bell on a staff seeking patients and selling herbal remedies for a small fee, also called 'bell doctor' (*lingyi* 鈴醫). The historian of science Needham groups these itinerant doctors together with the 'common practitioners of folk medicine' (*yongyi* 庸醫) as opposed to the group of the scholar physicians (*ruyi* 儒醫).[3] The distinction from the *ruyi* dates from the twelfth century AD when an imperial decree ruled that unqualified medical practitioners must pass provincial examinations in classical studies as well as medical subjects. The successful candidate would then qualify as a *ruyi*.[4] The itinerant practitioner's medical skills would traditionally pass down within the

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[1] *YYZ*, 8.113.

[2] *YYZ*, 8.113; *T-YYZ*, 39.509.

[3] J. Needham, *Clerks and Craftsmen in China and the West: Lectures and Addresses on the History of Science and Technology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, 265, 391.

[4] *Ibid.*

family from father to son. Eberhard defines in a sociological study the itinerant doctor as a practitioner of folk medicine, a half-educated man from a farmer's family who has had some chance to learn something though not enough to compete in the official examinations.[5] The stigma of belonging to the 'school of medical pedlars' (*lingyi pai* 鈴醫派) would not leave these healers even if they rose to official rank as medical officers (*yiguan* - like Zhao Xingchuan).[6] The social status of independent doctors was not very high.[7] The medical pedlar No. One remains a shadowy figure in the narrative. He has few individual traits, but he serves well to illustrate the society he lives in.

The narrative introduces the minor protagonist Xiao Qingmei 小青梅, Little Qingmei, a fifteen year-old maid in the family of Commander Liu 劉游擊, suffering from amenorrhea, *ganxue lao* 干血癆. Traditional Chinese medicine identifies this illness as emaciation due to chronic blood stasis and blood deficiency.[8] The Chinese medical dictionary *Zhongguo yixue dacidian* 中國醫學大辭典 describes the symptoms as the drying up of the blood causing chronic menopenia or amenia in women.[9]

The reader of the *Jin Ping Mei* may recall that the quack doctor Zhao Taiyi mentions *ganxue lao* in a comical context as one of his random guesses and obviously the wrong diagnosis for the over-bleeding Li Ping'er 李瓶兒.[10] The ability to diagnose an illness such as *ganxue lao* apparently requires a healer of a higher calibre than a quack *taiyi*. The narrating voice in the *Yinyuan zhuan* indicates the seriousness of this illness:

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[5]See Eberhard, 1962, 230.

[6]Lu Gwei-Djen and J. Needham, *Celestial Lancets: A History and Rationale of Acupuncture and Moxa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, 157.

[7]See e.g. Rall, 1970, 15. Needham (1970, 266) however excludes any idea that the 'profession as a whole was a despised one in Chinese civilisation.'

[8]See Ou Ming et al., *Chinese-English Glossary of Common Terms in Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1982, 5; Xie Zhufan and Huang Xiaokai, *Dictionary of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1985, 93.

[9]See Xie Guan 謝觀, *Zhongguo yixue dacidian* 中國醫學大辭典, vol. 2, Shanghai: Shangwu, 1933, 2428.

[10]*JPMCH*, 61.744.

This illness [leads to death] if fast within seven months, if slow within eight. There is absolutely no case that does not end fatally.[11]

This implies that a healer who can cure this illness must be very expert. As Liu's mother Mme Liu 劉夫人 desperately tries to heal Qingmei, a medical pedlar arrives by chance like a deus-ex-machina:

An itinerant doctor jingling his bell was sheltering from the rain under the big gate [of the Liu's residence]. The gate-keeper chatted with him and told him about the fatality of amenorrhea.[12]

Chatting with the gate-keeper, the medical pedlar displays his medical knowledge:

The doctor said: "There are two different kinds of that illness. If the disposition is weak, [then] the vital energy and the state of the blood are in a state of extreme deficiency. This resembles a dried well. No matter how much you cleanse it, you cannot use it anymore. If the cause happens to be a stagnation of the circulation of the blood vessels, then it will naturally heal if you dredge it. This illness is not always fatal."
The gate-keeper then discussed Xiao Qingmei's illness with him. He answered: "Wait until I have seen her. If it is the curable type, then I shall prescribe medicine."
The gate-keeper went inside to inform Mme Liu who called Qingmei to come to the middle gate so that the doctor could examine her. The doctor came to Qingmei and took her hand to feel the pulse. He also saw that Qingmei was not as emaciated as a ghost. Then he said: "This illness is not serious. When she has taken one dose of medicine, we shall see the effect."[13]

The medical pedlar speaks in the tone of professional medical discourse befitting a *taiyi*. His way of examination corresponds to the standard practice in traditional Chinese medicine. He derives his diagnosis from inspecting the patient and feeling the pulse - in contrast to Yang Taiyi. The medical pedlar accepts Mme Liu's 'Money for Opening the Box of Medicines' with due modesty - in opposition to the greediness of Ai Qianchuan. He gives an accurate prognosis and treats the patient with some unspecified medical pills efficiently and fast - like the good healers Xiao and Zhao. The narrating voice tells how the doctor instantly

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[11] *YYZ*, 8.113.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.*

produced a package of medicinal pills the size of mung beans, counted out seven and administered them with a broth spiced with saffron and peach kernel. [Mme Liu had] food prepared and entertained the doctor in the room opposite the principal room inside the house while making the broth and giving Qingmei the medicine. After a short while, Qingmei gradually developed a pain in her belly. Finally she felt some sharp pain and passed first several pints of dark smelly urine and then some bright red blood.

When they told the doctor, he said: "She has already recovered from this illness. She should avoid cold water, onions, garlic and raw foods. When you get a good enlightened doctor of internal medicine [to prescribe] ten doses of a tonic, she will fully recover."[14]

The medical pedlar appears as a highly efficient healer who corresponds to the ideal physician (as in the previous section on medical doctors) in attitude and behaviour. His character remains shadowy but he shows virtue as a healer and lacks any specific vices. The medical pedlar No. One contrasts with the quack doctor and the false *taiyi* in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Here, the ideal *taiyi* and the heterodox pedlar change roles: the world in the *Yinyuan zhuan* forms the opposite to conventions and norms. A *taiyi* should be efficient, but in the *Yinyuan zhuan* he is not. A heterodox healer such as the medical pedlar lacks qualification and distinctions, but in the *Yinyuan zhuan* he represents a perfect healer. The text ironically inverts the status quo in portraying the unorthodox and unofficial healer as the more knowledgeable and efficient one.

The cure of the patient plays a crucial part in the plot development. Qingmei survives to play her role in the tragic events that lead to Ms Ji's suicide. The narrating voice comments on Qingmei's recovery:

It was indeed as the saying goes: "Medicine cures the illnesses that are not fatal, Buddha saves the people that have that destiny (*yuan*)."[15]

This saying appears as common currency in the late Ming.[16] It illustrates the belief in the Buddhist concept of *yuan*, destiny, a key-word in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Qingmei's cure corresponds to this saying. Her illness is not fatal, so the pedlar's medicine succeeds in healing her. The religious aspect has special importance:

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[14]*YYZ*, 8.114.

[15]*YYZ*, 8.113.

[16]Also in *YYZ*, 28.416; *JPMCH*, 54.643; 79.1055.

Qingmei at first reacts to her illness by making a vow: 'Should she survive, she would become a nun.'[17] Yet here *yuan* ironically serves to invert religious meaning and to disturb the social order. Upon recovery, Qingmei opts for life as a nun. In particular, she wants to become a Daoist nun. She reveals with sarcasm that her motives lack any sense of piety. She discards her other options in society i.e. to become a concubine, a courtesan, or the wife of a servant or peasant, by exposing the hardship of women in such roles. She even rejects the service of Buddha as she desires the unlimited prospects of a life in sexual liberty and material luxury among the Daoist clergy.[18] Here the narrative opens yet another window on contemporary society: through Qingmei's eyes, we perceive the decadence among the clergy and their corrupting influence on the gentry womenfolk. The clergy have long lost their purity and sanctity. Depraved nuns infiltrate the elite families and undermine the domestic order.[19] The seventeenth-century scholar-official Huang Liuhong 黃六鴻 (ca. 1633-after 1705)[20] who served as a magistrate in Tancheng 郯城 county in southern Shandong in the early 1670s saw in this a particularly demoralising factor in his society. He warned in his handbook for magistrates *Fuhui quanshu* 福惠全書, a guide-book for a better world:

> The three sisters [Buddhist nuns, Daoist nuns, and female fortune-tellers] and the six old women [procuresses, matchmakers, spirit mediums, madames of brothels, medicine women and midwives] often act as go-betweens inducing people to wantonness and dissipation. Their talk corrupts virtuous women from honourable families. (...) [The magistrate] then ought to make public notifications that Buddhist and Daoist nuns have to practise religion quietly inside their monasteries and have no permission to enter people's households and solicit subscriptions. (...)

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[17]*YYZ*, 8.113.

[18]*YYZ*, 8.114-116.

[19]Chinese society regarded the violation of the sexual taboos among the clergy as the most unpardonable offence. As both male and female members of the clergy had easy access to the gentry families' households, they caused domestic disorder in the scholar-official elite. Cf. S. Rummel, *Der Mönche und Nonnen Sündenmeer. Der buddhistische Klerus in der chinesischen Roman- und Erzählliteratur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1992, 74-84; van Gulik, 1974, 267; see also the late Ming anthology *Sengni niehai* 僧尼孽海, Chapter 3, and Part II:11 (original has been unavailable to me), translated in Rummel, 1992, 173-180, 321.

[20]On Huang see *Tancheng xianzhi* 郯城縣志, 1763 edn., 7.26-27; *Wuxianzhi* 吳縣志, 1924 edn., 76B.4-6.

The magistrate must survey his district strictly. If anybody disobeys, they should forthwith be reported to the authorities so that we have evidence to arrest and deal with them. Such cases will correct depraved customs to a certain extent. When women's apartments strictly separate inside and outside, we will achieve good social customs. Men and women will all live in virtue and perfect harmony.[21]

Domestic disorder and social chaos ensue in the world of the *Yinyuan zhuan* - as it lacks the competent magistrate and his measures to restore law and order. Qingmei becomes a Daoist nun and in this role, she visits Ms Ji in Chao Yuan's household. This gives Zhen'ge in turn the opportunity to slander Ms Ji for adulterous contact with the clergy. To prove her innocence, Ms Ji commits suicide.[22] The healer does not appear in those scenes, but he belongs to their topsy-turvy dystopian society and plays a decisive part in it. His cure of Qingmei engenders a scene - an anti-utopian vision - in which the worst of a Confucian's nightmares come true.

## 2. Medical Pedlar No. Two

The second medical pedlar appears in the Di plot in chapter 39.[23] Like the first pedlar, he deals with a minor character within a sub-plot. The episode of the Confucian scholar and teacher Wang Weilu covers chapters 35, 38, 39, 41 and 42. The medical pedlar appears in Wang Weilu's death scene in chapter 39. Like the pedlar No. One, the second pedlar has few individual characteristics, but his appearance illuminates some of the darkest corners of society. The symptoms of Wang Weilu's illness help the local officials to identify him as a criminal. The Director of Education suspects Wang Weilu:

I remember having seen you like this before. That time I said to myself: "That man has not a single hair on his face. I suspect it is because he developed *yangmei chuang*."[24]

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[21]*Fuhui quanshu* 福惠全書, by Huang Liuhong 黃六鴻, author's preface 1694, ed. Obata Yukihiro 小畑行蘭, repr. Yamane Yukio 山根幸夫, Tokyo: Kyûko, 1973 (hereafter: *FHQS*), 31.11b.

[22]See *YYZ*, 8.118-9.130.

[23]Expurgated from *YYZ*, 39.577; for the most part in *T-YYZ*, 39.508-510; full text in *TDT*, 39.10b-13b.

[24]*YYZ*, 39.573.

The district magistrate of Xiujiang county confirms: 'He had no beard nor did he have hair on his temples. I am sure that it fell out a long time ago as he developed *yangmei chuang*.'[25] *Yangmei chuang* 楊梅瘡, plum blossom sores, denotes syphilis.[26] As the officials can diagnose it, they must have been familiar with this phenomenon in their society. The reference to syphilis strikes the reader as a blatant anachronism as the *Yinyuan zhuan* sets its action within the years between 1440 and 1490. The term *yangmei chuang* occurs first in the *Shishan yian* 石山醫按, a medical book by Wang Ji 汪機 written between 1520 and 1533.[27] The late Ming pharmacologist Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518-1593) points out that venereal disease but not syphilis has existed in China since antiquity.[28] Syphilis reached China for the first time via Canton around the year 1500.[29] The disease spread rapidly. An epidemic occurred for the first time between 1506 and 1521 and a second time around the year 1630.[30] The modern medical historians Wong and Wu note that syphilis was extremely prevalent in China from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards.[31] The characters' familiarity with its symptoms in the world of the *Yinyuan zhuan* suggests that the novel reflects sixteenth or seventeenth-century

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[25]*YYZ*, 39.575.

[26]The physician Yu Bian 俞辨 (fl. 1515) reports in his *Xu Yishuo* 續醫説 (1545) on the outbreak of the first syphilitic epidemic in China in 1488-1505. Cf. van Gulik, 1974, 311; Dohi, Keizo, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Syphilis. Insbesondere über ihren Ursprung und ihre Pathologie in Ostasien*, Tokyo: Nankodo, 1923, 45. As Chinese physicians recognised the link between sexual infection and the illness, the term *yangmei chuang* probably referred to the symptoms and to its sexual association; the plum symbolises sexuality; see van Gulik, 1974, 275.

[27]Dohi, 1923, 44-45.

[28]Cf. Wong and Wu, 1936, 217-218, 136-137.

[29]I.e. one or two decades before the arrival of the Portuguese. Dohi claims that not the Portuguese, but Chinese pioneers who traded in Malacca where they entertained friendly relations with the Portuguese and other foreigners, carried syphilis into China first. See Dohi, 1923, 46-47.

[30]Dohi, 1923, 45; van Gulik, 1974, 311-312; Wong and Wu, 1936, 129. The medical monograph *Meichuang bilu* 黴瘡秘錄 (1632) by Chen Sicheng 陳司成 describes the second epidemic in detail.

[31]Wong and Wu, 1936, 136-137.

Chinese society.[32]

Wang Weilu eventually dies of syphilis. When he is lying on his death-bed, an itinerant pedlar passes by jingling his bell. He has medical knowledge:

> The doctor said: "Give me two silver taels and I shall give you a prescription to relieve his plight for the time being."
> Wei Yun 魏運 asked his sister for two silver taels and requested the doctor to give the prescription. [The doctor] said: "You cannot get this medicine anywhere. Luckily I still have some here with me."[33]

The narrating voice does not satirise this healer as a quack. The medical pedlar gives an accurate prognosis: 'It is impossible to save his life, but he can at least have temporary relief from his plight.'[34] His medicine - some unspecified powder for external use - has the desired effect. The medical pedlar No. Two represents an efficient healer. He demands fair payment, but not an exorbitant amount. The two taels seem a modest request in terms of Zhao Xingchuan's idea about the standard rate for medical services.[35] His moral conduct as a healer, then, lacks any particular vice. Like the first pedlar, the pedlar No. Two primarily exposes the negative aspects of the world around him.

The image of syphilis links the theme of physical illness in certain members of society with that of moral sickness. Chinese physicians recognised the causal connection between the outbreak of the illness and its sexual source of infection as early as the sixteenth century.[36] The larger part of the population however regarded syphilis as one among many dangerous diseases that plagued their country at regular intervals.[37] The *Yinyuan zhuan* also refers to syphilis as *tianbao chuang* 天報瘡, sores of heavenly retribution.[38] This term conveys the idea that illness represents a higher moral punishment and therefore directly relates to the sufferer's

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[32]See also Hu Shi, in *YYZ*, 3:1448-1449. Hu Shi was the first modern scholar to date the *YYZ* into the seventeenth century, mainly for its repeated references to syphilis.

[33]*T-YYZ*, 39.510.

[34]*Ibid.*

[35]See *YYZ*, 67.962. Cf. section IV.4.

[36]See Dohi, 1923, 45.

[37]See van Gulik, 1974, 312.

[38]See *YYZ*, 11.165, 168; 25.373; 93.1324.

sins, his misconduct in human society. This idea consistently applies within the *Yinyuan zhuan*: syphilis repays Wang Weilu for his sins and in the other cases in the *Yinyuan zhuan*, syphilis similarly functions as higher retribution for crime and depravity.[39] In sum, syphilis works as a device to pinpoint moral weaknesses and social dysfunction in the world of the *Yinyuan zhuan*.

The narrating voice describes Wang Weilu's pathological symptoms through the image of the fictional character Xue Aocao 薛敖曹, the hero of the novel *Ruyijun zhuan*.[40] The image of Xue Aocao emerges as common currency in late Ming erotic descriptions. For example, the sixteenth-century novel *Jin Ping Mei* and the seventeenth-century novel *Xiuta yeshi* 繡榻野史 mention him.[41] The *Yinyuan zhuan* however conjures up his image with a little difference: while other fictional writings stress Xue Aocao's eroticism and heroism, the *Yinyuan zhuan* exploits his features to symbolise an outgrowth of sexual pathology. This allusion and displacement of connotation effect nausea rather than entertainment. The description breaks though all prevalent ideas of order and decency of that time. The narrating voice also delves into obscenity in minute detail when depicting the treatment of Wang Weilu's symptoms with the pedlar's medicine.[42] Lacking compassion or romanticising tendencies, the narrating voice shows no sentiment as it dissects depravity with voyeuristic glee.[43] It masterminds the horror vision of an anti-utopian world conveying a moral shock. The audience shares the disgust the other characters feel with Wang Weilu and his condition. As the narrating voice pushes bawdy entertainment to its limits, the scenario becomes unbearable even to the fictional onlookers.[44]

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[39]See *YYZ*, 25.373; 93.1324; cf. sections VI.5, VII.6.

[40]*T-YYZ*, 39.509. See also *YYZ*, 2.24; cf. section IV.1.

[41]*JPMCH*, 37.416; *Xiuta yeshi* 繡榻野史, partially repr. in R. H. van Gulik, *Erotic Colour Prints of the Ming Period*, vol. 2, Tokyo: Privately Published, 1950, 173-191, 180.

[42]See *T-YYZ*, 39.510.

[43]Feng Menglong for example romanticised and idealised life in the brothels. On Feng's views about courtesans see Ôki Yasushi 大木康, 'Fû Bôryû to gijo' 馮夢龍と妓女, *Hiroshima daigaku bungakubu kiyô* 広島大学文学部紀要 48, 1989, 71-91.

[44]See *T-YYZ*, 39.508 on the prostitutes; *YYZ*, 39.578, on Wang's wife Weishi 魏氏; Weishi's story also features in the *Liaozhai zhiyi zhaichao* 聊齋志異摘抄, a spurious collection of the *Liaozhai zhiyi* by Pu Songling; cf. Wu, 1986, 36-37.

Wang Weilu's death-bed scene also reminds of Ximen Qing's end in the *Jin Ping Mei*,[45] yet the *Yinyuan zhuan* takes its nauseating effect further. The narrating voice exceeds the limits of discretion and taste in showing how Wang Weilu's family employ low-class prostitutes for his benefit.[46] Such close details of low-class prostitution rarely occur in other contemporary writings.[47] It is significant that the *Yinyuan zhuan* picks up what other works pass over in silence. Huang Liuhong perceived a problem in prostitution during his time as a magistrate in the seventeenth century. In his *Fuhui quanshu* he visualises a cleansed society:

> Whenever there are loose women and prostitutes in a village, the local elders and village headmen should get orders to chase them away. Whenever there are frivolous and dissipated young men, the local elders and village headmen together with their fathers and elder brothers should exhort and order them to take up a profession. If this happens, suspicion will be remote and improper intimacy will not occur. Rites and righteousness will prosper whilst wanton customs will naturally end.[48]

Huang Liuhong again takes the magistrate to task:

> Whenever there are singing girls in market towns, thoroughfares, and trading centres, the magistrate should order the persons in charge with the maintenance of public order to take stringent action and oust them.[49]

Lacking such strict political control, the world in the *Yinyuan zhuan* is far removed from the ideal society Huang Liuhong envisages. Here vice-figures such as Wang Weilu flourish and low-class prostitution abounds. The episode of the medical pedlar exposes a coarse and vulgar, yet also earthy and realistic picture, illuminating the darkest corners of contemporary society. Realistic details in tendentious hyperbole and grotesque enlargement create an anti-utopian nightmare.

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[45]*JPMCH*, ch. 79.

[46]*TDT*, 39.10b-13a.

[47]Artists in late Ming Jiangnan romanticised life while neglecting its dark sides. Medical writers and foreigners provide the main sources of information on venereal disease and prostitution; cf. van Gulik, 1974, 313.

[48]*FHQS*, 19.16b.

[49]*FHQS*, 23.14b-15a.

Close reading has shown that the text consciously and carefully constructs the two medical pedlars to point to certain aspects in an (anti-)utopian universe. Narrative technique suggests that the medical pedlars both represent one type of healer. Both remain anonymous and shadowy like silhouettes. Both deal with minor characters. Both treat cases of sexual illness (first, sexual deficiency in a female character and second, sexual excess in a male character). In both cases, sexual illness indicates social dysfunction. Both healers expose short-comings in society and social relations, shedding light on decadence and the dark sides of life. Thus the *Yinyuan zhuan* sketches parallel representatives of one type of healer as mirror-images of each other. They reflect one kind of phenomenon in the fictional world, one idea in seventeenth-century Chinese imagination. Repetition emphasises that the Chao/Di plots share similar concerns as they depict corresponding incidents of physical and social breakdown. Both plots reiterate the same message reflecting the (anti-)utopian quality of society: the perception of a eutopian/dystopian dichotomy in the world.

The characterisation of the medical pedlars themselves illustrates this principle. Their medical proficiency and professional conduct invert common expectations. In the historical context, the medical pedlar represents an unorthodox, unofficial folk healer without much claim to professionalism in contrast to the *taiyi* and other medical doctors. The *Yinyuan zhuan* ironically exchanges their roles: while the *taiyi* and other medical doctors in the novel lack skills and morality, both medical pedlars display efficiency and professional behaviour. Satire attacks not the good healers, but the world around them. Here the healers primarily expose some of the most discomfiting and disturbing aspects of their world.

# VI

# Religious Specialists

The religious specialists form another group of healers in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Religious specialists include spirit-immortals, Daoists and Buddhists. Although not all religious specialists engage in healing, the narrative leaves no doubt as to the fact that the ideal religious specialist functions as a healer in his world. Both male and female religious specialists appear in the *Yinyuan zhuan*, but the act of healing mainly concerns the male characters. We shall focus on seven male religious specialists to examine the healer as a utopian motif.

## 1. Xu Zhenjun

Xu Zhenjun 許真君 is one of the most efficient healers in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. The title *zhenjun* 真君 designates a perfected man in the hierarchy of Daoist adepts who is also called *shenxian* 神仙, spirit-immortal. The figure of Xu Zhenjun in chapters 28 and 29 in the *Yinyuan zhuan* stems from contextual literature. The narrating voice identifies Xu at his first appearance as the 'Perfected Man Xu of Jingyang from the Palace of the Iron Tree in Nanchang Prefecture of Jiangxi [Province]' 江西南昌府鐵樹宮許旌陽真君.[1] Xu later refers to himself in the context of 'that affair of the Iron Palace'.[2] In the late Ming literary context, the tale of the immortal Xu Xun 許遜, *alias* Jingzhi 敬之, called Zhenjun 真君 (239-374) appears under the title 'Jingyang gong tieshu zhen yao' 旌陽宮鐵樹鎮妖 in Feng Menglong's collection of short prose fiction entitled *Jingshi tongyan*.[3] The story tells how the

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[1] *YYZ*, 28.414.

[2] *YYZ*, 28.417.

[3] *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言, by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, ed. Shanghai: Guji, 1992, 40.390-431. For sources see A. Lévy, *Inventaire Analytique et Critique du Conte Chinois en langue vulgaire*, vol. I.2, Paris: College de France, 1979, 563-567.

legendary hero Xu 許 conquers evil in the shape of the dragon Nielong 孽龍, Dragon of Evil, by binding him to an iron tree cast at Jingyang 旌陽.

In the *Yinyuan zhuan* Xu primarily functions as a healer of physical illness and as a saviour who descends to the earth to select the morally good people and protect them in the apocalypse of moral retribution. Xu appears at a crucial point in the novel in chapters 28 and 29, at the end of a seven-chapter sequence (from chapter 23 to 29) that forms a core piece in the novel and develops the didactic keynote of the narrative. The construction of a paradise in chapters 23 and 24 leads on to the systematic moral disintegration of the world and the cosmic destruction culminating in a purgative flood in chapter 29. Chapters 28 and 29 show how the people's sins against the moral order and hydraulic balance incur the wrath of the divine authorities. The celestial council meets and decides to drown the entire village as a punishment for their evils. The Jade Emperor (Yudi 玉帝), highest Daoist sovereign, summons Xu Zhenjun to release the flood, but he first sends him down to Mingshui Village to re-examine the people and save the virtuous ones.[4]

Xu perceives the fallen world of Mingshui as a place where 'there were one or two good people (*shan ren* 善人) in a hundred, while eight or nine out of ten were evil (*e* 惡).'[5] The previous chapters 25 to 28 illustrate how the narrating voice defines 'evil' in the fictional world. The narrating voice summarises evil in the Mingshui villagers as 'not loyal, not filial, without rites, without righteousness, devoid of modesty, devoid of shame'. They fail to take retribution as an incentive to 'change their behaviour and take up goodness, to reform their crooked minds.' Instead they 'continue as before to violate against Heaven and offend the moral principles, thieves and swindlers get worse and more wicked year by year, day by day.' They disregard Heaven and Earth and the deities of popular religion: Guandi 關帝, the City God and the Holy Mother of Taishan 太山聖母.[6] In sum, the narrating voice defines sin as the violation of Confucian ethics and the disregard for the values of popular religion.

Xu visits Mingshui in the guise of a Daoist and sells medicines in the market-place. He decocts his medicines himself, mixing mud from the earth with his saliva and kneading it into pellets. The narrating voice indicates that these pills work like a

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[4]*YYZ*, 28.414.

[5]*YYZ*, 28.414.

[6]*YYZ*, 28.410.

panacea curing illness instantaneously.[7]

Xu appears not only as a good healer but also as a paragon of virtue. He makes his medicines without pretence in front of the people even though the result is at first materialistically unrewarding. For nobody buys his pills and people even refuse to give alms. This scene implies that Xu lacks greed. Xu moreover shows that he possesses the virtue of modesty when he introduces himself to Di Yuanwai - and to the reader - with the following words:

> I do not understand any magical arts, I merely collect subscriptions and beg for alms so as not to starve. And I do not work with any divine decoctions but I merely sell some fake medicines to make a living and help the poor. That is all.[8]

Di Yuanwai decodes Xu's modesty:

> Father, your medicine must be a wonder drug as you yourself call it fake. If you had bragged that it was a panacea, then that may not necessarily have been true.[9]

Xu's medicines remain nameless. The trivial ingredients contrast with the pretentious albeit ineffective prescriptions of less ideal healers.[10] Xu sells medicines of various forms, first pills, then powders, but they do not differ in kind:

> That medicinal powder was no glutinous rehmannia, rhizome of atractylodes, licorice root or poris cocos, but the same dry mud of the earth which he sold as he picked it. Its effect in curing illnesses was exactly like that of the pellets.[11]

Shortly before leaving Mingshui, the spirit-immortal claims that his medicines do not only cure illnesses but also save from disaster.[12] Indeed the people who buy Xu's medicine and use it later according to Xu's instructions survive the retributive

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[7]*YYZ*, 28.414.

[8]*YYZ*, 29.426.

[9]*YYZ*, 29.426.

[10]See also *YYZ*, 4.46-49, 61.879, *TDT*, 61.10b-12a.

[11]*YYZ*, 28.416.

[12]*YYZ*, 28.416.

flood that cleanses Mingshui of its moral evils.[13]

Xu has real powers of mind-reading, healing and foresight. He uses these not for selfish motives but in the role of a healer and saviour. The *Yinyuan zhuan* depicts Xu as a positive figure combining the image of the ideal healer with moral perfection. The serious tone of the narrating voice and the absence of satire characterise Xu as a real *zhenjun* who has attained the state of Daoist perfection. Among all healers in the *Yinyuan zhuan*, Xu illustrates the theme of physical healing and moral soundness at its most explicit.

Despite Xu's qualities as a divine healer, his medicine is inconsistent in efficacy. The narrative gradually reveals that its special feature consists in functioning in relation to the morality of the patient. It cures illness and saves from disaster, but works only with the virtuous and those who respect Xu and believe in his medicine. Xu first cures a woman about to die in childbirth. He merely administers one of his pills to be swallowed with warm water. The woman instantly gives birth and recovers. Mind-reading (for diagnosis), wonder healing and foresight (for prognosis) work perfectly in this first act of Xu's healing. Not much is said about the patient's or her family's morality except that they follow Xu's instructions.[14]

Another example confirms the point that Xu's healing works provided that everybody acts according to his advice. The narrating voice informs the reader that Di Yuanwai's wife has been suffering from a nasty sexual illness (identified as whites) for several years. When she hears about the spirit-immortal's powers, she wonders whether he has some divine decoction, but her sense of decorum prevents her from speaking out.[15] While enjoying Di Yuanwai's hospitality, Xu reads Mrs Di's mind and administers three of his pellets to be taken with millet wine.[16] When Mrs Di takes the medicine out of its envelope, the pellets have turned into fragrant pills wrapped in gold leaf. The medicine cures Mrs Di instantly. The narrating voice concludes the episode by stressing its moral:

> From that time onwards, the spirit-immortal would often come of his own accord to visit and Di Yuanwai would often invite him for a vegetarian meal. Nobody in the family, big or small, would

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[13]*YYZ*, 29.419-420.

[14]*YYZ*, 28.415.

[15]*YYZ*, 29.427.

[16]*YYZ*, 29.427-428.

ever call him behind his back a Daoist, but they all addressed him as Spirit-Immortal.[17]

Consequently Di Yuanwai and his family also survive the flood of moral retribution in Mingshui unharmed.[18] Xu's medicine works because the 'patients' recognise and respect him as a perfect healer.

Many other people receive Xu's medicine, but it has differing results in curing their illnesses: 'Some who took it recovered, while others who took it got no effect.'[19] A similar phenomenon appears in the flood. When Xu claims that his medicine saves from disaster, some people reject it as a fraud, ridicule it and do not buy it. Others buy it, but treat it lightly. When the flood comes, the panacea saves only those that use it with respect and reverence. For them, it works like a dyke against the fatal torrents.[20] The others find their medicine bags empty or gone, or have forgotten all about it. They count among the seventy percent of over one hundred thousand people in Mingshui Village who perish in the flood. The narrating voice remarks on the survivors: 'When we consider their conduct in human society, [we find that] they all had some good points.'[21] Xu's medicine, then, has a function comparable to Noah's Ark. It works as a moral agent, a vehicle to preserve the virtuous elements in society.

No irony or comedy colours the cases of Xu's wonder healing. The narrating voice remains serious and consistent with the plot events. Irony and comedy do however mark the antithetical counter-examples as the narrative demonstrates what happens when people do not recognise Xu, or do not trust in his capabilities. The first example shows Xu on his first visit to Di Yuanwai who entertains him respectfully and cordially. Xu uses his supernatural powers to punish Di's servant Di Zhou for suspecting him to be a fake Daoist.[22] The second example shows how Xu warns Professor Xue not to go shopping. As the professor does not heed the warning, he duly meets with misfortune as a child's night pot is emptied over his

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[17]*YYZ*, 29.428.

[18]*YYZ*, 29.432-433.

[19]*YYZ*, 28.416.

[20]*YYZ*, 29.419-420.

[21]*YYZ*, 29.420.

[22]*YYZ*, 29.426-427.

shoes.[23] Satire attacks the people around Xu in their vain and foolish ways,[24] but not Xu himself. Sexual and scatological details stem from a voyeuristic delight in stripping society of decorum and propriety. Nevertheless the narrating voice confirms the established social hierarchies (e.g. of servant and master). This tendency represents the paradox of the *Yinyuan zhuan* as anti-utopian fiction: to preach in conservative tones while entertaining by irreverent satire.

The episode illustrates the moral to distinguish real from fake, to recognise and respect the real thing which in turn corresponds to the virtuous in society. Confucius expresses this very moral in his abhorrence of spuriousness, which he exemplifies in his judgements on the music of Shao 韶, Wu 武 and Zheng 鄭.[25]

In Chinese tradition Daoist healers like Xu Zhenjun count among the *fangshi* 方士, men with technical skills in medicine, divination and magic since Han times.[26] The Daoist specialist shares with the medical doctor the concern to preserve health and to prolong life.[27] The theoretical outlook of the *fangshi* rests on the assumption that the human body is a microcosmic system reflecting the structure and function of the cosmos in which it is situated, a view also expressed in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. Drugs belong to the *fangshi*'s typical methods of treatment; thus Xu Zhenjun fits into this historical role as a healer. Traditionally the *fangshi* are reclusive, reluctant to assume official positions, and generally detested by Confucianists.[28] The *Yinyuan zhuan* paradoxically inverts this official bias by advertising Xu as a most honourable healer. In this respect the *Yinyuan zhuan* reflects other works of popular fiction. Xu Zhenjun echoes the positive image of the spirit-immortal Wu Shenxian 吳神仙 in the *Jin Ping Mei* that does not question

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[23] *YYZ*, 29.429-430.

[24] See e.g. *YYZ*, 28.416.

[25] Cf. *Lunyu*, 3/25, 7/14, 15/11, 17/18. In *Lunyu yinde* 論語引得, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series 16, ed. William Hung et al., Beijing: Hafu-Yanjing xueshe, 1940.

[26] Cf. Thompson, 1990, 49.

[27] Cf. A. Seidel, 'Taoism', in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edn., *macropaedia*, vol. 17, Chicago, 1974, 1034-1044, 1042.

[28] Cf. K. J. DeWoskin, trans., *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, 1-2, 17-18.

his prognostic proficiency.[29]

The narrating voice points out that Xu Zhenjun displays compassion for all living beings and actively engages in charitable acts for the poor and needy.[30] In the late Ming, the Buddhist monk Zhuhong 袾宏 (1535-1615) of the Yunqi 雲棲 monastery near Hangzhou exerted great influence on the educated elite and the common people in propagating compassion for sentient beings and the release of animals.[31] Zhuhong explains that 'one thing a bodhisattva should do is offer salvation and protection.'[32] As a healer and saviour, Xu Zhenjun thus also embodies Buddhist ideals. A seventeenth-century reader would have recognised Xu as a moral ideal modelled on a syncretic mixture of Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist values.

## 2. Sun Zhenren

The second example of a spirit-immortal echoes the story of Xu Zhenjun in the Di plot. Sun Zhenren 孫真人 confirms the image of the morally perfected man as an ideal healer in his brief appearance in the Chao plot in chapter 90. As a *zhenren* 真人 Sun ranks just below a *zhenjun* in the hierarchy of Daoist immortal deities. The double occurrence of the spirit-immortals emphasises that their moral perfection brings about cure and salvation for the people.

Chao Liang 晁梁 (Chao Yuan's step-brother) falls ill when he excessively mourns the death of Mme Chao at her memorial temple. He collapses and spits blood. When he returns home, a Daoist 'with a long beard and a fair face, about forty years old' waits for him with medicine.[33] The Daoist administers three dark green pills the size of peas to be taken thrice with running water that flows eastwards. The wonder drug remains obscure as usually in such cases and recalls other ideal healers' medicines in shape and size. Chao Liang takes the medicine as prescribed and gradually recovers. He treats Sun with due respect and recognises

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[29] *JPMCH*, ch. 29, 79.

[30] *YYZ*, 28.416.

[31] See K. Yü Greenblatt, 'Chu-hung and Lay Buddhism in the Late Ming', in Wm. T. de Bary, ed., *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, 93-140, 95; Goodrich, 1976, 322-324.

[32] *Fanwang jing xindepin pusajie yishu fayin* 梵網經心地品菩薩戒義疏發隱, by Zhu Hong 袾宏, in *Yunqi fahui* 雲棲法彙, 40 extant *juan*, Chongzhen (1628-1644) edn., 1.10a-10b.

[33] *YYZ*, 90.1290.

him as a spirit-immortal, a truly perfected man.

These aspects repeat the pattern of successful healing we have seen in Xu Zhenjun, especially in his interaction with Di Yuanwai. Sun Zhenren emerges as a perfect healer like Xu Zhenjun. The absence of satire in Sun's description emphasises his role as a model. However he lacks detailed characterisation and therefore remains a mere silhouette echoing Xu. This suggests that he primarily functions as a type in the pattern of healers, a reminder of the positive ideal among numerous negative examples. Sun appears as a healer through the intervention of Mme Chao, as her spirit later reveals to Chao Yuan in a dream. This connection with the motif of Mme Chao as a moral model places Sun into a moral context of highly positive connotations.

The narrating voice contrasts the spirit-immortal with the classical medical doctor. When Chao Liang first falls ill, people summon two Grand Physicians, *taiyi*, to treat him. The narrating voice dismisses them: 'But they were merely quacks (*yongyi*), so how would they be able to cure anybody?'[34] Only the spirit-immortal Sun Zhenren is able to cure Chao Liang. This incident suggests that first, the religious specialists primarily function as healers. Second, the motif of the healer forms a larger scheme throughout the narrative. Various kinds of healers mutually reflect on each other. They appear in pairs as mirror-images and antithetical figures. The positive and negative characters acquire meaning as a utopian motif revealing the ideal and anti-ideal aspects of the world. This is one way of looking at the healers in the narrative.

Like Xu Zhenjun, Sun Zhenren as an immortal and ideal healer would have corresponded to the expectations of a contemporary reader. There are historical precedents for immortal healers such as the deity Wu Zhenren 吳真人 (979-1036), a famous local doctor who healed people suffering from all kinds of sicknesses. Like the immortals in the *Yinyuan zhuan*, Wu Zhenren assumes the role of a healer as well as a protector in popular belief.[35]

The *Huizuan gongguoge* 彙纂功過格, a morality book (*shanshu* 善書) written between 1671-1687 by Chen Xigu 陳錫嘏 (1634-1687), expresses the

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[34]*YYZ*, 90.1289.

[35]See B. J. Ter Haar, 'The Genesis and Spread of Temple Cults in Fukien', in E. B. Vermeer, ed., *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990, 349-396 , 355. Cf. K. Schipper, 'The Cult of Pao-sheng ta-ti and its spreading to Taiwan: a Case Study of *fen-hsiang*', in Vermeer, 1990, 397-416.

view that the perfected man, *zhenren*, manifests himself through healing: 'Medicine is the art of humaneness. Sun Zhenren 孫真人 thereby proved that he was an immortal (*xian* 仙).'[36] In this context, Sun Zhenren presumably refers to the Daoist and physician Sun Simiao from the early Tang. It is not clear whether Sun Zhenren in the *Yinyuan zhuan* also relates to the Tang dynasty physician, but this link is conceivable in the light of these contextual sources. For Sun Zhenren in the *Yinyuan zhuan* manifests his moral perfection as propagated in the *Huizang gongguoge*. Morality books were extremely popular in the late Ming and Qing. They incorporate moral values from Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, epitomising the syncretic tendencies of that time.[37] The moral ideal of the immortal healer in this sense reflects a current image in seventeenth-century Chinese imagination.

### 3. Hu Wuyi

Next to the spirit-immortals, one Buddhist monk appears as a perfect healer. Hu Wuyi 胡無翳 is the only Buddhist who combines his clerical function with medical healing. Moreover he is the only positive figure among the Buddhist characters in the novel (with the exception of his companion Liang Sheng 梁生 *alias* Pianyun 片雲 who dies soon after becoming a Buddhist monk). Originally he is neither a Buddhist nor a medical specialist, but an actor. The final epiphany in chapter 100 reveals that Hu and Liang were originally two attendants of the bodhisattva. When they neglected their duties while watching a play, they were demoted and condemned to be reborn as actors in the human world.[38] Hu Wuyi has supernatural origins just like the two spirit-immortals Xu and Sun in contrast to all other religious specialists.

The *Yinyuan zhuan* introduces him first in chapter 5 as the actor Hu Dan 胡旦 and shows how he and Liang Sheng use their political connections to advance

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[36]*Huizuan gongguoge* 彙纂功過格, by Chen Xigu 陳錫嘏, 1758 edn., 8.24b.

[37]On *shanshu* see Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, *Chûgoku zensho no kenkyû* 中国善書の研究, 1960, repr. Tokyo: Kokusho kankôkai, 1977, esp. 356-403; *idem*, 'Confucianism and Popular Educational Works', in Wm. T. de Bary, ed., *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970, 331-366; Zheng Zhiming 鄭志明, *Zhongguo shanshu yu zongjiao* 中國善書與宗教, Taibei: Xuesheng, 1988, 63-97; K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China. A Historical Survey*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964, 436-439.

[38]*YYZ*, 100.1423.

the official career of Chao Yuan's father Chao Sixiao.[39] Chao Yuan and his father 'repay' their kindness by robbing Hu and Liang of all their possessions and force them to take refuge in Xiangyan 香岩 Temple.[40] They take the tonsure and change their names to Hu Wuyi and Liang Pianyun.[41] In an attempt to redress the wrongs done to them, Mme Chao returns their money and possessions. They become her friends and helpers. Liang dies to be reborn as her son. Hu helps her in a dispute with her relatives when she has become a widow.[42] He reappears in chapter 90, forty-four years later in the fictional chronology, just before Mme Chao's one hundred-fourth and last birthday.

The narrating voice discloses that meanwhile Hu 'had seriously devoted himself to the study of medicine and he had become an excellent and renowned doctor.'[43] Paradoxically Hu Wuyi's name contains the character *hu* 胡 which in the context of the quack Yang Guyue means 'random' with regard to medical practice. Wuyi 無翳 puns on *wu yi* 無醫, 'not a medical doctor.' This paradox suggests that medical professionalism alone does not necessarily make a good healer, as we have seen in the case of Ai Qianchuan. Primarily an ideal healer in the *Yinyuan zhuan* has no vice and personifies moral perfection.

The *Yinyuan zhuan* shows Hu as a healer twice: first, in the context of Mme Chao's relief work for the people of Wucheng county when many diseases spread during a year of natural disasters.[44] Mme Chao sponsors Hu's medical activities, giving him money to buy land so that he can grow medical herbs and prepare medicines to save the people. The narrating voice cursorily outlines Hu as the perfect healer in a way that recalls the efficient medical specialists Xiao Beichuan and Zhao Xingchuan:

> Moreover Hu Wuyi's skills were brilliant. He became the saviour for all the sick people. Any illness would be cured the moment he took up treatment. Among one hundred people who took his medicine, ninety-nine would get well.[45]

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[39] *YYZ*, 5.64ff. See also section XI.3.

[40] See *YYZ*, 15.216-229.

[41] See *YYZ*, 15.216-228, 20.288-305.

[42] See *YYZ*, 22.320-338.

[43] *YYZ*, 90.1282.

[44] See *YYZ*, 90.1282. See also section XII.

[45] *YYZ*, 90.1282.

All we get is this brief sketch without any further information on his medical practice. This yet again confirms the anti-utopian tendency of the novel, which is to point to the positive images with a few words, while the negative examples receive ample attention. This pattern highlights the contrast of positive and negative ideals. It reminds the reader that the positive ideal potentially exists while implying that the negative examples threaten to dominate the world.

In the final chapter of the novel, Hu appears for the second time as a healer and the ultimate saviour who releases the protagonists from their karmic fates.[46] When Sujie's arrow fatally wounds Di Xichen in revenge for his shooting a fox demon in his previous incarnation as Chao Yuan in chapter 1, Hu miraculously heals Di Xichen. Hu uses an obscure medicine which he brought back from his travels to Sichuan where he achieved enlightenment. Di Xichen's pain instantaneously subsides and he recovers within one hundred days, similar to his previous cure at the hands of the ideal physician Zhao Xingchuan. Hu Wuyi, then, epitomises the ideal healer.

The conception of the Buddhist as a healer derives from the very beginning of Buddhism which emphasises the importance of health and advocates the prevention and cure of illnesses. The Buddha calls his teachings a therapy for the ills of the world and one of the important Buddhas in the pantheon is Bhaishajyaguru, the master of medicine. Several Buddhist monks in China gained fame for their proficiency in medicine.[47]

Trends in Buddhism in the late Ming also stress the notion of the Buddhist as a healer. The famous monk and reformer Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623)[48] holds that there are many kinds of sicknesses in the human body and mind which require innumerable prescriptions for treatment.[49] As his twentieth-century biographer Sung-peng Hsu summarises:

> The sickness of the body, which arises from impediments of the four elements, is also a type of Mind-sickness. This is easier to cure than other types of Mind-sickness in the consciousness. The

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[46]*YYZ*, 100.1423-1428.

[47]See Ch'en, 1964, 482.

[48]On Deqing see Goodrich, 1976, 1272-1275.

[49]*Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, by Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清, repr. Taibei: Xinwenfeng, 1983, 5.36, 7.32-33.

Buddha is the omnipotent doctor of all these sicknesses. In accordance with his wisdom and skilfullness, he prescribes all kinds of medicine for the treatment.[50]

Healing therefore counts as one of the responsibilities of the Buddhist. Deqing calls Buddha the 'medicine king of the world' (*shiyiwang* 世醫王).[51] Yunqi Zhuhong includes healing in his system of merits and demerits on the model of the popular morality books, originally a Daoist feature.[52] In his *Zizhilu* 自知錄 Zhuhong propagates healing as one way of gaining merit and increasing one's morality:

Healing one person from a serious illness equals10 merits.
Healing one person from a slight illness equals 5 merits.
Administering one dose of medicine equals 1 merit.[53]

On the other hand, Zhuhong evaluates negligence in healing:

Not healing a person in serious illness equals 2 demerits per case.
In case of a slight illness, 1 demerit per case.
Mixing poison into medicine equals 5 demerits.
Wishing to harm a person equals 10 demerits.
Taking the life of a person equals 100 demerits.[54]

The system of merits and demerits rests on the idea that an individual should add up all points at the end of the day. The belief implies that the individual will die if merits and demerits turn out equal in number. If the demerits outnumber the merits, his offspring will suffer. If the merits reach ten thousand points, all wishes will come true. Although the system runs counter to the Buddhist doctrine of karma and also to the disinterested ideals of Mahâyâna Buddhism, it gained widespread

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[50]S. Hsu, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China. The Life and Thought of Han-Shan Te-Ch'ing*, University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979, 124.

[51]*Hanshan laoren mengyouji*, 7.33.

[52]In *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 by Ge Hong 葛洪 (ca. 280-340). On Zhuhong see also Ch'en, 1964, 436-439.

[53]*Zizhilu* 自知錄, by Zhu Hong 袾宏, in *Yunqi fahui* 雲棲法彙, Chongzhen (1628-1644) edn., A.1b.

[54]*Zizhilu*, B.11b-12a.

popularity in the late Ming due to Zhuhong's advocacy. Hu Wuyi as a Buddhist healer, then, embodies a moral ideal in religious terms and in particular, in the contemporary historical context of the *Yinyuan zhuan.*

## 4. Bao Guang

In a side-plot to the Chao story in chapter 30, we encounter the Buddhist monk Bao Guang 寶光 at Zhenkong 真空 Temple in Wucheng county where Mme Chao has a mass (*jiao* 醮) held to deliver the soul of her daughter-in-law Ms Ji from purgatory.[55] This is the location where by contrast Hu Wuyi turns into an ideal healer.[56] The short episode concerning Bao Guang shows how a corrupt monk receives retribution for his sins. The narrating voice first interrupts the main plot for a flashback on Bao Guang's past to portray his character. Then the focus returns to the main action to show how an avenging spirit possesses and kills Bao Guang. The narrating voice concludes by evaluating the episode as an ugly interplay, a morally negative disturbance in the fictional world: 'one wicked monk almost deprived a most formidable mass of all its splendour.'[57]

Bao Guang appears as anti-ideal with regard to morality. In the universe of the *Yinyuan zhuan*, moral virtue, *de* 德, does not correspond to the level of learning or literary excellence, for Bao Guang is a brilliant scholar. During his past as a novice in Beijing, Bao Guang becomes his master's favourite protégé and receives a thorough training in the Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist canon. The narrating voice points out that talent, *cai* 才, in a man who lacks moral virtue (*de*) equals *cai* 財, the vice of covetousness:

> However, man's talent must go hand in hand with moral virtue (*de*). If it does not go hand in hand with that blessing, then the character for talent (*cai* 才) equals its homophone written with a cowry-shell at its side (*cai* 財, covetousness) which may harm people.[58]

Bao Guang personifies covetousness which the narrating voice marks as the worst of all vices.[59] His portrayal thus fits into the general pattern that parades the

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[55]See *YYZ*, 30.442-445.

[56]See section VI.3.

[57]*YYZ*, 30.445.

[58]*YYZ*, 30.442.

[59]See *YYZ*, 34.495.

personified vices in the *Yinyuan zhuan*. The narrative schematically depicts how Bao Guang takes to extravagant living with regard to foods and clothes and moreover acquires concubines to indulge in sensual pleasure.[60] Thus the vices of excess and desire for women are added to the characterisation of Bao Guang which in the case of a monk doubles his sins. When Bao Guang's protector dies, the authorities try to put Bao Guang to death, yet the Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (1425-1426) decides the case by merely demoting Bao Guang, stripping him of his ordination certificate and clerical status. When returning to his native place, Bao Guang experiences shipwreck on the Yellow River. He escapes with his life but loses his wealth and his women. The waters of the river take on the role of a moral agent similar to the retributive flood in the preceding chapter. Subsequently the spirit of his former protector reveals in Bao Guang's dream that he relieved him of covetousness and lechery in retribution. He furthermore removes Bao Guang's literary talent. Later during Mme Chao's mass the spirit of another monk called Hui Da 惠達 possesses Bao Guang in retribution for one further crime, the robbery of a precious rosary. Bao Guang consequently avenges his own sins in a terrible act of self-destruction.

Bao Guang lacks the virtues of the spirit immortals and Hu Wuyi. By contrast Bao Guang neither engages in healing nor bothers about compassion or charity. Like other vice-figures in the *Yinyuan zhuan*,[61] Bao Guang eventually meets with his due retribution through the moral judgement of supernatural forces.

The intellectual training of Bao Guang reflects syncretic tendencies that correspond to historical examples in the late Ming such as Hanshan Deqing and Yunqi Zhuhong. Similar to Bao Guang, Hanshan studied Confucian classics before and after his ordination and he wrote commentaries not only on many Buddhist sutras but also on Daoist texts such as *Laozi* 老子 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子.[62] Zhuhong had been a Confucian scholar before he became a Buddhist monk. Like Bao

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[60]See *YYZ*, 30.443.

[61]See section VI.5, VI.6; another depraved Daoist, Zhang Shuiyun 張水雲, appears in *YYZ*, 28.414-29.421.

[62]See Araki Kengo, 'Confucianism and Buddhism in the Late Ming', in Wm. T. de Bary, ed., *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, 39-66, 55. Cf. Pei-yi Wu, 'The Spiritual Autobiography of Te-ch'ing', in de Bary, 1975, 67-92.

Guang, he had the reputation of a talented writer.[63] Although Bao Guang has studied the books of all three teachings, he displays no Daoist, Buddhist or Confucian virtues in contrast to the three ideal religious specialists.

The revival of Buddhism in the Wanli period coincided with the flourishing of the Neo-Confucian school of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529).[64] An eminent Buddhist monk of the late Ming, Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655),[65] expressed contemporary awareness of the syncretic trends:

> The rise and fall of the teachings of Buddha depend on the rise and fall of Confucianism. The virtuous action and learning of Confucians are the life of the Buddhists.[66]

The narrating voice marks Bao Guang's special feature as the very link between Confucian and Buddhist learning, for 'Bao Guang must have been a Confucian scholar in his previous incarnation who was then reborn as a monk.'[67] Zhuhong moreover identified the Buddhist requirement for performing good deeds with the Confucian ideal of an upright official.[68] The case of Bao Guang inverts this doctrine as he embodies a vicious monk who in consequence of his vices also loses his literary craft, in particular the ability to write classical poetry, an ability that would ideally characterise a Confucian scholar-official. This loss is described in satirical detail.[69]

The narrating voice moreover points out that Bao Guang offends against religious rules and political laws equally:

> He also forgot that he was a monk, started to indulge in delicacies and precious foods and to wear silks and satins. He gradually came to take beautiful concubines and gave in to sensual pleasures. He did not in the least fear any regulations for monks or Buddhist restrictions, nor the laws of the

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[63] See A. Chan, *The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982, 115.

[64] Cf. Araki Kengo, 1975, 39-54.

[65] On Zhixu see Goodrich, 1976, 244-246.

[66] *Lingfeng Ouyi zonglun* 靈峰藕益宗論, Japanese edn. of 1723, 4.16.

[67] *YYZ*, 30.442.

[68] See *Yunqi fahui*, 30/2.24b; cf. Yü Greenblatt, 1975, 127.

[69] See *YYZ*, 30.444.

state or the rules of the king.[70]

The late Ming monk Zhuhong attempted to reform these very vices. He preached that 'monks should remember the favours that they have received from the state and should not violate its laws.'[71]

Luxury and opulence had come to characterise the life-style of the clergy during the Ming. This may have been due to the sharp increase in the number of Buddhist and Daoist ordinations throughout the reign periods of the Ming emperors. In 1372 for example 57,200 monks received ordination certificates and one year later their number had almost doubled. Despite imperial attempts to curb the rising numbers, 100,000 monks were ordained in 1476 and one decade later the number soared to 200,000.[72] The quantities of clerics and temples show that Buddhism continued to flourish in spite of the fact that the second Ming Emperor Huidi 惠帝 (r. 1398-1401) expressed his disappointment that monks had forgotten that they were monks and ordered to restrict the excessive wealth and luxury among the clergy.[73] During the fictional time-frame of the *Yinyuan zhuan*, the Ming emperors further expanded the Buddhist establishment by constructing large temples. Emperor Yingzong 英宗 (r. 1436-1449, 1457-1464) spent several hundred thousand taels on building one single temple while two hundred more were erected during his reign. His successor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 1465-1487) added one temple worth 100,000 taels to the more than 1000 temples that already existed in and around the capital.[74] The late Ming writer Xie Zhaozhe observed the deflation of Buddhism. He noted that in his days Buddhist monasteries were more numerous than schools and people recited prayers more often than they sang songs. Everybody from the noblemen down to women and girls discussed meditation and venerated the Buddha.[75] At that time, Matteo Ricci wrote in his diary that the

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[70]*YYZ*, 30.443.

[71]See Araki Kengo, 1975, 57.

[72]See Ch'en, 1964, 435.

[73]See *Guochao dianhui* 國朝典彙, by Xu Xueju 徐學聚, repr. Taibei: Zhongguo shixue congshu, 1968, 134/47.5b-6a.

[74]Cf. Chan, 1982, 109.

[75]*Wuzazu*, 8.32a.

current number of Buddhist priests amounted to two or three millions.[76] Ricci describes the Buddhist clergy thus:

> Though not a marrying class, they are so given to sexual indulgence that only the heaviest penalties can deter them from promiscuous living.[77]

Xie Zhaozhe likewise reports that monks drink wine, eat meat and get married, distinguishing themselves from the laity only in so far as they are exempted from *corvée*.[78] The *Yinyuan zhuan* gives a detailed picture of this very corruption not only in the story of Bao Guang but also in another episode focusing on the two Buddhist abbots Wu Bian 無遍 and Cheng An 誠庵.

### 5. Wu Bian and Cheng An

The image of two depraved Buddhist abbots emphasises by antithesis that the healer and Buddhist Hu Wuyi represents the positive ideal. As the action of the *Yinyuan zhuan* is drawing near its close with the final epiphany in chapter 100 at Xiangyan Temple through the omniscient powers of Hu Wuyi, Hu becomes the abbot of Xiangyan Temple in chapter 93. The narrating voice stresses the positive qualities of Hu by first describing Hu's predecessors at Xiangyan Temple as his antithesis in moral terms. Wu Bian and Cheng An thus gain importance as an implied statement on the motif of the healer in *Yinyuan zhuan* although they do not (as in Wu Bian's case) or only marginally (as in Cheng An's case) engage in medical activities. On the contrary, both suffer from illness.

The first abbot at Xiangyan Temple is the Buddhist Wu Bian. He is addicted to the cardinal vices of covetousness, *cai*, and lechery, *se*, as the narrating voice immediately points out in characterising Wu Bian as the anti-ideal:

> Wu Bian relied on his great wealth and his robust constitution; he associated with men of high positions and the imperial guards. Possessing both wealth and power and coveting the pleasures of women, he was a demonic despot (*mo jun* 魔君) who would kill people without batting an eyelid. In the forty or fifty brothels on the banks of the river there was not one [prostitute] he did not find pleasant. He would either receive them in the temple or himself go to the brothels. There was no

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[76]See Gallagher, 1953, 100.

[77]*Ibid*, 101.

[78]*Wuzazu*, 8.40a-b.

need for him to hide as none of the harlots' clients would dare to pick an argument with him. He also often invited guests and he was often invited in return to banquets. On such occasions, there would always be singing-girls present to keep them company for drinking. He would devour raw onions and garlic, and gobble up all the pork and beef.[79]

This episode reflects the threat of the Ming dynasty imperial guards (*changwei* 廠衛). The imperial guards were divided in *dongwei* 東衛, *xiwei* 西衛 and *jinyiwei* 錦衣衛.[80] They functioned as secret service, police and judicial authority under the control of the Ming emperors and the eunuchs. Through their network - people like Wu Bian - they exercised a reign of terror. The metaphor of the demonic ruler, *mo jun* 魔君, echoes a warning voiced in the utopian chapter 24.[81] Here we confront the negative counter-world to that paradise.

As a result of his physical excesses, Wu Bian dies from venereal disease. The narrating voice drastically depicts his death-bed scene. Its vulgar horror recalls a similar scene of the Confucianist teacher Wang Weilu in chapter 39, as well as Ximen Qing's death in the *Jin Ping Mei*.[82] But here bawdy comedy and satire characterise the event:[83] the metaphors for Wu Bian's fatal symptoms mockingly echo the opening verse of the *Sengni niehai*, a late Ming collection of pornographic stories involving monks and nuns.[84]

The next abbot at Xiangyan Temple, Cheng An, already suffers from syphilis by the time he succeeds Wu Bian.[85] Cheng An tries to hide his sickness for fear of doctors and resorts to self-medication. He uses *qingfen* 輕粉, calomel, which in

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[79]*YYZ*, 93.1324.

[80]On the palace guards, esp. *jinyiwei*, see Peter Greiner, *Die Brokatuniform- Brigade (chin-i wei) der Ming Zeit von den Anfängen bis zum Ende der T'ien-shun Periode (1368-1464)*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975; Charles O. Hucker, 'Confucianism and the Chinese Censorial System' in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Confucianism and Chinese Civilization*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959, repr. 1975, 50-76, 71; Chan, 1982, 33; Tong, 1991, 118.

[81]*YYZ*, 24.354.

[82]Cf. section V.2; IX.1.

[83]Expurgated in the Shanghai version 93.1324, line 13. Cf. *T-YYZ*, 93.1136, lines 1-3.

[84]See Rummel, 1992, 149.

[85]*YYZ*, 93.1324.

the late Ming was indeed used to combat syphilis.[86] But treatment comes too late, 'syphilis and insanity broke out simultaneously' and

> in accordance to the prophecy written in the *Heart Sutra*, he first lost his eyes, then his nose, and after that his tongue. It did not take long until he did not have a body any more.[87]

Cheng An subsequently tries spiritual healing but it merely leads to his physical disintegration. The episodes of both clerics play out the nightmare of the cardinal vices *se* and *cai*. Both contain grotesque elements. The narrating voice paradoxically displays great interest in the combination of eroticism and death, yet the episodes result in a horrifying picture. The scene effects warning overtones.

Monks generally had a bad reputation during the Ming due to the growing laxity of imperial control. According to the eunuch Liu Ruoyu 劉若愚 (1584-ca. 1642),[88] palace ladies received instruction in Buddhist sutras and many influential eunuchs adhered to Buddhism during the late Ming.[89] As a result, some monks who enjoyed the Emperor's favour or the patronage of influential eunuch believers became rich, powerful and arrogant,[90] just as the *Yinyuan zhuan* demonstrates.

The monk and reformer Zhuhong interprets illnesses as 'usually the result of too much killing.'[91] The illness of Wu Bian illustrates this belief. His vices relate to the Buddhist concept of evil. As a vice-figure he also fits into the pattern of the four vices of excess, in particular *cai, se* and *qi* in his acts of murder. The picture of depravity among the clergy in the *Yinyuan zhuan* relates to the efforts of Zhuhong to boost the morale in the clerical community and to strengthen Buddhism among the population through a lay movement.[92] Zhuhong tried to counter-act moral degeneration among the clergy by means of his all-encompassing guidelines: his works *Yunqi gongzhu guiyue* 雲棲共住規約, *Shami yaolüe* 沙彌要略, *Nie jie lu yao* 尼戒錄要, and *Seng xun riji* 僧訓日記 aim at reforming the behaviour of

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[86]Dohi, 1923, 32.

[87]*YYZ*, 93.1324-1325.

[88]On Liu see Goodrich, 1976, 950-953.

[89]*Zhuozhongzhi* 酌中志, by Liu Ruoyu 劉若愚, repr. Shanghai: Shangwu, 1935, 16.121-124, 22.195.

[90]Cf. Chan, 1982, 112.

[91]*Yunqi fahui*, 30/2.47a-b.

[92]For details see K. Yü Greenblatt, 1975, 93-140.

monks by setting up rules covering everything from daily hygiene to the proper sleeping position.[93] A satirical remark by Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1546-1605)[94] testifies to the philistine behaviour that prevailed in spite of Zhuhong's exhortations: 'There are always several hundred disciples at the side of Zhuhong, but not even half of them are Chan monks.'[95]

The decadence of the Buddhist clergy constitutes a common motif in the popular fiction of sixteenth and seventeenth century China. Monks who indulge in luxury and lechery feature largely in both the vernacular and classical fiction of the Ming/Qing period.[96] The dominant tendency of these works lies in exploiting the potential thrill of illicit eroticism. In the *Yinyuan zhuan* however the depiction of the depraved clergyman - Buddhists and Daoists alike - primarily creates shocking scenes of retribution, of illicit over-indulgence turning pathological and fatal. The monks' death-scenes of systematic supernatural destruction form grotesque images that heighten the familiar face of vice into one feature of an anti-utopian universe.

## 6. The Evil Daoist

A corrupt Daoist appears at the end of chapter 93 within the Chao plot. When a drought plagues Wucheng county, the magistrate summons a Daoist to practise magic for rainfall. The Daoist contrasts with the modesty of the spirit-immortal Xu Zhenjun as the narrating voice describes how

> he acted like a lunatic. He unblushingly boasted that the Thunder God was his nephew, the Mother of Lightning was his niece and the Dragon Kings in the four seas were his relatives and friends.[97]

Phrases such as 'he cunningly said' and 'pretended to practise magic' describe the Daoist's rituals as a fraud. They imply that this character is both useless and morally bad in his role as a religious specialist.

The Daoist embodies the vices of gluttony (including *jiu*) and lechery (*se*). He requires for his rituals one fat dog daily, certain amounts of warmed wine and garlic as well as a prostitute dressed up as the Dragon King's Daughter. He eats his

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[93] See Rummel, 1992, 83.

[94] On Feng see Goodrich, 1976, 343.

[95] *Kuaixue tangji* 快雪堂記, comp. by Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎, 1616 edn., 38.34.

[96] Cf. Rummel, 1992, 85-117.

[97] *YYZ*, 93.1331.

fill of dog meat, gets drunk on the wine and makes excessive use of the prostitute's services. Consequently exhaustion due to over-indulgence in sex and wine makes him ill and he collapses in the midst of his ritual. As a result, the magistrate removes the Daoist arena for the ritual, drives away the prostitute and stops the Daoist's payment. Rain falls only after the people's prayers to Mme Chao who after her death has turned into a goddess. The Daoist upon recovery nevertheless claims the rainfall as his merit and demands ten taels from the magistrate as a reward. Covetousness, *cai*, emerges as one of the Daoist's characteristics. The scene implicitly also comments on the magistrate as a weak ruler, as he complies with the Daoist's demands, unwilling to admit in public that the religious specialist he summoned has turned out to be useless.

The Daoist remains anonymous, but the narrating voice and a fictional character refer to the Daoist as *yao dao* 妖道, the Evil Daoist.[98] This example affirms that vices lead to physical illness and that this kind of illness is the moral retribution for these very vices. The Evil Daoist corresponds in this aspect to other vice-figures in the *Yinyuan zhuan* such as Chao Yuan (in the episode with Yang Taiyi) and the other vulgar religious specialists. The Evil Daoist is not a healer. On the contrary, he suffers from illness as his vices provoke immediate retribution. The way the anonymous Daoist pays for his sins during his ritual echoes the Buddhist example of Bao Guang. The scene of the Evil Daoist completes chapter 93 as the depiction of evil in religious specialists, for the same chapter contains the cases of the depraved Buddhists Wu Bian and Cheng An. These cases render the metaphorical equation of physical illness and moral sickness explicit. Chapter 93 moreover counterpoises chapter 90 which shows the Buddhist Hu Wuyi and the Daoist Sun Zhenren as ideal religious specialists and perfect healers. The episode of the Evil Daoist completes the pattern of vices among the vulgar religious specialists, in opposition to the ideal religious healers.

The episode of the Evil Daoist acquires another level of meaning when compared against the historical background. The seventeenth-century magistrate Huang Liuhong believed that the magistrate can help avoid natural disaster by his virtue and sincerity.[99] For the magistrate, the local ruler, functions as an Emperor in microcosm. In case of calamity in his district, he should blame himself for lack of virtue. According to Huang, the only remedy is to pray for deliverance. Huang

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[98] *YYZ*, 93.1333.

[99] See *FHQS*, 24.10b-11b; 13a-15a.

claims that his prayers at the temple of the City God in droughts and other disasters were always successful. On one condition: 'In order to succeed, the magistrate must offer prayers in person, with sincerity and clarity.'[100] In this light, the episode of the Evil Daoist can be read as criticism of the magistrate who neglects his duties and summons a useless religious specialist. When the Evil Daoist indulges in meat and wine, Huang Liuhong again would have the magistrate to blame:

> The magistrate should prohibit the slaughtering of animals and the selling of wine to maintain frugality in times of natural disaster.[101]

In this sense, the description of the Daoist's vices of excess attack the magistrate's misgovernment. Huang outlines what he considers as the proper thing to do instead:

> [The magistrate] should prepare the altar for sacrifice. For three days ahead, he should purify his mind and calm his thoughts. The men and women of his family should also abstain from meat and wine to support their master in examining his faults and repenting his sins. They should pray to the City God, the gods of the soil and grain, wind, clouds, thunder, rain, mountains and rivers within the region. Above all they should pray to the god of husbandry. Their prayers to the gods aim at reaching the high heavens to send disaster down on the magistrate as a punishment for his lack of virtue. Thus the people will be saved from the consequences of the magistrate's crimes.[102]

The gods and spirits should be invoked, as the Evil Daoist first announces, but the point is that the magistrate should act himself. As Huang demands: 'The magistrate has the duty to pray for relief.'[103] Thus we see that the magistrate of Wucheng county who orders the Daoist to perform exorcism, is guilty of doing exactly the wrong thing. As Huang Liuhong warns:

> Invoking the local dragon and casting spells over a pond is foolish and false. Practices such as trying to cut the rainbow or reciting incantations to thunder will in fact cause even more disorder.

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[100] *FHQS*, 24.11b.

[101] *FHQS*, 24.13b.

[102] *FHQS*, 24.13b-14a.

[103] *FHQS*, 24.13b.

A wise and experienced magistrate will ban such activites.[104]

The episode of the Evil Daoist in the *Yinyuan zhuan* illustrates local practice as the exact inversion of Huang Liuhong's ideal government. The need that compelled Huang to issue his guide-lines and warnings suggests that reality may not have been close to his ideal. Similar in spirit to the *Fuhui quanshu*, satire in the *Yinyuan zhuan* attacks not only the fake religious specialist but also the local ruler.

In the various examples of religious specialists, the *Yinyuan zhuan* stresses the importance of discerning and recognising the good and virtuous in society. Simultaneously it warns of the dangers of mistaking fake for real, bad for good, improper for decent. This tendency affirms the traditional values of Confucianism. The implied concept of the ideal also includes syncretic tendencies combining Confucian virtues with Daoist and Buddhist ideals.

Both ideal and anti-ideal religious specialists co-exist within the same social surroundings in the Chao and Di plots. As with the other groups of healers, the negative specimens dominate in quantity and thus indicate the deplorable state of current social mores. Analysis has shown that both the ideal and the anti-ideal religious specialists reflect current trends of the late Ming. Some resemble outstanding religious men while others exemplify the widespread decadence and depravity among the clergy as contemporary observers perceived them. The rhetoric of irony and satire deride the negative examples while lacking in the depictions of positive characters. Their characterisation takes on a didactic tone. Throughout the descriptions of the positive religious healers the narrating voice remains serious, thus advertising them as models of morality.

The negative examples end in grotesque scenes. Supernatural retribution descends in the form of grotesque destruction to eradicate vice and sin in the false religious specialists. The positive ideal, too, shows healers with super-natural powers and hyperbolic virtues. The resulting picture contains a 'grotesque realism'[105] that stresses the anti-utopian and utopian polarities in the fictional world.

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[104]*FHQS*, 24.14a.

[105]Cf. Inami's use of Bakhtin's terms in her analysis of Feng Menglong's *Sanyan* stories: Inami Ritsuko 井波律子, *Chûgoku no gurotesuku riarizumu* 中国のグロテスク　リアリズム, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1992. See also section VII.2.

The world of the *Yinyuan zhuan* needs many healers because its people suffer from many illnesses. Rhetoric and tone of voice emphasise that physical illnesses derive from the moral sickness of society, in particular, decadence, depravity and indulgence in vice. Thus the motif of the healer unmasks vice and evil in the patients, the population of the fictional world.

The healers themselves divide into two camps. They represent positive and negative polarities with regard to their social roles (as their medical proficiency implies) and their moral characteristics. Positive connotes here an ideal healer; negative means the anti-ideal healer who fails to live up to his role. Morality adds another layer of meaning: some positive healers represent virtues and the negative healers personify vices. The narrating voice defines morality in predominantly Confucian terms but also includes Daoist and Buddhist values. The text perceives vice in the conventional terms of *sitan*, the four vices of excess. The four vices of excess characterise most negative characters within all groups of healers. Although not without inconsistencies, the four vices function as a framework of anti-utopia that suggests a moral message. This concept represents an issue of special topicality in the late Ming. Human folly in terms of the four vices functions as a major framework in the four novels *Sanguozhi yanyi, Shuihu zhuan, Xiyou ji* and in particular, *Jin Ping Mei*.[1] The opening passages in the Chongzhen 崇禎 (1628-1644) edition of the *Jin Ping Mei* also discuss *sitan* as cardinal sins in human society.[2] Modern research maintains that the sixteenth-century playwright Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616) wrote in his last years on the four vices.[3] In 1590, the four vices assumed a historical significance when the scholar Luo Yuren 雒于仁 (fl. late 16th century) submitted a memorial to the throne denouncing the Wanli

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[1]Cf. Plaks, 1987, 154, 505; also pp. 12, 60-62, 77, 158, 483.

[2]*Xinke xiuxiang piping Jin Ping Mei* 新刻繡像批評金瓶梅, repr. Hong Kong: Sanlian and Qilu, 1990, 1.1-3.

[3]Roy uses historical documents that attest this fact to support his hypothesis of Tang Xianzu's authorship of the *Jin Ping Mei*. Cf. D. Roy, 'The Case for T'ang Hsien-tsu's Authorship of the *Chin P'ing Mei*', unpublished paper quoted in A. Plaks, 1987, 60, 62. On Tang see Hummel, 1943, 708-709.

Emperor for indulging in these vices. Luo's memorial created a scandal.[4] The *Yinyuan zhuan* reflects this atmosphere of the literati's obsession with the four vices. Its style of critique through the mask of anonymity corresponds to the other four great late Ming novels (*sida qishu*).

The representation of vices conveys the perception of a hierarchy among sin and crime in society. The vice of *cai* ranks as the cardinal one among human follies. The narrating voice reiterates this view when depicting sins and crimes in the negative healers - *cai* always entails the most disastrous consequences. The narrating voice states in another episode that it wishes to invert the conventional order of the *sitan, jiu se cai qi,* into a sequence starting with *cai* to reflect its perception of the world more accurately.[5] The narrating voice marks *cai* as a dangerous and anti-utopian element in society because it causes the loss of *liangxin* and undermines the Confucian value system:

> People who strive for immortality and study Buddhism talk about striving to cultivate their conduct, but the most important issue is to guard against wine, women, wealth and wrath. Amongst these four, one should not regard the word for wealth as the third item but as the Number One among the moral dangers. I have observed that the people in the world can yet manage somehow to put up with [the vices of over-indulgence in] wine, women, and wrath. The offence of [over-indulging in the vice of] wealth sweeps aside all concern about the eight [virtues of] filial piety, brotherly submission, loyalty, trustworthiness, rules of propriety, righteousness, sense of honour and sense of shame. Life is the most important issue for man. People more often than not disregard life for the sake of wealth. They do not care about going down in history as a byword of infamy and curses for one thousand people. When it comes to wealth, [people] soon have lost their conscience and daubed their faces. If they covet it, they merely pursue the happiness of the moment. They do not bother about the level of their moral character and integrity, they turn them upside down and that is that. The thing about wealth is really very odd. The underworld sends forth

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[4]For Luo's memorial see *Ming tongjian* 明通鑑, by Xia Xie 夏燮, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959, 69.2696-2697; *Wanli dichao* 萬曆邸鈔, ed. Taibei: Guting, 1968, 468-474. Shen Defu comments on this scandal in *Wanli yehuo bian*, 2.64; see also *Zhuozhongzhi*, 1.8, 5.30. For another fictionalized treatment see *Mingshi tongsu yanyi* 明史通俗演義, by Cai Dongfan 蔡東藩 (1877-1945), ed. Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin, 1980, 75.629-636, esp. 633-634. These sources refer to the four vices as *sizhen* 四箴, the Four Exhortations.

[5]See *YYZ*, 34.495.

a Spirit of Wealth to take charge (...).[6]

In this respect, the narrating voice assumes the persona of a Confucian conservative. It expresses the need to cleanse the existing system without replacing it. Confucian overtones dominate the visions of utopia in the *Yinyuan zhuan* whilst the subversion of Confucian ethics constitutes anti-utopia.

The *Yinyuan zhuan* is not alone in condemning *cai* and fearing the dominion of *caishen* 財神, the Spirit of Wealth, and its corrupting influence on traditional society in seventeenth-century China.[7] A Huizhou 徽州 gazetteer describes the dangerous state of the world in the year 1609:

Only one among one hundred people is rich whilst nine out of ten are poor. (...)
Money commands over heaven and the Spirit of Wealth (*qian shen* 錢神) reigns supreme over the Earth.[8]

Von Glahn states in his study of the Spirit of Wealth that *caishen* symbolises a malevolent spirit in particular in seventeenth-century China. This derives from the contemporary economic condition:

Perhaps at no time did money have greater symbolic import than in the late Ming period, when domestic economic growth and the infusion of foreign silver engendered a rapid expansion in its use.[9]

The narrating voice in the *Yinyuan zhuan* explicitly links the moral destruction of

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[6]*YYZ*, 34.495.

[7]See *YYZ*, 34.495.

[8]*Shezhi fengtu lun* 歙志風土論 (1609), quoted in *Tianxia junguo libing shu* 天下郡國利病書, by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, Sibu congkan edn., 9.76a-b.

[9]R. von Glahn, 'The Enchantment of Wealth: The God Wutong in the Social History of Jiangnan', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51.2, 1991, 651- 714, 651. On the import of silver and the domestic currency system see Adachi Keiji 足立啓二, 'Min Shin jidai ni okeru senkeizai no hatten' 明清時代における銭経済の発展, in Chûgokushi kenkyûkai 中国史研究会, ed., *Chûgoku sensei kokka to shakai tôgô* 中国専制国家と社会統合, Kyoto: Bunrikaku, 1990, 387-412; cf. section II.

society by the Spirit of Wealth with the motif of illness and the healer:

If you absolutely covet [wealth], [the Spirit of Wealth] will incite the ghosts of illnesses to trouble you, and seize the opportunity to hide with the medical doctor, or else entice evil spirits to make things difficult for you. He offers his services to the rich and influential and strips you of your last penny to leave you in destitution.[10]

This view closely corresponds to von Glahn's observation that in late Ming China, 'money was believed to be under the control of malicious and notoriously unreliable supernatural forces.'[11] The *Yinyuan zhuan* presents the vices that wealth and money entail as the root of all social and moral evil. The healer functions as a motif that interrelates with the rising threat of a money economy. In this sense it is possible to interpret the motif of the healer as a metaphor for historical experience.[12]

The anxiety about the loss of morality also shows in the late Ming craze for morality books. The *shanshu* serve to evaluate morality by listing and counting good and bad deeds. Healing counts as one of the ways to gain merit and display moral conduct. For example, the *Huizuan gongguoge* exhorts:

Support the poor who suffer from serious illnesses to get medical treatment. (...)
In times of plague, set up dispensaries to distribute medicine. (...)
Print and publish good medical prescriptions to rescue people in emergencies.[13]

The *Huizuan gongguoge* warns of the greed of surgeons - similar to the episode on Ai Qianchuan in the *Yinyuan zhuan.*[14] The book lists merits for healing as follows:

A doctor should treat rich and poor alike. He should examine and give prescriptions with care. Treating a minor illness without taking a reward - 1 merit.

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[10]*YYZ*, 34.495.

[11]Von Glahn, 1991, 711.

[12]On this concept in literary theory see Brockmeier, 1990, 41.

[13]*Huizuan gongguoge*, 8.28a-29a. For a seventeenth-century magistrate's idea about the use and evaluation of the registers of good and evil deeds see *FHQS*, 25.10a-11b.

[14]*Huizuan gongguoge*, 8.23b.

Treating a serious illness that threatens the patient's life, in spite of taking a reward - 10 merits.
The above case without taking a reward - 100 merits.[15]

Then the demerits:

A doctor covets profit and causes a person's loss of life - 100 demerits.
Being in doubt about an illness and administering the wrong medicine - 20 demerits.
Treating illness without care - 10 demerits.[16]

The *Yinyuan zhuan* illustrates a corresponding system of morality in the motif of the healer.

The healers in the *Yinyuan zhuan* appear as ambiguous characters. Their construction on the positive and negative axis shapes them as larger than life. Analysis has traced the rhetoric of comedy and satire, selectivity and hyperbole in the healers. The healers seem realistic, yet they also appear as grotesque. Such images represent a grotesque hyper-realism that reflects the world with irony.

The structural arrangement of the healers also implies the grotesque nature of this motif. The text applies the literary technique of 'doubling' to the various groups of healers.[17] Apart from the device of the double plot (i.e. the Chao and Di strands), the healers form analogous or complementary images of each other. They appear in pairs, mirroring each other in point counterpoint variation. The medical doctors Yang and Xiao form an antithetical pair and in turn mirror Ai and Zhao. The anonymous medical pedlars form an analogous pair. The spirit-immortal Xu Zhenjun correlates with Sun Zhenren. As Daoists, Xu and Sun function as complementary figures to the good Buddhist healer Hu Wuyi (who himself forms a pair with Liang Pianyun). Hu as a good Buddhist contrasts with the bad Buddhist

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[15]*Huizuan gongguoge*, 8.21b.

[16]*Huizuan gongguoge*, 8.21b.

[17]On doubling as a literary technique in the *Shuihu zhuan* see K. Mühlhahn, 'Herrschaft, Macht und Gewalt: Die Welt des *Shuihu zhuan*', *minima sinica* 1, 1992, 57-90, 87; Mühlhahn regards doubling as a technique of the polyphonic and carnivalistic novel, cf. M. Bachtin, *Literatur und Karneval. Zur Romantheorie und Lachkultur*, Frankfurt, 1990, 16-60. The technique of doubling corresponds to Yenna Wu's notion of 'repetition' in the *Yinyuan zhuan*, see Wu, 1986, 216-283; *idem*, 1991, 55-87.

Bao Guang. Bao Guang as a bad Buddhist correlates with the Evil Daoist. The corrupt Daoists (the Evil Daoist and also Zhang Shuiyun) are analogues to the depraved Buddhist abbots Wu Bian and Cheng An who form a pair of negative figures. In contrast to the ideal religious specialists, two anonymous *taiyi* appear as a pair of incompetent healers. The technique of doubling intensifies the (anti-) utopian message of the motif of the healer. This structural pattern shows how the imagery oscillates between utopia and anti-utopia in the fictional universe.

Structure and style also distinguish the utopian from the anti-utopian mode. Brevity in description and seriousness in the narrating voice characterise the utopian images. By contrast, parodistic wordiness and satire relate to the anti-utopian images. The motif of the healer shows that satire has two targets: on the one hand, the negative healers and on the other, the sick people they treat, in particular, certain members of the literati elite. The healers unmask their patients' decadence and turn them into a laughingstock. The motif of the healer thus implies social comment and political criticism.

In sum, we can read all this as depicting the world as utopia and anti-utopian. This is one way of looking at the text. The imagery divides into positive and negative, good and evil, dream and nightmare. The healers acquire significance as a utopian and anti-utopian theme within the fictional world while corresponding to contextual perceptions and observations on people and affairs. However the declared and implied thematic patterns frequently break down and open up glimpses of individuals, not rhetorical figures. The moral shock to a contemporary reader, then, may have consisted in recognising utopia and anti-utopia as the world right 'here and now'. As we lose sight of rhetorical figures and frameworks we gain a sharper view of a perceived reality in seventeenth century Chinese imagination.

Paradoxically the world of the *Yinyuan zhuan* seems realistic and yet it differs. The healers have grotesque and hyper-realistic features. Satire and inversion turn society inside out and topsy-turvy. Paradox serves to gain insight into a deplorable and discomfiting state of affairs. Rhetoric and fictional manipulation present an ironic and grotesque image of the world. However by analysing the art of mimesis in fiction and the utopian themes in context we can reconstruct how the text communicates its perception of historical experience.