Classical Sources and Vernacular Resources in *Xuanhe Yishi*: The Presence of Priority and the Priority of Presence*

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I. INTRODUCTION

> Men of the past liked to read the histories of the first four dynasties—mainly because of the language in which they were written. But if one were looking to find changes in men's hearts and in the fashions of governance, it would be better to examine the histories of just one dynasty: the Song. Leaving aside for the moment a discussion of good and bad in what China has come to be in our own day, it can be stated unequivocably that eight or nine tenths of it was wrought by men of Song.
>
> Yan Fu (1854-1921)[1]

Xuanhe yishi 宣和遺事 is the longest single work of Chinese vernacular narrative extant from the period prior to the beginning of the Ming dynasty.[2] Traditional Chinese bibliographers tended to treat the work as a piece of unreliable history.[3] Other Chinese critics, owing to the fact that the hero of *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳, Song Jiang, and some thirty-six of his comrades also appear in a brief section of the work, have devoted their attentions to the relationship between it and the much more famous Ming novel.[4]

*This study is based in part on the first section of the author's doctoral dissertation: "The Song Emperor Huizong in Popular History and Romance: The Early Chinese Vernacular Novel, *Xuanhe yishi*"; The University of Michigan, 1980.

[1]From a letter to Xiong Chunru 熊鈍如, quoted in the preface of Zhao Tiehan 趙鐵寒, *Songshi Ziliao Cuibian Diyiji* 宋史資料 萃編第一輯 (Taipei 1967), p. 1.

[2]At 59,000 words, *Xuanhe yishi* is slightly longer than *Sanguozhi pinghua* 三國志評話 and approximately twice as long as any of the five stories in *Wudaishi pinghua* 五代史評話. See Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, "Jiangshishu yu yongshishi"講史書與詠史詩, *Zhongguo Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo* 中國研究院歷史語言研究所, *10* (1948), p. 609. For a summary of the contents of the work, see Yves Hervouet, *A Sung Bibliography* (Hong Kong 1978) pp. 485-6 and the introduction to the English translation, William Hennessey, *Proclaiming Harmony*, (Ann Arbor 1982) p. ix (hereafter PH).

[3]The Ming writer Lang Ying 郎瑛(1487-ca. 1566) in his compendium *Qixiu leigao* 七修類稿 directs his comments to a consideration of the veracity of certain episodes dealing with the abduction of the last two emperors of Northern Song by the Jin invaders, which forms the bulk of the latter half of the book. Of the first half of the work, he merely notes that it is about events in the Northern Song and adds, "The beginning is just like that in skits and fiction (*yuanben xiaoshuo* 院本小說), which is just the way people wrote things at the time . . . I shall make a note of the significant events that deal with the Song ruling house and record them below, to give people a general idea of what they are all about at a glance. As for the rest of *Xuanhe yishi*, there is no need to bother with it." Kong Lingjing 孔另境, *Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shiliao* 中國小說史料 (Shanghai 1962), p. 6. This deprecatory attitude is also reflected in a modern bibliography, Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (ed.), *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu Tiyao* 續修四庫全書 提要 (Taipei 1972), *11*, 1806-7.

[4]Lu Xun 魯迅, *Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shilue* 中國小說史略 (Hong Kong 1957), pp. 93-96 arbitrarily divides *Xuanhe yishi* into ten sections without reference to the formal divisions in the text, assuming ten separate sources. His opinion is followed verbatim in Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, *Chatuben Zhongguo Wenxueshi* 插圖本中國文學史 (Peking 1957), p. 560; Guo Jianyi 郭箴一, *Zhongguo Xiaoshuoshi* 中國小說史 (Taipei 1974),

Two different versions of the work are extant. These differ primarily in terms of chapter division; however, at the narratorial level, the two redactions are almost identical.[5] A four-part version is divided up according to a "mantic formula" ultimately derived from the *Book of Changes* using the four Chinese characters *yuan* 元, *heng* 亨, *li* 利, and *zheng* 貞.[6] There is also an extant version in two parts; and on the basis of intrinsic and extrinsic evidence, it appears that the two-part version is the earlier.[7]

p. 178; and Fan Yanqiao 范煙橋, *Zhongguo Xiaoshuoshi* 中國小說史 (Taipei 1977), p. 90, among others. Kamiya Kōhei 神谷衡平 divides his annotated Japanese translation of the work into 54 sections, solely on the basis of content. *Dai Sō Senna iji* 大坡宣和遺事, in *Chūgoku koten bungaku zenshū* 中國古典文學全集, vol. 7 (Tokyo 1958), pp. 239-340.

[5]The Qing bibliophile Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629-1701) included an entry on *Xuanhe yishi* in 4 *juan* in his catalogue *Yeshiyuan Shumu* 也是園書目 in a list of *cihua* 詞話 by Song authors. See Jaroslav Prusek, *Chinese History and Literature* (Dordrecht 1970), pp. 202-3. Another collector, Huang Peilie 黃丕烈 (1763-1825), reprinted a two-part version in 1819 in his collection, *Shiliju congshu* 士禮居叢書. The four-part version was reprinted in 1896 in Nanjing by a certain Wang Luochuan 王洛川. I am grateful to the National Central Library, Taipei, for providing me with microfilms of the Huang Peilie and Wang Luochuan editions. I have not seen two other editions, both illustrated. One is *Guben* 古本 *Xuanhe yishi futu sice* 附圖四册 in Academia Sinica, Nanking, Taiwan. See *Zhongguo yanjiuyuan shanben shumu* 中國研究院善本書目, p. 146. Also, Zhang Zhenglang (*op. cit.*, p. 607) mentions *Xinjuan* 新鐫 *pinghua Xuanhe yishi* from the Gengshanfang 粳山房 collection of Wu Junxiu 吳郡修 (n.d.). The Huang edition is reprinted in the *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 series, no. 9156B (Taipei 1968) and as *Xinkan* 新刊 *Xuanhe yishi* (Shanghai 1954). The Wang edition is reprinted as *Dasong* 大宋 *Xuanhe yishi* (Taipei 1973) and in *Song Yuan Pinghua sizhong* 宋元平話四種 (Taipei 1977), pp. 1-142. Cf. Sun Kaidi 孫楷第, *Zhongguo Tongsu Xiaoshuo Shumu* 中國通俗小說書目 (Peking 1972), pp. 1-2. The only significant difference between the Huang edition and the Wang edition at the narratorial level is the addition of thirteen words at the end of part *yuan* of the Wang edition which read, "If you want to know what the poem was about, then see part *heng*. There is a poem to attest to it." See the 1977 edition, p. 40. We might note that the five *Wudaishi pinghua* are each in two parts, the first of which narrates the rise of each dynasty, and the second its fall. See Wilt L. Idema, *Chinese Vernacular Literature: The Formative Period* (Leiden 1974), pp. 87-9. A close reading of *Xuanhe yishi* reveals that the bipartite division is structurally much more significant than the quadripartite one, although see below n6.

[6]For an interesting discussion, see Iulian K. Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching* (Princeton 1979), especially pp. 140-3. This formula is of central importance to the mechanistic cosmology of Shao Yong. See below, n32.

[7]The Ming commentator Lang Ying was of the opinion that the work was written in the Song period. See above, n3. He based his judgment on the fact that, as he understood it, the vernacular version of the story of the capture of the last two Northern Song emperors and their wanderings in the north found in *Xuanhe yishi* was earlier than either of two versions in classical Chinese, which are datably Song in provenance. What led him to this belief was the fact that certain taboo names associated with the Song ruling house are avoided in the text, and that in certain editions the words *Dasong*, "the Great Song," appear in the title. It seems that Qian Zeng and Huang Peilie were sufficiently convinced to assign a place for the work in their libraries among "Song editions." However, Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) already gives us an indication that this attribution is open to question. *Kong Lingjing, op. cit.* (1962), p. 7. Cf. Yue Hengjun 樂蘅君, *Songdai Huaben Yanjiu* 宋代話本研究 (Taipei 1969), p. 161. Lu Xun (*op. cit.* p. 93) stated that internal evidence suggested that the work was not done in Song at all, but in the Yuan period. Wang Zhongxian (see n9) mustered a great deal of evidence on diction and prophecy which makes this Yuan attribution unassailable. See Wang Zhongxian 汪仲賢, "*Xuanhe yishi* kaozheng 宣和遺事考證", in Zheng Zhenduo, *Zhongguo Wenxue Yanjiu* 中國文學研究 (Hong Kong 1962), pp. 623-32. Originally printed in *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* 小說月報, *17* (supplement) (1927), pp. 1-10. But the work could not have been compiled very much later than the turn of the fourteenth century, judging from the dissimilarity between the names of the members of Song Jiang's band which also appear in "Sanshiliu ren zan 三十六人傳" by Gong Shengyu 龔聖與, also written in the Yuan period. Cf. Yue Hengjun (1969), pp. 179-80. Of course, there is also the possibility of a number of regional variations to the story cycle.

Several features of *Xuanhe yishi* are unique. One is that there are large sections of the text in an idiom quite close to what we might call normative classical Chinese—a much more sustained usage than we find in the *pinghua*.[8] Another is that these sections in classical Chinese are found in alternation with others in a vernacular idiom which is quite free, interspersed with verse in the *ci* 詞 and *qu* 曲 forms. This shifting from one level of diction to another is a feature which few readers could fail to notice; and these several features led Wang Zhongxian to the conclusion that the entire work was a compilation copied verbatim from other sources.[9] Unfortunately, he provided no substantive citations to support his thesis. My own investigation indicates that some of Wang's suggested sources were correct, while others bear only a rather vague similarity to the text of extant versions. Part II below examines the works in the historiographical tradition which parallel *Xuanhe yishi*, and upon which its author may have relied in writing his own work, in an attempt to provide the tentative outline of a literary history for the text.

No writers have yet endeavored to examine the work for its intrinsic literary merits. Yet, as the earliest vernacular account of the period in which the Ming novels *Shuihu zhuan* and *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 are set, *Xuanhe yishi* warrants a more detailed study of its literary characteristics. Much of what we know of pre-1600 Ming novels is shaped by what late sixteenth and seventeenth century literati commentators have to tell us about them. Hu Shi, in his study of the sources of *Shuihu zhuan*, notes that the metaphysical outlook and philosophical attitudes of seventeenth century commentators such as Jin Shengtan 金聖歎 (ca. 1610-1661) colored their views of vernacular fiction and led them to the opinion that it was nothing more or less than "popular history" or *shushi* 庶史.[10] For different motives, perhaps, the same could be said about the views of other writers such as the late sixteenth century critic, Li Zhuowu 李卓吾 (1527-1602). Hu wrote this piece as an introduction to the republication of the 120-chapter version of *Shuihu zhuan* in Shanghai in 1920, and merely mentions *Xuanhe yishi* in passing. Consequently, he was concerned only with the section on Song Jiang which reappeared in *Shuihu zhuan* in much expanded form. But his analysis of the origins of the story (*gushi* 故事) in the art of the storyteller and not in the events of the Northern Song period is noteworthy.

> The occurrence of this type of story and its transmittal over a long period of time is certainly not without its causes. Broadly speaking, there are several: (1) It is certain that Song Jiang's life and fame were widespread among the populace. (2) The Southern Song government was bent on appeasement and China's central plain had fallen into the hands of non-Chinese. Thus, from a psychological standpoint, the people of the time were longing for heroes. (3) The corruption of the Southern Song government and the tyranny of its obsequious

[8]Hanan states, "The *pinghua* are an odd mixture of languages, at one point more classical, at another more vernacular, the mixture representing their dual origins. They are an uneasy combination—one can scarcely say a synthesis—of two different methods of composition, those of written history and oral narrative, with proportions of each varying from work to work." *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge 1981), p. 8. It may be that it is not so much the proportions of the two idioms which distinguishes *Xuanhe yishi* from the *pinghua* as the degree to which the two languages are separated in the text, and that the word "*pinghua*" in one title of *Xuanhe yishi* is of late provenance. Cf. Zheng Zhenduo, *op. cit.* (1957), pp. 699-716.

[9]Wang Zhongxian, *op. cit.* (1927).

[10]Hu Shi 胡適, "*Shuihu zhuan* Kaozheng 水滸傳考證", in *Hu Shi Wencun* 胡適文存, First Series (Shanghai 1925) vol. 3, pp. 81-8.

ministers embittered the general public, while the lot of those in the north under the control of the non-Chinese was even worse. Thus, patterns of thought among the people both north and south were nurtured by a seething hatred of bad governments and bad officials; and it was from this psychology of hatred that was born one which worshipped the heroes of the marshes. It is this "story of Song Jiang" passed down among the general populace which was the earliest ancestor of *Shuihu zhuan*. In reading *Xuanhe yishi*, we can see the "story of the water margin" in a nutshell.[11]

Thus, he sees a radical connection between the art of *Shuihu zhuan*, of *Xuanhe yishi*, and of the storytellers of the Southern Song period. Given that possibility, a study of what Meir Sternberg calls "the variable dynamics of the reading process" may perhaps be fruitfully employed in helping to elucidate the art of *Xuanhe yishi*.[12]

Part III is an attempt to read the work as a piece of fiction along the lines suggested by Sternberg rather than as a repository of recorded historical events to be culled and weighed, separately and selectively, in accordance with their adherence or nonadherence to normative values in the larger context of an all-encompassing literary tradition. What is at stake here, objectively speaking, is a question of focus: the integrity, "inner logic," or "spirit," of a particular work relative to that of an entire tradition for a given reader.[13]

II. Books Within the Book

A list of all identifiable parallel texts which date from the Southern Song period is given below. I have rejected as possible parallel texts any works which do not show a consistent word-for-word correspondence to the text of *Xuanhe yishi*. Sections for which I have been unable to find parallel texts are marked with an asterisk.

If we discount the Tang dynasty poems, six of which appear in Part I of the text, there remain only the following seven works:[14]

1. *Bin tui lu* 賓退錄, by Zhao Yushi 趙與旹 (1175-1231), of Linjiang 臨江, Jiangxi.

2. *Huangchao Biannian Gangmu Beiyao* 皇朝編年綱目備要 (*Huangchao beiyao*), by Chen Jun 陳均 (fl. 1234), of Xinghua 興化, Fujian.

3. *Pingshan shichao* 屏山詩鈔, by Liu Zihui 劉子翬 (1101-47), settled after fall of Northern Song on Pingshan 屏山, Fujian.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[12] Meir Sternberg, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore 1978), p. 2.

[13] The poet Novalis (1772-1801) said, "Books are a modern species of historical entities, but a most significant one. They have perhaps taken the place of tradition." Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York 1953), p. 326. The relationship of priority to presence and of writing to speech is discussed in David Couzens Hoy, *The Critical Circle: Literature, History and Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley 1978), pp. 77-84, with specific reference to Derrida and Gadamer, and the relationship of priority to "tradition" as set forth by Nietzsche on pp. 127ff. See also Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," *Glyph 1* (1977), pp. 172-97; John R. Searle, "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida," *ibid.*, pp. 198-209; and T. K. Seung, *Semiotics and Thematics in Hermeneutics* (New York 1982), esp. p. 16 on Nietzsche and the "contextual abyss." See below n51, for the special case of novelistic fiction and its critics.

[14] I have used the following editions in the preparation of this study: (1) Zhao Yushi, *Bin tui lu; Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成, (Shanghai 1935), vols. 315-16. (2) Chen Jun, *Songben Huangchao Biannian Gangmu Beiyao* (Taipei 1966). (3) Liu Zihui, *Pingshan Shichao*; in *Song Shichao* 宋詩鈔 (Shanghai 1914), vol. 2 (no pagination). (4) Liu Kezhuang, *Houcun Shichao*; also in *Song Shichao*, vol. 2. (5) Lu Zhong, *Huangchao Dashi Jiangyi; Siku quanshu zhenben* 四庫全書珍本, second series, vol. 42, nos. 1 and 2 (Taipei 1971). (6) and (7), in *Biji Xiaoshuo Daguan* 筆記小說大觀 first series (Taipei 1962), pp. 1014-31 and pp. 975-83, respectively. Page references to *Xuanhe yishi* in this table and throughout the rest of this article refer to the *Sibu beiyao* edition. References to *Quan Tang Shi* are to the 1960 Peking edition.

Table I

Xuanhe yishi	Parallel Texts	Diction
Part I		
verse 1a	*	—
verse 2ab	*Quan Tang Shi* 7431, 7419, 7421, 7425	—
verse 3a	*Quan Tang Shi*, 4816-20	—
verse 3ab	*Bin tui lu*, 9.102	—
4a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 793	classical
	Bin tui lu, 10. 117	
4b-5a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 796-908	classical
6b-8b	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1166-1253	classical
verse 8b	*Houcun shichao*, 13b	—
9a (Zhang Jixian)	*	classical
9b	*Bin tui lu*, 5.62	classical
8b-10b	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1253-77	classical
verse 10b	*Pingshan shichao*, 27b	—
10b-13a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1279-1301	classical
verse 12b	*Bin tui lu*, 2.18	—
verses 13ab	*Pingshan shichao*, 27b	—
13a-13b	*Bin tui lu*, 1.4	classical
	Huangchao beiyao, 1302	
14a	*Bin tui lu*, 2.17	classical
14b-15a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1302-12	classical
verse 15a	*Pingshan shichao*, 27b	—
15a-16a (Xu Zhichang)	*	classical
verse 16b	*Bin tui lu*, 1.5	—
16a-18b	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1313-30	classical
verse 18b	*Pingshan shichao*, 26b	—
18b-21a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1331-48	classical
21a-25a (Song Jiang)	*	vernacular
25a-29a (Li Shishi)	*	vernacular
verse 29b	*Quan Tang Shi*, 4434	—
29b-36a (Jia Yi/Zhang Tianjue)	*	mixed
36a-37a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1355-62	classical
37a-40a (Lin Lingsu)	*Bin tui lu*, 1.4-6 (?)	mixed
40a-42b (Lantern Festival)	*	vernacular
43a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1366	classical
43a-44a	*Dashi jiangyi*, 22.8b-10b	classical

4. *Houcun shichao* 後村詩話, by Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1265), native of Putian 莆田, Fujian, and magistrate of Jianyang 建陽, also Fujian.

5. *Huangchao dashi jiangji* 皇朝大事講義 (*Dashi jiangyi*), by Lu Zhong 呂仲 (fl. 1250), native of Jinjiang 晉江, Fujian; later settled in Tingzhou 汀州, Fujian.

6. *Nanjin jiwen* 南燼紀聞, attributed to Huang Jizhi 黃冀之 (n.d.), postface dated 1137.

Table I (*continued*)

Xuanhe yishi	Parallel Texts	Diction
Part II		
1a-4b	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1368-93	classical
verse 4b	*Pingshan shichao*, 27b	—
5a-6b	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1396-1406	classical
6b-7a	*Bin tui lu*, 8.97	classical
verse 7ab	*Bin tui lu*, 8.97-8	—
7b-9a	*Huangchao beiyao*, 1409-68	classical
verse 9ab	*Houcun shichao*, 21b	—
9b-21b	*Nanjin jiwen*, 1a-23a	classical
21b-24a	*Qie fen lu*, 1a-7b *Nanjin jiwen*, 23b-27a	classical
24b-28a	*Xu Qie fen lu*, 2a-7b *Nanjin jiwen*, 30a-33a	classical
28b-35b	* *Zhongxing beiyao* (?)	mixed
verse 35b	*Houcun shichao*, 21b-22a	—

7. *Qie fen lu* 窃憤錄, anonymous, attributed spuriously to the poet Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140-1207).

All of the Song sources which can be tentatively identified were written by authors who lived in the vicinity of the publishing center at Jian'an 建安, Fujian.[15] Another fact immediately evident is that all sections for which there exist parallel texts are in classical Chinese, and those sections in classical Chinese which do not have parallel texts are few. Those in Part I include the stories of Zhang Jixian, Xu Zhichang, and Zhang Tianjue—all of whom happen to be Taoist magicians. We might perhaps surmise the existence of a work in classical Chinese about Taoist magicians which served as a basis for these sections, although I have been unsuccessful in locating such a text in the *Taoist Canon*.[16] The only unparalleled section in Part II consists of the last seven pages, which deal with the Song restoration under Prince Kang (later emperor Gaozong). Wang Zhongxian proposed the anonymous *Xu Song Zizhi Tongjian* 續宋資治通鑑, a rather shoddy compilation of uncertain date, as a possible source; however, this is obviously incorrect on the basis of comparison.[17] A more likely source is a sequel to Chen Jun's *Huangchao Beiyao* (which the author of *Xuanhe Yishi* appears to have relied upon heavily) known as *Zhongxing* 中興 *Biannian Gangmu Beiyao*. This book is now lost.[18]

[15]On the publishing center at Jian'an, see Wu Kuangtsing, "Ming Printers and Printing," *HJAS*, 7 (1942-3), pp. 203-60. P. Hanan notes the activities of storytellers in Fujian mentioned in the Yuan dynasty diary *Zuiweng tanlu* 醉翁談錄 in "Song and Yuan Fiction: A Critique of Modern Methods of Dating," *HJAS*, 30 (1970), p. 167.

[16]A fascinating account of the life of Zhang Jixian is given in Sun Kekuan 孫克寬, *Yuandai Daojiao zhi Fazhan* 元代道教之發展 (Taichung 1968), pp, 33-40, entitled "Shenhua renwu Zhang Jixian 神話人物張繼先."

[17]For *Xu Song Zizhi Tongjian*, of which there are two entirely different editions (one dealing with Northern Song in 18 *juan* and the other with Southern Song in 15 *juan*), see *Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiyao Buzheng* 四庫全書總目提要補證 (Shanghai 1962), pp. 415, 426.

[18]*Ibid.* pp. 412-13.

Of the seven parallel classical texts, four are mentioned explicitly in the narrative of *Xuanhe yishi*: *Bin tui lu, Dashi Jiangyi, Pingshan Shichao,* and *Houcun Shichao.*[19] Thus we can confidently say that the author-compiler had knowledge of these texts. But the three that are not mentioned explicitly are paralleled so extensively and so meticulously that we may safely consider them to have been sources of the vernacular work as well.[20]

As for the vernacular sections, none of which I have been able to find in any parallel text, Wang Zhongxian proposed that the author-compiler of *Xuanhe yishi* had relied upon a corpus of *huaben* (vernacular short stories). Wang had no basis for doing so other than his desire to state categorically that the entire work was a compilation, but it is certainly a possibility. We might note that all the sections in the vernacular idiom are concentrated in the latter half of Part I. This coincides with the stories of Song Jiang and his band of rebels, Huizong's illicit liaison with the songstress Li Shishi, Shishi's lover Jia Yi's attempts to break up the affair, a fantastic voyage taken by Huizong and his magician Lin Lingsu to the Moon Palace to see a chess game, and the revelry of the final Lantern Festival in the capital before the encroachment of the Jin armies. Of these, the latter four would appear to have been written with this particular story in mind.[21]

III. The Storyteller Within the Story

There is ample evidence that the author-compiler of *Xuanhe yishi* was familiar with the conventions of Chinese vernacular fiction of his day. The work begins with a *shi* poem in which an entertainer giving a musical performance before a live audience is about to continue by reciting a tale which he has gleaned from reading a "written legacy."

Let me, for the moment, hush the lute upon my knee	暫時罷鼓膝間琴
To idly scan a legacy of deeds in ages past,	閒把遺編閱古今
That we might marvel at the earnest thrift of honest kings,	常歎賢君務勤儉
And sigh the more for lesser lords, their days in profligacy passed.	深悲庸主事荒淫
Ensuring peace begins with trusting men of worth;	致平端自親賢哲
The ruler who heeds flatterers is sure to come to strife.	稔亂無非近佞臣
Let those who know the sound of mighty peak and flowing stream	說破興亡多少事
Now listen, for I tell of glories destined not to last! (I. 1a, PH 1)	高山流水有知音

Explicit reference to the narrator-as-live-entertainer is made in the first couplet of the poem, where he speaks of laying aside his zither and "idly" reading some old

[19]Explicit reference to *Bin tui lu* occurs at I.14a; to *Dashi Jiangyi* at I.43a; to *Pingshan Shichao* at 1.18b; and to *Houcun Shichao* at I.8b.

[20]We might note a textual corruption—a sentence which begins 上方爲期門之事 in *Huangchao beiyao,* p. 1331, which is copied verbatim into *Xuanhe yishi,* I.19a as evidence that this is the text upon which the *Xuanhe yishi* author relied. In the long segment from II.9b, line 2 to II.28b, line 3, there is hardly a single word of narrative which does not appear also in either *Nanjin Jiwen* or *Qie fen lu.* On the other hand, there is much material in the latter two works which does not appear in *Xuanhe yishi,* which would seem to prove that the vernacular work was derived from the classical ones and not vice versa, as Lang Ying had surmised.

[21]The Song Jiang sequence is the only vernacular section which seems to me to have been taken, perhaps, from a pre-existing *huaben* text. Yet, since this is obviously the most famous section in the entire work, it is often cited as evidence that the entire work is a compilation. Cf. Wang (1927), *passim.* and Richard G. Irwin, *The Evolution of a Chinese Novel: Shui-hu chuan* (Cambridge 1953), pp. 25-6.

history books. The last couplet also contains an allusion to a famous musical performance: that of Bo Ya for his friend Zhong Ziqi.[22] Thus, apart from the formal distinction from historical works, which never include intrusive verse selections printed separately from the text, we can also see an explicit identification with one of the conventions of most later vernacular fiction—namely, what Hanan calls its "simulated context."[23] It is this conspicuous appearance of the persona of the storyteller and a sense of fictive proportion which sets *Xuanhe yishi* apart from any historical record written in Chinese. The narrator of *Xuanhe yishi* is, for all intents and purposes, indistinguishable from the narrator in Ming vernacular fiction as Hanan describes him. In the discussion below, I will point out some of the characteristics of this persona in the text and some of the ways the author-compiler has deformed a straightforward narrative account to expand it—however crudely—as only a fiction-writer would. In a pattern typical of most vernacular literature, both fiction and drama, the narrator begins with a short prologue. Here, it takes the form of an epitome in which the rise and fall of earlier dynasties of China's past are narrated in swift succession. The literary function of this foreshortening of events previous to the beginning of the story proper has been pointed out by Sternberg:

> The exhaustive preliminary exposition in itself largely invests the reader with prescience, closely weaving narrative past and future in a straightforward, "natural" structure of probabilities.[24]

Fourteen of the most famous rulers of China's past are presented in just two pages, establishing the "canons of probability" which are to operate exclusively within the fictive world of *Xuanhe yishi*.[25] Thirteen of these characters fit into one of two categories—they are either "good first rulers" or "bad last rulers" of several successive turns in China's long cycle of dynasties in accordance with the Mandate of Heaven. The narrator explains the successes and failures as nothing more than a preponderance of good and evil in their respective "intentions 心術" and in the wisdom of their selection of men to serve them as ministers. Thus, the implied author's judgment on these thirteen exemplary characters presented in the epitome is totally conventional.[26] He relates their appearance to the natural fluctuation in the universe of Yin and Yang, the two complementary forces which "control the fortunes 用事" of all things. In keeping with conventional interpretations of this Mandate of Heaven, our narrator reaffirms the fact that the "bad last ruler" holds an integral place in the dynastic cycle, just as does the "good first ruler."

The material presented in this introductory section appears in numerous works which must have been familiar to authors and readers alike, if only second-hand. For example, the stories of Kings Yao and Shun, Jie and Zhou, are merely restatements of the accounts in the most ancient of the Confucian classics, the *Shujing* 書經, or *Canon of Documents*. Yao's counsel to Shun, the description of Shun as "enlightened as with

[22]Translated in Richard Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis 1976), p. 326.

[23]See Patrick Hanan, "The Making of *The Pearl-Sewn Shirt* and *The Courtesan's Jewel Box*," *HJAS*, 33 (1971), p. 125.

[24]Sternberg, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

[25]*Ibid.* p. 2.

[26]On the definition of "implied author" as a system of norms, moral or cultural, see Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca 1978), pp. 148-49.

four eyes; perceptive, as with four ears," the words of the people in praise of King Tang and in complaint against King Jie—all are transcribed verbatim onto the first page of *Xuanhe yishi*. No doubt all of these kings were themselves the topic of stories narrated by storytellers or written in the vernacular in the early period. One of these which is still extant which bears some similarity to *Xuanhe yishi* is *Wu Wang Fa Zhou Pinghua* 武王伐紂平話 (*King Wu's March Against Zhou*). This particular *pinghua* is the story of the victory of King Wu, "good first ruler" of the Zhou 周 dynasty, over King Zhou 紂, "bad last ruler" of the preceding Shang.

The fourteenth and last of the kings spoken of in the epitome fits into neither of these categories. The Tang emperor Minghuang, the "Brilliant Emperor," was neither first nor last of his line. The events of Minghuang's reign are recounted in a book from the late Tang period called *Kaiyuan Tianbao Yishi* 開元天寶遺事. Its title literally mirrors that of *Xuanhe yishi;* and although it is written in classical Chinese and its formal characteristics are quite different, the vignettes which it records are very similar to some scenes in the latter work.[27] Minghuang is shown surrounded by fawning ministers and engaged in a continual round of parties and feasts. The historical parallels between Minghuang and Huizong are interesting. Both lost their thrones because of their follies, and both became infatuated with their mistresses and dabbled in abstruse religious practices. In this much both Huizong and Minghuang fit the conventional pattern of the "bad last ruler."

Yet interestingly, the verse selection appended to the description of Minghuang differs from the four attached to previous "bad last rulers," which are all taken from a collection of 150 poems on historical themes, or *yongshishi* 詠史詩, by the poet Hu Zeng 胡曾 (fl. 860), a popular schoolbook in the Song period.[28] The two short verse selections associated with Minghuang come from the famous "Song of Everlasting Sorrow" of Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846). In it the poet expresses his feelings of nostalgia for the lost past, but there is no animosity directed at the emperor himself. Minghuang is not presented as a stereotypical "bad last ruler," but as a complex, talented individual overtaken by historical events.[29] Later on in *Xuanhe yishi* we find other long poems written by poets from the Southern Song period about Huizong's era in which the moods of ambivalence, nostalgia, and bitterness reminiscent of Bai Juyi's poem are evoked.

The appeal of figures like Minghuang and Huizong to the popular imagination is certainly obvious. Huizong, like Minghuang before him —and unlike the "good first rulers" and "bad last rulers" of the myth—is a complex and romantic character. But

[27]See Naha Toshisada 那波利貞, "Fūryū Tenshi Kisō Kōtei 風流天子徽宗皇帝," *Rekishi to Chiri* 歷史と地理, *16* (1925), no. 5, p. 407. A total of seventeen works with the term *yishi* in their title appear in *Congshu Zimu Leibian* 叢書子目類編, 3rd ed. (Taipei 1977), pp. 297, 298, 301, 302, 306, 311, 315, 319, 321, 346, 1068, 1115, and 1128. Of these, only *Xuanhe yishi* is written in vernacular Chinese.

[28]See Zhang Zhenglang, *op. cit.*, p. 617-26.

[29]Cf. Chatman, *op. cit.*, p. 132:

> In structural vocabulary we could say that the paradigm of the flat character is directed and teleological, whereas that of the round is agglomerate. The effect of the flat character is that it has a clear direction, and so, as Forster remarks, is more distinctly (if not more easily) remembered—there is simply *less* to remember, and that less is very clearly structured. Round characters, on the other hand, may inspire a stronger sense of intimacy, despite the fact that they do not "add up." We remember them as real people. They seem strangely familiar. Like real-life friends and enemies it is hard to describe what they are exactly like.

there are contrasts, too, which could not have been lost upon readers. Minghuang lost his throne but not his kingdom. His son returned to his capital at Chang'an and managed to keep the forces of destruction at bay so that twelve of his descendants could succeed him on that same throne. Huizong's palaces and gardens, his capital—literally his whole world—were brought to ruin in his own lifetime. Whereas the earlier "good first rulers" and "bad last rulers" had succeeded each other in a dull, repetitive process, the events surrounding these two rulers, Minghuang and Huizong, are tantalizingly similar in their particularities and yet in stark contrast overall. Thus, even at this early stage of the narrative, we see an expansion of the variables entering into the "canons of probability" of the text.

The story proper begins with a series of predictions—four in number—which impel the reader's attention to events in the narrative future. The first of these is a poem by Shao Kangjie 邵康節 (1011-77), also called Shao Yong 邵雍, a poet and one of the five major figures in Northern Song Neo-Confucianism. This poem is a description of the fall of the Western Jin dynasty (265-317) to a nomadic tribe, a previous occasion in which two Chinese emperors had been abducted. Outside the poet's collected works, this poem also appears in *Bin tui lu*, which, as we have seen, is explicitly mentioned in the text; however, the difference between the ways the classical author and the storyteller treat the poem is worth noting. Zhao Yushi declares flatly that the poem is a prophecy 豫讖 of impending disaster.

> This poem is a prophecy of the Jingkang catastrophe (of 1127). Although it alludes to the two Jin emperors, the reference to "imperial troops taking (barbarians) to task" resulting in an invasion can only refer to the battle of Yanshan (in 1125). There was nothing like this in the time of the two Jin empires. It bothers me that something as famous as this has been overlooked by the majority of readers. I heard it from my friend Zhao Youyu and became enlightened [to its significance].[30]

The storyteller, by contrast, merely entices his readers with a pertinent question, leaving them to their own "prescience" to determine the facts of the matter:

> Was this poem, entitled "Song on Left Lapels" by Master Kangjie, to foretell the troubles of the Xuanhe and Jingkang eras to come? (I.3b, PH8)

Shao Yong appears here—as in several later more important vernacular novels—as a prophet.[31] Yet in all such instances the obvious inference is left for the reader to make for himself rather than being instructed or told outright; and the interplay between narrator and reader *qua* storyteller and audience is concomitantly more "entertaining" (in the sense of suspended or kept in mind) than the direct confrontation of the historian and his reader.

Perhaps here a brief introduction to some of the basic ideas in Shao Yong's cosmology is in order, since they are little known and often misrepresented in the West. More importantly, they are still current among the more "popular" beliefs about the *Book of*

[30]*Bin tui lu*, 9.102.

[31]Shao Yong's poems appear on the first page of *Shuihu zhuan* and at the beginning of the pivotal chapter 79 of *Jin Ping Mei*. He is quoted on the opening page of *Xi You Ji* as well. Cf. Andrew H. Plaks, "*Shui-hu Chuan* and the Sixteenth-century Novel Form: An Interpretive Reappraisal," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, 2 (1980), p. 23 and n58. See also the final chapter of Ding Xisheng 丁西生, *Xu Jin Ping Mei* 續金瓶梅.

Changes in China and also, I believe, helpful to an understanding of the vernacular works in which he appears as either a prophet or Merlin-like magician. Shao Yong is the foremost representative of the *xiangshu* 象數 (images and numbers) school of interpretation of the *Book of Changes*, in contrast with the *yili* 義理 (significance and principle) school associated most closely with the names of Wang Bi 王弼 (223-46) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200). The latter interpretation is based on an ordering of the hexagrams called *houtian* 後天 and associated with the first historical king of the Zhou dynasty, King Wen. In the *houtian* order, the hexagrams are in "mirror-image" sequence, the first hexagram of all unbroken lines being followed directly by its "opposite," the hexagram of all broken lines. Each succeeding hexagram is followed by its mirror opposite. Shao Yong's ordering is based on a gradual progression of the hexagrams, from the first of all unbroken lines to the last of all broken lines. Called *xiantian* 先天, this ordering is associated (significantly, I believe, for our purposes) with the legendary first king of China, Fu Xi. It appears to have been Shao Yong's own invention or passed down to him, and is identical with modern binary numerical order.[32]

Shao Yong's theory of the four-stage cyclical nature of history (curiously similar to Vico's) and based on the "mantic formula" mentioned above, is laid out in arcane detail in his major work, the *Huangji jing shi shu* 皇機經世書 (*Book of the Supreme Principles Governing the World*).[33] A much more accessible version of his major ideas, however, is a short work called *Yuqiao wendui* 漁樵問對 ("Conversations between a Fisherman and a Woodcutter"), the postface of which is also by Zhao Yushi, mentioned above as the author of *Bin tui lu*.[34] Three ideas explained in rather rustic fashion in this little work which are worth our notice are the concepts *guanwu* 觀物 "observing things," *fanguan* 反觀 "objective observation" or "cross-observation," and *sheng* 聖 "the sage."

> The fisherman said to the woodcutter, "Do you know the nature of Heaven-and-Earth and of all things?"
>
> "Not yet," the woodcutter replied. "But I would like to hear of it."
>
> The fisherman said: What I call "observing things" means not looking at them with one's eyes but with one's mind, then not looking at them with one's mind but with the things' own principles (*li* 理). There is no object in the world which does not have its own principles. None which does not have its own properties (*xing* 性) and natural order (*ming* 命). Principles cannot be known until they have been probed thoroughly (*qiong* 窮). Properties of an object cannot be known until such an object has been extinguished. The natural order of an object cannot be known until it has been fulfilled. These three kinds of knowledge are the only true ones. Even the "sage" has no greater knowledge than this; and anyone whose knowledge is greater than this is not what I call a "sage."
>
> The reason a mirror can illuminate things is that it has the ability not to obscure forms. Be that as it may, the capability of the mirror not to obscure forms cannot equal the capability of water to conform to the shape of all objects or that of the "sage" to become

[32]A good general introduction to the various orderings of the hexagrams and of Shao Yong's interpretations can be found in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China, II* (Cambridge 1956), pp. 273-8 and 455-8 and *III* (Cambridge 1959), pp. 340-1. Also Wu Kang 吳康, *Shaozi Yixue* 邵子易學 (Taipei 1969).

[33]*Siku Quanshu Zhenben*, Fourth Series (Taipei 1973), vols. 168-71. *Juan* 1-4 lay out the theory of cycles, *juan* 5 the theory of harmonics and phonology, and *juan* 6-12 the *guanwu* 觀物 "observation of things."

[34]*Congshu jicheng*, first series (Shanghai 1959), vol. 626, pp. 1-11. See also James I. Crump, *"EADEM sed ALITER:* 'Pastoral' Idyl and *Vanitas* in Late Chinese Fiction and Verse," *Tamkang Review, VIII*, no. 2 (October 1977), pp. 1-34. I have a complete transcription of the work in manuscript.

one with all situations. The reason the "sage" can become one with all situations is because he can do "cross-observation." The reason this is called "cross-observation" is that he does not use his own self to observe objects. Not using one's own self to observe an object is to "use objects to observe objects (*yi wu guan wu* 以物觀物)." If I use one object to observe another object, where does the self enter in? This is to say that I am a human being, and that there is something about other human beings which is the same as I am, and that both I and other human beings are ourselves physical objects; and thus I can use the eyes of all phenomena as my eyes, and there is nothing one or another of these eyes has not seen. Thus I can use the ears of all phenemona as my own ears, and there is nothing that one or another of these ears has not heard. Thus I can use the mouths of all phenomena as my own mouth, and there is nothing that one or another of these mouths has not said; and thus I can use the minds of all phenomena as my own mind, and there is nothing that one or another of these minds has not conceived.

Indeed, are the observations of the world to be compared with what one man has seen? Are the sounds heard by the entire world to be compared to those one man has heard? Are the words of the entire world to be compared with the reasoned discourse of a single human being? Are the reckonings of the entire world to be compared in greatness with any personal happiness? Indeed, is not he who can make the breadth of his vision, the distance of his hearing, the elevation of his discourse, the greatness of his happiness the broadest, most distant, most elevated, and greatest either a spirit or a "sage"? Is it only I who would call such a human being the most spiritual or the most sagely? Or would not the entire world do the same? Is it only the entire world in my own era which would call such a person a spirit or a "sage"? Or would not a myriad of generations do so as well? You can surmise for yourself how far such an argument can be taken, I presume.[35]

The phrase which I have translated as "to use objects to observe objects" is conventionally translated as "to view things as things," which I don't think either makes much sense in English or conveys Shao Yong's original meaning.[36] We might compare this figure of "the sage" with R. Hegel's comment on the omniscient author in seventeenth-century Chinese novels.

> The Chinese novelists regularly resorted to a set of explicit rhetorical devices that separate the narrator, and *hence* the author, from the subject matter at hand. This "storyteller's manner" theoretically allows a degree of objectivity similar to that of Fielding's narrator in *Tom Jones*. It is from this ironic distance that the Chinese novelist could perform his "sagely" function of dispensing "praise and blame" to characters when appropriate—in precisely the manner of the historian. (The relationship between historiography and the writing of vernacular fiction becomes even more obvious here . . .)[37] (emphasis added)

Hegel notes the separation between the narrator and the "subject matter at hand" in the novels he discusses, yet in character with the literary milieu of the seventeenth-century intellectual, steeped in the scholastic realism of Zhu Xi's *gewu* 格物 ("investigation of things"), he implicitly identifies the narrator with the omniscient author. If one reads a text with Shao Yong's *fanguan* method in mind, a separation between the author of a novel and his narrator-storyteller—who is, after all, also a "character" or *renwu* 人物 in the story—obtains as well. The author "uses" the storyteller to observe "objectively" the story—just as he "uses" his characters to observe real people and

[35]*Yuqiao wendui*, pp. 4-5.

[36]E.g., Wing-tsit Ch'an, *Reflections on Things at Hand* (New York 1967), p. xxxiii.

[37]Robert Hegel, *The Novel in Seventeenth Century China* (New York 1981), p. 231.

their traits. If the author of *Xuanhe yishi* was as familiar with Shao Yong's ideas as his mention of him would seem to indicate, then a distinction between the ultimate author and his narrator would seem to hold.

Shao Yong is merely the first and by no means the only character in *Xuanhe yishi* to have a role in predicting events in the narrative future. A second prediction right after the first is cast in the form of an anecdote which links the Song royal family, the Zhao clan, and its Tang predecessor, the Li clan. Emperor Ming of the Later Tang (r. 926-34) burns incense and prays to heaven for the birth of a great ruler to save the nation. This vignette is almost identical to one found in *Wudaishi pinghua*.[38] Emperor Ming's supplication is, of course, successful; and we see Taizu, first emperor of Song, as an earthly manifestation of the Fire-star (Mars). This simple device serves to reinforce the connection between Taizu and all the "good, first rulers" of the past. Taizu brags to a character named Xu Xian that a "great golden disc" has appeared on earth like the morning sun, which chases the stars away. The narrator responds to this verse with a prediction: "Later on it was said that the reference to 'gold' was an oracle of the Jurchen Jin ("Gold") dynasty, which destroyed Bianjing." (I.4a, PH9) The historical Xu Xian's original liege was Li Houzhu 李後主 (937-78), last ruler of the Southern Tang dynasty and a famous poet. According to at least one popular legend Huizong was a reincarnation of this ruler.[39] This provides an occasion for the author to present the rather ironic situation of the Song ruler providing a prediction of his own dynasty's collapse to a man who served a dynasty which he himself had overthrown. The narrator retains his character and reliability (or lack of it) by relegating this prediction to the realm of hearsay, just as in the first instance he did so by casting it in the form of a question. The fictionally "uninvolved" storyteller-entertainer formally "involved" in the story seems closer to the fictional prophet Shao Kangjie—here a character in the story—than to the historian-commentator writing a book in his own name. His fictional "distance" from his readers, who are an "audience," prevents their intimidation or self-consciousness about their own opinions on what is being narrated. Such an audience is in no sense responsible for the actions or opinions of an entertainer. In addition, as an anonymous entertainer, "he" has nothing to gain from his readers, either in terms of immediate reward or the fame which posterity may bequeath upon the Confucian historian-commentator.

The third prediction is occasioned by a meeting between Taizong, the second emperor, and the enigmatic figure Chen Xiyi 陳希夷 (? - 989), a Taoist figure of considerable renown and reputed originator of the *Taijitu* 太極圖 ("Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate"). In this prophecy we see an anachronism which is the clearest indication that *Xuanhe yishi* was written at least as late as the fall of Southern Song: a prediction that the capitals of Song would be "first Bian, then Hang, then Min, then Guang." (I.4a, PH9) In an intrusive statement following this prediction, the narrator again intervenes to explain the oracle:

> Later on when Gaozong brought about the Song restoration he made his capital at Hangzhou. This was in accordance with the prediction and could hardly have been mere coincidence. (I.41, PH9)

[38]*Xinbian Wudaishi pinghua* (Taipei 1977), p. 96.

[39]Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Yihengguan cixuan* 藝衡館詞選, quoted in Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋, *Songci Sanbaishou Jianzhu* 宋詞三百詩箋注 (Hong Kong 1961), p. 2.

The modern reader is left wondering if the author might have intentionally failed to mention Min and Guang in the narrator's objection to any suggestion of coincidence, hoping thereby to confront his readers with the enticing possibility that perhaps *Xuanhe yishi* was written in Song times and that, in the eyes of his audience, portions of Chen's prediction had yet to come true when the book was written. Such a ploy would certainly not have hindered the work's popularity or sales among superstitious medieval readers!

The final prediction is again by Shao Yong. This vignette is placed in a time immediately preceding the first major Song incident —a narration of events fifty years before the Xuanhe era, when Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-86), the arch-villain, sets about to enact his notorious reforms. The narrator offers no comments of his own on this prediction, which is the first item in *Xuanhe yishi* to appear verbatim in *Huangchao beiyao*.[40] It is plausible that the author of *Xuanhe yishi* envisioned himself as neither more nor less than a publishing counterpart of the "reciter of history" mentioned in the opening poem. This is especially persuasive when we consider that a large number of events that are close to what a modern reader would call fantastic or supernatural in *Xuanhe yishi* appear in *Huangchao beiyao* under the rubric of historical "fact": Wang Anshi's vision of his son wearing a cangue,[41] the appearance of a flock of 30,000 cranes over the palace,[42] the depredations of a *jiao* dragon in Kaifeng county,[43] the male fruit-vendor who gives birth to seven grown men,[44] the woman who sprouts a moustache on the streets of the capital,[45] the foxes' night party in the emperor's Genyue garden,[46] etc. Many similar incidents appear also in *Nanjin jiwen* and *Qie fen lu*. We have an explicit description of the method of history writing used in *Huangchao beiyao* which explains this phenomenon. In his introduction to the work, Zhen Dexiu 眞德秀 (1187-1235), a student of Zhu Xi, quotes Chen Jun on the inspiration which led him to write his chronicle.

> When I read the *Tongjian Gangmu* 通鑑綱目 by Lord Wen (Zhu Xi) I was left breathless by his subtle integration of outline and particulars (*yili* 義例). In fact, his *gang* is the method of writing down events in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, while his *mu* is the substance of supporting evidence of the *Zuozhuan*. Sima Guang was the first to venture on a large scale to bring out important points with his *Index to the Comprehensive Mirror* (but it) leaves the reader with some disappointment owing to its omissions and duplications. I myself make no judgment on it, and consult it without much ado. Yet when Lord Wen narrates the history of previous eras, he conceals his praise and blame rather in the very way that he writes. My own record here is an account based on the true facts of events (*ju shishi lu* 據事實錄) and nothing more. I would not presume to consider it the equal of Lord Wen's method; but if I were to preface it with one remark, it would be, "What about it?"[47]

As Charles S. Gardner reminds us in his seminal study of Chinese historiography, "It is surely an axiom of all writing that the motives which impel authorship largely

[40] *Huangchao Beiyao*, p. 793.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 908 and *PH*, p. 13.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 1312 and *PH*, p. 30.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 1325 and *PH*, p. 41.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 1374 and *PH*, p. 102.
[45] *Ibid.* and *PH ibid.*
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 1380 and *PH*, p. 103.
[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13. Zhen Dexiu also hails from the city of Jian'an. See n15 above.

condition the product."[48] Chen Jun is very clear here about his intentions. He is following Zhu Xi's methodology and is interested in "facts." The core of the method is found in the words *yili* 義例, which I have translated as "outline and particulars." The phrase is defined in the modern dictionary *Guoyu cidian* as *zhuzhi ji tili* 主旨及體例, "principal import and essential examples."[49] But *tili* is usually defined as *banshi zhi guize huo wenci zhi geshi* 辦事之規則或文詞之格式 ("rules of conduct or style of literary composition").[50] The substance of one's argument under such a method is subject to the prior normative dictates of stylistic usage. The historian must shape his work in accordance with an "aesthetic" of historical writing, while the reader of such a history must be attuned to what the historian is trying to imply from the events selected for inclusion in it. For anyone familiar with such recent deconstructionist critical notions as Derrida's écriture, the priority of "text" over "context," and the "figural force" of criticism and its aesthetic, Chen Jun's statements about the blending of "text" (the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) and "context" (the *Zuozhuan*) cannot but have a decidedly modern ring to them.[51]

Yet even though we can make no hard and fast distinction between the kind of history represented by *Huangchao beiyao* and the kind of fiction represented by *Xuanhe yishi* on the basis either of what is narrated or the fact that an aesthetic of writing is involved, the dynamics of narration are decidedly different in the classical work from what appears in the vernacular one, as are the aesthetic and stylistic norms. In the case of *Xuanhe yishi*, I believe that a case can be made for seeing the first half of Part I and the whole of Part II as predominantly classical in diction with vernacular expressions in fairly predictable locations, while the second half of Part I is written in a rather racy vernacular idiom which is quite different from the language of the *pinghua*.[52] The longest anecdote in the classical idiom in Part I—a description of a dinner party which the emperor holds for his ministers at the Palace of Proclaimed Harmony—is less than two full pages in length (I.17b-18b). By and large, the entries in classical Chinese which make up the first half of Part I are very short—sometimes less than two lines (e. g., Daguan: First year, I. 9a). By comparison, the bulk of the second half of Part I consists of five long stories, each one averaging five full pages in length. If we compare the ratio of narrated time to narrative time (what Sternberg calls the Represented: Rep-

[48]Charles S. Gardner, *Chinese Traditional Historiography* (Cambridge 1966), p. 7.

[49](Taipei 1976), p. 3944.

[50]*Ibid.*, p. 769.

[51]Hoy (*op. cit.* n13) states, "All understanding presupposes a prior grasp, a preunderstanding of the whole." In this regard, cf. Lubomir Dolozel, "Commentary," *New Literary History, VI*, no. 2 (1975), p. 465 on "the turning point in Western narrative theory." Contrary to what might be inferred from Dolozel's assertion, mundane reality (and its simulation as context in novelistic fiction), while in some sense "whole," is never finished and complete, being always prior to an as yet unseen text—i.e., the future or "narrative future"—and thus can have no theoretically cognizable "turning point." Hanan (*op. cit.* 1973, p. 139) states, "Fiction differs in the degree to which it discriminates and selects from what Henry James called 'the inclusion and confusion' of life." See also below, n56.

[52]The distinction between classical and vernacular diction is rather difficult to quantify. Generally speaking, I have made my decision based upon the fact that sections which I have labeled "vernacular" are those in which inflective particles such as *le* 了 and *de* 的 and deitics such as *zhe* and *na* 那 are widely used; unfamiliar expressions are found in vernacular dictionaries or in Yuan drama; and classical particles such as *yi* 矣 and *zhi* 之 are seldom employed. Purely vernacular sections were easier to identify than purely classical ones; and the sections which I have labeled "classical" are at times sprinkled with vernacular phrases, usually in the form of comments by the narrator.

resentational time ratio), we see a clear distinction between the epitome, the classical sections, and the vernacular ones.[53] This phenomenon in *Xuanhe yishi* is presented in Table II below.

Table II

section	represented time (years)	representational time (pages)
epitome	3,000	2.5
Part I, sect. 1	22	19.0
Part I, sec. 2	4.1	22.0
Part II	35	34

Roughly speaking, we see that whereas in the epitome approximately 1,000 years were covered on each page, and in the first section of Part I and all of Part II something slightly more than one year per page, in the second section of Part I (vernacular) one year was narrated in approximately five pages. It is also significant that within the vernacular section excluding the Song Jiang story, which culminates Part I (I.25a-43a [PH 58-96]), eighteen pages are used to narrate a mere thirteen months. None of the parallel texts exhibits this type of stylistic deformation of narrative time.

Also, this final section of Part I consists not of the typical month-by-month narration of events, but at least three examples, in a rudimentary form, of what Henry James calls a "standard scene"—one which is

> copious, comprehensive, and accordingly never short, but with its office as definite as that of the hammer on the gong of the clock, the office of expressing all that is in the hour.[54]

The three "standard scenes" in this section of *Xuanhe yishi* are Huizong's first meeting with Li Shishi (I.27a-30a, PH 62-67); the first confrontation between the emperor and Shishi's boyfriend Jia Yi, the following morning (I.30-31b, PH 67-70); and the conclusion of the Lantern Festival (I.41a-43a, PH 91-96). In the first of these, the narrator has "shifted moods" from the glowering figure of the first part of the book to a much less sanctimonious and far more relaxed one as he describes the emperor's "secret excursions 私行" to the pleasure precincts of Bianjing. Note the attention to detail, the formulaic description, and the conspicuous lack of moralizing in this scene:

> Hastily, the emperor doffed his dragon robes and slipped into a black sark, purple doublet with red silk knotted tassels, turban, and black boots. They sneaked out the rear gate of the forbidden city, leaving a carved tally with Chief of the Guard Guo Jian for their return. Then they took the main avenue leading into the heart of Bianjing. They came upon a low balustrade and looked out over a vast and splendid panorama—cabarets, dancehalls, taverns, and brothels.
>
> On they went until dusk, when they arrived in a quarter known as the Alley of the Golden Rings, especially noted for the variety of its attractions. Behind these doors, with their great carven door-gods, lived the most famous courtesans of the capital. Their laughter

[53]My treatment of *Xuanhe yishi* here owes much to Sternberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14, "Quantitative Indicator, Scenic Norm, and Fictive Present."

[54]Henry James, *The Art of the Novel* (ed. Richard P. Blackmur) (New York 1962), p. 323. Cf. Sternberg, *op. cit.*, p. 20. Sternberg refers to James' "standard scene" under the name "discriminated occasion."

and animated talk filtered through the shutters; the music of their flute-playing filled the air. One after another the emperor saw them: throats and bosoms powdered creamy white, cheeks rouged like peaches and apricots. He was delirious with delight! A few steps further along, they came to an establishment with white plastered walls and roofed with mandarin-duck tiles. The door was lacquered vermilion, and had great rings set into the jaw of beasts. The eaves overhead reflected the deep greens of the the locust trees. Beyond a door with scenery painted on it appeared a dense grove of slender bamboos. Huizong asked his companions whose house this was, so perfectly appointed. He stood there gaping, transfixed in admiration. Then suddenly, he heard a cough.

Twin-pupilled eyes, open wide
And he beheld a smile worth a thousand taels.

Just as the emperor happened to cast his eyes in that direction, a kingfisher-blue screen was furled and a brocade curtain parted to reveal a maiden with clouds of raven hair set with golden phoenix combs. Her eyes sent glances like glittering autumn leaves beneath brows as dark as the hills in spring. Her waist was pliant like a willow, and creamy white was her flesh. She had long and slender fingers like shoots of spring bamboos and exquisitely firm and tiny bound feet.

If she but held a jade mandolin one would say it was Zheng's Guanyin; if she had held a parrot, then Yang Guifei. It was as though Chang'e herself had abandoned her Moon Palace and descended an alabaster staircase to become a mortal girl. She had:

Brows hidden by clouds of high-spun hair,
And eyes, clear pools of autumn freshness;
Tiny phoenix slippers, like tiny archer's bows,
And a voice: the twittering of an oriole.
A coat cut from cloth of clouds and sewn with mist,
And a slender waist wrapped in tucks of white;
Cheeks like blossoms, flesh like jade—
An artist could use up all his pigments and do no justice to it all!

This was the queen of all the poets and carousers in two capitals and proprietor of the finest gentlemen's establishment in Bianjing. Her name was Li Shishi and all she cared for was the heads and tails of coins. She was so sharp, she could shuffle the very clouds and mist! Scions of the famous houses were completely undone by her, and if a country boy should cross her path, she had him looking for an early grave. Those who fell for her charms ended by begging from door to door. Huizong's eyes were riveted on her. Sakyamuni Lord Buddha himself would have been so captivated he would have fallen off his lotus! How much less a chance had a crazed fool like Huizong? (I.27a-28a, PH 62-64)

The reference to an "artist's pigments" in the last line of the poem is particularly appropriate, given that Huizong is remembered as a painter and patron of the painting academy.

I will discuss the last "standard scene," which is the climax of the work, in greater detail. This scene takes place on the evening of the fourteenth day of the sixth year of the Xuanhe reign (1124). In this section are eleven sections of verse—much greater proportionally than in any other section, including the epitome. Of these verse selections two are denoted as *qu* and four as *ci*. All of these serve to retard the narrative's forward movement and help to create a feeling of fullness of scene. It seems probable that whoever wrote this section of the narrative also penned most of these verses, for they are all involved with events immediately unfolding in it. The first *qu*, entitled "Praising the Sage Court" 賀 聖 朝 (I.40b, PH 90) opens with a mood of grandeur and

peace and of pride in what was no doubt a magnificent empire. This aria is followed by three pages in which the blissful ignorance of the townsfolk of the capital is portrayed in such a way as to lull the reader almost to forget what is taking place outside the city walls—the approach of the Jurchen armies. A *ci* entitled "Scattering Golden Coins" (I.41b, PH92) describes the townspeople as they vie with each other to snatch up the golden coins which palace attendants are throwing off the balconies.[55] For the reader who can detach himself from the immediate scene, this vignette serves to highlight the incongruous situation of the ruler throwing away money "as if there were no tomorrow" as his nation approaches the brink of collapse. The narrator adds a couplet which explicitly states the mood he is trying to convey:

> Lantern fires blazed so it was never night;
> Amid cacophony of music and song the land was eternally spring. (I.41 b, PH 92)

The narrative's forward impetus is completely arrested as the storyteller turns to the emperor himself at the palace. A woman of the city who has been arrested for stealing a golden cup sings a song to Huizong, begging thereby to procure her freedom. But the emperor remains skeptical and she is asked to sing another to prove her talent and sincerity. For the fiction reader, the action of the story seems to fade into the background as he is drawn into the spectacle of this woman's performance.

This retardatory structure serves to make the rapid action which follows all the more striking. Just as the emperor hands the woman the golden cup as a souvenir, the scene quickly changes before his eyes. The throng of revelers begins to run uncontrolled in front of the palace as prisoners are brought from the dungeons for a mock trial and pardon beneath the emperor's balcony. As the excitement reaches a frenzied pitch, a man in black emerges from the middle of the mob looking "rather like a Buddhist acolyte" and explodes in a string of curses at the host of the celebration. This mysterious figure in black has no name and no background, and goes to his death without exhibiting the least human emotion.

The text of this last incident is identical in *Huangchao beiyao* and *Xuanhe yishi*, with the exception of one sentence missing from the former text but present in the latter.

> To the end, (the man) refused to utter the true facts of the situation 終不肯吐露情實. (I.43a, PH 95)

Given that, as we have seen, the author-compiler of *Xuanhe yishi* has relied so much upon *Huangchao beiyao*, it would appear that he has intentionally made the identity of this character more ambiguous in order to intensify what Sternberg calls a "permanent gap" in the exposition.[56] Also significant is the fact that in *Huangchao beiyao* this incident is merely one of several unremarked short entries for the first month of the sixth year of Xuanhe.[57] In *Xuanhe yishi*, by contrast, it is the closing scene in

[55]This tune-title does not appear in the corpus of Song *ci* poetry.

[56]"Permanent gaps . . . give rise to expectations or sets of questions to which no single, fully explicit and authoritative answer is made by the text from beginning to end. . . No reader can afford to disregard them, but he will look in vain for pat explicit answers. Only through a close analysis can he evolve a hypothesis or a set of hypotheses by which these gaps can be filled in with any degree of probability." Sternberg, *op. cit.* p. 51. This unmistakably Buddhist character is reminiscent of the mysterious Buddhist figures who seem to play a central role in the retribution schemes in *Jin Ping Mei* and *Hong Lou Meng*.

[57]*Huangchao beiyao*, p. 1336.

Part I, the closing scene of the whole Northern Song era, and is followed by a verse couplet which underscores its importance as a *tubian* 突變—a peripeteia or nexal pivot of change:

> Youth passes, overtaken by graying hairs;
> Just as gaiety and pleasure reach a zenith, sorrows come, (I.43a, PH 96)

The storyteller here informs his audience that the scales of the natural order have irrevocably tipped against Huizong and the Song empire. The action of Part II is unremittingly downhill, closing with the ignominious complicity by default of emperor Gaozong in the Yue Fei/Qin Gui affair.[58] In part II the figure of Huizong is a chastened, benevolent one; yet it is too late either for him or for his kingdom. Ironically, Huizong comes to grips with the reality of his responsibilities to his world at the very moment his influence in that world is overshadowed by a force which has been gaining strength throughout Part I and which he has heretofore ignored—"the tribes." The narrator's couplet is a reiteration of the Chinese proverb, *le ji sheng bei*: "At the peak of joy, sadness is born." As Shao Yong mentioned in his poem at the beginning of Huizong's story, and as the narrator reiterates in the opening verse of Part II which follows immediately upon this scene, dealing with "the tribes" requires not only benevolence, but strength. All the benevolence and symbolic "good behavior" Huizong can muster after this scene cannot compensate for a course of events which has slipped beyond his grasp.

After this scene, Part I closes with a one-page explanation of the causes of the "Jingkang incident" taken from Lu Zhong's *Lectures on the Significance of Great Events of the Imperial Court*. The word *yidi* 夷狄 is hypostatized here to signify, in effect, all those elements in the story which remain impervious to becoming thrall to the Chinese ethical universe—not merely the actions of "barbarians," but the weaknesses and vices of all "petty men." It appears in a lecture explaining the events of the sixth and seventh years of the Xuanhe era which are covered in Part II of *Xuanhe yishi*. The narrator explicitly identifies Lu Zhong as the author of this piece; however, one short segment at the very end does not appear in extant editions of Lu's work, and it reads:

> Petty men and the tribes are both of the Yin category. When the Yin of petty men is close to home, it is enough to provoke the other Yin influence, the tribes. When frost forms, the bell on Mt. Feng resounds. When rain comes, the bases of pillars sweat. Likes produce likes. This is the principle which must come to pass. (I.43b-44a, PH 97-98)

The reference to the "bell on Mt. Feng" may be an allusion to an item in the *Shan Hai Jing* 山海經 (*Canon of Mountains and Seas*).[59] In a commentary on that entry is a reference to *jin* 金 ("metal")—the same as the name of the tribe which overran Huizong's empire, which reads:

> There is a bell on Mt. Feng with nine bosses. When frost forms, the bell resounds. *Commentary*: When frost forms, the "*qi* of metal 金氣" responds.[60]

[58]For an interesting look at how canons of taste and popular expectation operate in modern Chinese historiography, compare the treatment of emperor Gaozong with regard to the Yue Fei/Qin Gui incident in the first edition of Lin Ruihan 林瑞翰 *Zhongguo tongshi* 中國通史 (Taichung 1970), vol. 2, pp. 464-5, with that found in the second edition of the same work (Taipei 1973), vol. 2, p. 181.

[59]*Shan Hai Jing; Sibu beiyao* edition, no. 9186 (Taipei 1972), 5.43b.

[60]The commentary appears in *Peiwen yunfu* 佩文韻府 (Taipei 1966), p. 60.

Whether or not the author of *Xuanhe yishi* selected this allusion with the word *jin* in mind is impossible for us to ascertain. The evidence would suggest that he had more than mere entertainment of his audience in mind if he did so. Be that as it may, by adopting a context of live entertainment prior to the narrating of events in his text, the fiction writer affirms the life of myth and legend in his art and offers his book to the fiction reader's scrutiny as a discrete contextual whole.

By contrast, the elite, "serious" reader and critic, for whom the act of reading involves not only personal experience of the novel but its later interpretation for *another* reader, in effect attempts to do that which the novelist had been unwilling or unable to do originally—replace a *model* of articulate memory simulating the three-dimensional relationship of past, present, and future and crafted out of long strings of words ("images and numbers") with an orderly exposition of enduring concepts ultimately reducible to individual words ("significance and principle") sometimes offered under the rubric of "intelligibility." However, this requires a shift from the self-referential coherence of the novel's miniaturized context to an *external* priority; and here the critic must make a more candid choice than the novelist. In the light of which of the three global historical contexts ("redactions of the human story," if you will) does the critic most seek to play a part and be remembered: modern scholarship or either of its intriguing co-versions—ancient tradition (the Source) and the post-modern "human condition" embraced in counterpoise by Marx and Nietzsche (the Future)? Transfixing horizons or the abbreviated shadows of midday?[61]

[61]Rousseau offers a cross-observation on global contexts. "Logically," he says,"everything should come first." Quoted in Leif Carter, *Reason in Law* (Boston 1979) p.3.