

## Tale 1

### “Hongxian” 紅線<sup>1</sup>

by Yuan Jiao 袁郊 or Yang Juyuan 楊巨源<sup>2</sup>

translated by Cao Weiguo

Hongxian [Red Threads]<sup>3</sup> was a maid<sup>4</sup> of Xue Song 薛嵩 (?-773),<sup>5</sup> the Military Governor of Luzhou 潞州.<sup>6</sup> She was good at playing

<sup>1</sup> This translation is based on the text edited by Wang Meng'ou 王夢鷗, *Tangren xiaoshuo jiaoshi* 唐人小說校釋 (Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1983), pp. 277-80. Although Wang's collation is based on a number of major versions of the story (Wang Meng'ou, p. 288), he only discusses some of the variants in his apparatus. Thus, the translator has added collational notes. For a discussion of the major editions consulted, see “Translator's Note.”

<sup>2</sup> This is one of the eight stories collected in Yuan Jiao's (fl. 868) *Gan ze yao* 甘澤謠 [Ballads of Timely Rainfall]. For an account of the author's life as well as the textual history of this story, see “Translator's Note.”

<sup>3</sup> *Gujin shihua* 古今詩話 as quoted in *Shihua zonggui* 詩話總龜 (41.6a), compiled by Ruan Yue 阮閱 during 1086-1100, records a different origin for Hongxian, which seems to have circulated in a separate tradition: “At the age of 13, a little maid was presented to Xue Song, a Military Governor in the Tang. On both of her hands there were faint lines like red threads, hence she was named ‘red threads.’” *Tangshi jishi* 唐詩紀事 also indicated that Hongxian was named because the lines of her palm looked like red threads. See Wang Zhongyong 王仲鏞, ed. *Tangshi jishi jiaojian* 唐詩紀事校箋 (Chengdu: Ba Shu, 1989), p. 852.

<sup>4</sup> The word *qingyi* 青衣 means “maid.” With its literal meaning “a person with dark color clothes,” it may also foreshadow that Hongxian was a heavenly servant. As William H. Nienhauser points out, “a heavenly female dressed in blue brings a solution” is one of the basic motifs in the story-complex of early texts such as *Shanhai jing* 山海經. This motif had a great influence on the later fictional writing. See William H. Nienhauser “The Origin of Chinese Fiction” *MS* 38 (1988-89): 208-15.

<sup>5</sup> Xue Song was a grandson of Xue Rengui 薛仁貴 (614-683), the famous Tang general and later legendary hero of folk tradition. Xue Song originally participated in the An Lushan Rebellion, but eventually surrendered to the court. In 763 he was appointed Military Governor of Xiang 相 (its seat is in modern Anyang 安陽, Henan), Wei 衛 (with its seat in modern Ji 汲 County, Henan), Ming 洺 (its seat is southeast of modern Yongnian 永年, Henan), and Xing 邢 (with its seat in modern Xingtai 邢臺, Hebei). In 766 his army was granted the title of Zhaoyi 昭義 “Brightness and Righteousness.” See his biography in *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, 124.3525-26, *Xing Tang shu* 新唐書, 111.4144-45. There is also a story recorded in *Langhuan ji* 琅嬛記 (11.21a-b) about how Xue Song was once nearly murdered by an assassin, suggesting that there may have been a number of such stories.

<sup>6</sup> Luzhou had its seat at modern Changzhi 長治, Shanxi (Tan Qixiang, 5: 38).

The opening sentence in *TPGJ* (195: 1460) is a little different, it reads 唐潞州節度使薛嵩家青衣紅線者 for 紅線潞州節度使薛嵩青衣. *Yu chu zhi* 虞初志 (2.11), *Jindai mishu* 津逮秘書 (17a), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* 五朝小說 (1487) and *Yanyi bian* 豔異編 (24.1a) all have the word *jia* 家 in the opening sentence. Only *Shuo fu* 說郛 (19. 25a) does not have the word *jia*. It is very likely that the editors of later editions tried to explicate the text and added the word *jia*. According to the principles of textual criticism, the short reading is generally preferable for the reason that the scribes “occasionally added a word or a phrase to clarify a thought.” See Harold Greenlee. *Scribes, Scrolls, and Scripture: A Student’s Guide to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), p. 60.

*Bai Kong liutie* 白孔六帖 (24. 5a) has another important variant, it reads 唐潞帥薛嵩有歌妓曰紅線. *Lei shuo* 類說 (36: 21a) and *Gan zhu ji* 紺珠集 (11.19a) agree with this version and also identify Hongxian as a singing girl. According to this synoptic version, Hongxian was a singing girl, instead of a maid.

The Military Governor of Luzhou during this period was actually Li Baoyu 李報玉, not Xue Song. Xue Song was appointed as the Military Governor of Xiangwei and four other prefectures, and his army was titled Zhaoyi. Thus, he was also called the Military Governor of Zhaoyi. However, after 780, the seat of the Zhaoyi Army was moved to Luzhou, and it is only after that time did the leader of the Zhaoyi Army become the Military Governor of Lu-chou. Since Hsüeh Sung had already died in 773, he was never the leader of a new Zhaoyi Army. The author of this story obviously confused the old Zhaoyi with the new Zhaoyi. See Bian Xiaoxuan 卞孝萱, “Hongxian Nie Yinniang xin tan” 紅線聶隱娘新探, *Yangzhou Daxue xuebao* 1997.2: 29-37. The problem was also noticed by Charles A. Peterson, who wrote, “(Xue Song’s province) was also known as Xiangwei 相衛 or “Xiangwei liuzhou” 相衛六州 and, from 766 to 775, as Zhaoyi

the Ruanxian’s 阮咸 lute,<sup>7</sup> and was also well versed in the classics and histories.<sup>8</sup> Song put her in charge of his official correspondence and memorials, and called her “the inner record-keeper.”<sup>9</sup> Once when there was a great feast among the army, Hongxian told Song, “The sound of the Jie 羯 drum<sup>10</sup> is very

jun 昭義軍. It is somewhat confusing, however, if the latter title is used since after 776 it will be conferred on an essentially different province.” See Charles A. Peterson, “The Autonomy of the Northeastern Provinces in the Period Following the An Lushan Rebellion,” Unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Washington, 1966), p. 66.

The mistake about Xue Song’s position further confirms my hypothesis that the author selected Xue Song as a character not because of his knowledge of him, but because of other reasons, which I will discuss in my “Translator’s Note.”

<sup>7</sup> The Ruanxian’s lute was a kind of musical instrument which was named after Ruan Xian, one of the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove” of Western Jin 晉 dynasty. According to *Xin Tang shu*, 200. 5691, this instrument was first found in an ancient tomb and was made of copper. It resembled the *pipa* 琵琶 but its body was round. No one at that time knew what it was. Yuan Xingchong 元行沖 (?-729) alone identified it as an instrument invented by Juan Hsien and he remade it with wood. Thereafter the instrument became popular and was called “Ruanxian.” It can also be simply called “juan.” For a description of this instrument, see Xue Zongming 薛宗明, *Zhongguo yinyue shi: yueqi bian* 中國音樂史：樂器編 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1983), pp. 768-770. A photograph of a Tang “juanxian” can be found in Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏, *Zhongguo gudai yinyue shi gao* 中國古代音樂史稿 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue, 1980), fig. 109.

<sup>8</sup> The heroines of Tang tales are usually presented to the readers with a description of their stunning beauty. By contrast, in this story, the description of Hongxian’s looks is kept minimal. On the other hand, her intellectual qualities are much emphasized.

<sup>9</sup> *Nei jishi* 內記室, also translated as “private secretary.” *Jishi* 記室 (record keeper) was an official post designated for those who were in charge of official documents. Since Hongxian was a female and could only performed her duties in Xue Song’s inner rooms, she was thereby called “inner record keeper.”

<sup>10</sup> The Jie drum is a kind of bucket-shaped drum which became popular in Tang China. Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-755) was fond of this drum and called it “leader of the Eight Musical Sounds.” According to Nan Zhuo’s 南卓 “Jie gu lu” 羯鼓錄, written in 840, the Jie drum was made of the skin of deer and it originally came from the country of the Jie tribe. It was usually placed on a

mournful. Something must have happened to the drummer." Song usually had a good understanding of musical rhythm, and said, "It is just as you say." Then he summoned the drummer and questioned him. [The drummer] said, "My wife died last night. I dared not ask for leave." Song immediately released him to return home.<sup>11</sup>

This was a time after the Zhide 至德 era (756-758).<sup>12</sup> The Lianghe 兩河<sup>13</sup> area was still not at peace.<sup>14</sup> The Zhaoyi 昭義 Army

big seat. The drummer used two sticks to beat both sides. Its sound is vigorous and ferocious, and is usually fit for martial music. Xue Zongming believes that the Jie drum was introduced to China from India during the Jin Dynasty. See Xue Zongming, *Zhongguo yinyue shi: yueqi bian*, p. 108. There is also a picture of the Jie drum on the same page. Edward H. Schafer says the drum was widely known in Turkestan and in India, but reached China from Kucha. See Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 52, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> The anecdote of listening to the drum seems to have little connection with the main story, which is an account of Hongxian heroic deeds. However, it does show Hongxian has an unusual capacity, in other words, she was an "extraordinary person" 異人, as Xue Song later labeled her. Furthermore, by examining all the eight stories in the *Ganze yao*, we find in each story the personage has some anecdote related to music. This shows the author had an overall conception in his mind when he wrote these stories. For a discussion of the role of music in *Ganze yao*, see Lin Mingde 林明德, "Yuan Jiao yu Ganze yao" 袁郊與甘澤謠, *Xiandai wenxue* 44 (1971): 169-70.

This anecdote also suggests that the *Lei shuo* version of Hongxian as a singing girl has some basis. It is hard to imagine that a maid could have the opportunity to learn the classics and became well versed in music. On the other hand, it is well known that the singing girls of Tang times were gifted in many arts.

<sup>12</sup> *TPGJ* (195: 1460), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487), *Yu chu zhi* (2.11) and *Yan yi bian* (24.1a) all read 是時至德之後. *Jindai mishu* (17b) and *Shuo fu* (19.25b) read 時至德之後. The word *shi* 是 must have been added by later editors to clarify the meaning.

As Wang Rutao 王汝濤 (p. 315) points out, Xue Song was appointed as a Military Governor in 763, in the Baoying 寶應 reign period (762-763). There are two reign periods--Qianyuan 乾元 (758-760) and Shangyuan 上元 (760-761)--between the Zhide and Baoying reign period. Thus, the statement that the court

was first established,<sup>15</sup> with Fuyang 滏陽<sup>16</sup> as its garrison seat. [The court] ordered Song to firmly hold it, so as to take control of and hold down Shandong 山東.<sup>17</sup> In the aftermath of severe disaster [caused by the Rebellion], the military office had just been established. The court also made Song’s daughter wed the son of Tian Chengsi 田承嗣,<sup>18</sup> the Military Governor of Weibo 魏博,<sup>19</sup>

used Xue Song to control Shandong after the Zhide era is misleading. This fact again shows that the author does not know too much about Xue Song.

<sup>13</sup> Lianghe 兩河 refers to Henan 河南 and Hebei 河北, which includes most of modern Hebei and Shandong area (see Tan Qixiang, 5. 33).

<sup>14</sup> After the year 757, the An Lushan Rebellion was subsiding and many of his generals surrendered to the Tang court, but some still caused troubles for a few years. For a discussion of the unsettled situation after the An Lushan rebellion, see Denis Twitchett, ed. *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 464-68.

<sup>15</sup> *Jindai mishu* (17b) reads 初置招義軍. As I pointed out, Xue Song’s army was called *Zhaoyi* 昭義, not *Zhaoyi* 招義. However, since the author seems unfamiliar with the position of Xue Song and already mistakenly called him the Military Governor of Lu-chou, it is likely he makes another mistake here. Thus, the line from *Jindai mishu* may be from the original version. The editors of *TPGJ*, probably being aware of this mistake, delete this sentence. *Yu chu zhi* (2.11), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) and *Yan yi bian* (24.1) follow *TPGJ*. *Shuo fu* (19.25b) corrects this mistake and reads 初置昭義軍.

<sup>16</sup> Modern Ci 磁 County, Hebei (see Tan Qixiang, 5. 49).

<sup>17</sup> Shandong refers to the area east of Taihang Mountains 太行山, including most of Shandong, Henan, and Hebei. For a discussion of the definition of Shandong during Tang times, see Wang Mingsheng 王鳴盛, *Shiqishi shangque* 十七史商榷, 90. 3a-b, 95. 12b., *Baibu congshu jicheng* edition. This was the most troublesome area because most of the former rebel generals became the Military Governors of this area. Xue Song’s territory was just located between the court region and the Shandong area. Thus the court wanted to use him to control other Military Governors.

<sup>18</sup> Like Xue Song, Tian Chengsi (704-778) was also previously a rebel general under An Lushan and later surrendered to the Tang court. According to the dynastic histories, even after his surrender, he was unwilling to obey the court. He was ambitious and raised an army of 100,000 men in his region. The story here is historically correct in stating that Tian had ambition to annex the land of his neighbors. According to the historical sources, upon Xue Song’s

[and] his son marry the daughter of Linghu Zhang 令狐彰,<sup>20</sup> the Military Governor of Huazhou 滑州.<sup>21</sup> The three garrisons were linked by marriage with each other. Their messengers<sup>22</sup> came and

death, Tian Chengsi sent someone to assassinate Xue Xiong 薛雄, Xue Song's nephew, the Military Governor of Wei. He finally succeeded in seizing the lands of Hsiang, Wei, Tz'u, and Ming. See *Jiu Tang shu*, 141.3837-41 and *Xin Tang shu*, 210.5923-26.

<sup>19</sup> The territory of Weibo covered part of modern Hebei and Shandong provinces, with its seat in Weizhou 魏州 (southeast of modern Wei County, Hebei). Bo refers to Bozhou (with its seat in modern Liaocheng 聊城, Shandong). See Tan Qixiang, 5: 49.

<sup>20</sup> Linghu Zhang (?-773) was also a former rebel general. After surrendering to Tang court, he was appointed as the Military Governor of Huabo 滑亳 in 761. The seat of Huazhou is Huatai 滑臺 (southeast of modern Hua County, Henan). The seat of Bozhou is located in modern Bo County, Anhui (see Tan Qixiang, 5: 38). See his biography in *Jiu Tang shu*, 124.3527-30, *Xin Tang shu*, 148.4765-66.

<sup>21</sup> TPGJ (195: 1460) reads "Huabo" 滑亳; *Shuo fu* (19.25b) and *Jindai mishu* (18a) read "Huazhou." *Yu chu zhi* (2.11), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487), and *Yan yi bian* (24.1a) read "Huatai." "Huazhou" is preferred, as explained in the "translator's note," the author may simply wanted to use a governor of Huazhou as his character.

TPGJ (195: 1460), *Yu chu zhi* (2.11) and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) read Linghu Zhang 令狐章, *Yan yi bian* (24.1a) reads Hu Zhang 胡章, *Shuo fu* (19.25b) and *Jindai mishu* (18a) read Zhang 彰 for Zhang 章. Although Zhang 彰 is correct, Zhang 章 may actually came from the original version and it seems the author again made a mistake about the identities of the Military Governors he mentioned.

<sup>22</sup> *Jindai mishu* (18a) and *Shuo fu* (19.25b) read *ren shi* 人使 (literally "people who serve as messengers," see Glossary). TPGJ (195.1460) reads *shi shi* 使使 (sent messengers). *Ren shi* is preferred, because later in this story, after Hongxian's mission is completed, there is a sentence "within one or two months, people who serve as messengers from both north and south of the He came one after another," which is certainly meant to echo this sentence. TPGJ changed the wording to *shi shi* obviously in order to make the meaning clearer, because *ren shi* can be easily misunderstood as "people and messengers." *Yu chu zhi* (2.11) and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) follow TPGJ as usual, but *Yan yi bian* (24.1a-b) reads 使蓋相接 (the canopy of the messengers followed each other); perhaps the editor felt *shi shi* read awkward in the sentence and tried to polish it.

went [among the three garrisons] from time to time. Tian Chengsi often suffered from the disease of noxious heat<sup>23</sup> and when summer came it became even worse. He often said, “If I move to garrison the east side of [Taihang] mountains<sup>24</sup> and take in the cool weather there, I will be able to prolong my life by several years.” He then recruited from his army soldiers ten times more martial and brave [than the ordinary soldiers], obtaining three thousand men. He called them “Lads of the Outer-residence”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> TPGJ (195.1460), *Yu chu zhi* (2.11), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) and *Yan yi bian* (24.1b) read *feiqi* 肺氣, whereas *Jindai mishu* (18a) and *Shuo fu* (19.25b) read *redufeng* 熱毒風.

Heat is considered by traditional Chinese medicine one of the six pathological factors which can cause disease. When the pathogenic heat was stagnated in the body, it accumulated and became noxious-this is called *redu* 熱毒. See *Zhongguo yixue da cidian* 中國醫學大辭典, p. 3950; *Zhongyi mingci shuyi xuanshi* 中醫名詞術語選釋, 100-101. Few texts, however, mention the disease of *redufeng* 熱毒風, except in *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (71.5a-b), where a pellet is recommended to cure this and several other diseases. Wang Meng’ou (p. 282) was obviously puzzled by this term and tried to compromise the variances between TPGJ and this text by proposing that Tian may have suffered a lung disease which was caused by the hot weather of the summer. But even the word *feiqi* is troublesome. There are diseases like *feiqi re* 肺氣熱 “heat of the vital energy in the lungs,” *feihuo* 肺火 “pathological fire of the lungs,” or *feiqi zhong* 肺氣腫 “emphysema,” but *feiqi* is hardly the name of a disease. Another possible reading is to simply regard *redu* as the intensive heat of the summer, and to regard *redufeng* as a kind of heat stroke, a reading that fits the context quite well.

<sup>24</sup> Both Xue Song’s and Tian Chengsi’s territories are located east of Taihang mountains. Thus, it seems absurd that Tian Chengsi, already being in Shandong, still wanted to move to Shandong. It seems that Shandong here may refer to the area just on the east side of Taihang mountains, since Xue Song’s seat, Fuyang, was only about 20 miles east of Taihang mountains

<sup>25</sup> There is some historical basis for the establishment of the “Lads of the Outer-residence.” According to the historical sources, Tian Chengsi “had at its disposal within a few years an army of 100,000 men. He then drew 10,000 of the hardest to form his personal guard. They were called the headquarter garrison (*yabing* 牙兵).” See *Jiu Tang shu*, 141.3838.

and maintained them generously.<sup>26</sup> He often ordered three hundred men to stand guard at his official residence at night. He divined to choose a good day and was about to annex<sup>27</sup> Luzhou.

When Song heard of this, he felt depressed day and night. He would talk to himself with moaning and groaning<sup>28</sup> but could not come up with a plan. Once, when the night watch was about to be sounded by the clepsydra,<sup>29</sup> and the outer gate of the headquarters was already shut, Song was walking with a stick in the courtyard. Only Hongxian walked with him. Hongxian said, "Master, for one month you have not had the time to eat and sleep.<sup>30</sup> You have

<sup>26</sup> TPGJ (195.1460) reads 厚其卹養, *Jindai mishu* (18b) and *Shuo fu* (19.25b) reads 厚卹養之. The latter is preferred since the word *xuyang* in classical Chinese usually means "to raise or maintain" (see Glossary). *Yu chu zhi* (2.11), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) and *Yan yi bian* (24.1b) read 厚其廩給 (to give them generous salary). Obviously they still follow the TPGJ version but they also give a *lectio faciliior* to make the meaning clearer.

<sup>27</sup> TPGJ (195: 1460), *Jindai mishu* (18b), *Yu chu zhi* (2.11), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) and *Yan yi bian* (24.1b) read *bing* 併 "annex," *Shuo fu* (19.25b) reads *qian* 遷 "to move." Here, we have an instance in which *Jindai mishu* is in disagreement with *Shuo fu*. As Wang Meng'ou (p. 282) points out, *ping* makes Tian's intention clearer.

<sup>28</sup> The word *duoduo* 咄咄 is an onomatopoeia, to indicate the sound of sighs of grief and worry. According to *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, when Yin Hao 殷浩 was removed from his office. He often wrote with his finger on the air, "Duoduo! What a bizarre thing." See Yang Yong 楊勇, ed. *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋 (Hong Kong: Dazhong, 1969), p. 647. This may be used as a reference to the author's patron, Zhang Hongjing 張弘靖, who was demoted twice in 821 (see "Translator's Note").

<sup>29</sup> The night watch should be sounded every *ke* 刻 (roughly 15 minutes) after the first *geng* 更 (about eight o'clock in the evening).

<sup>30</sup> Allusion to a line in the *Book of Poetry*: "My heart in sad. I have no leisure to lie down." It is said the line expresses the sadness of a son being banished from his father. See Chen Zizhan 陳子展, ed. *Shi jing zhijie* 詩經直解 (Taipei: Shulin, 1982), p. 688. The author here may allude to his nephew Yang Lao 楊牢, who had just lost his father and desperately searched for his body. See "Translator's Note."

been preoccupied with something.<sup>31</sup> Isn't it about the neighboring region?"

Song said, "This matter is tied up with our safety and danger. It is not something you can handle."<sup>32</sup>

Hongxian said, "Although I am of the humble class, I am still the one who can alleviate the master's anxiety."

Song then told her the matter in detail, and said, "I have succeeded to the heritage of my grandfather and received great favor from the state. If one day I lose my territory, then the great achievements<sup>33</sup> of several centuries will come to an end."

Hongxian said, "This is easy and my master needn't worry about it. I beg you to let me go to the Wei commandery once to see its situation and spy out whether there are (suspicious) activities. Now at first watch I will head out, I can be back and make my report at the third watch.<sup>34</sup> Please first arrange a speedy horse and a messenger<sup>35</sup> along with a letter of greeting. As for other things, please wait until I come back."

<sup>31</sup> The word *zhuyi* 屬意 in classical texts and Tang tales usually means "to be preoccupied with something." (see Glossary)

<sup>32</sup> Another reading for *fei ru neng liao* 非汝能料 can be "it is not something you can expect."

<sup>33</sup> *Jindai mishu* (19a), *TPGJ* (195: 1460), *Yu chu zhi* (2.11), and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) read *xun fa* 勳伐 ("merits and achievements," see Glossary). *Shuo fu* (19.26b) reads *xun ye* 勳業; *Yan yi bian* (19.26b) reads *gong xun* 功勳. The three versions basically have the same meaning. But since *xun fa* has the most difficult reading (*lectio difficillior*), most probably it comes from the original text. Here, we observe another instance in which *Yan yi bian* changed the word of *TPGJ* while *Yu chu zhi* and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* did not. Thus, it seems of the three Ming anthologies, *Yan yi bian* takes more liberties with its base text.

<sup>34</sup> Roughly at midnight.

<sup>35</sup> *Jindai mishu* (19a) and *Shuo fu* (19.25b) read *zouma* 走馬. *Taiping guangji* (195. 1461), *Yu chu zhi* (2.12), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) and *Yan yi bian* (24.2a) read *zouma shi* 走馬使. The word *zouma* 走馬 usually means a horse which can run quickly. Wang Meng'ou prefers the *TPGJ* reading and thinks the text here should be *zouma shi* 走馬使, which means a messenger on horseback. Actually, the word *zouma* can also have the meaning of "messenger on horseback" (see Glossary).

Song was greatly surprised and said, "I did not know that you were an extraordinary person.<sup>36</sup> I was completely in the dark.<sup>37</sup> However, if the matter does not succeed, it will even hasten the disaster. Then what can we do?"

Hongxian said, "All my actions have succeeded."

Then [she] entered her boudoir and outfitted herself for travel. She combed her hair into a *wu man* 烏蠻 bun,<sup>38</sup> clasped with a golden phoenix hairpin, dressed herself in short robe with purple embroider, tied on a pair of light shoes with green silk ribbons, strapped a dragon-patterned dagger around her breast, wrote the name of the God of Grand One on her forehead.<sup>39</sup> She prostrated herself twice and then left, in a flash she disappeared.

Thus, it seems to me *zouma* should be from the original text. The editor of *TPGJ* may not like the confusing meaning of *zouma* or he may be unaware of the second meaning of *zouma* and thereby added a word *shi* to make the meaning clearer.

<sup>36</sup> *Yiren* 異人 usually refers to a person with supernatural power.

<sup>37</sup> *TPGJ* (195.1460) had this sentence moved to a preceding line, after the sentence "I am also the one who can alleviate the master's anxiety." Besides, the wording is different, which reads, "Song heard that Hongxian's words was unusual, thus he said, 'I knew you are an unusual person. How benighted and ignorant I was.'" The word *anmei* 暗昧 is certainly to expound the meaning of the word *an* 暗, which is used in *Jindai mishu* (19a) and *Shuo fu* (19.26b). *Yu chu zhi* (2.11), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1487) and *Yan yi bian* (24.1b) follow *TPGJ*, but they also felt Xue Song's first sentence in *TPGJ* does not make sense, thus they changed it to "I did NOT know you are an unusual person. How benighted and ignorant I was."

<sup>38</sup> *Wuman* was a minority nation which lived in south-west of Tang China. The "wuman" bun is to comb one's hair into a high bun on the top of the head. See Zhou Xun 周汛, *Zhongguo gudai fushi daguan* 中國古代服飾大觀 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1995), pp. 76-77. Yuan Jiao's father Yuan Zi 袁滋 was once sent as an envoy to the south-west *man* people, it is probably because of this Yuan Jiao came to know their hair style.

<sup>39</sup> According to Schafer, "The brightest and most important star of the Northern Culmen was reddish Kochab, which was the visible aspect of the Theocrat (*Di*), or Grand Monad (*Tai yi*). He was one of the two greatest of

Song then turned around and shut the door. With his back to the candles, he sat up straight. Usually he could drink several *ge* 合<sup>40</sup> of wine,<sup>41</sup> but this night he emptied over ten cups without setting drunk. Suddenly he heard the sounds of reveille chanting in the wind, and a drop of dew falling from a leaf.<sup>42</sup> Startled, he made a cautious inquiry: it was Hongxian coming back. Song was delighted. He saluted her and asked, "Did it go smoothly?"

Hongxian said, "I dare not fail you on your mission."

[Xue Song] then asked, "Haven't you killed or injured anyone?"

the polar deities." See Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 45.

<sup>40</sup> *Ge* is an unit of measurement for capacity. One *ge* is equivalent to 1 deciliter, ten *ge* is equivalent to one *sheng* 升.

<sup>41</sup> Here, the author gave a vivid account of how Xue Song sat and drank while he was waiting for the result of Hongxian's mission. It is noteworthy that he did not face the light, instead he hid himself in the shadow of the candle; he did not relax himself by leaning on the chair, instead he sat upright. The description of Xue Song sitting posture makes the readers feel gloomy and somber, and it further reveals Xue Song's nervousness. The mechanical action of drinking over ten vessels of wine both reflect Xue Song's anxiety and creates a sense of monotonousness. Since Xue was alone by himself, it was unlikely that anyone else should be able to know this detail. This kind of description can be regarded as "fictional" rather than "historical." A historian would rather focus on major events and discard those "trivial" matters, but a fiction writer would choose or make up such events to shed light on the psychological depth of his persona (i.e. how nervous he became). It should also be pointed out that readers, like Xue Song, are eager to learn what happened to Hongxian after she left, and a normal historical work would immediately give such an account. But in this story, Hongxian's deeds were presented to readers by means of flashback in which Hongxian recounted her story to Xue Song after she came back. The author created a suspension: he deliberately let readers anxiously wait for the result, along with Xue Song.

<sup>42</sup> "A dew fell from a leaf" is certainly employed to describe the miraculous footworkship of Hongxian, i.e. she was as light as a dew, as many commentators points out. On the other hand, it also reveals how nervous Xue Song was, since he was still able to response quickly to such a slight sound after a whole night's drinking.

“I didn’t go that far. I only took the golden box at the head of the bed as a token,” Hongxian said. “At three *ke* 刻<sup>43</sup> to midnight, I already arrived at the Wei commandery. In all I passed several gates, then I reached the sleeping quarters. The ‘Lads of the Outer-residence’ rested along the verandah. I heard them snoring thunderously. I saw the soldiers of the headquarters walking in the courtyard and corridors, passing on the password and shouting like a blowing gale. I opened up his left door leaf and came near his bed-curtain. I saw Tian, our father-in-law, resting inside the curtain, lying on his back, with his legs crossed and bent upwards,<sup>44</sup> in a sound sleep. His head was pillowed on a patterned rhinoceros horn.<sup>45</sup> His bun was wrapped in yellow crepe silk gauze. In front of the pillow a sword of seven-stars<sup>46</sup> appeared.<sup>47</sup> In front of the sword a golden box lay open. Inside the box there was written the time of his birth with its corresponding

<sup>43</sup> *ke* 刻 refers to the graduation of the waterclock. A whole day and night was divided into one hundred *ke*. Thus, three *ke* to midnight was roughly equivalent to 11:00 p.m.

<sup>44</sup> TPGJ (195: 1461) reads *fu* 趺. All other texts read *gu fu* 鼓趺. *Fu* 趺 is the same as *gu* 鼓, but since the former is a difficult word, it is likely that this is from the original text.

<sup>45</sup> Pillows and boxes of rhinoceros horn were both regarded as precious ornaments at that time. See Schafer’s discussion in *The Golden Peaches*, 241.

<sup>46</sup> Both Shafer (*Pacing the Void*, 157-58) and Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬 (p. 183) point out that the sword of seven-stars had its *locus classicus* in the story of Wu Zixu 伍子胥. Schafer also notes that the sword was believed to have the magic power to slaughter demons in the Daoist practice of the Tang.

<sup>47</sup> *Jindai mishu* (19b) and *Shuo fu* (19.26a) read *lu tuo* 露橐. TPGJ (195: 1461), *Yu chu zhi* (2.12), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1488) and *Yan yi bian* (24.2b) all omit the word *tuo*, thereby making the meaning simpler. Although *lu tuo* is a very difficult reading, it may come from the original text and may mean “to appear from a sack.” Sacks (*tuo* 橐) in ancient times could be used to hold weapons and armor, see “Glossary.”

Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches<sup>48</sup> and the name of the god of the Big Dipper.<sup>49</sup> In addition, famous incenses and precious jewelry were scattered on it. Displaying my prowess in the jade tent,<sup>50</sup> [I] only expect that my heart is connected to the life before;<sup>51</sup> Sleeping as usual in an orchid-scented hall, [Tian Chengsi] was unaware that his life was in my hands. Why should one tire [troops] to catch him and release him;<sup>52</sup> that will only add more

<sup>48</sup> These are the so-called “Eight Characters” (*ba zi* 八字). They indicated the year, month, day, and hour of a person’s birth, each consisting of one Heavenly Stem and one Earthly Branch.

<sup>49</sup> To put one’s “eight characters” together with the name of the god is believed to have the function of talisman. Schafer (*Pacing the Void*, p. 49) points out “in a grand sense the Dipper presided over the welfare of the state and its sovereign.”

<sup>50</sup> The jade tent (*yu zhang* 玉帳) refers to the place where a chief commander resides. The word “jade” is employed to indicate that the tent is as solid as a jade.

<sup>51</sup> Modern commentators like Wang Meng’ou and Xu Shinian as well as English translators all regard the subject of the sentence 揚威玉帳，但期心豁於生前 as Tian Chengsi. The whole sentence could thus be translated as “[Tian Chengsi] making a show of his strength in the jade tent, he only hopes he can do as he pleases in his life.” However, one can hardly imagine how Tian, in his sound sleep, could show off any of his power. On the other hand, Hongxian seems to be the only person who is displaying her prowess at that time. The term *sheng qian* 生前 usually means “when someone is alive.” But here with its literal meaning (“before one’s life”) it seems to foreshadow the ending of the story, where we learn all that Hongxian has done is to atone for the wrongdoings of her previous life. This implication becomes much clearer with the word *huo* 豁, which means “there is something before to be connected” (*qian you suo tong* 前有所通) according to *Shuowen xici* 說文繫辭, as quoted in Wang Meng’ou (p. 284) Besides, after Hongxian completed her mission, there is a sentence 聊副於心期. With the similar phrase *xinqi* 心期 “the expectation in my heart,” the author implied that Hongxian did this to meet her own needs. Finally, if we take the next sentence “dreaming as usual in the fragrant hall, [Tian Chengsi] was unaware that his life was in my hand” into consideration, we find the author contrasts Hongxian with Tian Chengsi, while the former was active and fully aware of her mission, the latter was still dreaming and was totally in the dark.

<sup>52</sup> Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬 (pp. 182-83) believes this is an allusion to the legendary story of Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234), who captured and released one

pain and sorrow. At that time the light of candles ‘congealed.’<sup>53</sup> The incense ash in the burner accumulated. Servant-girls were all around. Weapons of all kinds were displayed with stern looking. There were some whose heads touched the screen and who were snoring and drooping. There were some whose hands held towels or horsetail whisks and who were sleeping, stretched out.<sup>54</sup> I pulled out their hair clasps and ear-rings, bound together their short jacket and skirts. They were as if sick or fainted,<sup>55</sup> and none

enemy chieftain seven times. It seems to me the connection is not so strong, unless he has a different text here.

<sup>53</sup> Actually it is the guttering that congealed, but since the light of the candle became dimmer and dimmer, it almost looked like it was “congealed.”

Both *Jindai mishu* (20a) and *Shuo fu* (19.26a) read *la ju guang ning* 蠟炬光凝. The TPGJ editor, obviously having difficulty with the meaning of *guang ning*, chose another word, *yan wei* 煙微 (the smoke from the candles becomes less), thereby making the meaning simpler. *Yu chu zhi* (2.12), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1488) and *Yan yi bian* (24.2a) follow TPGJ. *Yan yi bian* even took the liberty to choose a more common phrase *la zhu* 蠟燭, to replace *la ju*.

<sup>54</sup> From the sentence “displaying my prowess” to this line, there are altogether fourteen sentences which are parallel, most of them in either four or six characters. This is the parallel-prose style. Such prose style frequently occurred in late Tang tales, influenced by the fashionable parallel writing of the time (see Cheng Yizhong 程毅中, *Tangdai xiaoshuo shihua* 唐代小說史話, pp. 256-57; Li Zongwei 李宗為, *Tangren chuanqi* 唐人傳奇, p. 128). In Yuan Jiao’s *Gan ze yao*, we can find a lot of similar examples. He was especially fond of using a succession of four-character sentences. For a detailed discussion, see Wu Dayun 吳達芸, “Tu *Gan ze yao*” 讀甘澤謠, *Xiandai wenxue* 43 (1971): 200-201, Fanmu 凡木, “Jian lun Tangdai chuanqi xiaoshuo ‘Hongxian’” 簡論唐代傳奇小說紅線, 57.

<sup>55</sup> *Jindai mishu* (20a) and *Shuo fu* (19.26b) read 如病如昏. TPGJ (195: 1461) and *Yan yi bian* (24.2a) read 如病如醒 (as if sick or awake), which obviously did not make any sense in the context. However, *Yu chu zhi* (2.12) and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1488) give an important variant, *cheng* 醒 (to be drunk or fuddled) which fits the context very well. It shows that the reason TPGJ used the wrong word is that there was confusion between the two similar characters *xing* 醒 and *cheng* 醒. My argument is further supported by Wang Rutao 王汝濤 (p. 316), who points out that the Huang Cheng 黃晟 edition of TPGJ reads *cheng* 醒 for *xing* 醒.

of them was able to awake.<sup>56</sup> Then I took the golden box and came back. I went out of the west gate of the city-wall of Wei and travelled about two hundred *li*. I saw the Terrace of Bronze [Bird]<sup>57</sup> rising high and the Zhang 漳 River flowing eastward; morning gusts stirred [the grass of] the wilderness and the oblique moon was in the forest.<sup>58</sup> Feeling indignant, I left; filled with joy, I return. In a short while I forgot the fatigue of the long walk. Moved by your appreciation, I wish to repay your kindness<sup>59</sup> and to respectfully live up to the expectation in your heart.<sup>60</sup> For this

<sup>56</sup> Hongxian’s teasing the servant-girls gives the story a comic flavor. In the previous passage, the author described in detail how she carefully dressed herself. Now she was making a mess of other girl’s dress. This also accords with the character of our heroine: although she was a knight errant, she was also a young girl.

<sup>57</sup> The Terrace of the Bronze Bird was built by Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220) in 210. It was located west of modern Linzhang 臨漳 County, Hebei, just between Xue Song’s garrison Fuyang and Tian Chengsi’s seat Weicheng (see Tan Qixiang, 5. 49). According to Wang Meng’ou (p. 285), the tower had been leveled to the ground long before Tang. Here, we observe another instance where the author used his imagination to create a fictional marvel.

<sup>58</sup> In the above four sentences, the author gives a montage of four pictures, which all take a vast perspective and which are all seen in rapid motion. Notice even in the last scene, readers are still able to get a sense of movement since the moon in the forest becomes “oblique” in people’s visual impression only when someone is moving quickly. Although the author did not directly describe Hongxian’s skill, readers almost get a feeling that they were flying with Hongxian.

<sup>59</sup> Here, Hongxian’s action was certainly to repay her master for his kindness. But she was at the same time redeeming her wrongdoings in her previous life, as we will see at the end of the story.

<sup>60</sup> *Jindai mishu* (20a) reads *yang fu* 仰副, *Shuo fu* (19.26b), *TPGJ* (195: 1461), *Yu chu zhi* (2.12), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1488) and *Yan yi bian* (24.2a) read *liao fu* 聊副. *Yang* 仰 and *liao* 聊 can be very easily confused because of their similar shape. *Yang fu* is preferred because it fits the context very well. Hongxian was expressing her gratitude to her master, and, being a servant, she had to use a respectful term. Moreover, *yang fu* is a difficult term for which *liao fu* could be a simplification (see glossary).

reason within three *shi*<sup>61</sup> by the clepsydra, I travelled there and back seven-hundred *li*, entered dangerous regions and passed through five or six walled cities. I wish to allay my master's anxiety and dare not talk about my hardships."

Song then sent out a messenger to deliver Chengsi a letter, which read, "Yesterday evening there was a guest from the region of Wei, who said that [she] had obtained a golden box next to the head of you, the supreme commander. I dare not retain it, so I respectfully give it back, sealing it and submitting it [to you]."

The special messenger galloped by starlight and did not reach the region until midnight.<sup>62</sup> He saw people searching for the golden box, and the whole army was worried and apprehensive. The messenger knocked on the gate with his horsewhip and asked for an audience at an unusual time.<sup>63</sup> Chengsi hurriedly went out, [the messenger] gave him the golden box. Upon holding [it], he was so astounded that he fell down.<sup>64</sup> Then he retained the messenger and made him stay at his residence, fawning on him,

<sup>61</sup> *Shi* 時. Three *shi* are equivalent to six hours.

<sup>62</sup> Wang Meng'ou (p. 285) says that the term *xing chi* 星馳 means "to gallop as fast as shooting star." But *xing chi* in classical Chinese has another meaning, "to gallop by starlight," which describes the traveller's hastiness rather than his speed. This meaning is strongly suggested by a line in *Bao pu zi* 抱朴子, 驚蹇星馳以兼路 (an inferior horse gallops by starlight to travel at double speed). See *Bao pu zi nei pian* 抱樸子內篇 (Taibei: Laogu Wenhua, 1987), p. 267. Here, from the context, the second meaning is preferred since in the next sentence, we find that it nearly took a whole day for the messenger to reach the Wei region. This is again in contrast with Hongxian, who took only four hours to finish the round-trip.

<sup>63</sup> The term *fei shi* 非時 literally means "not an appropriate time." Since it was already midnight, it was not a time to receive guests.

<sup>64</sup> Although the term *jie dao* 絕倒 in modern times means "to roar with laughter," Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814) examines a number of occurrences of this word in classical texts and finds it usually meant "to faint and fall down because of extreme sadness." See Zhao Yi, *Gai yu cong kao* 陔餘叢考 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1957), p. 447.

treating him with private feast and entertainment,<sup>65</sup> and giving him numerous gifts. The next day, [Tian Chengsi] sent a messenger, delivering thirty thousand rolls<sup>66</sup> of silks, two hundred fine horses, along with other things of similar value and presenting them to Xue Song, saying, “My head and neck are tied up with your favor and kindness.<sup>67</sup> It is necessary [for me] to know my faults and have a fresh start. I will no longer bring sorrow to myself.<sup>68</sup> I will wholly follow your order and instruction. How dare I talk about our marital relationship.<sup>69</sup> If you go out,<sup>70</sup> I should hold the hub behind your carriage;<sup>71</sup> if you

<sup>65</sup> The term *Yan si* 宴私 usually refers to private and informal parties and entertainments in one’s leisure hours. See “Glossary.”

<sup>66</sup> I.e., *pi* 疋. In Tang measurements, one *pi* of silk is equivalent to a piece 1.8 *chi* in width, 40 *chi* long. One *chi* is slightly less than one English foot. See *Cambridge History of China*. vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), xx.

<sup>67</sup> This means whether he can keep his head is subject to the will of Xue Song.

<sup>68</sup> Karl Kao (p. 368) translates the sentence 不復更貽伊戚 as “I will give you no cause for concern.” But here the phrase *dai yi qi* 貽伊戚 is an allusion to a line in the *Book of Poetry* “My heart is sad. I give myself nothing but distress.” See Chen Zizhan 陳子展, p. 421. It is noteworthy that in both of the author’s allusions to the *Book of Poetry*, the idea of sadness dominated. This poem is normally understood as expressing one’s concern about one’s friends and the current situation. This may also reflect the author’s mental state. The circumstances under which he wrote the story are that he lost his friends and relatives and was worried about the rebels among the Military Governors. See “Translator’s Note.”

<sup>69</sup> This means from now on Tian will not share the same status as Xue Song, since he is treated as only a subordinate of Xue, not a relative by marriage.

<sup>70</sup> *Jindai mishu* (21a) and *Shuo fu* (19.26b) read *yi* 役 (to serve as a servant). *TPGJ* (195: 1461) reads *bi* 彼 (there). As Wang Meng’ou (p. 286) points out, this sentence and the following sentence are parallel. Thus, he suspects the original character might be *wang* 往, which matches the word *lai* 來, the first word of the following sentence. Actually, if he had consulted *Yu chu zhi* (2.13) and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1489), he would have noticed that the word in these two texts is *wang*. Here, we find another instance in which *Yu chu zhi* and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* give the best reading.

come, I will wave the whip in front of your horse.<sup>72</sup> The reason that I organized these chief servants<sup>73</sup> and called them ‘the Lads of the Outer Residence’ was originally to guard against bandits and it is not that I have inordinate ambitions. Right now I have made them take off their armor and let them return to the lands.” Because of this, within one or two months, messengers from both north and south of He<sup>74</sup> came one after another.

Suddenly one day, Hongxian asked to leave. Song said, “You were born in my household. Right now where do you want to go? Besides, currently I am counting on you. How can you talk about leaving?”

<sup>71</sup> The meaning of the term *peng gu* 捧轂 is obscure. Wang Meng’ou (p. 286) says that whenever there is some obstacle on the road, people will hold up the hub to let the carriage pass through. In the “plain narratives” (*ping hua* 平話) of Yuan dynasty, there is a phrase *peng gu tui lun* 捧轂推輪 “to hold up the hub and push the wheel”, which indicates a special courteous reception accorded to honored person. See *Qiguo chunqiu pinghua* 七國春秋平話 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959), p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> This may be a reference to a passage from *Zhuang zi* 莊子, “The Yellow Emperor set out to visit Great Clod at Ju ci 具茨 Mountains. Fang Ming 方明 was his carriage driver, Chang Yu 昌萬 rode at his right side, Zhang Ruo 張若 and Xi Peng 譚朋 stood in front of the horse, Kun Hun 昆閻 and Gu Ji 滑稽 followed behind the carriage.” See Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Zhuang Zi jin zhu jin yi* 莊子今注今譯 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983), p. 633.

<sup>73</sup> *Ji gang pu* 紀綱仆 literally means “servants for [maintaining] order.”

<sup>74</sup> Xu Shinian (p. 387) says Xue Song’s garrison area was in Hedong and Hebei Circuits; whereas Tian Chengsi’s area was in Hebei Circuit. Based on these facts, Xu Shinian was puzzled by the statement about Hebei and Henan here and suspected that “Henan” was a mistake for “Hedong.” However, at the beginning of the tale, there was already a reference to the Henan and Hebei areas in the sentence “the Lianghe area was not at peace.” Secondly, Linghu Zhang’s garrison was in Henan Circuit. Thirdly, if we believe Xue Song’s garrison did not include Luzhou, as that argued in note 6, then Xue Song’s area was entirely in Hebei. Thus, it is clear that the author is stating that Hongxian’s efforts reverse the whole situation and eventually bring peace to these three garrison areas.

Hongxian said, “I was originally a man in my previous incarnation.<sup>75</sup> I wandered among the rivers and lakes, read Shennong’s 神農 (the Divine Farmer) herbal,<sup>76</sup> and rescued people of the world from misfortune. There was once in a village a pregnant woman who was suddenly stricken with a disease of *gu* 蠱.<sup>77</sup> I used medicinal liquor of lilac daphne genkwa<sup>78</sup> to beat them [the parasites] down, but the woman and the two unborn infants all died. Thus,<sup>79</sup> with one act, I killed three people. The netherworld punished me by demoting me to be a woman,

<sup>75</sup> Here, the author once again used the narrative mode of flashback to recount Hongxian’s deeds in her previous life. The flashback also serves to answer the question what she expects on completing her mission, as hinted in the previous statement (see note 50). This narrative mode is again different from a historical account, which would certainly relate Hongxian’s previous life at the beginning. Through the fictional narrative mode, the author deliberately conceals some crucial information about Hongxian in order to create a special artistic effect. Thus, readers, along with Xue Song, were in the previous passage surprised to learn that Hongxian was an “extraordinary person,” just as here they are once again surprised to learn that she was originally a man.

<sup>76</sup> Shennong was a legendary emperor in ancient China. It is said he tasted many kinds of herbs and became the founder of traditional Chinese herbal medicine. A book called *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經, which is no longer extant, reputedly records some of his prescriptions.

<sup>77</sup> *Gu* is a legendary venomous insect. According to traditional Chinese medicine, the disease of *gu* is a kind of tympanites due to parasitosis in the bowels. See *Zhongguo yixue da cidian* 中國醫學大辭典 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1921), p. 4619.

<sup>78</sup> As Lévy (p. 123) points out, *Yuanhua* 芫花 is also called “fisherman’s poison” and is used by fisherman to poison fish. Thus, he was wondering whether Hongxian had made the wrong prescription. Actually, on *Shiji*, 105.2809, we find lilac daphne could be used to eliminate the parasite. Thus, it was only an overdose that could be fatal. A pregnant woman especially must not take this medicine. See *Zhongyao da cidian* 中藥大辭典 (Hong Kong: Shangwu, 1978), pp. 1047-49.

<sup>79</sup> *Jindai mishu* (21a), *Shuo fu* (19.27a), *TPGJ* (195: 1462), *Yu chu zhi* (2.13), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1489) and *Yan yi bian* (24.3b) all read *shi* 是 (thus); Wang Meng’ou (p. 279) alone reads *dan* 但 (however), which must be an error.

making me live as a humble servant, and bear the spirit of the evil star.<sup>80</sup> Fortunately I was born in your household. Up to now it has been nineteen years. I have been fed up with clothes of silk gauze, and I have eaten up all kinds of delicious foods. You have granted me more and more favor and generous treatment, and my honor has reached the utmost level. Moreover, since our state has established the right way,<sup>81</sup> its fortune will be boundless. This man<sup>82</sup> turns his back on the heavenly principles. I should remove all the troubles [caused by him]. Last time I went to<sup>83</sup> the Wei commandery, so as to repay you for your kindness. Right now the

<sup>80</sup> The term *zei xing* 賊星 appeared in *Shi ji*, 27. 1334. It usually refers to an evil star and looks like a comet. Here, the word *zei* (thief) may specifically refer to Hongxian's stealing the golden box.

<sup>81</sup> The term *jian ji* 建極 comes from a phrase from *Shang shu* 尚書, "establish and use the august correctness." See Bernhard Karlgren, *Glosses on the Book of Document* (Stockholm, 1948), p. 233.

<sup>82</sup> *Jindai mishu* (21b) and *Shuo fu* (19.27a) read *ci bei* 此輩. Most people translate this term as "people like Tian" or "Tian and his like," i.e., those Military Governors who dominated the local government and who went against court rules. However, throughout the story, the author mentioned no other ambitious Military Governor besides Tian. Moreover, if the word *ci bei* refers to a group of people, then the next sentence 當盡弭患 must indicate that Hongxian wanted to alleviate troubles caused by ALL these troublesome Military Governors; yet Hongxian only punished ONE Military Governor, Tian Chengsi. Thus, from the context, *ci bei* must refer to Tian Chengsi only. This argument is further supported by Wang Ying 王瑛, who discussed the occurrence of the word *bei* in the literary sketches of Tang and Song and found that although *bei* usually means "a group of people," in some cases it can mean "a single person" (Wang Ying, *Tang Song bi ji yu ci hui shi* 唐宋筆記語辭匯釋 [Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990]), pp. 2-3). On the other hand, it is very likely that the author played on the double meaning of this term and although "this person" fits well into the context here, in a larger sense, it also has the implication of "this group of people," referring to the recalcitrant Military Governors of his own time. *TPGJ* (195: 1462), *Yu chu zhi* (2.13), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1489) and *Yan yi bian* (24.3b) changed the term into *ci ji* 此即 (this man is), obviously puzzled how Tian Chengsi, a single person, could be referred to as *ci bei* (a group of people).

<sup>83</sup> Wang Meng'ou (p. 279) reads *zhu* 住 for *wang* 往, an obvious error.

two regions have preserved their city walls and moats, thousands of people have kept their lives. I cause the treacherous subjects to come to know fear<sup>84</sup> and the heroic person to bring peace through their plan. As a woman, my meritorious service was not small. It can certainly atone for my previous wrongdoings so that I can return to my original [male] body. Then I should withdraw myself from the mundane world and rest my heart on that which transcends secular affairs. I will cleanse and purify my single and unified vital spirit<sup>85</sup> and make it exist forever, beyond life and death.” Song said, “That is not good.<sup>86</sup> I will give you one thousand pieces of gold so as to build a dwelling while living in the mountains.”<sup>87</sup> Hongxian said, “This matter is related to the next life. How can one plan it in advance?” Song knew that he could not retain [her], then he gave a large farewell dinner for her.

<sup>84</sup> A reference to *Mencius* 孟子, “Confucius completed the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and struck terror into the hearts of rebellious subjects and undutiful sons.” See D. C. Lau, *Mencius* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 115.

<sup>85</sup> According to the Daoist teaching, “one” is the “vital spirit.” Everything in the world is nourished by this “one spirit.” See Qing Xitai 卿希泰, *Zhongguo daojiao shi* 中國道教史 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin, 1992), 201, 241.

<sup>86</sup> Another reading for the short phrase *bu ran* 不然 may be: “if you do not want to stay.”

<sup>87</sup> *Jindai mishu* (21b) and *Shuo fu* (19.27a) read 遺爾千金為居山之所給 (give you one thousand pieces of gold for the expenses of living in the mountains), *TPGJ* (195: 1462), *Yu chu zhi* (2.13), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1489) and *Yan yi bian* (24.4a) read 以千金為居山之所 (use one thousand pieces of gold to make a dwelling place to live in the mountains).

Here, the *TPGJ* tradition is preferred, although nearly all translators think the one thousand gold pieces were for Hongxian’s living expenses (with the exception of Herbert Franke, who correctly translates it as ‘your dwelling place’ see *The Golden Casket*, p. 142. Not only do words such as *yi’er* 遺爾, *suo ji* 所給 suggest later interpolation, but also from the context, we find Xue Song was actually trying to detain Hongxian. Thus, he promised to build a dwelling, which would certainly take a long time, in order that Hongxian would not leave immediately. Thus, after Hongxian refused his proposal, he felt desperate and “knew that he could not retain her.”

He gathered all the guests and retainers and held a night feast at the central hall. Song presented a cup of wine to Hongxian with a song.<sup>88</sup> He asked Leng Chaoyang 冷朝陽,<sup>89</sup> one of his guests, to write a lyric, which reads:

Picking waternuts, with a song so sad,<sup>90</sup> in the magnolia boat.

Seeing you off, with a heart so broken, at a tower of a hundred feet.

Just like the goddess of Luo 洛 [River],<sup>91</sup> she left, riding on the mist.

<sup>88</sup> *Jindai mishu* (22a), *TPGJ* (195: 1462), *Yu chu zhi* (2.14), *Wuchao xiaoshuo* (1489) and *Yan yi bian* (24.4a) read 高以歌送紅線酒, *Shuo fu* (19.27a) alone omits the final word and the meaning of the sentence becomes “Song bid farewell to Hongxian with a song.” Almost all the modern translators agree with the *Shuo fu* reading, which, I believe, is an error. If Xue Song really bid farewell to Hongxian at this time, why later on did Hongxian have to pretend to be drunk in order to leave? Wang Rutao (p. 320) alone adheres to *TPGJ* version, but he does not explain the meaning of *Song jiu* 送酒.

*Song jiu* presents a difficulty because readers (especially modern readers) may wonder why Xue Song gave wine to Hongxian during a feast. However, this term in Tang times had a special meaning: it is part of the courtesy of a banquet, and it means “to toast somebody,” or “to present wine to somebody,” usually accompanied by songs and music (see Glossary). This meaning fits the context very well because we find Xue Song toasted Hongxian with a song.

<sup>89</sup> Leng Chaoyang was a native of Jinling 金陵 (modern Nanjing, Jiangsu). He passed the *jinshi* examination in 769. He was famous for his poetic writing and associated with those “ten talented poets” of Dali 大曆 era (766-779). He became a Proofreader of the Heir (*taizi zhengzi* 太子正字) in 784 (see Hucker, p. 125) and served as assistants of local officials as late as Zhenyuan 貞元 period (785-805). See Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮, ed. *Tang caizi zhuan jiaojian* 唐才子傳校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1989), pp. 106-109. *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 records eleven of his poems. See *Quan Tang shi*, 305: 3471-73.

<sup>90</sup> The song of “Cai ling qu” 採菱曲 was written by Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (464-549). See *Liuchao shi ji* 六朝詩集 (Taibei: Guangwen, 1972), 16.

<sup>91</sup> Luofei 洛妃, or Fufei 宓妃, was the goddess of Luo River, a tributary of the Yellow River in modern Shensi Province (Tan Qixiang, 5: 41). According to

The azure sky, boundless, and the water, flowing forever.<sup>92</sup>

When the song was over, Song was overwhelmed with sadness. Hongxian prostrated herself and wept. Pretending to be drunk, she availed herself of the opportunity to leave the dining table. After that her whereabouts were unknown.

*Shi ji*, 117.3040, she was a daughter of Emperor Fuxi 伏羲. She drowned herself in the Luo River and thereafter became the goddess of that river. During the Three Kingdoms period (192-232), Cao Zhi wrote his famous "Rhapsody on the Goddess of Luo." From then on, the image of goddess of Luo becomes a symbol of a beautiful female celestial whom human beings in vain search after.

<sup>92</sup> This line may have come from one of Li Bai's poem, "On seeing off Meng Haoran," "The lonely sail in the distance, vanished at last beyond the blue sky. And I could see only the river, flowing along the border of heaven." See Shigeyoshi Obata, *The Works of Li Bai* (New York: 1922), p. 68.

## Translator's Note

### 1) Authorship

Most modern scholars believe this piece is from the story collection of *Ganze yao* 甘澤謠 (Ballads of Timely Rainfall) written by Yuan Jiao 袁郊. Yuan Jiao was a man of Langshan 朗山 of Caizhou 蔡州 (modern Runan 汝南 County, Henan). His father Yuan Zi 袁滋 (ca. 748-818)<sup>93</sup> once studied with Yuan Jie 元結 (719-772) and his official rank reached as high as the Director of Board of Finance (*hubu shangshu* 戶部尚書). It is noteworthy that Yuan Zi served as a Military Governor several times. He was appointed as the Military Governor of Jiannan 劍南,<sup>94</sup> but was soon demoted because he was weak in suppressing bandits. In 806 he was appointed as the Military Governor of the Yicheng 義成 Army, with its seat in Huazhou 滑州,<sup>95</sup> which adjoins the province of Weibo just to the north. He stayed there for seven years (806-812) and it is said Tian Ji'an 田季安,<sup>96</sup> a grandson of Tian Chengsi, then the Military Governor of Weibo, "submitted to him in fear" (*weifu zhi* 畏服之). It should be pointed out that Yuan Zi was basically a civil official and was not good at military affairs. On the other hand, the Tian family has dominated the Weibo territory by the strength of their military force for several generations. Tian Ji'an was especially famous for his cruelty and ferocity — it is said that he feared nothing.<sup>97</sup> How could such a person come to fear Yuan Zi? Could it be that he, like Xue Song, also got some magical help from someone and thereby caused Tian Ji'an to be obedient? If

<sup>93</sup> See his biography in *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 185. 4830.

<sup>94</sup> In part of modern Sichuan province, with its seat in Chengdu 成都 (Tan Qixiang, 5. 38-39).

<sup>95</sup> See Tan Qixiang, 5: 38.

<sup>96</sup> See his biography in *Jiu Tang shu*, 140.3846-47.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 3846-47.

that is the case, then it well serves as a motivation for his son to write the “Hongxian” story.

Yuan Jiao was the youngest son of Yuan Zi.<sup>98</sup> Yuan Jiao was active during the reign of Yizong 懿宗 (r. 859-873), serving as the Director of the Department of Sacrifices (*cibu langzhong* 祠部郎中) and the Inspector of the Prefect of Guozhou 虢州 (modern Lingbao 靈寶 County, Henan).<sup>99</sup> He was a close friend of the famous *ci* 詞 poet, Wen Tingyun 溫庭筠 (ca. 812-870), who presented a poem to him in 840.<sup>100</sup>

According to the *Zhizhai shulu tijie* 直齋書錄題解, there are altogether nine pieces in the *Ganze yao*, plus a preface which states that the book was written in the spring of 868, when there was a timely rainfall, hence the title of the book.<sup>101</sup> The *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志 says that he was confined to bed while compiling the work.<sup>102</sup>

Besides the *Ganze yao*, he also wrote a number of books including *Eryi shilu fuzhuang mingyi tu* 二儀實錄服裝名義圖 (Illustrated Explanations of the Clothes in the *Records of the Two*

<sup>98</sup> According to *Xin Tang shu*, 74.3166, Yuan Zi had five sons, Yuan Jiao was the youngest.

<sup>99</sup> See Wang Zhongyong 王仲鏞, ed. *Tangshi jishi jiaojian* 唐詩紀事校箋 (Chengdu: Ba Shu, 1989), pp. 1743-44. According to *Zhizhai shulu tijie* 直齋書錄題解, his position is Senior Secretary of Board of Justice. See Wang Zhongyong, p. 1744. *Xin Tang shu* (58: 1492) states that Yuan Jiao was a Hanlin Academician during Zhaozong’s 昭宗 reign (889-896). This seems to be a mistake. Yuan Jiao was most likely born before 810 (his father reached the age of 62 in 810), thus, if he were still alive even in the beginning of Zhaozong’s reign, he would have been at least eighty years old. How could he still be a Hanlin Academician? See also Li Jianguo 李劍國, *Tang Wudai zhiguai chuanqi xulu* 唐五代志怪傳奇敘錄 (Tianjin: Nankai Daxue, 1993), pp. 798-99; Chen Shangjun 陳尚君, “Yuan Jiao wei ren Hanlin Xueshi” 袁郊未任翰林學士, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 33 (1985): 168.

<sup>100</sup> See *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, 580. 6732.

<sup>101</sup> Chen Zhensun 陳振孫. *Zhizhai shulu tijie* 直齋書錄題解 (Taipei: Guangwen, 1968), p. 695.

<sup>102</sup> *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志, *zhi san xia* 志三下, 6a. *Sibu congkan* edition.

Powers).<sup>103</sup> Of his poems, only four are extant. They are entitled "Moon," "Frost," "Dew" and "Clouds."<sup>104</sup> It is noteworthy that all of these poems have a political meaning behind the description of natural scene. This is certainly in agreement with the strong concern for the current political affairs manifested in the story of "Hongxian."

Although Yuan Jiao may be the author of "Hongxian" story, there is a tradition of attributing the authorship of "Hongxian" to Yang Juyuan 楊巨源 (755-?).<sup>105</sup> Modern scholars tend to discredit this view and claim that it is merely a mistake by Ming editors.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, E. D. Edwards states that there is still no strong evidence to prove Yang was not the author of "Hongxian" "in view of the fact that the present editions of *Ganze yao* were recovered from the other books after the loss of the original."<sup>107</sup> Liu Ying 劉瑛 believes "Hongxian" may have been written by Yang Juyuan, but he merely claims that the writing style of "Hongxian" appears different from that of other pieces of *Ganze yao*, without presenting strong evidence.<sup>108</sup> My point is it is very likely that "Hongxian" is a piece from the original *Ganze yao*, given the fact that the editors of *Taiping guangji*, *Lei shuo* and *Gan zhu ji*, who were still be able to see the original version, all claimed that "Hongxian" was from *Ganze yao*. However, there remains the

<sup>103</sup> *Xin Tang shu*, 58.1492.

<sup>104</sup> See *Tang Shi jishi jiaojian*, p. 1743.

<sup>105</sup> Almost all the editors of the "anthology group" (i.e. the group which includes "Hongxian" story in the fiction anthology, such as *Yu chu zhi* 虞初志, *Wuchao xiaoshuo* 五朝小說 and *Tangdai congshu* 唐代叢書, etc.) identified the author of "Hongxian" as Yang Juyuan.

For a discussion of the birth year of Yang Juyuan, see Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮, ed. *Tang caizi zhuan jiaojian* 唐才子傳校箋, pp. 401-2.

<sup>106</sup> See Wang Pijiang 汪辟疆, *Tangren xiaoshuo* 唐人小說 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1978), p. 263. Lin Mingde, "Yuan Jiao yu *Ganze yao*," p. 170.

<sup>107</sup> E. D. Edwards, *Chinese Prose Literature of the Tang Period*, p. 114

<sup>108</sup> Liu Ying 劉瑛. *Tangdai chuanqi yuanjiu* 唐代傳奇研究 (Taipei: Lianjing, 1994), p. 395.

question whether Yuan Jiao collected and edited the “Hongxian” story, which was written by Yang Juyuan, while compiling his work.<sup>109</sup> Yuan Jiao may well have had some notes on the origin of the story, but as his original version was lost, today we are not able to see his notes (if there were any). It may also have happened that some Ming editors had seen these notes and thereupon attributed the authorship to Yang Juyuan.

Yang Juyuan was a native of Puzhou 蒲州.<sup>110</sup> He passed the *jinshi* examination in 789. From 811-814, he served as an assistant of Zhang Hongqing 張弘靖, who was then the Military Governor of Hezhong 河中.<sup>111</sup> In 814 Chang became the chancellor. Yang followed him to the capital and was appointed as an Assistant in the Palace Library (*Mishu lang* 秘書郎), most probably because of Zhang Hongqing’s recommendation. Later he became Erudite of the Court of Imperial Sacrifice (*Taichang Boshi* 太常博士). It is said<sup>112</sup> that he asked to leave his office of Vice Director of National University (*Guozi siye* 國子司業) at the age of seventy, but the chancellor still did not want him to retire and thereby appointed him as Vice Governor (*Shaoyin* 少尹) of his hometown Hezhong 河中.<sup>113</sup> His friends include Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831),<sup>114</sup> Bai Juyi, Wang Jian 王建 (ca. 767-830) and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824).<sup>115</sup> He has

<sup>109</sup> This question is also raised by Ye Qingbing 葉慶炳, although he still prefers Yuan Jiao to be the author. See Ye Chingbing, “Tan ‘Hongxian zhuan,’” 48-49.

<sup>110</sup> West of modern Yongji 永濟 County, Shanxi (Tan Qixiang, 5: 47).

<sup>111</sup> Hezhong was actually the same place as Yang’s hometown, Puzhou.

<sup>112</sup> See Han Yu, “Song Yang shaoyin xu,” 送楊少尹序, in *Han Changli ji* 韓昌黎集 (Taipei: Xinxing, 1970): 7a-9a.

<sup>113</sup> For an overview of Yang Juyuan’s life, see Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮, ed. *Tang caizi zhuan jiaojian* 唐才子傳校箋, p. 401. See also Sun Yingkui 孫映達, ed. *Tang caizi zhuan jiao zhu* 唐才子傳校注 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1991), pp. 478-79.

<sup>114</sup> Yuan claimed he was a friend of Yang since childhood. See Sun Yingkui, p. 480.

<sup>115</sup> See note 112 above.

one *juan* of poems in *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩.<sup>116</sup> It is interesting to note that Yang Juyuan once wrote a poem “Cuiniang shi” 崔娘詩, which is about Cui Yingying 崔鶯鶯, the heroine of his friend Yuan Zhen’s famous *chuanqi* story “Yingying zhuan.”<sup>117</sup> One source says that a famous singing girl was especially fond of singing the poem by Yang Juyuan.<sup>118</sup> In another instance, Yang wrote two poems about a courtesan, feeling moved by her decision to become a Daoist priest.<sup>119</sup> The above evidence leads us to believe that Yang himself may be fond of *chuanqi* writing and it would not be surprising that he used a singing girl as the heroine of his story.

Although there is no indication in early sources that Yang Juyuan had any direct connection with the writing of “Hongxian,” a close examination of his biographic information does show that his life was implicated in the turmoils caused by the Military Governors of his time. It is especially interesting that one incident in his life seems to involve him with all the three major parties in the “Hongxian” story, i.e. the Tian family, the Military Governors of Luzhou and Huazhou. If this is the case, it will certainly serve as a motivation for him to write the story. In the following passage, I will try to reconstruct this incident and raise a hypothesis on the circumstances which drove him to create the “Hongxian” story.

From one of his poems, we know that he had a cousin named Yang Maoqing 楊茂卿,<sup>120</sup> who passed the *jinshi* in 810. According

<sup>116</sup> See *Quan Tang shi*, 333.3714-3742.

<sup>117</sup> The poem is included in “Yingying zhuan.” See Wang Meng’ou, *Tangren xiaoshuo jiaoshi*, p. 86.

<sup>118</sup> See Liu Ying, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu*, p. 396.

<sup>119</sup> *Quan Tang shi*, 333. 3739.

<sup>120</sup> The poem is titled “Zeng tudi Maoqing” 贈從弟茂卿 (A poem presented to my cousin, Maoqing). In the poem, Yang bid farewell to his cousin, who was going to Youzhou 幽州, where he was eventually killed by rebels. See *Quan Tang shi*, 333, 3717.

to the *Xin Tang shu*, Maoqing served as an assistant in the headquarters of the Tian clan. Upon a rebellion of the army of Zhao 趙, both Tian and Maoqing were killed.<sup>121</sup> Although the text does not mention who this Tian was and when this rebellion happened, an examination of the primary sources shows this Tian must be Tian Hongzheng 田弘正, who was a nephew of Tian Chengsi.<sup>122</sup> In 821, he was appointed as the Military Governor of Chengde 成德.<sup>123</sup> In the seventh month, the troops of Chengde rebelled<sup>124</sup> and killed Tian Hongzheng, along with hundreds of his subordinators, one of whom must have been Yang Maoqing.<sup>125</sup> It should be immediately pointed out that Tian Hongzheng, unlike Tian Chengsi, was loyal to the court. He had for many times urged Tian Ji’an not to indulge in wanton and cruel behavior, so that eventually the latter dreaded him and wanted to kill him. Upon the death of Tian Ji’an, Tian Hongzheng became the Military Governor of Weibo and started a sharp reversal of his predecessors’ policy: he led the whole territory of Weibo to pay tribute to the court; moreover, he helped the court to fight against other rebellious Military Governors. It is noteworthy that Yang Juyuan was a close friend of Tian Hongzheng. In his extant poems in *Quan Tang shi*, three of them mentioned a Tian *Shangshu* 田尚書 (Minister Tian) or Tian *puye* 田僕射 (Vice Director Tian).<sup>126</sup> This person must be Tian Hongzheng. My evidence is that, first of all,

<sup>121</sup> See *Xin Tang shu*, 118.4291.

<sup>122</sup> See his biography in *Jiu Tang shu*, 141. 3848, *Xin Tang shu*, 148. 4781.

<sup>123</sup> The Zhengde military province was located in modern Hebei province, with its seat in Zhenzhou 鎮州 (northeast of modern Shijiazhuang 石家莊, Hebei; see Tan Qixiang, 5: 38). This area is traditionally called the region of Zhao, hence the name “the army of Zhao” in *Xin Tang shu*.

<sup>124</sup> Tian Hongzheng was originally a military leader of Weibo. The army of Zhengde was not his troops. Actually he previously fought against them. Thus, he led his troop of 2,000 men to go to Zhengde with him. Eventually a confrontation broke out and led to the final disaster.

<sup>125</sup> For an account of this incident, see *Xin Tang shu*, 148.4783.

<sup>126</sup> See *Quan Tang shi*, 333.3714, 3740.

Tian had served as both *Gongbu Shangshu* 工部尚書 (Minister of Department of Works) and *Jianjiao Yu Puye* 檢校右僕射 (Acting Vice Director of the Right). Secondly, one poem is entitled “He Pei Sheren guan Tian Shangshu chulie” 和裴舍人觀田尚書出獵 (Responding to the Poem by Nobleman Pei on the Minister Tian’s Hunting). Nobleman Pei must have been Yang’s close friend Pei Du 裴度 (765-839).<sup>127</sup> Of the Tian clan members, Pei had only met Tian Hongzheng, when he was sent by the court to take greetings and gifts to the latter’s army.<sup>128</sup> One more piece of evidence can be found in the *Xin Tang shu* (118.4783), where it is said that the emperor gave official titles to each of Tian Hongzheng’s children and thereby his honor was matchless at the time. This fits in well with the context of one poem, which offers congratulations to Tian and his children, all of whom received illustrious positions.<sup>129</sup> In another poem, Yang Juyuan expressed gratitude to Tian, apparently for the reason that the latter wrote a letter of recommendation for him.<sup>130</sup> This suggests Tian was one of Yang’s patrons, we may further speculate that it is due to this connection that Yang’s cousin was able to obtain a position in Tian’s office. If the above speculation is true, then we may understand that the incident of 821 would surely give him a terrible blow: he lost both his cousin and his patron. Actually, the misfortune is more than

<sup>127</sup> See Fu Xuanzong, p. 404.

<sup>128</sup> See *Xin Tang shu*, 148.4782.

<sup>129</sup> Fu Xuanzong (*Tang caizi zhuan jiaozhu*, p. 409) believes that Tian *puye* 田僕射 in this poem refers to Tian Bu 田布, the son of Tian Hongzheng. This is a mistake. Tian Bu was conferred the title of *shangshu you puye* 尚書右僕射 only after his death in 821. How could Yang congratulate a deceased person? Furthermore, Tian Bu died at the age of 38, his children did not enter the official career until the reign of Xuanzong (847-859), by that time Yang Juyuan must have already died. Thus, it seems only Tian Hongzheng can be the Tian *puye* of the poem.

<sup>130</sup> “Ci Weibo Tian Shangshu chujing hou gan’en liande yin deng cong tai” 辭魏博田尚書出境後感恩戀德因登叢臺. *Quan Tang shi*, 333.3715.

that, since in the same seventh lunar month, there was another mutiny at Youzhou 幽州,<sup>131</sup> and Zhang Hongqing, another patron of Yang, was captured and imprisoned. In the mean time, Zhang was demoted by the court two times in one month.<sup>132</sup> After a short while, the troops of Weibo rebelled and it is said “the three garrisons were once again occupied by the bandits and they kept on fighting against each other.”<sup>133</sup> This turmoil would certainly bring his memory back to the An Lushan rebellion and its subsequent uneasiness in the military provinces in the Hebei area, notably Tian Chengsi’s expansionist ambition toward his neighbors, all of which Yang had witnessed. Being deprived of his relatives and patrons, he had no recourse to avenge them. He could only use his imagination to make up what he had lost and to realize what he could not achieve in reality. It is probably under these circumstances that he created the knight-errant Hongxian, who was able to pay back his master’s favor by suppressing the recalcitrant Tian Chengsi and bringing peace to the country.

Another interesting aspect of this incident is that after the death of Yang Maoqing, Yang Lao 楊牢, his second son, was determined to bury his father’s corpse properly and, having walked for two-thousand *li*, he finally reached the camp of the rebel army. There he prostrated himself and kept on crying, until eventually even his enemy felt sympathy for him and returned his father’s corpse. This incident reminds us of Hongxian’s travel to Wei. Once again, the ideal and reality is in sharp contrast: ideally, the author hoped people could run as quickly as Hongxian, who covered seven hundred *li* with such a ease that she was almost like flying; in reality, his nephew staggered along the mountain road, with bleeding feet. However, both have accomplished

<sup>131</sup> Youzhou was the seat of the Lulong 盧龍 military province. It is located southwest of modern Beijing (Tan Qixiang, 5: 38).

<sup>132</sup> See *Jiu Tang shu*, 16. 490.

<sup>133</sup> *Jiu Tang shu*, 17. 1329-30.

a difficult mission: Hongxian, with her supernatural power, obtained the golden box from the enemy's bed, whereas Yang Lao, with his stunning courage, retrieved his father's body from the enemy's hands. The story of Yang Lao certainly spread quickly and people were so moved by his deeds that upon the burial of his father, the Military Governors' of Luzhou and Huazhou all contributed him money. The occurrence of Military Governors of Luzhou and Huazhou is certainly another coincidence to the story of "Hongxian." I have already pointed out that the author in several places in the story gives misleading information about Xue Song and Linghu Zhang. The true case might be that the author was already determined to use the Military Governors of Luzhou and Huazhou as his characters when he came to write the story, without knowing too much about them.

## 2) Textual History

The original *Ganze yao* was lost, probably sometime during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368).<sup>134</sup> Thus, the earliest source we can trace is from Song texts. *TPGJ* collected eight entries of the *Ganze yao*, including "Hongxian." The *TPGJ* text has a tremendous influence on the full-text tradition of later period, however, the later full-text tradition was by no means solely influenced by *TPGJ*, as shall be discussed below. First, let us begin with the synoptic tradition of the Song text.

### 2.1. The Song Synoptic Tradition

The "Hongxian" story was partially preserved in Song "classified books" (*lei shu* 類書), thereby formed a synoptic tradition of the text. Since the Song editors were still able to see the original version of the *Ganze yao*, their texts, albeit fragmentary, are still valuable for textual collation. Dudbridge has already discussed some important Song texts such as the *Lei shuo*

<sup>134</sup> Both *Xin Tang shu* and *Song shu* list one *juan* of *Ganze yao*.

類說 and the *Lüchuang xinhua* 綠窗新話.<sup>135</sup> Within the “Hongxian” textual tradition, there are still two more texts worthy of mentioning. One is called *Gan zhu ji* 紺珠集, which was probably compiled by Zhu Shengfei 朱勝非 (1082-1144). The earliest extant edition is dated 1137, with a preface stating that it is uncertain when the manuscript came out, suggesting the original compilation may have been much earlier than that of *Lei shuo*.<sup>136</sup> Another text is from *Bai Kong liu tie* 白孔六帖, which was initially compiled by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and then continued in a sequel by Kong Chuan 孔傳, probably at the beginning of Southern Song dynasty.<sup>137</sup>

Although the texts of synoptic tradition are all short and do not give many variants, in one instance we find an important variant with regard to Hongxian’s identity. As pointed out in note 6 above, *Lei shuo*, *Gan zhu ji* and *Bai Kong liu tie* all called Hongxian “a singing girl” rather than “a maid,” as which she is identified by versions in all the full-text tradition. It is noteworthy also that according to some other Song sources, Hongxian was brought to Xue Song’s household at the age of thirteen, and she got her name because of the red lines of her palm (see note 3). This is again different from the full-text tradition, which unanimously claims that Hongxian was born in Xue’s household and did not explain why she was called “red threads.” Such confusion of Hongxian’s identity leads You Zhicheng 游志誠 to claim that the role of Hongxian in the synoptic tradition was invented during the

<sup>135</sup> See Glen Dudbridge. *The Tale of Li Wa* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), pp. 1-8.

<sup>136</sup> See Huang Lin 黃霖, ed. *Zhongguo lidai xiaoshuo cidian* 中國歷代小說詞典, vol. 2 (Kunming: Yunnan ren-min, 1993), p. 423. Chang Bide argues that the format of *Lei shuo* follows that of *Gan zhu ji*. See Chang Bide 昌彼德, “*Lei shuo*” 類說, *Guoli Zhongyang Tushuguan guankan* 1.2 (1967): 74-78.

<sup>137</sup> The preface says that it was compiled between the Jianyan 建炎 (1127-1130) and Shaoxing 紹興 (1131-1162) period. See *Siku quanshu*, 891.3.

Song.<sup>138</sup> However, since the original version of the story was lost, we simply cannot be sure whether the story of full-text tradition really came earlier than that of synoptic tradition, given the fact that we are only able to see *TPGJ* editions from the Ming dynasty. Furthermore, it has already been pointed out that the *TPGJ* editors did not do careful work and often they distorted the original text,<sup>139</sup> whereas in the case of synoptic tradition, we still have the Song text. On the other hand, Cheng Yizhong 程毅中, based upon the variants in the synoptic tradition, suspects that the current story of “Hongxian” in the full-text tradition is no longer the original version.<sup>140</sup> At any rate, it is evident that there had been several versions of Hongxian’s origin at the time of Song dynasty. It is not until the Ming dynasty, with the firm establishment of the full-text tradition, that the origin of Hongxian became fixed.

## 2.2. The Full-text Tradition A: “Yang Yi 楊儀 Group.”

One common feature of the “Yang Yi” textual group is that the “Hongxian” story of this group was all included in *Ganze yao*, whereas in the “anthology group,” “Hongxian” was presented in the large fiction anthology. As I mentioned above, the original *Ganze yao* was lost, thus one may ask how the book was recovered. During the Jiajing 嘉靖 period of the Ming dynasty (1522-1566), Yang Yi compiled “A Newly Collated *Ganze yao*.” In his preface, dated 1553, Yang Yi claimed that he had searched for the book for thirty years and finally obtained an old edition of *Ganze yao* in 1548. Since it had too many errors, he collated it by consulting other texts.<sup>141</sup> Later, when Mao Jin 毛晉 (1599-1659) compiled his

<sup>138</sup> You Zhizheng, p. 112.

<sup>139</sup> Ye Qingbing already points out the editors of *TPGJ* often took great liberties in changing the original text. See Ye Qingbing 葉慶炳, *Gudian xiaoshuo lumping* 古典小說論評 (Taipei: Youshi wenhua, 1985), pp. 28-32.

<sup>140</sup> Zheng Yizhong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo shihua*, p. 255.

<sup>141</sup> See *Ganze yao* 1a. *Baibu congshu jicheng* edition.

*Jindai mishu* 津逮秘書 between 1630-1642, he also included the *Ganze yao* in his collection, claiming he was using Yang Yi's edition.<sup>142</sup> As Li Jianguo 李劍國 points out, Yang Yi's edition became the base text for all the later editions of the *Ganze yao*.<sup>143</sup> A close examination of the “Hongxian” texts in three notable editions of this group, namely, the *Jindai mishu* edition, the *Siku quanshu* edition, and the *Xuejin taoyuan* 學津討原 edition,<sup>144</sup> reveals that out of the twenty significant variants which discussed in footnotes above (nn. 6, 12, 15, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 32, 34, 36, 43, 46, 52, 54, 59, 69, 81, 86, 87), the *Siku* edition is in total agreement with *Jindai mishu* edition, whereas the *Xuejin taoyuan* edition differs from *Jindai mishu* edition only in two instances, in both cases *Xuejin taoyuan* either avoids a difficult term or adds some word to make the meaning clearer, suggesting a revision by later hands. This shows that the editions of this group all share a significant number of characteristic variants, and we may further conclude that with the printing of these three editions, the “Yang Yi text” was established as a standard text of the *Ganze yao*.

It should also be pointed out that the *Shuo fu* 說郛, originally compiled by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (fl. 1396), also included “Hongxian” and another piece from the *Ganze yao*. The text of *Shuo fu* is so close to those of “Yang Yi group” that Li Jianguo claims that Yang Yi must have used *Shuo fu* as his base text.<sup>145</sup> A comparison between *Shuo fu* and “Yang Yi” text shows that they share fourteen characteristic variants out of twenty (see nn. 12, 21, 22, 23, 26, 34, 36, 43, 46, 52, 54, 69, 81, 86). This certainly shows that

<sup>142</sup> A modern photocopy of this edition was published in 1922 by Boguzhai 博谷齋 of Shanghai.

<sup>143</sup> Li Jianguo 李劍國. *Tang Wudai zhiguai chuanqi xulu* 唐五代志怪傳奇敘錄, p. 801.

<sup>144</sup> The *Xuejin taoyuan* collection was compiled by Zhang Haipeng 張海鵬 (1755-1816), first printed during 1802-06. It reprinted many titles from the *Jindai mishu*, with additions. The edition I consult is from *Baibu congshu jicheng*.

<sup>145</sup> Li Jianguo, p. 801.

*Shuo fu* is much closer to the “Yang Yi group” than it is to the “TPGJ-anthology group,” given the fact that *Shuo fu* and TPGJ only share one significant variants out of twenty (see n. 59). The question remains whether the “Yang Yi text” is copied from *Shuo fu*. It should be pointed out that the textual history of *Shuo fu* is itself very complicated and today we are only able to see the critical edition of *Shuo fu* based upon Ming manuscripts.<sup>146</sup> Thus, we cannot be sure whether the current *Shuo fu* text is identical with that of the original version. Furthermore, an examination of the seven variants between *Shuo fu* and the “Yang Yi text” shows that in four cases (see nn.15, 32, 59, and 87), it is most likely that “Yang Yi” variants are from the original version or at least came earlier than *Shuo fu*, whereas in one case (see n. 6), *Shuo fu* suggests an original reading. This indicates that even if Yang Yi had consulted *Shuo fu*, he must have consulted other books. At any rate, I think the “Yang Yi text” and *Shuo fu* can be put in the same textual group and that they are most likely the “sub-texts” of the same origin.

The *Siku* editors argued that Yang Yi actually had not seen the old edition of *Ganze yao* and that he copied the pieces from TPGJ.<sup>147</sup> On the other hand, both Li Jianguo and Li Zongwei 李宗為 have observed that there are variants between TPGJ and the “Yang Yi group,” but the variants of *Ganze yao* are better than those of TPGJ.<sup>148</sup> My opinion is that TPGJ did have great influence on the later full-text tradition and it forms an independent textual group, the “anthology group,” which is quite different from the “Yang Yi” group.

<sup>146</sup> See Chang Bide 昌彼得, “*Shuo fu kao*” 說郭考, *Bulletin of the China Council for East Asian Studies* 1 (1962): 29-30.

<sup>147</sup> *Siku quanshu*, 1042: 823-4.

<sup>148</sup> Li Zongwei. *Tangren chuanqi* 唐人傳奇 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985), p. 126; Li Jianguo, *Tang Wudai zhiguai chuanqi xulu*, pp. 80-1.

### 2.3. Full-text Tradition B: “the Anthology Group.”

This group is named “anthology group” because the “Hongxian” story in this grouping is not a piece from the *Ganze yao*, but rather from one of the anthologies of early tales. The *TPGJ* was certainly the first anthology to include “Hongxian” story. During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), however, “Hongxian” appeared in several anthologies, including the *Yu chu zhi* 虞初志, *Yan yi bian* 豔異編, and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* 五朝小說. Dudbridge labeled this group “a later Ming group” and pointed out its version of “Li Wa zhuan” is clearly based on *TPGJ*.<sup>149</sup> This statement is also true in the case of “Hongxian.” On the other hand, it may be arguable to put *Shuo fu* in this group as well, as Dudbridge did. As far as the “Hongxian” text is concerned, it is quite clear the variants in *Shuo fu* can only lead us to believe that it belongs to the “Yang Yi” group, rather than this group (see above discussion). The texts of later Ming anthologies share a number of characteristic variants with *TPGJ* out of the twenty variants I have discussed, *Yan yi bian* shares variants with *TPGJ* in fifteen instances. It is interesting to note that in four instances (see nn. 22, 26, 36 and 52), although the *Yan yi bian* differs from the *TPGJ* version, its variants are obviously derived from the *TPGJ* reading. The *Yu chu zhi* and the *Wuchao xiaoshuo* texts are identical in these twenty instances, and both share sixteen variants with *TPGJ*. Although the later Ming anthologies basically follow *TPGJ*, they do have some distinct features. One is that all of them attribute the authorship of “Hongxian” to Yang Juyuan, as pointed out above. Secondly, *Yu chu zhi* and *Wuchao xiaoshuo* contribute two important variants, which are most likely from the original version (see nn. 54 and 69). The above two facts indicates the editors of Ming anthologies must have known something beyond *TPGJ* (or they may use a text different from the current edition

<sup>149</sup> Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 10-11.

of *TPGJ*). Another feature is that there are always some commentaries attached to each story, and sometimes the words of the text have been changed in such a way that one feels someone must have taken liberties in revising the words in order to polish the sentence or to make the meaning clearer (see nn. 22, 26, 32, 36, 52). It is said the stories in these anthologies had been read and commented by the renowned scholars of the time: such as Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616), Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526-1590) and others.<sup>150</sup> It is most likely that these scholars might have provided some information such as the authorship of “Hongxian” through their extensive reading. And, being literati themselves, they would not hesitate to revise the text if necessary.

The final question is how the “Yang Yi group” is related to the “anthology group” and whether the text of Yang Yi is copied from *TPGJ*. A comparison between *TPGJ* and the “Yang Yi” text immediately shows that there are variances almost in every sentence. Thus, had Yang Yi copied *TPGJ*, he must have been a very careless copier. Of the twenty variants I have discussed, *TPGJ* only share six variants with the “Yang Yi” text. In eleven instances (see nn. 12, 15, 21, 22, 26, 34, 36, 46, 52, 59, and 81), the “Yang Yi” text strongly suggests an earlier version, whereas *TPGJ* was preferred only in two instances (see nn. 43 and 86). As Li Zongwei points out, in another story “Tao Xian” 陶峴, there were in the ending sixty-one characters in the “Yang Yi text” which the *TPGJ* version does not have.<sup>151</sup> The above evidence clearly shows that it

<sup>150</sup> For a discussions of these anthologies and its editors, see Ye Dejun 葉德均, “*Yu chu zhi de bianzhe*” 虞初志的編者, in his *Xiqu xiaoshuo congkao* 戲曲小說叢考 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), pp. 516-19, Hou Zhongyi 侯忠義, *Zhongguo wenyan xiaoshuo shigao* 中國文言小說史稿, (Beijing: Beijing Daxue, 1993), p. 122. Ye Dejun suspects the commentaries were forged by Ling Mengchu 凌濛初 (1580-1644) and Ling Xinde 凌性德, but he has no strong evidence.

<sup>151</sup> Li Zongwei, *Tangren chuanqi*, 126.

is very unlikely that the “Yang Yi text” was copied from the *TPGJ* and it is indeed “better” (to use Li Jianguo’s word) than the *TPGJ* version. Yang Yi might be true in stating that his base text is from an old edition of the *Ganze yao*, which he had sought for years.

## Glossary

**bei 輩** **pron.** usu. “a group of people,” sometimes, “a single person.” 此輩背違天理. “This man turns his back on the heavenly principles” (Wang Meng’ou, p. 279, line 15 [hereafter as 279.15]). Examples: “Among them there was one person called Zhang Yin” 其間一輩曰張隱 (TPGJ, *juan* 257); Wang Ying 王瑛, *Tang biji yuci huishi* 唐宋筆記語辭匯釋 (Beijing: Zhunghua Shuju, 1990), 2-3.

**duoduo 咄咄** **onomatopoeia.** “to sigh with a bad feeling.” 嵩聞之，日夜憂悶，咄咄自語. “When Song heard about that, he felt depressed day and night, he would talk to himself with deep sighs.” (Wang Meng’ou, 277.9). Examples: “Alas! I am old. How can I do about that?” 咄咄奈老何. (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, 341).

**fei shi 非時** **adv.** “not in proper time, at an unusual time.” 非時請見. “[The messenger] asked for an audience at an unusual time.” (Wang Meng’ou, 279.5).

**jian ji 建極** **v.** “[of an imperial house] to establish the right way, to establish the august correctness.” 國家建極. “Our state has established the right way” (Wang Meng’ou, 279.15). Examples: “to established and use the august [middle way] correctness” 建用皇極 (*Shang shu* 尚書) and also “King Wen is the lord who established the august correctness” 文王乃建極之君 (*Jiu Tang shu*, 25. 968).

**juedao 絕倒** **v.** “to fall down, to faint because of terror, deep grief, or stroke.” “to roar with laughter.” 驚怛絕倒. “He was so astounded that he fell down” (Wang Meng’ou, 279.6).

Examples: "He lamented for the dead day and night. Every time he started to cry, he would always fall down" 朝夕哀臨，每一發聲，未嘗不絕倒 (*Sui shu*, 71. 1659) and "[he said,] 'Let's perform monkshood and angelica (both are Chinese medicine) to bid farewell to our guests.' Everyone roared with laughter" 『且作附子當歸以送客 · 』合座絕倒 (*Xiao lin* 笑林, in *Gu xiaoshuo gouchen* 古小說鉤沉, p. 64); Zhao Yi 趙翼, *Gai yu cong kao* 陔餘叢考 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1957), p. 447; "The king is afraid that it will be fruitless since it is not a good timing to start it" 王以非時發，恐無功 (*Shiji*, 58.3093).

**renshi** 人使 **n.** "people as messenger; messenger." 人使日浹往來。"Their messengers came and went from time to time." (Wang Meng'ou, 277.6). Examples: "[He] sent messengers to Meng Haigong to form an alliance with him for outside help" 遣人使于孟海公，結為外助 (*Sui shu*, 85. 1893).

**song jiu** 送酒 **v.** "to toast sb. to present wine to sb. usually accompanied by a song." 嵩以歌送紅線酒。"Song presented a cup of wine to Hongxian with a song." (Wang Meng'ou, 280.4). Examples: "Then he summoned Shang and others to have a feast. [An] Lushan personally toasted people with a song" 遂召尚等飲宴作樂，祿山自唱歌以送酒 (*Jiu Tang shu*, 200. 5375); "Let's send Green Bamboo to bring *pipa* to play. My daughter will present wine to the commandant [with a song]" 遣綠竹取琵琶彈，兒與少府公送酒 ("You xianku" 遊仙窟).

**tuo** 橐 **n./v.** 1) "sack"; 枕前露橐一七星劍。"in front of the pillow a sword of seven-stars appeared from the sack" (Wang Meng'ou, 278.13); 2) "to put into a sack," "[He] ordered all the commanders to put the bow and arrow in the sack and to use short weapons (for close combat)" 號令諸將皆橐弓矢，用短兵. (*Xin Wudai shi*, 46. 510).

**xing chi** 星馳 v. “to gallop [even] by starlight,” i.e., “to gallop day and night.” 專使星馳. “The special messenger galloped by starlight” (Wang Meng’ou, 279.5). Examples: “An inferior horse gallops by starlight to travel at double speed” 駑蹇星馳以兼路 (*Baopuzi neipian* 抱樸子內篇, 267.)

**xunfa** 勳伐 n. “merits and achievements”; 即數百年勳伐盡矣. “then the merits and achievements of several centuries will come to an end.” (Wang Meng’ou, 278.1). Examples: “Subjects sometimes wrote the merits and achievements of their sovereigns on it [the stele]” 臣子或書君父勳伐於其上 (Feng Yan 封演, *Wenjian ji* 聞見記).

**xuyang** 卹養 v. “to raise, to maintain.” 厚卹養之. “[he] maintained them generously.” (Wang Meng’ou, 277.6); Examples: “If someone dies, he would raise his orphan” 死則卹養其孤 (Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, “Gu Bazhou Wen an xian zhubu Su Jun muzhiming” 故霸州文安縣主簿蘇君墓志銘).

**yang fu** 仰副 v. “to respectfully live up to [one’s expectation].” 仰副于心期. “[I] respectfully live up to the expectation in your heart” (Wang Meng’ou, 279.2). Examples: “Although your subject is stupid and ignorant, he can live up to your august expectation” 臣雖愚陋，可以仰副聖情 (*Jiu Tang shu*, 139. 3791) and “Yet Gao Kai can still exert himself to choose scholars and respectfully fulfill your august order” 然高錯亦能勵精選士，仰副聖旨 (*Jiu Tang shu*, 168. 4388).

**yansi** 宴私 n. “private feast and entertainment,” in contrast with “official feast or official party.” 狎以宴私. “[he] treated him with private feast and entertainment” (Wang Meng’ou, 279.7). Examples: “Private feasts and entertainments at one’s leisure, music and dance at the imperial palace, these things existed

also in ancient times” 餘閑宴私，後延伎樂，古亦有之 (*Xin Tang shu*, 119. 4298); “Even though he was at a private feast, he did not speak or laugh inordinately” 雖在宴私，不妄言笑 (*Sui shu*, 80.1811).

**zhuyi** 屬意 **v./n.** “intention, to be intent on something, to think highly of somebody, to fall in love with somebody.” 主自一月，不遑寢食，意有所屬。 “Master, for one month you have not had the leisure to eat or sleep. You have been intent on something” (Wang Meng’ou, 277.10). Example: 此其屬意非止此也。 “This shows that their intention was more than that.” (*Shiji*, 10. 413). Other examples are “Yu’s son Qi was worthy. People of the world fixed their hope on him” 禹子啟賢，天下屬意焉 (*Shiji*, 2. 83 and the translation in the *Grand Scribe’s Records* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002], 2:36) and also “Lady Liu then fell in love with him” [柳氏]遂屬意焉 (“Liu shi zhuan”).

**zou ma** 走馬 **n./v.** 1) “messenger on horseback,” “speedy horse,” “to ride a horse.” 請先定一走馬兼具寒暄書。 “Please first arrange a messenger on horseback and a letter of greeting” (Wang Meng’ou, 278.3). Examples: “[He] simply asked the messenger on horseback to come and ask for rewards every day” 但日令走馬來求賞給 (Han Yu 韓愈, “Yu Ezhong Liu Zhongcheng shu” 與鄂中柳中丞書) and also “To carry a lot of treasure and speedy horses” 多齎金寶走馬 (*Han shu*, 63. 2754).

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**Hongxian steals the golden box under the cover of night**