Did Dreams Come True in the Song Dynasty? -

A Typology and Critical Study of

Dream Narratives in *Taiping guangji*

Chapters 276-282

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Statement by Author

This is to certify that this sub-thesis is the result of my own work. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

Mei Yee Seto
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PART A

Ch. 1 Dream Narratives in *Taiping guangji*

How magnificent are dreams! If dreams did not exist, the universe would be so ordinary and not at all wondrous. And wouldn't that be tragic? - Dong Yue.¹

Dream is a strange realm that has always fascinated people. Our effort to explain the act of dreaming and to interpret or rationalise its visual content are almost as old as human history. The Chinese have been earnestly interested in dream ever since the beginning of recorded history. They possess a rich store of dream records that date back to fifth century B. C. oracle bone inscriptions. Materials relating to dreams are recorded in orthodox historical texts, medical literature, religious texts of Daoism and Buddhism, philosophical writings; as well as informal historical texts, dream-books, essays, anecdotes, poetry, drama, fiction and random jottings.

This essay concerns one small selection of these records: chapters 276-282 of *Taiping guangji* (hereafter TPGJ) 太平廣記, an early Song compendium that was compiled in the years 977-8 under the imperial order of Song Taizong 宋太宗.

About one hundred and seventy dream narratives are found within these seven chapters of TPGJ, but the principle behind its classification of dreams

is unclear. A brief introduction to TPGJ and its original classification of
dream records will be introduced first, in part A in this essay.

Next we examine dream records in terms of typology. In contrast to the 20th
century view, dreams are not considered to be inner psychological
experiences but are regarded as soul wanderings while asleep, allowing the
spirits of human beings to come across supernatural beings in other realms.
Thus, dream is a specific realm in which men can perceive divine advice or
take instruction on the direction of their lives from immortals, fairies, deities,
ghosts, demons, daoists, monks, spirits of deceased ancestors or animals.
From this point of view, events occurring in dreams have to be greatly
respected and taken seriously because they are seen as the prognostication of
future events. Messages of this type are transmitted explicitly either orally or
by action.

However, not all the messages are transmitted unequivocally to the dreamers.
Not uncommonly, the messages are coded in cryptic form by spiritual beings;
or, sometimes, only images, words, symbols, allegories or metaphors are
presented. Such omens are subject to different interpretations, leaving open
the possibility of the message being deciphered erroneously. Hence the
basic question is hermeneutic. What does the omen mean? How should it be
interpreted? It is thus also important to discuss the different techniques of
oneiromancy.

Chinese philosophers have also had a profound interest in dream and its
interpretation. There are abundant texts explaining the act of dreaming in
philosophical writings. While Confucianism may be considered a dominant
school of thought, and was the state orthodoxy for more than two thousand
years, it is generally agreed that narratives regarding dream are deeply influenced by Daoism and Buddhism rather than Confucianism (especially at the time of TPGJ's composition before the flowering of Neo-Confucianism). The prevailing influence of Daoist love of freedom and natural simplicity together with the Buddhist belief that life is ephemeral and futile have enriched dream literature. We will try to relate those philosophical writings that are relevant to the narratives from TPGJ in part B.

**Brief Introduction of *Taiping guangji***

TPGJ was one of three huge compendia compiled by imperial order during the Taiping reign (A. D. 976-983). The other two works were the *Taiping yulan* (hereafter TPYL) 太平御覽 and the *Wenyuan yinghua* (hereafter WYYH) 文苑英華. The chief compiler of TPGJ, Li Fang 李昉 (A. D. 925-996), was also in charge of editing TPYL and WYYH. But the compilation of TPGJ, which began in the second year of Taiping reign (A. D. 977) was finished within eighteen months - a much shorter period than it took to complete the other two.

Li Fang was assisted by thirteen scholars, including Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (916-991), whose *Jishen lu* 稽神錄 is cited in TPGJ, as well as by Xu's son-in-

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3 Li Fang took four years four months and six years ten months to compile WYYH and TPYL respectively. See "Youguan *Taiping guangji* de jige wenti", p. 7.
law Wu Shu 吳淑 (947-1002). Source materials which were considered "informal" were collected and divided into five hundred chapters (juan 卷) under 92 major topics and 150 sub-topics. At least eighty percent of the accounts in TPGJ concern the supernatural. All narratives in TPGJ were extracted from other collections, and since over half of the works which TPGJ had consulted no longer exist, it is undoubtedly the most important source of early fiction available today. Hence the value of TPGJ as an anthology of fiction and a source book for useful anecdotes and archetypes for later narratives cannot be exaggerated.

However, with the speed of compilation and the probable lack of organisation (Li Fang's participation was only nominal and several scholars

4 According to the list which Li Fang presented to the throne, the thirteen scholars were Lù Wenzhong 呂文仲, Wu Shu 吳淑, Shu Ya 舒雅, Chen E 陳鄠, Zhao Linji 趙鄰幾, Dong Chun 董淳, Wang Kezhen 王克貞, Zhang Ji 張洎, Song Bai 宋白, Xu Xuan 徐鉉, Tang Yue 湯悅, Li Mu 李穆 and Hu Meng 胡濙. See the preface of Taiping guangji (TPGJ) 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, hereafter ZHSJ, 1961), pp. 1-2 and Guo Bogong 郭伯恭, Song sida shukao 宋四大書考 in C. E. Hammond, Tang Stories in Tai-p'ing Kuang-chi (Columbia University, degree date: 1987. UMI Dissertation Services, 1994), p. 12.

5 Yuhai 玉海, "TPGJ was edited into five hundred chapters from unofficial histories, strange tales and fiction in an unsystematic way" 又以野史傳奇小說, 綜編為五百卷. See Deng Siyu 鄧嗣禹, Taiping guangji bianmu ji yinshu yinde 太平廣記編目及引書引得 (Peiping: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1934, Sinological Index Series, no. 15), p. vi. However, the line differentiating formal and informal data was far from clear-cut. For instance, some dream narratives were recorded in both TPGJ and TPYL, see Appendix A.

6 C. E. Hammond employed a simple statistical calculation to work out this percentage. For the detailed analysis, see Tang Stories in Tai-p'ing Kuang-chi, p. 14.

7 475 sources had been consulted by the compilers of TPGJ: about one-third of them were from Tang dynasty, the remainder predated Tang. Over half of these works have been lost. See Tang Stories in Tai-p'ing Kuang-chi, p. 14.

8 Y. W. Ma and S. M. Lau voice a widely accepted opinion: "Our knowledge of Chinese fiction before the Song period in general, and the Tang in particular, would have been more scanty if this voluminous work had not been compiled in the early Song, when a number of these works were still in circulation". See Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 583.
were transferred off the project midway through), it was always likely to include errors.\(^9\) Inappropriate classifications and incorrect citations have been found by later scholars\(^10\), and it is not uncommon to discover that the narratives included in TPGJ are somewhat different from the original sources.\(^11\)

Although compilation of TPGJ had been finished in 979, it was not widely published at that time; a printed copy was stored in Taiqing Lou 太清楼.\(^12\) No copy of this version of TPGJ survives today. However, as TPGJ was a basic textbook for the storytellers in the Song dynasty, we know that at least it was circulating at that time.\(^13\)

The earliest edition still extant was compiled by Tan Kai 談愷 of Wuxi 無錫 in the forty-fifth year of Jiajing 嘉靖 (1566) in the Ming dynasty.

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10 Ye Qingbing noted down six categories of illogical classifications and groupings: 1. listing the quoted sources incorrectly; 2. referring to the same source by different names; 3. not citing the original source; 4. citing more than one original source; 5. changing the original texts freely; 6. unsystematic way of groupings. See "Youguan *Taiping guangji* de jige wenti", pp. 6-32.

11 For example the dream narratives of Jiang Yan 江淹 in TPGJ was collected from *Nanshi* 南史, but the extracted part is quite different from that in *Nanshi*, see TPGJ 277:2192 (no. 10. 梁江淹) and *Nanshi* 59:1447-1451. This problem is also discussed by Ye Qingbing in "Youguan *Taiping guangji* de jige wenti", pp. 30-32. For another example, the dream narrative about Zhou Xuan 周宣 divining the dream image of straw dogs is only an abridgment of the original source, see TPGJ 276:2177-8 (no. 12. 周宣) and *Sanguo zhi* 29:810-1. (For the simplified call no. of TPGJ used in this essay, see "The Classification of Dreams in *Taiping guangji*", pp. 7-8). At times this may be because the transmitted version of the original source is different from the source used by the editors of TPGJ.

12 Quoted from *Yuhai* 五海 in Deng Siyu, *Taiping guangji bianmu ji yinshu yinde*, p. ix.

13 In Luo Ye's 羅堯 *Zuiweng tanlu* 醉翁談錄, it is said that Song storytellers had to study TPGJ at an early age, see G. Foccardi (tr. & ed.), *Lo Yeh: The Tales of An Old Drunkard* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981), ch. 1, part 1, p. 11.
Based on a manuscript collated with other unknown versions, it serves as the basis of other copies made in Ming and Qing dynasties.\textsuperscript{14}

There are also other editions such as the "Song copy" that collated by Chen Zhan 謝遵 (1753-1817); the printed edition collated by Xu Zichang 許自昌 (courtesy name Xuanyou 玄佑) in the early seventeenth century; and the copy of Huang Sheng 黃晟 (courtesy name Xiaofeng 曉峰) dated 1753. According to Deng Siyu 鄧嗣禹, these are the three versions of TPGJ that should be considered.\textsuperscript{15}

Other early versions exist, such as the manuscript copy from the studio of Shen Yuwen 沈與文 of the Ming dynasty; the Ming edition (based on Tan Kai's version) collated by Sun Qian 孫潜\textsuperscript{16}; Song kanben Ming huozi ben 宋刊本明活字本; Saoye shanfang 掃業山房; Kan xiaozi ben by Wang 黃氏刊小字本; Siku quanshu 四庫全書 and Xiaoshuo biji daguan 小說筆記大全. However, there are many shortcomings in these versions - either misprints occur frequently, or their characters were not printed clearly enough.\textsuperscript{17} The best version we can find today is the Beijing zhonghua shuju 北京中華書局, edition of 1961. It was generally based on a copy of Tan Kai's version, making reference to the versions of Chen Zhan, Xu Zichang, Huang Sheng and Shen Yuwen.\textsuperscript{18} This is the edition used in this essay.

\textsuperscript{15} Deng Siyu, \textit{Taiping guangji bianmu ji yinshu yinde}, p. xii.
\textsuperscript{16} These two are quoted from G. Dudbridge, \textit{The Tale of Li Wa}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{17} Deng Siyu, \textit{Taiping guangji bianmu ji yinshu yinde}, pp. xii-xv.
\textsuperscript{18} See the preface of \textit{Taiping guangji}. 
Aside from complete versions of the text, the famous vernacular story writer of the Ming dynasty, Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646), extracted some narratives to compile *Taiping guangji chao* 太平廣記鈔, adding some comments between the lines or at the end of some narratives.

**The Classification of Dreams in *Taiping guangji***

Dream narratives in TPGJ are found mainly under the topic "menglei" 夢類 (category of dreams) in chapters 276-282. Some dream narratives are found elsewhere in TPGJ but this study is restricted to these seven chapters for reasons of space. They are not categorized in a systematic way. From chapter 276 to the twelfth entry of chapter 277, the narratives fall under the major topic of "menglei". From the thirteenth entry onwards, compilers divide the narratives into four sub-topics: "meng xiu zheng" 夢休徵 (dreams of felicitous manifestations, starting from the thirteenth entry of chapter 277 to the end of chapter 278); "meng jiuzheng" 夢咎徵 (dreams of calamitous manifestations, chapter 279); "guishen" 鬼神 (ghosts and spirits, from chapter 280 to the ninth entry of chapter of 281); "meng you" 夢遊 (dream adventuring, from the tenth entry to the end of chapter 282).19

In general, their titles came from the name of the character who appears first in each narratives, regardless of what part he plays in it. For the sake of easy reference, we will assign a call number to each story according to the Beijing zhonghua shuju, 1961 edition. Thus the first account - "Zhou Zhaowang"

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19 The rendering of the titles are for the most part from E. H. Schafer, "The Table of Contents of the *T'ai-p'ing Kuang-chi*" in *Chinese Literature Essays, Articles, Reviews* (vol. 2, no. 2, 1980), pp. 258-263.
Strange, the compilers sometimes failed to categorize nearly identical stories together. For instance, the dream scenario and the way of interpretation for Sun's 孫 dream is the same as that interpreted by Xiao Ji 蕭吉, yet the former was classified under the major category "menglei" and the latter in sub-topic "meng xiu zheng". As ghosts and spirits usually reveal auspicious or inauspicious portents to dreamers, it is again confusing to classify them separately from the categories of felicitous and calamitous manifestations. Furthermore, the dream accounts of Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝, Zong Shulin 宗叔林 and Huan Miao 恒邈 in "menglei" were also put under the topic of "baoying" 報應 (retribution), in a distant part of TPGJ.

20 For the title and call no. of each account, see Appendix B.
21 TPGJ 276:2186 (no. 44, 孫氏) and 279:2216 (no. 1, 蕭吉).
22 TPGJ 276:2174 (no. 3, 漢武帝), 276:2184 (no. 34, 宗叔林) and 276:2187-7 (no. 48, 恒邈).
23 TPGJ 118:822 (no. 1, 漢武帝), 118:824 (no. 5, 宗叔林) and 118:824 (no. 6, 恒邈). And it is worth noting that though two dream accounts of Emperor Wu of Han in TPGJ were collected from Sanqin ji 三秦記, they varied both in length and wording.
Ch. 2 A Typology of Dream Narratives in *Taiping guangji*

In the modern era dreams are seen as creations of the mind brought about by the mental and physical conditions of the dreamer.\(^2\) However, the idea of dreams as a means of communication with another realms was prevalent in pre-modern times. Many dream episodes found in TPGJ show how people believed that during sleep some sort of contact is made between the dreamer and a being from another realm. This other realm is the realm of the supernatural. In other words, dream is conceived as a divine instrument by which immortals, fairies, demons, daoists, monks, spirits of deceased ancestors communicate with men.\(^3\)

**Messages Transmitted Directly by Spiritual Powers**

**Deities**

Facing problems beyond their comprehension or control, people will easily dream of deities coming to offer help or reveal the hidden future for them. Their purposes for appearing in dreams are various; usually good fortune is...

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1. It should be noted that the panoply of dream records were not written with the intention of easy categorization by later scholars. The line drawn for separating them into different types is certainly not definite. More often than not one dream account can be put into more than one group.

2. Sigmund Freud brought to public attention the whole area of the unconscious mind at the beginning of this century. For Freud, the architect of the dream was the unconscious mind itself. His claim was that the purpose of dreaming is wish-fulfilment. See *The Interpretation of Dreams* (tr. J. Strachey. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), pp. 122-130.

brought or correct guidance is revealed. For instance, King Zhao of Zhou
周昭王 dreams of a man whose clothes are made entirely of feathers. He
then asks him the technique of ascending to immortality. Thereupon, the
"feathered man" gives him some pills for renewing the blood vessels and
some power for supplementing the essence of the blood.

In the thirtieth year of the reign of King Zhao 周昭王 [of Zhou 周] [B. C.
1022]⁴, the king sat in the Room of Zhiming 执明 [Exposition of
Deities]⁵, taking a nap in the day time. Suddenly the clouds gathered
together and rose, and there appeared a man whose clothes were made
entirely of feathers. For this reason, he was called the "feathered man".
In his dream, the king talked with him. He asked him the technique of
ascending to immortality. The feathered man said, "Your Majesty has
not obtained your essence and wisdom. [Although] you seek for the
fullness of life and lasting vision, you are not able to obtain it." The king
knelt down and asked strenuously for instructions for abstaining from
desires. The feathered man then used his finger to draw the king's heart
[on his body]. He fell open, bodily in response to the touch of the
feathered man. The king was startled and woke up. His lapels and mat
were wet with sweat. As a result, his heart was stricken with illness and
he withdrew from food and music.⁶ Ten days passed. He suddenly saw
the one he had dreamed of coming to inform him, saying, "First, I want
to change Your Majesty's heart." Then he took out a green pouch one-
inch square. There was some medicine inside called "xumai wan buxue
jingsan" 續脈丸補血精散 (pills for renewing the blood vessels and
powder for supplementing the essence of the blood). He used his hands
to massage the king's breast; after a little while, he recovered. The King
immediately requested the medicine. He [got it], storing in a jade crock,
and sealed it with golden cord. Applying this medicine to the feet
enabled one to fly beyond heaven and earth, just like travelling close by.
If someone obtained this medicine and took it, they died the next day.⁷

- original collected in 王子年拾遺記

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⁴ King Zhao had been on the throne for fifty-one years, reigning from 1052-1002 B. C.
⁵ "Zhi" 祇 is a general term for gods and deities. In Shijing Shangsong Changfa
詩經商頌長發, "shangdi shi zhi" 上帝是祇 (heavenly god is called "zhi"), see
Cihai (hereafter CH) 詞海 (Hong Kong: ZHSJ, 1976), p. 978.
⁶ The original text is "撤樂". Here I render "撤" as "撤", meaning "withdraw......
from ......".
⁷ TPGJ 276:2173-4 (no. 1, 周昭王).
Though deities normally offer help to dreamers, it is far from the case that they are all propitious. Huan Huo 桓軾 once dreamed of the spirit of Longshan 龍山 who came with harmful intentions. The spirit left only when he found no excuse for staying there to harm him.

Huan Huo 桓軾 [A. D. 320-377]8, the Regional Inspector of Jingzhou 荊州 [in modern Hubei province], once saw a man in the study in which he lived who was over one zhang 丈 tall.9 He dreamed the man said, "I am the spirit of Longshan 龍山 [in modern Hubei province]. I came with no good intention. But as Shijun 使君10 [i.e. Huan Huo] is a man of good virtue, I have to leave."11

- original collected in 甄異記

Though deities' powers surpass those of mortals, sometimes they have needs understood in human terms.12 The spirit of Li Guang's 李廣 mind is dissatisfied for being employed too hard, thus making his life miserable.

Li Guang 李廣 [A. D. 550-577]13, an Attendant Censor of Northern Qi 北齊, was an erudite scholar who composed historical texts. One night he dreamed of a person saying, "I am the spirit of your mind [xinshen

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8 Huan Huo is the younger brother of Huan Yi 桓彝. His biography is in Jinshu 74:1941-3.
10 "Shijun" 使君 is a respectful name used for magistrates in general. Cao Cao 曹操 once said to Liu Bei 劉備, "Jin tianxia yingxiong, wei shijun yu Cao er" 今天下英雄, 唯使君與操耳 (Now, among all the heroes in China, there were only you [Liu Bei] and Cao left). Liu Bei was the Magistrate of Yuzhou 豫州 at that time. See Sanguo zhi (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1973) 32:875 and CH, p. 101.
11 TPGJ 276:2182-3 (no. 30, 桓軾).
13 His biography is in Beishi (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1974) 83:2787-8 and Beiqi shu (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1972) 45:607.
As you have made my life so miserable, I have to leave." Not long after, Guang died of illness.¹⁴

The relationship between the messengers (deities) and recipients (dreamers) is formal and pious. Either the deities formally offer unsolicited warnings and revelations, or the dreamers ask for guidance devoutly. As we have seen, King Zhao kneels down to ask the "feathered man" the instruction for abstaining from desires strenuously.¹⁵ A woman of the Wei 韋 family asks the way of healing her relative, Xue Yi's 薛義 (A. D. 678-749) illness by putting her hands together and paying her respects to the deity who appears in her dream.¹⁶

In general, the deities appearing in dreams correspond to the Daoist image of deities. The movement of deities is sudden and quick; they appear without warning and seem to disappear at will. The "feathered man" drives a cloud chariot, appearing without warning; and both the spirits of Longshan and Li Guang's mind leave as their will takes them. These all remind us of the Daoist spiritual being in the far-off mountains, driving flying dragons and roaming out of the Four Seas.¹⁷ And in some cases, their clothes are of a special material, such as feathers. Its appearance matches with the Daoist female deity, Magu 麻姑, whose hands were like

¹⁴ TPGJ 277:2191 (no. 7, 北齊李廣). This dream narrative is also quoted in Beishi and Beiqi shu.
¹⁵ TPGJ 276:2173-4 (no. 1, 周昭王).
¹⁶ TPGJ 278:2210 (no. 15, 薛義). For the translation, see Appendix D.
¹⁷ The figure in Xiaoyao you 逍遙遊 of Zhuang Zi is immediately recalled, "In the mountains of far-off Ku-yì there lives a daemonic man, whose skin and flesh are like ice and snow, who is gentle as a virgin. He does not eat the five grains but sucks in the wind and drinks the dew; he rides the vapour of the clouds, yokes flying dragons to his chariot, and roams beyond the four seas." See A. C. Graham (trans.), Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu (London: George & Unwin, 1981), p. 46.
those of birds. In the chapter concerning Daoists and Daoism, Joseph Needham concludes that deities "in the form of feathered men, are not uncommon in Han art". He also reprints an image of the feathered "xian" (immortal) from an inlaid bronze basin in the Hosogawa collection. Thus the image of Daoist deities is so deep-rooted in ancient Chinese culture, it is then reflected in both art and their dreams.

**Demons**

Demons, as the name suggests, constantly seek for ways to deceive and harm human beings. Whenever possible, demons take possession of men's lives. This is to be feared, for it means sickness or death. However, they can be combated if one is able to treat them cleverly. Below is a dream narrative concerning demons invading the body of a patient.

Wang Fangping 王方平 of Taiyuan 太原 [in modern Shanxi province] was extremely filial in nature. His father had an illness and was in a critical situation. Fangping served him with medicine, not loosening his sash for over a month. Later, being very tired from nursing his sick father, he fell asleep sitting at the side of his father's bed. He dreamed of two ghosts having a conversation. They wanted to enter his father's abdomen. One ghost said, "How can we enter his guts?" The other ghost replied, "We wait till he swallows the congee, and we can follow it in." After they had made the agreement, Fangping woke up startled. He pierced the congee bowl and used his finger to block the hole. Then he placed a small jug below it. He waited until his father was about to drink, then he took away his finger. The congee ran into the jug, which he covered. He cooked it up to boiling point in the cauldron, opened it and looked inside. It was full of meat. His father recovered. Those who

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18 Despite not having feathers, she had claws like a bird.
20 It probably implies that Fangping has taken such good care for his father did not take a bath himself.
discussed this incident considered that it was due to Fangping's pure filial piety. — original collected in 廣異記

The end of the narrative concludes that the recovery of Fangping’s father was due to Fangping’s pure filial piety. The didactic notion that filial piety is the utmost virtue is explicit - his father recovers for this reason not only overriding Fangping’s clever actions but also the functions of medicine.

**Daoists and Monks**

Shamans and Daoists appearing in dreams are closely related to alchemy and all sort of miraculous things. It was a general opinion in pre-modern times that all diseases from which men suffered were caused by demons (like the case of Wang Fangping’s father), making it necessary to find methods to expel them. This need was usually met by medicines prescribed by physicians, but if the patient did not immediately recover, drugs or incantations prescribed by Daoists would then perform this function for the patient. There are some narratives in TPGJ concerning Daoists healing disease. Sometimes their prescriptions are sent to the patients during dreams, which makes the situation even more marvellous.

In the reign of Dali 大羅 [A. D. 766-779], Assistant Editorial Director Chu Shi 楚蒧, was delirious for forty days and could not recognize

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21 TPGJ 280:2233 (no. 7, 王方平).
22 Confucians emphasize filial piety is the root of moral development. It is a common saying in Chinese: filial piety ranks the top among all the virtues of mankind (baixing xiao wei xian 百行孝為先).
23 "Fangshi" 方士 were particularly associated with the elixir of immortality and with drugs in general since Shanhai jing 山海經. J. Needham notes that, "in view of the close connection between shamanist exorcism and early medicine it is of much interest that the earliest writing the character i [yi 医] (medicine) was i [yi 医]." See Science and Civilisation in China, vol. 2, ch. 10, pp. 134-7. Hence the close link of shamans with pharmaceutics and alchemy is apparent.
anybody because of a serious imbalance in his *qi*. On the following day, he suddenly dreamed of a yellow-clothed female Daoist who came to his house, telling him, "You have an official post and are not supposed to be dead yet." Thereupon she called Fan Zheng 范政 to present the medicine. Suddenly he saw the small child, holding a glass container and a small horn-shaped bowl [dajiaowan 大角椀] which contained purgatives [xieyao 写藥]. After drinking all the medicine, he recovered.

Next day, Xu Shuji 許叔冀 ordered someone to deliver the medicine for him. Having been sick and weary for long, at first Shi could not open his eyes. Later he saw a small child and a small bowl of medicine. It was all just as he had seen the night before, so he called the small child "Fan Zheng". He asked him and it was indeed his name. His illness was then cured. - original collected in 廣異記

As each disease has its own particular cause or origin, a different method is necessary for each case. In one dream account, the protagonist is caught by four men in his dream. The way to expel them is by taking some pills like seeds of a paulownia.

In the ninth year of Yuanjia 元嘉 [A. D. 432], the attendant of Invading Northern Territory Administrator Ming Yizhi 明稽之, one night fell asleep and had a great nightmare. Shizhi went and tried to wake him up himself, but after a short time the attendant was not able to get a response. He had also lost his hair topknot. Three days later, he woke up and said, "My legs were caught by three men and my topknot [was taken off by] another man. Suddenly I dreamed of a Daoist who gave me some pills like the seeds of a paulownia, ordered me to take them with water." After he awoke, he had the pills in his hand. He took them and recovered. 27

24 "大角" is a musical instrument commonly used in army, shaped like a horn. It is also the name used to denote the Arcturus star, see *Zhongwen da cidian* (hereafter ZWDCD) 中文大辭典 (Zhang Qiyun 張其昀 et al. comp. Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, 1962), vol. 8 p. 201. Probably it refers to the shape of the container. "椀" is a small bowl, cf CH, p. 704. And "寫藥" may be interpreted as "寫藥", meaning some kind of laxatives or purgatives, see ZWDCD, vol. 10, p. 183.

25 See *Zaixiang shixi biao* 宰相世系表 in *Xin Tangshu* 73a:2878.

26 TPGJ 278:2203 (no. 2, 楚窪).

27 TPGJ 276:2185 (no. 39, 明稽之).
Another typical way for curing disease is by bestowing talismans and incantations. The Daoist deity in Madam Wei's dream shows a creature shaped like a black dog with hairy caterpillars for hair as the origin of her disease and gives two talismans and an incantation to her that are especially for curing malaria. The incantation is: "Malignant malaria! Malignant malaria! Spirits of the four mountains, I send for you to bind it up! Envoys of Liuding 六丁, Generals of Wudao 五道, collect your essence and vital spirit and summon your spirit and soul. Get out quickly! Get out quickly! Never come upon this person. Quickly, quickly according to the regulations and ordinances".

In other cases, a monk might act as a guide to the dreamer.

He Jingshu 何敬叔 had respected the Buddhist law since he was young. He wanted to build a Buddhist image, but had not yet got the wood. First he dreamed of a Buddhist monk, wearing monk's robes, with a staff of tin, saying, "the paulownia of the He 何 family behind the county town would be ideal." After he woke, he searched for it according to the dream and indeed found it.

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28 "Liuding" 六丁 is the name of a Daoist spirit called "liuding yinshen yunú" 六丁陰神玉女, see Yunji qiqian 雲笈七籖, quoted from ZWDCD, vol. 4, p. 30.
29 "Wudao" 五道, in Daoist term, refers to heaven 天, men 人, brute beasts 畜生, famished devils 餓鬼 and the hell 地獄, see Yunji qiqian. The same five elements are used for the name of "wudao" in Buddhism, but it is usually called "liudao" 六道 (the six conditions of existence), including titanic demons (Sanskrit: Asura; Chinese: xiuluo 修羅), see Handbook of Chinese Buddhism, p. 41, quoted from W. F. Mayers, The Chinese Reader's Manual (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1924), p. 347 and ZWDCD, vol. 2, p. 209.
30 TPGJ 278:2210 (no. 15, 薛義).
31 A tin staff is what a high-rank monk usually holds in hand when he walks, see CH, p. 1386.
32 TPGJ 276:2188 (no. 50, 何敬叔).
From the above dream narratives, there seem to be no explicit difference between the powers of deities and that of shamans and Daoists: as both have the abilities of foretelling future events, healing diseases and acting as guides and mentors. However, when Daoists occur in dreams, the medicines that they bestow on dreamers are usually described in detail, which is slightly different from narratives concerning deities.  

**Deceased Persons**

Getting in touch with people who have gone to the underworld is a common theme in dream narratives. In Chinese tradition, people believed that dead people still live in the other world and still have human feelings, thoughts and so on. Dream is considered to be a special arena for cross-boundary communication between the dead and the living. The dead, especially ancestors, are thought to contact dreamers in order to act as advisers; this is called "tuomeng" 托夢. Unlike deities, the deceased relatives appearing in dreams all come with good intentions, or at least cause no harm to the dreamers.

**Fathers**

The father is the symbol of dignity and sternness. He is the figurehead and the highest authority in the family who gives warnings, revelations, sincere advice; or renders help or protection to his descendants, both in reality, and

33 Of course, there is certainly exceptional case. For instance, the medicine given to King Zhao 昭王 is described in detail, see TPGJ 276:2173-4 (no. 1, 周昭王).
35 Ibid.
in dreams. Their help may range from giving admonishment to repairing the fallen house for his living wife and descendants.

Xu Xianzhi 徐羡之 served as the Recorder and Junior Mentor of Wang Xiong 王雄. He dreamed of his father, telling him, "From now on, you should not walk across Zhuque Heng 朱雀桁, then you will become an eminent person." Xianzhi later went halfway across Zhuque Heng. Recalling the dream of his father, he turned his horse back. Because of this, later he really was promoted from Recorder to Grand Councilor.

- original collected in 幽明錄

Liu Shamen 劉沙門 lived in Pengcheng 彭城 [in modern Jiangsu province]. He died of disease and left behind his poor wife and a young child. One day the wall of his house fell down in the strong wind and heavy rain of a storm. His wife cried and hugged her young son, saying, "If your father were still alive, how would we have come to this!" That night she dreamed of Shamen, bringing several tens of workmen to repair the house. The next day the house was completely fixed.

- original collected in 甄異記

The great grandfather of a scholar whose surname is Li 李 also makes every effort to help his descendant. The younger Li visits the underworld in his dream. The king of the underworld asks why he stole his brother-in-law's money. Since Li has completely forgotten this incident, he does not

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36 His biography is in Songsu (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1974) 43:1329-35 and Nanshi (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1975) 15:434.
37 According to Songsu, his name should be Wang Ya 王雅.
38 "Heng" 桁 is a kind of floating bridge. The biography of Wen Qiao 吳嶠 in Jinshu (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1974) 67:1788 recorded that Wen Qiao once had burnt Zhuque Heng to prevent rebel Wang Dun 王敦 from crossing the river.
39 TPGJ 276:2185 (no. 37, 徐羡之). According to Songsu, he is promoted to the title of Situ 司徒. This is an eminent central official post which almost interchangeable with Grand Councilor, see Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 12; no. 4871, p. 399 and no. 5801, p. 458. In Nanshi 15:434, a similar dream is recorded. Xu Xianzhi once dreamed of his grandfather telling him the way of escaping calamities by burying twenty-eight qian 錢 under four corners of the house.
40 "Shamen" is also a term referring to monks.
41 TPGJ 276:2186 (no. 42, 劉沙門).
know how to reply. After a while, a red-clothed man comes pleading with the king not to kill Li. He suggests that the king can set fifteen days as the time limit for Li to repay the stolen money. The king then accepts his proposal. However, after Li awakes, he regards the dream as a preposterous affair and takes no action. After ten days pass, a mirror-polisher urges him to repay the money. Only when Li asks how he knows of the incident, does he realize that the red-clothed man who pleaded for him was his great-grandfather, and it is he who sent the mirror-polisher to warm him.42 These examples show how deceased fathers make every effort to help their descendants. They are eager to assist the dreamers (i.e. their descendants) whenever crises arise.43

It is interesting to explain the strong tie between the deceased ancestors and their descendants with reference to the Chinese religious system. There was a boundary separating one kinship group from another in pre-modern times. Sacrificial offerings to the dead were restricted only to one's own lineage members. Confucius himself was said to have remarked, "To offer sacrifice to the spirit of an ancestor not one's own is obsequious" (fei qigui er jizhi, chan ye 非其鬼而祭之, 諂也).44 The notion that "the spirits

42 TPGJ 281:2237-8 (no. 1, 李進士). For the translation, see Appendix D.
43 In the whole corpus of zhiguai literature, there are a few "morally shocking" cases showing the hostile attitude of ancestors toward their own descendants, for instance, Humu Ban's deceased father summoned his descendants to the underworld one by one because he missed them very much. See the dream narrative of Humu Ban recorded in Soushen ji (for the English translation, see Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic, ed. K. S. Y. Kao. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985, pp. 69-71), quoted from Robert F. Campany, "Ghosts Matter: The Culture of Ghosts in Six Dynasties Zhiguai" in Chinese Literature Essays, Articles, Reviews (vol. 13, Dec 1991), pp. 31-32.
[of the dead] do not accept [offerings] from those not of their lineage, and the people do not sacrifice to spirits not of their clan" is found in Zuozhuan (shen buxin feilei, min busi feizu 神不歆非類, 民不祀非祖). Hence we know that "making offerings to the non-ancestral dead was morally and religiously unacceptable". The dead ancestors depend on their descendants' incessant offerings and in return they give their blessings to them. The mutual benefit for both parties is the main tie binding them together.

As P. B. Ebrey and P. N. Gregory observes, "one of the cardinal religious practices running throughout the entire span of Chinese history is ancestor worship"; and "it is predicated on the belief that there is a continuity between the living and the dead; the living and the dead can affect one another because they share the same substance (ch'i), uniting them within a single, corporate kinship body." This may be one of the most important reasons for explaining their helpful behaviour, even in dream.

Wives

A deceased woman coming to greet her husband is one of the common dream phenomena. It is worth noting that while a wife often comes to convey a message to her husband, it is rare that a mother gives warning or advice to descendants. This reflects the status of women in traditional China, as females rarely attained a position of real dominance in the

46 Ibid., p. 18.
family. Song Ying's 宋穎 wife who has died appears to bid him farewell because she is now sentenced to be another man's wife.

During the Hou Wei 後魏 dynasty [A.D. 386-532], Song Ying's 宋穎 wife, whose family name was Deng 邓, had already been dead for fifteen years. Ying suddenly dreamed of his wife bowing to him, saying, "I am now sentenced to be Gao Chong's 高崇 wife, so I came to say goodbye to you." She was crying while she left. A few days later, Chong died. 50

In another dream narrative concerning deceased female relatives, Huangfu Hong 皇甫弘 provokes Qian Hui 錢徽 (A.D. 755-829), the Prefect of Huazhou 華州 (in modern Shanxi province) because of his drunkenness. As Qian Hui is the Examination Administrator, Hong thinks he will not get the opportunity to pass the civil service examination. On the way back home he dreams of his deceased wife's wet nurse. The wet nurse advises him; and accompanies him first to pray to the Old Lady of Stone, then later back to the place where he lives. 51 The interesting point is that the one who takes initiative to help Hong is his wife's wet nurse, not his female relatives such as wife, mother or grandmother. It is immaterial to our argument whether there are female relatives offering guidance for descendants (especially male descendants) in other dream narratives or not, but the point is that the role of offering help is left as much as possible, if not exclusively, to the male. If the father, or other male ancestors, do not appear to act as the helper, usually other elder persons rather than one's female relatives would perform this function.

51 TPGJ 278:2206-7 (no. 9, 皇甫弘). For the translation, see Appendix D.
**Sons & Other Relatives**

There is only one dream narrative in our area of study describing a deceased son. Dreamers usually dream of supernatural beings or deceased ancestors, seldom do they dream of deceased descendants, probably because it is comparatively rare that descendants die before their parents. Below is one of these cases. Jiang Ji's son comes to his mother in two consecutive nights. He tells her that he is now the petty sergeant in Mount Tai. Because of the lowliness of this position and the hardships it entails, he requests his father to enjoin Sun, a person whom he knows will soon die and be the Magistrate of Mount Tai, to give him a better position in the realm of the dead.

There are also some narratives concerning relatives such as brothers and uncles. The large number of dream narratives concerning relatives reflect their importance in the Chinese mind. And as we have noted earlier, deceased relatives all have good intentions toward the dreamer. They are more willing to help the dreamer to get out of trouble than deities. Thus, deities are likely to appear in dreams when the dreamer is sick or in

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52 Jiang Ji was a native of the state of Chu who came to be Defender-in-chief in the state of Wei. His biography is in *Sanguo zhi* 14:450-456.

53 Mt. Tai is one of the five sacred mountains in China. The God of Mt. Tai is sometimes considered to be the lord of departed souls and the judge of the dead, see the note in the translation.

54 TPGJ 276:2177 (no. 11, 蔣濟). For the translation, see Appendix D.

55 A Taiwan survey shows that the dreams of modern Taiwanese "contained very few references to relatives other than members of the nuclear family", see Wolfram Eberhard, "Social Interaction and Social Values in Chinese Dreams" in *Moral and Social Values of the Chinese Collected Essay* (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing, 1971), p. 43. Is this due to the change from extended families to nuclear families? This is also a subject worth exploring.
confusion; while deceased relatives are likely to offer help whenever problems arise.

**Friends**

The purpose of friends appearing is mainly to inform the dreamer that they have died and want to bid farewell to their friends. The day which they appear in the dream is usually the day that they really pass away.

Lu Yuanming 鄧元明 of Hou Wei 後魏 [A. D. 386-532], courtesy name Youzhang 幼章, held the post of Attendant Gentleman. At the end of the Yong Xi 永熙 [A. D. 534] reign period of Emperor Xiaowu 孝武帝, he lived in Mt. Gou 維山 [in modern Henan province], east of Luoyang 洛陽 [in modern Henan province]. At that time, Yuanming dreamed of his friend, Wang You 王由, coming along with wine and saying goodbye to him. He also composed a poem as a present for Yuanming. As Yuanming awoke, he remembered two lines of the poem [literally ten words], "Henceforth I leave here, I won't go to the morning market anymore." Yuanming sighed and said, "By nature, You is not a person who indulges in mundane affairs. He is just like a traveller who lodges in the mundane world; yet I have had this dream. Considering how his poem is composed, there must be another reason for it." Three days passed and in the end he heard that You was killed by rebels. Yuanming inquired about the day You was dead - it was the night that he had dreamed of him. 58

In another anecdote, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 is getting on very well with his young master, Xiao Keng 蕭鎬. He once dreams of Keng saying goodbye to him, telling him he will be born into a certain family three years later.

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56 His brief biographical sketch is in Beishi 30:1083 and Weishu (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1974) 12:301, 36:840, 39:897 and 47:1060.
57 His biographical sketch is in Beishi 45:1659 and Weishu 71:1588-9. He was killed by rebels when he was forty-three.
58 TPGJ 277:2190 (no. 4, 鄧元明). This dream narrative is also quoted in Beishi 30:1083, Weishu 47:1060 and TPYL 399:3b. See also TPGJ 279:2222-3 (no. 18, 王由), the day which Lu Xiufu 鄧休符 dreams of his friend is also the day his friend indeed passes away.
The Ruler of Yidu 宜都 in Qi 齊, [Xiao] Keng 鍾, was enfeoffed as Ruler at the year of seven. Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 [452-536 A.D.] served as his Reader-in-waiting. When he was eight or nine they were getting on very well. Later Keng met with an accident. At that time, Hongjing was living in mountains. He dreamed of Keng coming, saying goodbye to him sadly, "Now my life has passed. As I have committed no crime, I shall be born to some family three years from now." Hongjing inquired about underworld affairs, but for the most part they were secret and could not be made public. After awakening, Hongjing immediately sent someone to the capital to enquire after him. The situation matched with his dream. Because of this, Hongjing composed a book called Mengji 梦記.60

- original collected in夢記

The theme of calling upon friends on a specified day appears in numerous versions. In Hou Hanshu, Fan Shi 范式, courtesy name Juqing 巨卿, dreams of his best friend Zhang Shao 張劭 telling him that he has died on a certain day and then bids him farewell.61 The motif of Fan Juqing jishu sisheng jiao 范巨卿雞黍死生交 in Gujin xiaoshuo 古今小說 is virtually the same. It describes two friends separating for one year to meet in a dream.62 The profundity of their friendship will overcome obstacles

59 Tao Hongjing was a great polymath who possessed extensive knowledge of literature, Daoism, medicine, calligraphy and music etc. In the Liang 梁 dynasty, he lived as a hermit in Juqu Shan 句曲山 (Mao Shan 茅山). Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 wanted to appoint him to an official post, but he refused to accept it. The Emperor then sought his opinion regarding the court's affairs by sending envoys to the mountain where he lived. People at that time called him "the grand councilor in mountains" 山中宰相. See Liangshu (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1973) 51:742-3.

60 TPGJ 277:2191 (no. 8, 蕭鎬). Mengji is not extant now. But according to Nanshi, Tao Hongjing and dreams are often related. He was born after his mother dreamed of two persons holding a censer to her house. And, his mother once dreamed of a green dragon, which had no tail, flying to Heaven. It was regarded as the portent of Hongjing having no wife and descendant. Hongjing himself was also recorded to have dreamed of Buddha, giving him a scripture called Puti ji 菩提記, see 7b:1897-1900.


(such as time, distance, and the boundary between life and death). In the case of Wang You and Xiao Keng, the arena of dream thus serves as a good instrument for them to bid farewell.

Other Recognizable or Unrecognizable Persons / Spiritual Beings

Many narratives concern recognizable and unrecognizable spiritual beings conveying messages to dreamers. Their reasons for appearing vary from case to case. We cannot deal with them one by one, but some common themes among them are extracted below.

Among them, there are a few records in which the dreamer dreams of a deceased renowned person, in which the actions the distinguished persons perform are closely related to their personal lives.

The family of a butcher, Zheng Jiu of Shouchun [in modern Anhui province], was very poor. He commonly dreamed of a man who said he was Lian Po, telling him, "If you dig to the east of the house, you should be able to obtain my precious sword. I shall then command that you become rich, but you must not change your profession." Jiu did what he told and in the end he hunted out the sword. Next year he became rich. Later he let out the secret and then he lost the sword.

- original collected in 稟神錄

63 "The living and the dead travel in different roads" (sisheng yilu 死生異路) was an idea prevailing in pre-modern times. It was reflected in various dream episodes such as TPGJ 276:2177 (no. 11, 蔣濟), 279:2219 (no. 8, 李叔齋); the narrative of Humu Ban 胡母班 in Soushen ji (Kao, Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic, pp. 69-71) and the biography of Fan Shi 范式 in Hou Hanshu 81:2676-7.
64 R. E. Hegel, "Heavens and Hells in Chinese Fictional Dreams", p. 4.
65 TPGJ 276:2179 (no. 16, 呂蒙); 280:2229 (no. 1, 嶽帝) and 281:2242 (no. 9, 鄭就).
66 A famous general in the period of Warring States. His biography is in Shiji (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1959) 81:2439-2452.
67 TPGJ 281:2242 (no. 9, 鄭就).
Lian Po was an excellent general in the state of Zhao 趙 during the Warring States period. In the sixteenth year of King Huiwen of Zhao 趙惠文王 (B. C. 283), Lian Po was the Zhao commander who attacked and completely defeated the state of Qi 齊. He was honoured by promotion to the rank of "shangqìng" 上卿 and became known for his valour among all the sovereign lords. In this narrative, he is described to have a precious sword and he chooses to appear in the dream of a butcher. As the sword figures prominently in the gear of the medieval Chinese alchemist, the sword of Lian Po seems to signify his martial potency and capabilities more than merely the sword itself. Thus he appears in the dream of a butcher, bestowing on him his martial potency.

Similarly, Fu Xi 伏羲, the Duke of Zhou 周公 and King Wen of Zhou 周文王, who are supposed to be the authors of the Yijing 易經, let Lù Meng 吕蒙, who himself is an expert in the Classic, understand its profound meanings by discussing the affairs relating to the rise and fall in the fate of nations; and way of expansion and brightness of the sun and the moon to him.

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68 "Qìng" 卿 was the highest of the three grades of ranks (dáfù 大夫 and shí 士 being the others) and "shangqìng" was the highest of the three levels within it, see A. K. Frank, Ssu-ma Ch'ien Historiographical Attitude as Reflected in Four Late Warring States Biographies (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962), p. 81.

69 In the year 279 B. C., Lian Po further drove east to attack Qi and smashed one of her armies. Two years later (277 B. C.), he again smote the city of Qi and took it. See Shiji 81:2439-2452.

70 Michel Strickmann, "Swords have long figured in the panoply of authority. Brandished in ritual display, they attest to the officiant's martial potency ...... Subsequently, swords of power have also been fashioned from materials ill suited to actual physical combat. Constructed of coins, drawn or printed on paper, spirit-swords are used as apotropaic talismans. Even such numinous swords are deemed to possess a death-dealing power in the hands of a qualified master, or even an earnest officiant when following prescribed ritual". "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing" in Asia Major (3rd ser., vol. VI, part 2, 1993), p. 2.
Lü Meng 吕蒙 [A.D. 178-219] went to Wu 吴. Emperor [Sun Quan 孫權] exhorted him to study, so he read extensively in a wide range of subjects, and regarded the Book of Changes as the primary text. He once got deeply drunk at a feast held by Sun Ce 孫策. He suddenly recited a part of the Book of Changes in his sleep. Not long after he woke up startled. They all asked him [what had happened]. He said, "I have just dreamed of Fu Xi 伏羲, King Wen 文王 [of Zhou] and the Duke of Zhou 周公. They discussed with me the affairs relating the rise and fall in the fate of nations, and the way of expansion and brightness of the sun and the moon. It was all exquisite and deeply mysterious. We hadn't completed the discussion of dark topics. I had only just recited the text." The people there all knew that Meng had recited the text in his sleep.

Another theme which repeatedly occurs is the spirit of a deceased person requesting the dreamer to bury his dead body - which has been interred.

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71 Lü Meng, courtesy name Ziming 子明, was a famous general in the Three Kingdoms period. He served under Zhou Yu 周瑜 to fight against Cao Cao 曹操 in Wulin 烏林 and Ruxu 瀾須, presenting several intelligent tricks for the troops. He set up plans to seize Jingzhou 荆州. And the renowned general in Shu 蜀, Guan Yu 關羽, was caught under his plan. Sun Quan then made the remark saying that he was a clever general that second to Zhou Yu. *Sanguo zhi* 54: 1273-81.

72 Sun Quan was the first emperor of Wu, he formed alliance with Liu Bei 劉備 to fight against Cao Cao 曹操 in Chibi 赤壁. After winning this battle, he ascended the throne and called himself the Emperor of Wu.

73 *Yijing*, also called the *Zhouyi*, is an anthology of omens, popular sayings, prognostications, and the like, which is gathered and structured around a framework of hexagrams (each consisting of six solid or broken lines). In particular, the explanations of the entire figures to those sixty-four hexagram (guaci 卦辭) were attributed to King Wen; further explanations of their yao (yaoci 爻辭) and the separate lines of these figures were attributed the Duke of Zhou. The text is now recognized to have had its origin in the rich divinatory tradition of early China.

74 The original text is "chang" 常, meaning "usually". According to the context here, I attempt to render it as "chang" 常, meaning "once".

75 Sun Ce was the elder brother of Sun Quan. After their father Sun Jian 孫堅 died, Sun Ce set up the place in the east of Changjiang 長江 as his base. Sun Quan succeeded him after he died and became the emperor later.

76 The original sentence is "zheng kongsong qiwen er" 政空頌其文耳. From the context, I render "政" as "正", meaning "just".

77 TPGJ 276:2179 (no. 16, 吕蒙).
improperly or without the appropriate rites. Though, in some cases, deceased persons are described as having supernatural powers such as the abilities of predicting future incidents; on the whole, they are not omnipotent. Asking dreamers to bury them properly is one of the recurring themes in dream narratives. For instance, Zou Zhan 鄒湛 dreams of a man requesting him to bury his dead body.

Zou Zhan 鄒湛 dreamed of a man paying respects to him, who said he was Zhen Zhongshu 甄仲舒. He asked Zhan to bury him. After waking up, Zhan thought, "He is the one who is under the tiles and earth to the west of the house." So, he took the body and buried it. He again dreamed of this person paying his respects and thanking him.

Furthermore, there are some vivid narratives of deceased spiritual beings asking for help from dreamers in various circumstances. A slave woman of the Zhou 周 household once dreamed of a woman pleading with her to pick the thorns out of her eyes.

A slave woman of the Zhou 周 household of Chenliu 陳留 [in modern Henan province] once went into the mountains gathering wood. Feeling tired, she fell asleep. Suddenly she dreamed of a woman, kneeling right in front of her, pleading, "My eyes have thorns in them. Would you please help me by picking them out?" After she woke, suddenly in a

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78 The following passages by J. M. M. deGroot shows the importance of proper burial and the burial of unclaimed corpses in Chinese culture: the Chinese "have always regarded it as a dire calamity to be buried in an incomplete manner, and the greatest disaster not to be buried at all ... to be committed to the earth without a coffin was of old regarded as a curse"; and "the miserable condition to which, as the Chinese believe, souls are doomed whose bodies are not properly buried, we may place among the chief reasons for their giving decent interment to their parents and relations, and for this being considered one of the very first duties imposed upon mankind by their social laws." See The Religious System of China (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892-1910), p. 555 and 860.

79 His biography is in Jinshu 92:2380.

80 According to Jinshu, his name is Zhen Shuzhong 甄仲仲 and he had appeared more than once in Zou Zhan's dream.

81 TPGJ 276:2178 (no. 14, 鄒湛).
coffin she saw a skull with grass growing from its eyes. She then picked
the grass out for her. Later she obtained a pair of golden rings at the
side of the road.\footnote{original collected in \textit{述異記}}

Shang Zhongkan \foreignlanguage{zh}{商仲堪} dreams of a deceased person whose body is in a
coffin floating on the water requesting Zhongkan to move him to a place
where is high and dry.

Shang Zhongkan \foreignlanguage{zh}{商仲堪} was in Dantu [in modern Jiangsu
province]. He dreamed of a person, saying, "You have the will to rescue
beings. If you can move me to a place which is high and dry, then your
kind compassion will extend to rotten bones." The following day,
Zhongkan indeed found a coffin floating on the water. He then took and
buried it on a high mound, and poured out a libation. That night he
dreamed of that person coming to express his gratitude.\footnote{original collected in \textit{夢儐}}

In all these cases, the deceased persons reward the dreamers who have
done the requested favours. As the proper burial of the body was stressed
in China, the act of "burying a non-interred or imperfectly interred corpse of
any individual to whom one is not related, is considered by the nation as the
greatest service that can be rendered to his soul and, consequently, as a
charitable deed of such merit that it cannot fail to call down blessings on the

Another common theme that can be extracted from the corpus of dream
literature is that dream seems to have been a favourite means of providing
artists with inspirations, creative ideas, brilliant discoveries or concrete

\footnote{TPGJ 276:2188 (no. 49, 周氏婢). See also TPYL 399:9a-b.}
\footnote{His name is quoted as Yin Zhongkan 殷仲堪 in \textit{Jinshu}. See 84:2192-2199.}
\footnote{TPGJ 276:2182 (no. 28, 商仲堪). See also TPYL 399:8b. This dream narrative is
also quoted in \textit{Jinshu}. According to \textit{Jinshu}, the unknown spirit is called Xu Boyuan 徐伯元. The spirit repays his kindness by revealing that he will soon be the
magistrate of a certain province.}
solutions. As the associative process in dream is more fluid than that of wakefulness\textsuperscript{86}, the dreamer has "access to a nonlogical form of thinking and may be spontaneous and creative in a way not possible in waking life".\textsuperscript{87}

An example of this is one narrative concerning Jiang Yan.

Jiang Yan 江淹 [A. D. 444-505]\textsuperscript{88}, a native of Jiyang 濟陽 [in modern Henan province], was the Governor of Xuancheng 宣城 [in modern Anhui province]. When he was young, he once dreamed of a person who gave him a five-coloured brush, therefore his writings became refined and eloquent. Later he dreamed of a man who said he was Guo Jingchun 郭景純 [A. D. 276-324]\textsuperscript{89}, saying, "Previously, I lent a brush to you, sir. Is it possible for you to return it?" Yan then took the five-coloured brush out from his clothes and gave it to him. From that time onwards, there was a sharp drop of quality in his works. Because of this, people at that time concluded that Yan's talent had been exhausted.\textsuperscript{90}

Jiang Yan, courtesy name Wentong 文通, was a writer famous for depicting men's innermost feelings. \textit{Bie fu} 别賦 and \textit{Hen fu} 恨賦 were regarded as representative of his literary work. In the dream narrative, his literary talent is symbolized by a five-coloured brush bestowed by Guo Jingchun, who himself is a great scholar well-known for his poetic talent.

\textsuperscript{86} It is one of the six distinctive features of dream that analyzed by David Foulkes in \textit{A Grammar of Dreams}, see "Introduction" in Carolyn T. Brown (ed.), \textit{Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture}, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{87} Floyd B. Galler, "Western Psychoanalysis and Asian Dreams" in \textit{Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture}, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{88} His biography is in \textit{Liangshu} 14:247-251 and \textit{Nanshi} 59:1447-1451.

\textsuperscript{89} Guo Pu 郭璞 (A. D. 276-324), courtesy name Jingchun 景純, was a scholar well-known for his poetic talent. The writings which he composed amounted to more than several hundred thousand words. He studied \textit{Qinglang zhongshu} 青囊中書 of Guo Gong 郭公, and became well-versed in Five Phrases, astrology and divination. He had made successful divinations over sixty times; these were recorded in a book called \textit{Donglin} 洞林. He also annotated several hundred thousand words for \textit{Erya} 竟雅, \textit{Sancang} 三蒼, \textit{Fangyan} 方言, \textit{Mu tianzi zhuan} 穆天子傳, \textit{Shanhai jing} 山海經, \textit{Chuci} 楚辭, \textit{Zixu fu} 子虛賦, and \textit{Shanglin fu} 上林賦 and others. His biography is in \textit{Jinshu} 72:1899-1910.

\textsuperscript{90} TPGJ 277:2192 (no. 10, 梁江淹). See also TPYL 398:4b.
Liangshu also comments on Yan's talent being exhausted: "Yan was famous for his literary writings when he was young, but his literary talent and thought gradually diminished when he grew old. The people at that time all concluded that Yan's talent had been exhausted." 江郎才尽, "Jianglang caijin" refers to those people who once have a special talent in art but which becomes exhausted.

A similar incident happens to Sima Xiangru when he is about to present a rhapsody to Emperor Wu of Han. Sima Xiangru, a native of Chengdu (in modern Sichuan province), in early life rose to distinction as a scholar and poet. He held office in the reign of Emperor Jing of Han 漢景帝, but subsequently retired to his native place. In the reign of Emperor Wu, he again rose to become a noted scholar and enjoyed the patronage of Emperor Wu, who employed him in various political and literary capacities. His biography is in Shiji 117:3056-3062.

According to Shiji, Daren fu was written shortly after Sima Xiangru 蘇馬相如 presented the Shanglin fu 上林賦 to Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝. Sima Xiangru believed that the traditional account of immortals living in the mountains or the mashes was not compatible with the emperor's notion of the immortal.

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91 Liangshu 14:247-251. The same comment is found in Nanshi. In Nanshi, a similar incident is recorded just before this dream. Jiang Yan dreams of Zhang Jingyang 張景陽 who requests him to return the brocade that Jingyang has given him previously. But the compilers of TPGJ only extracted the second one and left out this one, see Nanshi 59:1451.

92 Sima Xiangru, a native of Chengdu 成都 (in modern Sichuan 四川 province), in early life rose to distinction as a scholar and poet. He held office in the reign of Emperor Jing of Han 漢景帝, but subsequently retired to his native place. In the reign of Emperor Wu, he again rose to become a noted scholar and enjoyed the patronage of Emperor Wu, who employed him in various political and literary capacities. His biography is in Shiji 117:3056-3062.

93 TPGJ 276:2175 (no. 4, 司馬相如).
He therefore presented the *Daren ju*, describing the magical journey of the Mighty Man (i.e. Emperor Wu) into the cosmos of gods, spirits, and immortals.94

The Mighty Man finds the mundane world too small and confining, so he decides to go on a distant journey in search of immortals.95 He travels to Mt. Chong 崇山 (the home of ancient Emperor Yao 堯) and visits Emperor Shun 舜 in the Jiuyi mountains 九疑山. He even ventures to pass through dangerous regions such as Leishi 雷室 (Thunder Hall), Guigu 鬼谷 (Devil Valley), Yanhuo 炎火 (the Flaming Mountain), Ruoshui 弱水 (the River of Weak Waters) and Liusha 流沙 (the Drifting Sands). During his journey, he meets fairy Lingwa 靈媮, Fengyi 馮夷, Pingyi 屏翳, Fengbo 風伯, Yushi 雨司, Yunü 玉女 (Jade Maidens)99 and Xi

94 "Emperor Wu had earlier expressed admiration for the poet's work on Shanglin Fu. Sima Xiangru, observing that the emperor was fond of anything dealing with immortal spirits, took occasion to remark, 'my description of the Shanglin Fu is hardly deserving of praise. I have something that is still finer. In the past I began a poem in rhyme-prose style on Daren Fu (The Mighty One). It is not completed yet, but when I have finished it, I beg to present it to Your Majesty.' The older legends of famous immortals always pictured them as emaciated creatures who dwell among the hills and swamps, but Sima Xiangru judged that this was not the type of immortal that would take the emperor's fancy. He therefore completed his 'Fu on the Mighty One' ", quoted from B. Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, Translated from the Shih Chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 332. Also see Shiji 117:3056.

95 The original text of *Daren fu* is quoted in the biography of Sima Xiangru, see Shiji 117:3056-3062. The English translation can be found in B. Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, pp. 332-335.

96 According to *Hanshu yinyi* 漢書音義, Lingwa 靈媮 is Nüwa 女媮. Nüwa is a magical goddess who has used five-coloured stone to repair the crack of Heaven, see Shiji 117:3061, note 11.

97 According to *Hanshu yinyi* 漢書音義, Fengyi is the courtesy name for the deity Hebo 河伯. Ibid.

98 Pingyi is Leishi 雷師 (The God of Thunder). Ibid., note 12.

99 Yunü here refers to goddesses such as Qingyao 青要 and Chengyi 乘弋. Ibid., p. 3062, note 18.
D. R. Knechtges remarks that "in this fu [rhapsody] of about 750 characters there are 60 impressifs, and about thirty of these are original to Sima Xiangru". It is possible, therefore, to conjecture that Sima Xiangru was guided by a spiritual power (the yellow-clothed man) in composing the rhapsody regarding immortals, just as it says in the description of the dream narrative in TPGJ.

Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, an authoritative exegete of Confucian Classics in the Eastern Han dynasty, is described as attaining "enlightenment" as the result of having an operation in his heart by an unknown "surgical operator".

Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 [A. D. 127-200] teacher was Ma Rong 馬融. After three years of studying, Xuan was without knowledge. Rong then sent him away. On the way, Xuan took a nap under the shade of a tree. He dreamed of a person who cut open his heart using a knife, saying, "You are now fitted to learn." He then awoke and immediately went back to study. Thereupon he penetrated and grasped the essentials of the canons and texts. Later he returned to the east. Rong said, "The Books of Poetry, History, Rites and Music have all been transferred to the east." - original collected in 異苑

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100 Xi Wangmu 西王母 (Mother Queen of the West) is a major figure among the immortals, especially in the Han dynasty. She has the appearance of a human being, but has a leopard's tail and the tiger's teeth, which make her appearance very distinctive. Ibid., note 22.


102 Zheng Xuan was a famous Confucian scholar in the Eastern Han dynasty. He had studied with Ma Rong of Fufeng 扶風 for over ten years; later he returned to Donglai 東萊. He annotated many Confucian Classics, such as Shijing 詩經, Shujing 書經, Lijing 禮經, Yijing 易經, Lunyu 論語, Xiaoqing 孝經, etc. His biography is in Hou Hanshu 35:1207-1213.

103 According to Duyi zhi 獨異志, Ma Rong's literary talent was also related to a dream. He was described as being familiar with all the literary works, having eaten flowers in his dream. See ZWDCD, vol. 8, p. 172.

104 TPGJ 276:2175-6 (no. 7, 鄭玄). See also TPYL 398.6b.
Liu Wenying has compiled some other accounts concerning dreams and creativity, showing there is a strong link between creativity and the spiritual beings that appear in dreams. *Nishang yuwu qu*霓裳羽舞曲 originated from the performance of a goddess in Tang Xuanzong's 唐玄宗 dream.\(^{105}\) *Yangchun qu* 陽春曲 was sung by a woman in Xing Feng's 行風 dream.\(^{106}\) The literary works or visual art claimed to be inspired by spiritual beings in dreams not only emphasize the superb quality of these works, but also bring out the affirmation of the intimate relationship of dreams, spiritual beings and creativity.

**Animals**

Some dream narratives concerning animals asking for help are recorded in TPGJ. Ten turtles request mercy from Zong Shulin 宗叔林.

Zong Shulin 宗叔林, Governor of Jinyang 晉陽 [in modern Shanxi province], acquired turtles. He gave them to the chef and said, "Everyday make two turtles into soup." That night he dreamed of ten men wearing black clothes and trousers [Kuzhe 褲褶]\(^{107}\), bowing their heads, requesting mercy from him. He did not understand and ate two turtles. The next night he dreamed of eight men asking him to save their lives. Only then did he realize and let the turtles free. Later he dreamed of eight men coming, expressing gratitude to him.\(^{108}\)

- original collected in 搜神記

A big fish pleads with Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝 to take the hook out of its mouth.

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106 See *Yiwen lu* 異聞錄, ibid. See also TPGJ 282:2247-8 (no. 3, 刑鳳).

107 "Kuzhe" 褲褶 used as a compound is another name for "rongyi" 戊衣 (army uniforms), see CH, p. 1213. Considering the context here, I only render it as "trousers" in general.

108 TPGJ 276:2184 (no. 34, 宗叔林). See also TPYL 399:8a-b.
Emperor Wu of Han [B. C. 156-87] dreamed of a big fish pleading with him to take the hook out of its mouth. Next day while he was cruising on the Pond of Kunming, he saw a fish with a hook in its mouth. Thereupon, he took the hook out and let it go free. Three days later, he got a pair of pearls from the bank of the pond.109

- original collected in 三秦記

The belief that deceased spiritual beings may interfere in human affairs or fate at any moment either favourably or unfavourably, is also extended to animals, for, in fact, they too have spirits which may work vengeance or bring rewards. The common point in here is that the animals who get help often come to render thanks to the dreamers, either by expressing gratitude or giving presents.

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109 TPGJ 276:2174 (no. 3, 漢武帝). See also TPYL 399:6b.
Decoded Messages

Among all the methods of divination, oneiromancy is the most important one.

Hanshu.¹

Dreams which are not interpreted are like letters which have not been opened. - Talmud.²

Sometimes, the message does not come in clear words and the need to determine its meaning arises. Oneiromancy (zhameng 占夢) has been practised and recorded since ancient times. The Zhouli 周禮 says that the interpretation of dreams was in the department of the Grand Augur (Dabu 大卜), which was responsible for directing religious rites, divination and astrological investigations.³ Oneiromancy was one of the methods used by the Grand Augur to "observe the felicitous or calamitous portents for the country" (guan guojia zhijixiong 觀國家之吉凶).⁴

General guidelines for categorizing images that occurred in dreams as auspicious or inauspicious were provided by Wang Fu 王符 (c. A. D. 78-163).

Images of clarity, purity, freshness, [lacuna] displaying stability and vigor; those of fair and luxuriant forests and groves of bamboo. Images of palaces and sundry implements, of the newly completed, of squareness and rectitude; of enlightenment and brilliance; those of mildness, harmony, of ascension, and flourishing. All of these are the auguries of happiness, of plans brought to completion, and matters accomplished. Images that are

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¹ Hanshu (Hong Kong: ZHSJ, 1970) 30:1773.
⁴ Zhouli goes on to say there are ten basic methods for oneiromancy, and each has nine variations. As a result there are ninety different ways to analyze dreams. Unfortunately, its interpretation methods are not extant. Ibid.
foul, filthy, rotting and broken; withered, desiccated, dark, and obfuscated; of obliquity, leaning, opposition, and perversity; of tottering and instability; of obstruction, stricture, darkness, and gloom; and of loosening, sinking, falling downwards, and decline - all portend plans impeded and not brought to fruition.5

But in most cases, it appears, the assessment as "good" or "bad" does not satisfy the dreamers, so that subsequently they make enquiries about the details in order to perform a ritual, either to "avert the evil" (mi qianjiu 弊譴咎), or to "attract the good" (zhi xiu zhen 致休禫).6 The method for determining the meaning of a dream can be described in a three-part structure in these narratives: 1. dreamers state their dream images; 2. interpreters decipher the cryptic meaning from the dream images by various different methods; 3. the verification of the dream.

The prerequisite for correctly divining the dream images relies significantly on the dreamer's descriptive abilities. As Wang Fu explains, sometimes "numberless transformations may occur on a given night, the dreamers may see a succession of hundreds of different things, and so it is difficult for them to examine and explain it" 一寢之夢, 或屢遷化, 百物代至,而其不能究道之.7 Indeed, it is especially true in the case of dreams which are extremely confused and disordered. Because of the inaccurate or


6 Offering sacrifices to spirits and being virtuous were two major methods used to "avert the evil" and "attract the good". Cf Lingzhen zhi 靈徵志 in Weishu 112a:2893. A similar idea was reflected in TPYL 397:5b, "xianzhe zhizhi zi gaige" 賢者知之自改革.

Incomplete description, the blame for misinterpretation of the dream images rests not on the diviners, but the dreamers themselves.  

The origin of dreams need to be authenticated, too. Not all dreams are regarded as manifestations from heaven. If the dreamers cannot differentiate heaven-sent dreams from "wild dreams" (yemeng 野夢) and "freak dreams" (kuangmeng 狂夢), there is possibility that dreams may not be fulfilled. This is because both "wild dreams" and "freak dreams" are considered to be "caused by demons who seize the soul while one is asleep and lead it astray".

Methods of deciphering cryptic meanings are various, however, we can group them into three major categories: deciphering meaning 1. by directly matching the dream images with waking realities; 2. by different kinds of indirect techniques; 3. by interpreting the dream images as the opposite of the waking realities. It is worth noting that the classification of techniques in oneiroscopy is somewhat artificial. It is difficult in practice to isolate any one of the techniques which we describe below. In fact, in most cases, various different techniques are employed at the same time to explain one dream episode.

8 This is the excuse usually employed by diviners in cases of wrong interpretation. See Liu Wenying, Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo, pp. 97-101.
10 A wide variety of verification methods were analyzed by different scholars. R. G. Wagner suggests using the following six techniques: matching by divination; matching by images; matching by names; matching by explanations; technical verification and factual verification, see "Imperial Dreams in China", pp. 12-18. In addition, see the methods that are used by Liu Wenying, Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo, pp. 72-96 and Fu Xiren 傅錫壬, "Meng de jieshi" 夢的解釋 (Tamkang Journal, no. 15, 1977), pp. 256-8. The methods that are used in this essay is mostly based on Liu's analysis.
Direct Matching

The simplest verification technique is directly matching the dream images with waking realities. This may be a straightforward match: someone dreams of an event; and the event later actually happens. Wang Chong observes that "having a direct dream, we dream of so-and-so, or of any gentleman, and, on the following day, see Mr. So-and-so, or the gentleman in question. That is direct" 直夢者, 夢見甲, 夢見君, 明日見甲與君, 此直也. When dreams provide us with very detailed information, including both plots and casts, the scenario of the dream can be a prediction of the future. R. G. Wagner states the distinctive features of dream narratives as follows:

Compared to most other heavenly manifestations, dreams were often much more complex, including entire narratives of events and detailed projections of the future. There is little in the other manifestations of heavenly decrees, such as portents, natural events, oracles, and the like, to match the specificity of dreams with regard to both cast and plot. The method of direct matching is what Wang Fu called "dream of direct correspondence" (zhīying zhimeng 直應之夢). The dream of King Wu's consort is a typical one:

Formerly, when King Wu's Consort I Chiang [Yi Jiang 邑姜] was about to give birth to T'ai-shu [Taishu 太叔], she dreamt that the Lord on High said to her, "I declare that your son will be called Yu [Yu 虞] and I

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shall give him T'ang [Tang 唐]." When T'ai-shu was born, his hand bore the character "yü", after which he was named. When King Ch'eng [Cheng 成王] brought down the house of T'ang, he invested T'ai-shu with the principality. This is called a dream of direct correspondence.14

The Chinese were not the only people to have such vivid scenarios in dream narratives. In the Bible, many examples of God's decree being laid down in dreams can be found. Dreams conveying direct messages in words were recorded in both the Old and New Testaments, "revealing the Jews as continuously recognising dreams as a channel of divine intervention and communication."15

The visual nature of dreaming has always seemed to overshadow any other sensory elements that might be present. There is rarely an example of an exclusively auditory dream in TPGJ. The dream is usually perceived by the dreamer's eyes rather than by his ears or intellect.16 In our area of study, the dream of Pan Jie 潘玠 is a good example. Reality matches exactly what happened in his dream.

Pan Jie 潘玠17 said that before he presented himself [chushen 出身]18 to take up an office, he had to have a dream. He and Zhao Zi Qin 趙自勤19

15 For instance, the dream of Jacob and Paul are the typical examples, see A. J. J. Ratcliff, The Nature of Dreams (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1939), pp. 36-38.
16 And even when the new methods for monitoring dreams were devised in recent years, "it so happened that the first discovery made was of the rapid eye movements (REM), which seemed, metaphorically at least, to watch the action of the dream." See E. Diamond, The Science of Dreams (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1962), p. 245.
17 His biography is in Lin Bao 林寶, Yuanhe xingzuan 元和姓纂 (Jiaokan guxi Hongshi kanben 校刊古歙洪氏刊本, 1880) 4:20a.
were selected [by the Bureau of Appointments] and had presented their names to the official hall, yet their official posts had not been notified for a long time. Later Jie said, "I've had a dream. The official posts are about to be notified." He dreamed that he and Ziqin paid their respects to the officials together, Jie was walking in front while Ziqin followed behind. When they reached the place where they paid their respects, Jie was at the east side while Zhao [Ziqin] was at the west. They laughed when they looked at each other. Three days later, their official posts were indeed notified. Jie was the Censor and Ziqin the Reminder. They paid their respects in the same day. At first, they were led and Jie walked in front while Ziqin followed behind. When they arrived at the court, Jie stood at the east and Ziqin at the west. So they laughed when they looked at each other, just like Jie's dream.  

-S original collected in 定命錄

Sometimes, several clues are presented in an account for direct matching.

Zhang Tianxi 張天锡, in Liangzhou 漢州 [in modern Gansu province], dreamed of a green dog which was very long, coming from south, wanting to bite him. He got on the bed to escape it, and then fell to the ground. Later Fu Jian 菻堅 [A.D. 338-385] sent a person called Gou Chang 菻萇, wearing a brocade robe which was green in its base colour. He came from the south and assualted Tianxi at the gate and won a great victory over him.  

-S original collected in 李產集異傳

The images in Zhang Tianxi's dream match exactly with the waking realities. The pronunciation of the assailter's surname (Gou 菻) is same as that of a "dog" (gou 狗); and his name (Chang 萇) is the same as "long" (chang 長).

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18 Presenting oneself to serve for the emperor is called "chushen" 出身, see Mi Heng's 彰衡 Yingwu fu 舉薦賦 in Xiao Tong 蕭統, Wenxuan 文選 (Li Shan 李善 annotated. Beijing: ZHSJ, 1981) 13:21b, "chen chushen er shizhu" 至出身而事主. "Chushen" 出身 is also a title given to successful examinees, such as "chushen" 出身 and "jidi chushen" 及第出身, see CH, p. 172.
19 According to Xin Tangshu, Zhao Ziqin served as the Director of the Palace Library during the reign of Tianbao 天寶 and compiled ten chapters of Dingming lun 定命論, see Xin Tangshu (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1975) 59:1542.
20 TPGJ 277:2199-2200 (no. 28, 潘玠).
21 TPGJ 276:2179 (no. 18, 張天錫). See also TPYL 400:9b. The historical background of this event is recorded in Jinshu 113-4:2883-2937 under the biography of Fu Jian (see especially pp. 2889-90, 2894, 2897-8).
(As noted above, the interpretation of a dream episode usually involves more than one kind of technique, here it involves phonetic analogy which we will discuss later.) Furthermore, the dream is verified by other evidence in terms of colour, direction and consequences. The dog's colour represents the green brocade robe; both assailants come from the south; the protagonist, in both cases, suffers unfortunate consequences: Tianxi gets hurt in the dream and is defeated in reality. From the above examples, we notice that direct matching is a very simple method in oneiromancy: features in dreams are verified by facts in reality. Correctly matching the two is the way to decipher its meaning.

**Indirect Interpretation**

Of course, different peoples created different myths just as different people dream different dreams. But in spite of all these differences, all myths and all dreams have one thing in common, they are all "written" in the same language, *symbolic language*. - Erich Fromm.²²

Not all messages are transmitted unequivocally. The images in dreams, in most cases, are like riddles that need to be solved and interpreted. They usually come not in clear words, but words veiled in mystery, gestures, and actions pointing to a cryptic meaning. Hence, they cannot be solved directly.

**Word Analogy**

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As Chinese writing can be described as pictographic or ideographic, dream images are able to be transformed into written words.\textsuperscript{23} We are all aware that the Chinese characters represent "not only a certain word and sound, as in all writing systems using a phonetic script, but also a picture of the particular entity designated by the character".\textsuperscript{24} Thus using the technique of "cazi" (dissecting characters; or "glyphomancy", as Joseph Needham calls it\textsuperscript{25}) to explain the dream image can "only have arisen in a culture with an ideographic language, such as China".\textsuperscript{26}

Chinese traditionally regarded written words as powerful tools to communicate between celestial and terrestrial worlds.\textsuperscript{27} Writing thus served as one channel for letting Heaven's will be known. Several divinatory techniques, such as "fuji" (or 扶乩; planchette or spirit writing)\textsuperscript{28}, in which written words figure prominently are commonly found in historical

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Gujin tushu jizheng} 古今圖書集成 has two chapters devoted to play in written characters, but are rather incoherent and unsystematic, see \textit{Yishu dian} in \textit{Gujin tushu jicheng} (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1935), ch. 747-8.


\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. But L. L. Mark points out that riddles are not impossible in languages having alphabetical scripts, for example, "What's round at both ends and high in the middle?" Answer: "Ohio", see "Riddles, Divination, and Word Magic" in \textit{Legend, Lore, and Religion in China}, p. 57. However, making riddles by means of employing alphabetical scripts is not as prevalent as those using Chinese characters; and relating it to dream images is hardly found.

\textsuperscript{27} As L. L. Mark remarks: 1. concepts and powers become verified and real when expressed in writing; 2. communication with the supernatural is possible in writing; 3. the future can also be revealed in written words. Ibid., p. 64.

\textsuperscript{28} L. L. Mark describes the method of "fuji" 扶乩 as follows: "According to reports about this technique, one or more persons, sometimes in trance, hold a sieve or a two-pronged stick to which a brush or rod has been attached. When the spirit is said to have arrived, the wielders write or make marks or characters on a piece of paper or in a bed of sand spread out on a table top. The marks or characters are then interpreted." Ibid., p. 58.
records. Attention was given to this kind of "orthography riddles" because of their prognosticatory nature. But special techniques are needed in order to fully comprehend the "riddles" that appear in dreams.

**(a) adding / reducing strokes or radicals**

One is employing the method of adding and reducing strokes ("tianbi" 添筆 and "jianbi" 減筆) to a certain word.

Du Xuan 杜玄 of Luozhou 洛州 [in modern Sichuan province] had a cow. Xuan had tender regard for it. One night, he dreamed of his cow having two tails. He asked diviner Li Xianyao 李仙藥 about it. Li said, "The character 'cattle' [niu 牛] with two tails is the character 'loss' [shi 失]." After a few days he did in fact lose it.

-S original collected in 朝野僉載

Similarly, Suo Dan 索紘 explains two dream accounts by means of employing the method of adding and reducing radicals.

Suo Chong 索充 dreamed of a captive who was undressed above the waist, coming to visit him. Suo Dan 索紘 divined it, saying, "Casting off the upper half [of the character] 'lu' 虜 [captive] leaves the character 'nan' 男 [man] below. A barbarian captive is under the category of 'yin'.

29 The term of "orthography riddles" was used by L. L. Mark referring to riddles "having the written word as objects to be guessed". Ibid., p. 44.

30 In the book called Buyi chaizi mizhuan 卜易拆字秘傳, edited by Fu Baotai 傅寶泰, apart from "tianbi" 添筆 and "jianbi" 減筆, there are many technical terms in glyphomancy, such as "zhaiqu" 摘取 (extracting), "zhuangtou" 裝頭 (loading the head), "jiejiao" 接腳 (wrapping up the legs), "chuanxin" 穿心 (going through the heart), "baolong" 包籠 (wrapping in a basket), "duiguan" 對關 (connecting opposites), see W. Bauer, "Chinese Glyphomancy (ch'ai-tzu) and Its Uses in Present-day Taiwan", pp. 81-2.

31 TPGJ 279:2217 (no. 5, 杜玄).

32 His biography is in Jinshu 95:2493-5.

33 Similar play on the word "lu" 虜 is also recorded in the biography of Xu Zhicai 許之才, see Beiqi shu 33:447.
Thus your wife will give birth to a baby-boy." Later it was indeed fulfilled.

Also, Song Tong 宋桶 dreamed of a person wearing a robe in his chamber [neizhong 内中].\(^{34}\) Tong held up two staffs in one hand and hit him vigorously. Suo Dan divined it, saying, "A person [ren 人] inside your chamber [nei 内] is the character of "rou 肉 [meat].\(^{35}\) The two staffs are a sign for chopsticks. You will eat a lot of meat." Tong passed by three households in three days, and in each of them he got meat to eat.\(^{36}\)

- original collected in 劉彦明燦煌錄

(b) integrating strokes or radicals

The following example is able to demonstrate how interpreters used the pictographic aspect of Chinese written language to integrate strokes and radicals to form a character in order to solve the dream's meaning. The word that the interpreter uses is "di 第 (grade). And in Chinese, "jidi" 及第 means being able to pass an examination.

Pei Yuanzhi 裴元質 of Hedong 河東 [in modern Shanxi province] first sat for the "jinshi" 進士 examination.\(^{37}\) The next day, he would be called to attend the "ce 策 examination.\(^{38}\) At night, he dreamed of a dog coming out from its kennel. He drew a bow to shoot it but his arrow went awry. He regarded the dream as inauspicious and asked a historian

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\(^{34}\) "Neizhong" 内中 refers to "imperial seraglio" or "chamber", see the exegesis of Wudi ji 武帝紀 in Hanshu by Yan Shigu 颜师古 and Wang Xianqian 王先谦 in CH, p. 141.

\(^{35}\) The original text in TPGJ is "neizhong youren, shi rouzi 而中有人, 是肉子也. This dream narrative is also quoted in Jinshu 95:2494. According to Jinshu, the phrase "rouzi 肉子 is written as 肉子. Considering the context here, I render it according to Jinshu.

\(^{36}\) TPGJ 276:2180 (no. 20, 索充宋桶).

\(^{37}\) See the translation and notes about the "jinshi" examination in Appendix D, TPGJ 278:2206-7 (no. 9, 皇甫弘).

\(^{38}\) "Ceshi" 策試 was one of the methods examining candidates' analytical abilities under the former civil examination system started in the Western Han. See "ce 策, Wenti mingbian 文體明辨 in ZWDCD, vol. 25, pp. 13-4.
whose surname was Cao 曹 about it. Cao said, "I also had this dream the night before I attended the 'ce' examination. The Spirit of Dream explained the meaning to me, saying, 'gou' 狗 [dog] forms the top radical of the character 'di' 等 [grade] [i.e. taking the '丫' as 'ì' ]. 40 'Gong' 弓 [bow] forms the main part of the character 'di' 等. 'Jian' 箭 [arrow] was the vertical stroke of 'di' 等. Adding the downward-to-the-left stroke, thus forms the [whole character of] 'di' 等." Not long after that, Yuanzhi attended the examination. It indeed matched with his dream. 41

--- original collected in 朝野僉載

(c) disintegrating characters

The diviner can sometimes disintegrate a character, taking it as formed by means of the method "huiyi" 会意 (semantic aggregate principle). 42 Yang Yuanzhen explains the dream image of leaning on a locust tree and wearing ceremonial dress of high officials as the portent of posthumously getting a high official rank.

In the Hou Wei 後魏 dynasty [A. D. 386-532], the Ruler of Guangyang 廣陽 [in modern Hebei province], Yuan Yuan 元淵 dreamed of wearing the ceremonial dress of high officials while leaning on a locust tree (in Chinese, 槐 "huai"). He then asked diviner Yang Yuanzhen

39 "Liangshi" 良史 was a title given for those who were good at recording historical events for the imperial court. For instance, Sima Qian 司馬遷 was said to have the capabilities of being "Liangshi" in Hanshu 62:2738.

40 Some radicals have modified forms which might be called "alloradicals". For example, the radical for “dog” has two forms: 犬 and 亻. But here it only turns the shape of 亻 90° to the right.

41 TPGJ 277:2199 (no. 27, 裴元贇).

42 In traditional Chinese philology, six distinct orthographic principles were recognized: "xiangxing" 象形 (depictive principle); "zhishi" 指事 (indicating principle); "huiyi" 会意 (semantic aggregate principle); "xingsheng" 形聲 (phonetic and semantic combination); "zhuanzhu" 轉注 (phonetic loan) and "jiajie" 借借 (semantic derivation). See Duan Yucai 段玉裁, Shuowen jiezi zhu 説文解字注 (Jingyun lou cangban 經韵樓藏版. Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1984), pp. 755-6.

43 According to Fan Xiangyong 范祥雍, "Yuan Yuan" 元淵 and "Yuan Shen" 元深 were the same person, see Yang Xuanzhi 楊衒之, Luoyang jialan ji 洛陽伽藍記 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1958) 2:130, note 48. Yuan Shen’s biography is in Weishu 18: 428-434.

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about it. Yuanzhen said, "You'll get the official rank of Sangong. He came out and said to others, "He will only get the official rank of Sangong after his death." The character "huai" 槐, is written as a ghost [gui 鬼] standing beside a tree [mu 木]. He indeed was killed by Zhu Rong 朱榮 [A. D. 493-530] and posthumously granted the title Situ 司徒. - original collected in 西陽雜俎

(d) sub-conclusion

Many examples employing the technique of integrating strokes or radicals can be found in historical records such as Fengsu tongyi 風俗通義, attributed to Ying Shao 應劭 (ca. A. D. 140-206). A jade oracle tablet on which the characters "eight" and "ten" appeared was read as "eighty" and interpreted as being the number of years that Emperor Wu of Han (B. C. 160-157) was living in the reign of Emperor Xiaoming of Northern Wei 北魏孝明帝. His name is quoted as "Yuanshen" 元慎 in Luoyang jialan ji. According to Luoyang jialan ji 2:117, he was very good at oneiromancy: His contemporaries compared him favourably to Zhou Xuan 周宣, a distinguished dream interpreter in the Three Kingdoms period.

"Sangong" 三公 were the three highest-ranking officials in imperial court of ancient China, but its titles and duties varied in different dynasties. In the Zhou dynasty, Taishi 太師, Taifu 太傅 and Taibao 太保 were called "Sangong". In the Han dynasty, they referred to Grand Minister of Education (Da Situ 大司徒), Commander-in-chief (Da Sima 大司马) and Grand Minister of Works (Da Sikong 大司空). See C. O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, p. 12 and no. 4871, p. 399.

According to Weishu, he was killed by Ge Rong 葛榮. The name of "Zhu Rong" 朱榮 is misquoted in Youyang zazu 西陽雜俎, see Fan Xiangyong's note in Luoyang jialan ji 2:120 and Weishu 18:433-4. According to Xiaoming di ji 孝明帝紀, in the second reign year of Xiaochang 孝昌 (A. D. 526), Yuan Yuan 元淵 (i.e. Yuan Shen 元深) originally sent armed forces to suppress Xianyu Xiuli 鮮于修禮. But Xiuli's army was taken over by Ge Rong 葛榮 after his death. Thus Yuan Yuan was later killed by Ge Rong, see Luoyang jialan ji 2:130, note 2.

According to Weishu, Yuan was killed by Ge Rong and thus entitled "Situ" after his death by Emperor Zhuang 莊帝. The war between him and Ge Rong was recorded in Weishu 18:428-434.

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Wang Jun's four-knives dream is well known in dream literature. He once dreamed of four knives (dao 刀) on top of him and regarded it as an inauspicious dream. But Li Yi 李毅 explained that three knives combining together was the character "zhou" 州. One more knife added onto it implied the character "yi" 益, meaning "adding". It was the portent for him to become the Magistrate of Yizhou 益州.49

Chan Hok-lam traces the beginning of this word play back to as early as the twelfth year of Duke Xuan 宣公 in Zuozhuan, where the character "wu" 武 (martial) is dissected as "zhige" 止戈 (to stop fighting; lit. "stop spears"). They are also frequently found in prophetic texts such as Tuibeitu 推背圖 and Shaobing ge 烏餅歌.50 Moreover, in the biography of Xu Zhicai 许之才 from Beiqi shu 北齊書, the surname of Wang Xin 王昕 was riddled in this way: 有言則訟, 近犬便狂, 加頸足而為馬.

48 See Ying Shao 应劭, Fengsu tongyi, pp. 10-11, quoted from L. L. Mark, "Riddles, Divination, and Word Magic", p. 58.
49 See Wuji 武紀 in Jinshu, quoted from TPYL 398:2b-3a. The technique of integrating radicals reminds us of a typical example (though not in a dream) in Shishuo xinyu 說新語, the compilation of popular tales and anecdotes from the fifth century. Yang Xiu 楊修 explained the riddle "yellow pongee, youthful wife, maternal grandson, ground in a mortar" 黃緞, 幼婦, 外孫, 糧曰 as "utterly wonderful, lovely words" (juemiao hao ci 絕妙好辭). His explanation was that yellow pongee was coloured silk (sesi 色絲), which combined in one character, was "jue" 絕; youthful wife was young woman (shaonu 少女 formed the character "miao" 妙); maternal grandson was a daughter's son (nuzi 女子 formed the character "hao" 好); ground in a mortar (shouxin 受辛) is to suffer hardship, which combined in one character was "ci" 辜. See ch. 11 of Shishuo xinyu by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (Beijing: Wenxue guji kanhangshe, 1955) and Richard B. Mather (tr. & ed.), Shishuo Hsin-yu: A New Account of Tales of the World (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 293.
50 Tuibeitu and Shaobing ge were two prognosticatory texts written respectively in Tang and Ming dynasties. Heavy use of allusions based on the principles of glyphomancy are found among the texts. See "The Baked Cake Ballad: A Prophecy Book Attributed to Liu Chi (1311-1375)" in Essays in Chinese Studies presented to Professor Lo Hsiang-lin (Hong Kong, 1970), pp. 163-199, quoted from W. Bauer, "Chinese Glyphomancy (ch'ai-tzu) and Its Uses in Present-day Taiwan", p. 72.
施角尾而為羊 (When given a "word", he is prone to "cheat" 詐; put next to a "dog", it turns "mad" 狂; applying a neck and feet, it becomes a "horse" 馬; and added horns and a tail, it changes into a "goat" 羊). 51 Perhaps the best known surname riddle is based on Li 李 being written as eighteen sons (十, 八 和 子). 52

In order to solve this kind of dream, diviners require not only "a perfect mastery of the script and an unusually wide reading to find out all the associations which can be related to one single character" 53, but also a quick mind to relate a dream image to waking realities.

It is worth noting that by expounding sub-characters of a Chinese ideogram, it is often too easy to conjecture meanings that are sometimes bizarre. Take modern scholar Hean-Tatt Ong who associates Chinese written words to Biblical stories. He associates the character "boat" (chuan 船) to the great flood in the Bible.

The word chuan (boat) was associated with some famous event where eight persons and a big boat were involved [i.e. the word 船 is separated into three parts: "舟", "八" and "口"]. Looking through conventional Chinese history we may not realise what sort of famous event this could be. However, if Biblical history is reflected in Chinese memory in some way, then the Biblical Flood is a logical basis for that famous ancient event of "eight persons and a boat" giving rise to the actual meaning of the word "chuan" for "boat". 54

51 Quoted from Beiqi shu 33:447. See the section of "rhetoric" in W. H. Nienhauser, The Indiana Companion to Classical Chinese Literature, p. 135.
52 Quoted from W. Bauer, "Chinese Glyphomancy (ch'ai-tzu) and Its Uses in Present-day Taiwan", p. 72.
53 This was the comment made by W. Bauer regarding solving riddles, but it is also the prerequisite for dream interpreters. Ibid., p. 87.
The method of associating the ideas indicated by the sub-characters to provide the overall meaning of the ideogram may run into risk. He takes "船" as word made by means of the principle of "huiyi" (semantic aggregate). But according to the lexicographer of the Eastern Han, Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. A.D. 58-147), "船" is made by the principle of "xingsheng" 形聲 (phonetic and semantic combination). While the discussion of the above character's origin is best left for lexicographers, our intention here is only to point out that by interpreting sub-characters of a Chinese ideogram, it is often too easy to conjecture meanings. The dream interpreters in the past and modern scholar Hean-Tatt Ong serve as the good examples.

**Phonetic Analogy**

Though not linguistically appropriate or reasonable, deriving meaning from pronunciation was not an unusual practice in traditional Chinese hermeneutics. In Han dynasty, *Shiming* 釋名, attributed to Liu Xi 劉熙, was a dictionary using mainly pronunciation to denote meanings. Not surprisingly, dream narratives making reference to puns are not infrequent.

(a) jieyin 借音

Dreams can be explained according to the method of "jieyin" 借音: a homonymic pun pointing to a semantic association (cf. "syllepsis" in

55 See the explanation of the six principles in Duan Yucai, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, pp. 755-6 and note 42.
56 Xu Shen explains the word "chuan" 船 to be formed by combining the meaning of "zhou" 舟 (boat) and the sound of "yuan" 聲. See Duan Yucai, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, p. 403, "Chuan, zhouye, chongzhou, yuansheng" 从舟聲.
Zhang Mao 張茂 dreams of an elephant, which is a big animal (shou 獸). As "prefect" (shou 守) has the same pronunciation, interpreter Wan Tui 萬推 foretells that he will become a prefect.

Zhang Mao 張茂 [A.D. 278-324] of Kuaiji 會稽 [in modern Zhejiang province] once dreamed of a big elephant. He asked Wan Tui 萬推 about it. Tui said, "You will be [the administrator] of a big province, but you will not have a natural death. An elephant is a big animal. From its pronunciation, an animal [shou 獸] refers to a prefect [shou 守]. An elephant is burnt because of its tusks, so you will certainly be murdered."

In the reign of Yongchang 永昌 [A.D. 322], Mao was the Prefect of Wuxing 吳興 [in modern Zhejiang province]. At that time, Wang Dun 王敦 [A.D. 266-324] aspired to the throne [lit. sought the cauldron, 間鼎]. Mao upheld the right and did not waver. Dun then sent Shen Chong 沈充 to kill him.63

Traditionally, Chinese were divided into four social classes, ranging from scholars at the top to farmers, workers and merchants (shi, nong, gong, shang 士農工商). The attainment of official position was the dream of nearly all scholars in imperial China because it also implied having power and prestige. Thereby, dreams relating to the dreamer's political career paths have received particular attention. As coffin (guan 棺) has the same pronunciation as official post (guan 官), it was then taken as the symbol for

57 See the section of "rhetoric" in W. H. Nienhauser, The Indiana Companion to Classical Chinese Literature, p. 135.
58 The pronunciation of "獣" and "守" were also the same in medieval China, both pronounced eiau, 舍救切, see Li Zhenhua 李珍華 & Zhou Changyi 周長楫, Hanzi gujinyinhiao 漢字古今音表 (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1993), p. 422.
59 His biography is in Jinshu 78:2064-5.
60 The phrase "an elephant is burnt because of its tusks" (xiang youchi yifen qishen 象有齒以焚其身) originated from Zuozhuan, see CH, p. 1264.
61 His biography is in Jinshu 98:2553-2568.
62 He was Wang Dun's general, see Jinshu, ibid.
63 TPGJ 276:2181 (no. 24, 張茂). See also TPYL 399:2b. This dream narrative is also recorded in Jinshu 78:2065.
being appointed in government bureaucracy. For instance, the dreambook in *Dunhuang yishu* 敦煌遗書 says, "Dream of a coffin, get an official post, auspicious" (mengjian guanmu, deguan, ji 夢見棺木, 得官, 吉). 65

One could even count how many different official posts would occur in a political career by counting coffins appearing in a dream.

Zhao Liangqi 赵良器 once dreamed of having more than ten coffins arrayed in an even row. He trod on them one by one, starting from the east. On the eleventh one, the coffin broke; and his feet were trapped. He was later indeed transferred to eleven official posts and died in the post of Member of the Secretariat Drafter. 66

The coffins might be arrayed horizontally, in the dream of Zhao Liangqi; or vertically. Gao Shi 高適 dreams of a pile of coffins stacked up from the floor to the roof. By the side, there is one that is extremely spacious. This portends that he will consecutively hold various official posts. The oversized coffin implies that he was always a relaxed official.

When Gao Shi 高適 [A. D. 765] 67 served as the Administrator of Guangling 廣陵 [in modern Jiangsu province], he once told others, "Recently, I dreamed of a pile of coffins, stacked up in a hall, from the floor to the roof. By the side, there was one coffin which was extremely spacious. When I lay down in it, I did not fill it up in any direction. I don't know what this dream means." Later he consecutively held various official posts.

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64 The pronunciation of "棺" and "官" were also the same in medieval China, both pronounced "kuan", see Z. H. Li & C. Y. Zhou, *Hanzi gujiao yubiao*, p. 205.
65 See Bo 伯 3105 in *Dunhuang yishu* 敦煌遗書, quoted from Liu Wenying, *Meng de mixin yu mengde tansuo*, p. 92. Similar interpretation is found in Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo xinlu* 4:72b and the biography of Yin Hao 殷浩 in *Jinshu* 77:2043.
66 TPGJ 277:2198 (no. 24, 赵良器).
67 His biography is in *Jiu Tangshu* (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1975) 111:3328-3331 and *Xin Tangshu* 143:4679-4681.
Moreover, the position of the coffin is also worth noting:

Before Li Fengji 李逢吉 took charge of imperial rescript, there was, in his family, an old slave who was fond of telling about her dreams. Later most of them were fulfilled. Mr. Li was long hoping to be appointed to an office, so he inquired with his slave. One day, the slave came sadly. Mr. Li asked for the reason. She said, "Last night I had an inauspicious dream for you. I intend not to tell you." But Mr. Li compelled her to tell him. She said, "I dream of somebody lifting a coffin to the back of the hall, and said, 'Let's place it here in the mean time.' Not long after that it was moved to the centre of the hall. I am afraid that this is not an auspicious dream." [But] after hearing, Mr. Li was very happy. Soon he was appointed to be the Secretariat Drafter and later became the Examination Administrator. Before he had finished this post, he became the Grand Councilor.

(b) fanyu 反語

Sometimes, the linguistic involvement in such dream episodes is much more complicated. One kind of rhetorical figure often employed is fanyu 反語.

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68 According to Jiu and Xin Tangshu, Gao Shi had taken various official posts including the District Defender of Fengqiu 封丘, Investigating Censor, Attendant Censor, Grand Masters of Remonstrance, Chief Secretary and Supervisor of the Household etc.

69 According to Jiu Tangshu, he was degraded by Li Fuguo 李輔國 as the Junior Supervisor of the Household of the Heir Apparent because of his outspoken character.

70 TPGJ 277:2198 (no. 24, 趙良器). In Jiu Tangshu and Xin Tangshu, Gao Shi is described as "zheng cun kuanjian, limin bianzhi" 政存寬簡, 吏民便之 and "zheng kuanjian, suoli, ren bianzhi" 政寬簡, 所泣, 人便之, see 111:3331 and 143:4681 respectively.

71 His biography is in Jiu Tangshu 167:4365-8 and Xin Tangshu 174:5221-3.

Fanyu, the same as fanqie 反切, was originally employed to denote the sound of a word that was not known. It is a method of phonetic notation by spelling two characters together - taking the initial of the first character and the rhyme of the second to form one word. For instance, 飞 and 本 (pronounced as "fei" and "ben" respectively) can be used to denote the sound of 飞 ("fen") by taking the initial "f" from "fen" and the rhyme "en" from "ben".

Fanyu can be employed in two different ways, zhengqie 正切 and daoqie 倒切. Zhengqie is the method described above; daoqie is the other way round: taking the initial of the second character and the rhyme of the first to form another word. For instance, the daoqie of 北 and 力 is 位 (pronounced as "lei") - this is formed by taking the initial "l" from the second character "li" 力 and the rhyme ("ei") of the first "bei" 北. The way of employing zhengqie and fanqie together is usually used in interpreting punning dreams, which Wenxin diaolong 文心雕龍 describes as fanyin 反音. For instance, "sang-luo" 桑落 can be deduced from "suo-lang" 索郎 by using this method - i.e. taking "s" from "suo" 索 and "ang" from "lang" 郎 to form "sang" 桑; and taking "l" from "lang" 郎 and "uo" from "suo" 索 to form "luo" 落.

This method is employed by Li Tongli 李通禮 to decipher his uncle Zhang Yi's 張鎰 dream.

74 See CH, p. 234.
75 See Zhixia 指瑕 in Liu Xie's 劉勰 Wenxin diaolong 文心雕龍 (Yang Mingzhao 楊明照 annotated. Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1958) 41:263.
In the reign of Dali 大曆 [A. D. 766-779], Zhang Yi 張鎰 [A.D. ?-783] was the Acting Imperial Secretary in the Ministry of Works and the Supervisor of the Ministry of Revenue. Because he presented a report in full accordance with the ideas of the emperor, Daizong 代宗 [A. D. 726-779] in person foreshadowed his appointment to the post of Grand Councilor. He received great generosity from the emperor. Mr. Zhang hoped for the appointment everyday, but after several tens of days, no letter arrived. At night, he dreamed of somebody coming in abruptly from the door. Raising his voice, he said, "Rendiao baixiang" 任調拜相. Mr. Zhang woke up startled. He recalled no person by this name and puzzled over its meaning but he could not solve it.

He had a nephew called Li Tongli 李通禮. Tongli was an erudite scholar and very wise. Because of this, Mr. Zhang called and informed him about the dream in person. He ordered him to search out its meaning. Scholar Li pondered for a long while, and then congratulated his uncle, "You'll be the Grand Councilor." Mr. Zhang immediately asked for his reasons. Tongli replied, "'Raojian' 饴甜 [very sweet-tasting] is the fanyu of 'rendiao' 任調. Among all the very sweet-tasty food, none can be sweeter than 'gancao' 甘草 [glycyrrhiza]. 'Gancao' is one kind of 'zhenyao' 真藥 [precious medicine]." The fanyu of 'zhenyao' is your name." Not long after that, a mounted courier announced, "The white hemp 78 has been issued.

Mr. Zhang was offered the post of Vice-director of the Secretariat and Jointly Manager of Affairs. 79

- original collected in 集異記

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76 His biography is in Jiu Tangshu 125:3545-9 and Xin Tangshu 152:4829-31.
77 According to The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), glycyrrhiza glabra "contains a peculiar sugar, which is uncrystallizable, called glycicon or glycyrrhizin, and other matters", see vol. IV, p. 243. For the details regarding glycyrrhiza glabra, see Zhongyao da cidian 中藥大辭典 (Shanghai: Kexue jishu chubanshe, 1978), pp. 567-573.
78 According to Tang huiyao 唐會要, in the Tang dynasty, the imperial command such as designating the Queen, the crown prince, or appointing officials was written on white hemp fabric; while yellow hemp fabric was used for dismissing officials or promulgating law and order. See CH, p. 928.
79 TPGJ 278:2202-3 (no. 1, 張鎰). The post of "Jointly Manager of Affairs" 平章事 signifies that, in addition to his regular appointment, Zhang Yi is serving concurrently as a Grand Councilor. "In the last half of the Tang era, dozens of men at a time had such nominal status, including regional warlords, though the number of active Grand Councilors generally did not exceed four or five", quoted from C. O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, p. 30, see also no. 5278, pp. 426-7.
Zhang Yi dreams of a man announcing four characters "rendiao baixiang" 任調拜相 in his dream. No one but Tongli can decipher its meaning. First, he explains, "rendiao" is the fanyu of "raotian" 饒甜 (very luscious taste). This must be understood by using the medieval pronunciation. In medieval times, "任" and "調" were pronounced "rie m" and "dieu" respectively. Using the method of fanyu, "rieu" and "djęem" can be derived, and they match the medieval pronunciation of the word "饒甜" (rieu djęem).

Next, he deduces "gancao" 甘草 (glycyrrhiza glabra) from "raotian" 饒甜. And "gancao" 甘草 is one kind of "zhenyao" 珍藥, which is the fanyu of his uncle's name, Zhang Yi 張鎬. Thus, the four words "rendiao baixiang" which appear in his uncle's dream are same as "Zhang Yi baixiang" 張鎬拜相 (Zhang Yi will become the Grand Councilor).

Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 claims that the method of fanyu was used for making fun and deliberately hiding real meanings from the Han to the Tang. He lists more than ten examples of fanyu under the topic of "fanyu kao" 反語考. "Da-tong" 大同 is the fanyu of "tong-tai" 同泰; "shu-bao" 叔寶 is the fanyu of "shao-fu" 少福; "yuan-min" 袁愍 is the fanyu of "yun-men" 殇門; "xi baima" 洗白馬 is the fanyu of "xie baimi" 瀉白米; and "wenxiu" 溫休 is the fanyu of "youhun" 幽婚.

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81 Ibid., p. 266 and 444.
82 In medieval China, "珍", "藥", "張" and "鎬" were pronounced as "tién", "jiâk", "tiâng" and "jiéjè" respectively, see Hanzi gujin yinbiao, p. 162, 190, 322 and 347. But the fanyu of "鎬" is only similar to the pronunciation of "鎬".
84 See Liang Wudi ji 樊武帝紀 in Nanshi, ibid.
85 See Chen Houzhu ji 陳後主紀 in Nanshi, ibid.
86 See the biography of Yuan Can 袁粲傳 in Nanshi, ibid.
87 TPGJ 289:2220 (no. 11, 李伯憤).
Symbolism

Sometimes, the relationship between the dream images and the waking realities may be symbolic. In such a case, the images predict the future in cryptic form, making it necessary for interpreters to translate it into earthly language. The earliest dream record in Chinese literature using the method of symbolism can be traced back to *Shijing*, compiled around 600 B.C. Bears were the symbol for male; snakes and cobras for female. According to Zheng Xuan's annotation, bears lived in mountains while snakes and cobras lived in caves; they were the auspicious omens of "yang" and "yin" respectively. Hence they symbolize giving birth to sons or daughters. By analyzing Wang Chong's theory, A. Forke concludes that the Chinese are full of such wonderful signs:

Of omens or portents there are auspicious and inauspicious ones, lucky or unlucky auguries. Freaks of nature, and rare specimens, sometimes only existing in imagination, are considered auspicious e.g. sweet dew and wine springs believed to appear in very propitious times, in the vegetable kingdom: the purple boletus, and auspicious grass, in the animal kingdom: the phoenix, the unicorn, the dragon, the tortoise, and other fabulous animals.

Symbolic images in dreams can often be traced back to such wonderful signs recorded in official and unofficial records. They come not in clear words,

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88 TPGJ 316:2500-1 (no. 4, 夷充).
90 Zhu Xi, *Shi jizhuan* 11:125.
but words veiled in mystery, gestures, and actions pointing to a hidden meaning. This is what Wang Fu called "symbolic dreams" (xiang zhi meng 象之夢). 92 Some prevalent symbolic signs found in TPGJ are translated below. The sun appearing in one's dream obviously is the symbol of eminence (guizheng 貴徴). 93

Lü Ying 閆英 of Hou Wei 後魏 [A.D. 386-532] was the Magistrate of Feicheng 肥城 [in modern Shandong province]. He dreamed that the sun fell into the river of Huangshan 黃山 94 where he lived. Villagers using both vehicles and cattle could not manage to pull it out, but Ying carried it back by holding it on his head with both arms. He was later given the title of Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary. 95

The ability of getting hold of the sun is symbolic of being eminent, apparently referring to appointment to office in imperial times. In some cases, the sun is symbolic of extreme eminence, i.e. the emperor.

Xuanzong 玄宗 dreamed of falling into a well. A soldier, wearing scarlet trousers, carried him on his back to help him out. The next day, Xuanzong made an imperial order to search among the soldiers, but no such person could be found. Then he ordered to investigate the imperial garden, where a door-keeper, wearing scarlet trousers, was found. So he was presented to the emperor. The emperor asked, "What have you dreamed last night?" He replied, "I carried the sun out on my back from a well up to Heaven." The emperor looked at his appearance and it matched the one in his dream, so he asked him, "Do you want to be a government official?" He replied, "Your servant doesn't know how to be a government official. Your servant's family is poor." Thereupon the emperor made an imperial order to give him five hundred thousand cash. 96

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93 TPYL 397:8a.
94 Huangshan 黃山 is a very common name for mountains in China. Both modern Anhui and Hebei province have a mountain called Huangshan.
95 TPGJ 277:2189 (no. 1, 閆英).
96 TPGJ 277:2196-7 (no. 20b, 玄宗).
The relationship between these two has been established since Han dynasty: *Wuxing zhi* 五行志 stated the sun was the symbolic of the emperor, "Rizhe, t'aiyang zhijing, renjun zhixiang" 日者, 太陽之精, 人君之象." Hence, Emperor Wu of Han's mother dreamed that a spiritual girl bestowed the sun on her when she got pregnant. In the Song dynasty, when Taizong, Zhenzong, Renzong and Lingzong's mothers got pregnant, none of them had not dreamed of the sun.

Furthermore, there are a great number of well-known elements in symbolic dreams which link the dream with waking realities. The reasons why the equations are made often can be found in earlier dream-books. Towers, belvederes, hills and mountains are symbols of official posts. When a man dreams of ascending a tower or a belvedere, or of mounting a hill or a mountain, he usually will get an office. A writing brush is symbolic of creative writings. When Jiang Yan dreams of someone giving him a five-coloured brush, it is symbolic of giving him the ability to compose essays; and the returning of the brush is symbolic that his talent has been exhausted. A plum is symbolic of the judge. A hairpin is symbolic of

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97 *Hou Hanshu* 18:3357.
98 See *Waiqi shijia* 外戚世家 in *Shiji* 49:1975. Also, see TPYL 397:8a.
100 In *Mengshu* 夢書, a list of correspondence between the signifiers and the signified was recorded, see *Jingdian jilin* 經典集成 in *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成 30:1-5.
102 TPGJ 277:2192 (no. 10, 梁江淹). See also the dream narrative of Jiang Yan in pp. 30-1.
103 *Fafa pian* 法法篇 of Guanzi 管子, "Gao Tao wei li" 皋陶為李. Gao Tao was a famous judge in the reign of Shun 舜. Plums were then taken as symbolic of judges. See Liu Wenying, *Meng de mixin yu mengde tansuo*, p. 78 and CH, p. 936.
the dreamer himself. Pine is symbolic of the superior man; dreaming of pine is symbolic of having an audience with an emperor or superior man.

However, one would not have complete success if one interpreted dream symbols by simply drawing an analogy between the signifier and the signified. Instead, a successful oneirocritic must pay meticulous attention to each image, and treat them as an individual unit in different dreams (suiyi huiqing 隨意會情).

**Semantic Analogy**

Semantic analogy is a method that first transfers the dream image into the related object, and then proceeds to derive meaning on the basis of it. Dream books are full of such analogies: rulers and measures are tools for measurement, thus are the symbol of the desire to admonish others. The cooking stove is in the kitchen where women usually work, thus it is the symbol of worrying about marriage. Willow is often a gift to the travellers, so it is the symbol for emissary.

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104 TPYL 688:9a, "Zan zhe wei shen" 箇者為身.
105 Pine is regarded as the best among all trees. See Zishuo 字說, quoted from Liu Wenying, *Meng de mixin yu mengde tansuo*, p. 78. Thus it is symbolic of the superior man. See Gujin tushu jicheng 144:39a, "Song wei renjun, mengjian songzhe, jian renjun zhizheng ye" 松為人君, 夢見松者, 見人君之徵也. See also TPYL 953:11b.
106 See Yang Xuanzhi, *Luoyang jialan ji* 2:120.
107 See Liu Wenying, *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo*, p. 82.
109 Yiwen leiju 藝文類聚 80:26b, "Mengjian zaozhe, you quifu jianu" 夢見竈者, 憂求婦嫁女.
110 TPYL 957:6a, "Liu wei shizhe, mengjian liu, dang chuyou ye" 柳為使者, 夢見柳, 當出游也.
In our area of study, several examples can be found. Phoenixes are traditionally regarded as an auspicious sign\(^{111}\), but phoenixes that perch on the fists become an omen of a parent's death.

A person whose family name was Sun 宋 wanted to be appointed to office. He dreamed that two phoenixes perched on his two fists. He asked diviner Song Dong 宋董 about it. Dong said, "The phoenix rests on nothing except paulownia, and eats nothing except bamboo fruit.\(^{112}\) A great disaster will befall you. If it does not refer to your father's death, then it refers to your mother's [juzhang 柏杖 or xiezhang 削杖].\(^{113}\) Later Sun indeed encountered his mother's death.\(^{114}\)

Paulownia has been dubbed the "phoenix-tree" and has long been considered the bird's rightful perch.\(^{115}\) This is because phoenixes rest on nothing except paulownia, and eat nothing except bamboo fruit. Phoenixes gathering on a dreamer's hands imply the paulownia or bamboo. As paulownia and bamboo staffs were used in parents' funerals, this is the portent of parents' death. Furthermore, pine is grown in funeral places, thereby it relates to the

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\(^{112}\) According to Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 annotation, the "bamboo" cited is almost surely not the modern bamboo, see D. R. McGraw, "Along the Wutong Trail: The Paulownia in Chinese Poetry" in *Chinese Literature Essays, Articles, Reviews* (vol. 10, no. 1 & 2, July 1988), p. 86.
\(^{113}\) According to *Liji sangfu xiaoji 礼记丧服小记*, "juzhang, zhuye" 菰杖, 竹也. "Juzhang" is a bamboo staff used when one's father dies; "xiezhang, tongye" 削杖, 桐也. "Xiezhang" is a paulownia staff used when one's mother dies. See Chen Hao 陈澔, *Liji jishuo 礼记集说* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1969) 15:181.
\(^{114}\) TPGJ 276:2186 (no. 44, 孫氏). See also TPGJ 279:2216 (no. 1, 蕭吉) (For the translation, see Appendix D) and TPYL 400:9b.
funeral affairs.\textsuperscript{116} Zhang Mou dreaming of an elephant signifies his death, as an elephant is burnt because of its precious tusks.\textsuperscript{117} The ceremonial dress that Yuan Yuan wears in dreams is the attire of highly eminent officials, thus is the portent for getting the title of "Sangong".\textsuperscript{118}

\textbf{Antithesis}

Dreams are often interpreted as the antithesis of their apparent meanings. For instance, a dream of wearing new clothes indicates you'll get sick; a dream of crying is greatly auspicious.\textsuperscript{119} The method of antithetical interpretation is not only found in Chinese dream narratives, but also in Western cultures. R. K. Gnuse remarks, "Dreaming that the god cursed you implied blessing, catching a bird meant loss of possessions, and a woman kissing her husband signified ill fortune."\textsuperscript{120} In an ancient Egyptian document, a typical entry using opposite explanation is found, "If a man sees himself in a dream, seeing himself dead, good; it means a long life for him."\textsuperscript{121}

There are some good examples of this in TPGJ. When Emperor Wen of Sui 隋文帝 dreams that he does not have his left-hand, he is extremely

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} TPGJ 279:2221 (no. 13, 于堇).
\item \textsuperscript{117} TPGJ 276:2181 (no. 24, 張茂). See also the interpretation in p. 51.
\item \textsuperscript{118} TPGJ 277:2190 (no. 5, 元淵). See also pp. 46-7.
\item \textsuperscript{119} In Dunhuang yishu, Bo 伯 3908, Xinji Zhougong jiémeng shu 新集周公解夢書, quoted from Liu Wenying, Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo, appendix 3, p. 347.
\item \textsuperscript{121} E. Diamond, The Science of Dreams, pp. 21-2. In Dunhuang yishu, Bo 3281, there is a similar entry, see Liu Wenying, Zhongguo gudai de mengshu 中國古代的夢書 (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1990), p. 10.
\end{itemize}
distressed. However, an old monk explains that only one fist left is the metaphor of becoming the son of Heaven. Since "fist" (quan 拳) is the same pronunciation of "power" (quan 權); having only one fist (duquan 獨拳) implies the meaning of having power only for himself (duquan 獨權). It is then an auspicious omen.

Before Emperor Wen of Sui 隋文帝 [A.D. 541-604] became eminent, he commonly travelled by boat on the river. At night, he moored it in the middle of the river and dreamed that he was without his left-hand. When he woke, he was greatly upset. When he went ashore, he visited a thatched hermitage. There was an old monk in the hermitage who had [acquired] the very essence of the dao. He told his dream to the monk in detail. [After hearing his dream], the monk stood up, congratulating him, saying, "Having no left-hand means you will hold power alone [duquan 獨拳; lit. having a single fist]. You will be the Son of Heaven." Later Emperor Wen re-built the hermitage as the Jixiang Si 吉祥寺 [The Monastery of Good Omens]. It was situated thirty li from Wuchang 武昌 [in modern Hubei province].

- original collected in 獨異志

Shen Qingzhi 沈慶之 once dreams of leading a line of official vehicles to the lavatory. He feels exceedingly uneasy about it. But someone explains to him that it is an auspicious dream. As for the line of official vehicles, they are the features of being wealthy and eminent. From the dynasties of Wei and Jin, people had the superstition that the spirit of the lavatory (ceshen 廁神) was equivalent as the next coming emperor, so it is the portent that Qingzhi will become eminent - though not now.

122 As "duquan" 獨拳 is homonymous as 獨權, here I render it as the latter meaning in order to make explicit its meaning.
123 TPGJ 277:2193 (no. 13,隋文帝).
In the reign of Yuanjia 元嘉 [A. D. 424], Shen Qingzhi 沈慶之, first dreamed of leading official vehicles [lubu 卤部] into the toilet. Although he was happy that the way was cleared for him [qingdao 清道], he detested it. Someone explained the dream for him, saying, "You will be eminent, but not now. Official vehicles are the features of the wealthy and eminent. [The spirit] of the toilet is what called the 'next emperor'. You will be wealthy and eminent, but not in this dynasty." Later his dream was indeed fulfilled.  

Dreams requiring antithetical interpreting are called "antithetical dreams" or "fanzhong guiyu" 反中詭遇 (mystically met and fulfilled by antithetical interpretation). Wang Fu explains the phenomenon as the good fortune of "yin" at its height and the misfortune of "yang" at its nadir is what is known as "antithetical" and postulates the following explanation for it, "Could it be that men's waking hours are 'yang' and the sleep state is 'yin', hence the individual functions of yin and yang are antithetical [during the sleeping state]?"
Verification by Other Divinatory Methods

Dream as a means of prognostication is interconnected with other divinatory methods such as astrology, palmistry, physiognomy; or reading the cracks in the tortoise shell, interpreting the Yijing hexagrams. As dream is a rather private matter, proofs from other verification methods are indeed helpful to verify its credibility, especially "if an imperial dream with its dramatic consequences is to acquire public credibility, the proofs and verifications must needs be in the public domain outside the control of the dreamer".133 According to Shangshu 尚書, King Wu's武王 attack against the Shang was justified by the agreement (xie 协) of what was manifested in his dream and the divination result of Yijing. As they were in agreement, the promise of Heaven was unequivocal that he was sure to succeed.134 The effect is "double authentication: the external texts authenticate the dream, and their being announced in the dream authenticates their heavenly origin".135

It seems that Heaven by means of me, is going to rule the people. My dream coincides with my divination, [confirming by] duplication the auspicious omens. My attack against the Shang will certainly succeed"136

Tang Gaozu's唐高祖 dream, in our area of study, is the same as the case of King Wu. The text of Yijing is taken for reference in his dream. Falling off his bed is the portent of the thirty-sixth hexagram, Mingyi 明夷, meaning brightness obscured.137 According to Xun巽 hexagram, the

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134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., p. 16.
136 Ibid., p. 12.
137 According to its "tuanci" 象辭, "The symbol of the Earth and that of Brightness entering into the midst of it give the idea of Mingyi (Brightness wounded or obscured)" 明入地中, 明夷. See Z. D. Sung, The Text of Yi King (And Its
representative of the sun (referring symbolically to Tang Gaozu himself) beneath a couch, though he'll in confusion, there will be good fortune and no error. And the interpreter goes on to predict that his son would harmonize this auspicious dream based on the Gu hexagram:

Tang Taizong 唐太宗 [A. D. 599-649] was given the title Qinwang 秦王 when he was eighteen years old [A. D. 618]. On the night he first planned with Magistrate of Jinyang 晉陽 [in modern Shanxi province] Liu Wenjing 劉文靖 [A. D. 568-619], Gaozu 高祖 dreamed he fell off his bed, and that his entire body was eaten by worms and maggots. He detested this dream and enquired about it from Zhi Man 智滿, the Dhyana master in the Anle Si 安樂寺 [Monastery of Peacefulness and Joyfulness].

The secular surname of the master was Jia 賈 He was a native of Xihe 西河 [in modern Henan or Shanxi province]. His practice of the precepts was high and pure. The master said, "This dream worth your paying obeisance. As for the person who is under the bed, this refers to 'your majesty'. As for being eaten by a group of maggots, it is what is called 'all men's lives rely totally on one person.'" Gaozu greatly appreciated his words.

He again said, "Your poor monk has learned some [principles of] Yijing. Taking the dream images to divine, it is the portent of Mingyi 明夷. According to Yijing, 'The representative of the sun beneath a couch, though in confusion; there will be good fortune and no error [xun zai zhuangxia, funruo wuju]. It is auspicious in the morning and inauspicious in the evening. This refers to a big event and not to a small one. If you take it as a small event, you will not succeed; but if you take it as a big one, you will succeed. You can proceed to big events to save everyone's lives. Nowhere that you proceed to will not be smooth, so you will be sure to succeed!'"


138 This is quoted from the fifty-seventh hexagram of Yijing: "Xun" 离, see Z. D. Sung, The Text of Yi King, p. 240, "The second Nine (or line, undivided) shows the representative of Sun beneath a couch, and employing diviners and exorcists in a way bordering on confusion. There will be good fortune and no error." 九二, 离在床下, 用史巫紛若, 吉, 無咎.

139 See the above note of Mingyi 明夷 hexagram.

140 See the above note of Xun 离 hexagram.
Gaozu changed his facial expression, saying, "Though I've received your good guidance, I dare not yet accept." The monk looked askance at Qinwang, saying, "Your son will harmonize the auspicious dream of your majesty, that is what called 'A son dealing with the troubles caused by his father. If he be an [able] son, the father will escape the blame of having erred 幹父之蟲, 考用無咎." The law of Heaven and of mundane affairs can be known explicitly. You cannot resolutely decline them. It is what the Heaven bestows on you. If it is what Heaven bestows on you and you don't accept it, censure will sure be received. Nothing will be impossible."

Gaozu paid his respects and thanked him, saying, "How lucky is your student! It is my intention to trouble you again for such serious exhortations. How could I dare not to follow your advice respectfully!" - original collected in 廣德神異録

Clearly one dream image can sometimes be subject to several different interpretations. It is even more remarkable then that while the dream images are placed in various contexts, and several meanings can then be deduced from them:

Zhou Xuan 周宣 143 of Wei 魏 dynasty [A.D. 220-265], courtesy name Konghe 孔和, was good at oneiromancy. There was a person who asked Xuan, "I dream of straw dogs." Xuan said, "You'll obtain delicious food." Soon afterwards, he again dreamed of straw dogs. Xuan said, "You'll fall from a carriage and break your legs." Not long after that, the person again said he dreamed of straw dogs. Xuan said, "You'll have a catastrophic fire." Later it all turned out as he had said.

The person said, "I haven't really dreamed. I've just been testing you. The three divinations are different, but they all came true, why?" Xuan said, "Your intention is expressed in your words, so I divined for your fate. Moreover, straw dogs are the sacrificial offerings for spirits. So when you first said you dreamed of them, you would be obtain delicious food. When the sacrificial ceremony is over, they are crushed under wheels, so

141 This is quoted from the eighteenth hexagram of Yijing: "Gu" 故, see Z. D. Sung, The Text of Yi King, p. 84, "The first Six (or line, divided,) shows (a son) dealing with the troubles caused by his father. If he be an (able) son, the father will escape the blame of having erred. The position is perilous, but there will be good fortune in the end." 初六: 幹父之蟲, 有子考, 無咎, 厲, 終吉.

142 TPGJ 277:2193-4 (no. 14, 唐高祖).

143 His biography is in Sanguo zhi 29:810-1. This dream narrative is also quoted in Sanguo zhi.
you would fall from a carriage and break your legs. After they have been crushed, the straw dogs are carted away as firewood. So I said that you would have a catastrophic fire."144

Zhou Xuan interprets the meaning of straw dogs by having "recourse to its cultural connotations" and "information about the dreamer's present circumstances and preoccupations".145 The same image of straw dogs can have three meanings: being able to obtain delicious food; breaking one's legs and having a catastrophic fire. Hence we discern that dreams cannot be interpreted unless their context and background are fully understood.

As the art of interpretation requires a considerable amount of intellectual versatility and skill, especially the ability to relate dream images to conventional philosophical and religious authorities, and to the cultural and social environment, the interpretation may also differ amongst people of different places and different times because content in dreams is molded by their cultural environments. Dreaming of a tree piercing the sky is regarded as "a phallic symbol in Freudian symbology". From C. G. Jung's perspective, "it evokes fructifying powers - the tree of life". However, in Chinese term, when the character "tree" (mu *) pierces the sky, it becomes the character "wei" 未, meaning "not yet".146 Dream is always enriched by allusions to traditional legend, lore, literature and the like; these "assign" a meaning to a specific dream image dependent on specific cultural features.

144 TPGJ 276:2177-8 (no. 12, 周宣). The rendering of this passage is based on Roberto K. Ong, "Image and Meaning: The Hermeneutics of Traditional Chinese Literature" in Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture, pp. 51-2. See also TPYL 397:2a-b.
145 Ibid., p. 51.
146 This example is quoted from the "Introduction" in Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture, p. 3.
Another distinctive type of dream accounts is dream adventuring, in which the role of the dreamer is not only as a passive recipient, but also an active participant in his travelling. The dreamer's spiritual soul (hun 魂) leaves his body on the dream-journey, sometimes travelling to other realms (such as heaven and hell) which are not within reach of normal waking faculties of perception. While travelling in time is comparatively rare, protagonists usually travel freely between the different realms of reality and dream. Y. W. Ma and S. M. Lau suggest that the narratives of dream travelling can be "conventional" or "unconventional".


2 See the detailed explanation of spiritual soul on pp. 75-6.


4 Y. W. Ma & S. M. Lau, *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, p. 433, "The experience of the dream adventurer can be both conventional and unconventional. The conventional pattern, as represented by adventure of Scholar Lu (in "The World Inside a Pillow") [Zhenzhong ji 枕中記], is close to being a formula. With the help of a magic pillow, Lu leaves the primary world of daily reality to enter the secondary world of fantasy. After a lifelong prominent career in this realm, he wakes up to the world of actuality only to find out that the duration of his dream is as brief as is suggested in the story: 'The millet which the host had been steaming was not yet ready.'" For the unconventional type, Ma & Lau suggest the dream narrative of Zhang Sheng 張生 as the typical example, "The adventure of Scholar Chang [Zhang] is strikingly unique in its absence of any allegorical intent. The dream world in 'Scholar Chang' is truly three dimensional in that the shared experience of the different dreamers happens at the same clock time in the same place involving the same people. To the knowledge of the Editors, there are no
Conventional Dream Adventuring (Lifetime-in-a-dream)

Why must you speak of being in a dream.
When all of life is but a dream?
何必言夢中
人生盡如夢?

This type of narrative is termed "conventional" because both the narrative structure and its motifs are formulaic: the protagonists fall asleep and then enter into the world of fantasy where they encounter miraculous happenings that are not within normal waking perception. The narratives of dream adventuring sometimes involve a world-within-a-world situation. The protagonists in the narratives wander by chance into a secondary world and spend decades there. Only when they return to the waking world do they realize that their attained honour, fame and wealth vanish also like the dream. Protagonists are shocked to be made aware that all the time they have spent in the dream world amounts to no more than a fleeting moment in the mundane world. The dream narratives start with the human world and end with the same world; the dream world is a transition. This three-part structure - the declaration of the secondary world as a dream, the time difference between the two worlds, and the demand for the secondary world to rejoin the primary one - forms the standard structure of dream adventuring.

The dream experience of Luzi 盧子 in the narrative Yingtao qingyi 櫻桃青衣 is an excellent example of the "conventional" type in our area of comparable examples (other than a few similar T'ang tales) in the vast repertoire of Chinese dream stories." For the detailed analysis, see the section below.

5 TPGJ 282:2250-1 (no. 5, 張生). Original collected in Zuanyi ji 練異記.
study. Luzi is falling asleep while he is listening to a monk's preaching. He dreams that he is led by a maidservant, who carries a basket of cherries, to the world of fantasy. In that world he marries a beautiful lady, has children and a successful career. After twenty years have passed, he returns to the monastery and falls asleep again; and finally awakens to find it is all a dream.6

Yanglin 楊林 in Youming lu 幽明錄 is the prototype of this "lifetime-in-a-dream" series.7 The famous Tang dream narratives Zhenzhongji 枕中記 written by Shen Jiji 沈既濟 (ca. 750-800) and Nanke taishou zhuan 南柯太守傳 by Li Gongzuo 李公佐 (786-846) convey virtually the same motif and have the same narrative structure.8

Though they are all highly imaginative stories intended to "promote a degree of self-denial that transcends even distinctions of right or wrong to reach levels of Buddhist or Taoist enlightenment"9, the incidents in dreams do not really escape this world. Narrators tend to depict the dream world just like

6 TPGJ 281:2242-4 (no. 10, 櫻桃青衣). Due to the length of the dream narrative, I only summarize the main points here and have not translated the whole text.
8 But compilers of TPGJ put them under different categories. Yanglin was put under "Shamans" (Wo 巫), see TPGJ 283:2254 (no. 3, 楊林). Zhenzhongji and Nanke taishou zhuan were put under the topic of "Extraordinary Persons" (Yiren 異人), 82:526-8 (no. 5, 呂翁) and "The Swarms of Crawlers" (Kunchong 昆蟲), 475:3910-5 (no. 1, 淳于棼) respectively. Dream narratives of this kind had been circulated in Tang dynasty. One Tang collection, Sanshui xiaodu 三水小贒 has a poem saying, "wunian ronggui jin he zai, buyi Nanke yimeng zhong" 五年榮貴今何在, 不異南柯一夢中, see TPGJ 353:2793 (no. 1, 陳璠). After the Tang dynasty, many stories and dramas were written under their influence, for instance, Huangliang meng 黃粱夢 by Ma Zhiyuan 馬致遠 (fl. 1230-60), Handan ji 邯郸記 by Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1150-1617) and Xu huangliang 続黃粱 by Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715) etc.
the real one. The fantastic and allegorical elements in dream are kept to a minimum. David Knechtges observes, "in contrast to European stories, these Chinese tales place little emphasis on the magic - if any - used to induce sleep." And from the structural point of view, the happenings in the dream are part of the real world; they serve as an indispensable source for describing the political and societal circumstances at that specific period of time.

Importantly, objective time is carefully recorded. In the case of Luzi, the dream's duration is measured precisely from dusk to noon; but the dream happenings seem to occupy all the time he would take up in real life. Time moving ahead simultaneously but at different speeds is a traditional way of narrating happenings in two separate realms (compare the saying: Shanzhong fang yiri, shishang shuqian nian which presumes the two realms are both "real" and co-exist at the same time.

Not only there is a strong sense of time in dream travelling narratives, the happenings inside the dream are highly sequential in time order, and generally the presentation of scenes is also chronological. This stress on

11 See Huang Jingjin, "Zhenzhong ji de jiegou fenxi", p. 97.
12 Quoted from Robert E. Hegel, "Heavens and Hells in Chinese Fictional Dreams", p. 3.
13 See Huang Jingjin, "Zhenzhong ji de jiegou fenxi", p. 100 and Liu Kairong, Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu, ch. 5, pp. 87-92.
realism further emphasizes the "emptiness and transience of worldly glory" after the dreamer awakes.¹⁴

**Unconventional Dream Adventuring**

Our dreams are real to us while we are dreaming; as real as any experience we have in our waking life. There is no "as if" in the dream. The dream is present, real experience. - Erich Fromm.¹⁵

The "unconventional" type is best represented by the dream experiences of Xu Jing 徐精 and scholar Zhang (Zhang Sheng 張生). When Xu Jing is travelling far away, he dreams of sleeping with his wife and she becomes pregnant. This dream account is short but it does lead to the expanded version of the same theme in later dynasties.¹⁶

At the beginning of the reign of Xianhe 咸和 [A.D. 326-334] in the Jin dynasty, Xu Jing 徐精 was travelling far away. He dreamed of sleeping with his wife and she became pregnant. The next year, when he returned home, his wife indeed gave birth to a child. Later, it was just as he had said [The precise meaning of the last sentence is not clear].¹⁷

- original collected in 幽明錄

Even more strangely, scholar Zhang is able to travel into the realm of his wife's dream. Zhang had been parted his wife for five years. On his way back home, at night, he spies his wife being forced to sing songs for a band

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16 See D. R. Hales, "Dreams and the Daemonic in Traditional Chinese Short Stories", p. 84.
17 TPGJ 276:2182 (no. 27, 徐精). The dream narrative of Dugu Xiashu 獨狐遐叔 has the same structure of this dream episode, see TPGJ 281:2244-5 (no. 11, 獨狐遐叔).
of rowdies in a thicket. Furious at the humiliation of his wife, he throws two tiles into the crowd: one hits a bearded rowdy and the other hits his wife’s forehead. Suddenly everything becomes quiet and everyone has mysteriously disappeared. Zhang takes it as a portent of his wife’s death; so crying bitterly, he resumes his journey.

In the morning he reaches home and finds his wife lying in bed because of a headache. She then tells him that she was compelled to sing songs for a band of rowdies in her dream. Suddenly some tiles came flying in and the second one hit her on the forehead. Zhang’s experiences matched miraculously with the dream of his wife. Zhang then realizes what he had seen the night before was his wife’s dream. The dream and reality are unseparable; the real is indistinguishable from the unreal.18 His experience is "unique" in "its absence of any allegorical intent" in terms of the whole Chinese narrative. Its "three dimensional point of view" allows "the shared experience of the different dreamers happens at the same clock time in the same place involving the same people".19

18 TPGJ 282:2250-1 (no. 5, 張生). For the translation, see Appendix D.
PART B

Dream Theory

It is beyond me to distinguish dreaming and not dreaming. If you want to distinguish dreaming from waking, you will have to call in the Yellow Emperor or Confucius. Now that we have lost the Yellow Emperor and Confucius, who is to distinguish them? - Liezi.1

The relationship between dreaming and waking perplexed many philosophers and has been a subject of fascination since the Shang dynasty.2 The great lexicographer of the Eastern Han, Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. A. D. 58-147) defines dreams as follows, "Dream means having awareness while asleep" 眠覺而有信曰寤.3 This suggests that men are not altogether unconscious while asleep.4

The dream phenomenon compelled men to think in terms of the dichotomy between body and soul during sleep. In China, the soul was further divided into the material-soul (po 魂) and spiritual-soul (hun 魂). Generally

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2 Dream accounts were recorded in the oracle bone inscriptions in the Shang dynasty, see Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, *Yinren zhanmeng kao 殷人占夢考* in *Jiaguxue Shangshi luncong chuji 甲骨學商史論叢初集* (Hong Kong: Wenyou tang shudian, 1970), vol. 2, pp. 1-10.

3 See Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi 説文解字* (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1963) 7b:153. Liu Wenying has a few pages devoted to explain different early forms of the character "meng". He analyzes the basic meaning of "meng" as what a person sees while lying asleep on a bed. *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* (pp. 156-8).

4 Modern theory about dreaming also regards that the mind is not altogether inactive during sleep, "Though the body may lie supine and inactive as though dead, the natural functions continue their work" and "though at a slightly slower rate, and the senses remain alert enough to receive impressions". See A. J. J. Ratcliff, *The Nature of Dreams*, p. 11.
speaking, the spiritual-soul has the ability to leave the body and wander in the outside world; the material-soul adhered to the body and could not be separated. The chapter Jiyao pian 紀妖篇 in Lunheng quotes the opinion of the oneirocritics of the Han dynasty, saying, "As for the dreams of human beings, oneirocritics regard them as the wandering of soul." 

**Dream is a realm where spirits can actually come into contact with dreamers**

Based on the belief of the soul wandering while asleep, one oneirocritic theory, which already existed in Han dynasty and which is still popular at present with many Chinese, is that once the spiritual soul is free from the body it may wander in distant places and different realms and can communicate with spirits from the nether world: "The spirit chances on it, and we dream" (shenyu weimeng 神遇為夢). In Lunsi pian 論死篇 in Lunheng, Wang Chong (A.D. 27-91) states that people in the Han dynasty believed that the soul might communicate with men and other creatures in dreams coming back into the spiritless body before waking.

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5 Michael Loewe’s explanation is as follows: "The two different elements of the soul of man which the Chinese distinguished were known as the hun and the p’o. By informing the material body and maintaining it in a state of harmony, they served to keep a human being alive; death occurred when the three elements of hun, p’o and body were separated. During life, the hun and the p’o had different functions. The hun corresponded to a power that could direct activity and was capable of spiritual experience and intellectual energy. The p’o enabled the body to take action and exercise its limbs, for it infused strength and movement into its various members." See Chinese Ideas of Life and Death: Faith Myth and Reason in the Han Period (202 BC-AD 220) (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 26.


7 A. C. Graham (trans.), The Book of Lieh Tzu, p. 67.

The great Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi also describes the difference between waking and sleeping in *Qiwu lun* 齊物論, "While it sleeps, the paths of souls cross. When it wakes, the body opens" 聲也魂交, 其覺也形開. Zhuangzi notes that in the day time when we are awake, we have new perceptions and feelings because our bodies are "open". But in the sleeping state, our bodies close, thus "allowing the soul to wander off and come into contact with other souls".10

These all explain why deities, immortals, fairies, and spirits of deceased ancestors are common recurring elements in the dream narratives of TPGJ.11 In a Daoist work dated A. D. 682, "coming into communication with the spirits" in dreams is also regarded as a sign of attaining enlightenment.12 This, from another angle, verifies the spiritual existence in dream:

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9 Quoted from Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解 (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1954) 2:7. The rendering of this statement is from A. C. Graham (trans.), *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu*, p. 50.

10 The Northern Song Neo-Confucian philosopher, Zhang Zai 張載 (960-1126), further explains Zhuangzi's notion in the chapter of *Dongwu* 動物, "During wakefulness, the body opens and the will (chih 志) interacts with what is external; during sleep, the body closes and the vital spirits (ch'i 氣) concentrate on what is internal." See Lin Shuen-fu, "Chia Pao-yü's First Visit to the Land of Illusion: An Analysis of a Literary Dream in Interdisciplinary Perspective" in *Chinese Literature Essays, Articles, Reviews* (vol. 14, Dec. 1992), p. 80. For the original text, see Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, *Zhangzi zhengmeng zhu* 張子正蒙注 (Beijing: ZHSJ, 1975), p. 90.

11 Dream was conceived as one of the arenas for spiritual beings actually to come into contact and reveal heavenly orders to men from the Shang dynasty. According to Hu Houxuan, the dreams of Shang kings were often believed to have been caused by the spirits of deceased ancestors and relatives, see *Yinren zhanmeng kao*, p. 8.

12 For seeking enlightenment, the dreamer should be directed by potent pharmacological agents (consuming five-tablets daily of a twelve ingredient iatro-chemical compound - the predominant ingredient is acetate of iron: iron cyanized with vinegar), see Yunji qiqian 雲笈七籤 78:21b, quoted from M. Strickmann, "Dreamwork of Psycho-sinologists: Doctors, Taoists, Monks" in *Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture*, pp. 34-5.
You will be able to cut down on sleep considerably until what you behold in your dreams will be just as clear and real as what you see when awake. This will be a sign that you are coming into communication with the spirits; and in due time, you will thus occultly come to know all sorts of things about the invisible world.13

As a result, Chinese writers have generally focussed their attention on the dream messages rather than search for the internal psychological states such as desires, tensions or conflicts that may have produced them.14

The chapters of dream records in TPGJ reveal how widespread the belief was in the authenticity of dream. Since they are conceived as divine inspiration, the messages are regarded as unfailing future indications sent by spiritual powers from the Heaven and the underworld to men.15 When clear messages are conveyed, nearly all the recipients listen to the messages earnestly and prudently follow their every word. As a result, the oneiromantic theory that assumes that "dreams images were predictions of things to come, and often prescriptions for the dreamer to reenact in reality what had been projected in dream" is also reflected in TPGJ.16 Fan Xi's 樊系 dream is an excellent example to illustrate this theory.

Vice Director Fan Xi dreams of passing the civil examination one year before he takes it. The result is shown in his dream: there are twenty-six

13 Ibid.
15 Compare the comment made by Wang Fu, "A divination will be effective only in instances where the soul has actually been affected or informed by some spiritual power." See The Art of Han Essay: Wang Fu's Ch’ien-Fu Lun, p. 122. For the original text, see Qianfu lun jian 28:320.
successful candidates with Wang Zhengqing 王正卿 coming first. One year later Fan indeed succeeds in the examination. Wang Zhengqing is the top of all candidates, and the number of successful candidates is also the same as what he has dreamed. After that he deeply believes in dream revelation and proceeds to act strictly according to what is revealed in his dream, regardless whether it is beneficial to him or not. Even when higher official posts are offered to him, he declines to accept them. The reason behind his firm refusal is because he once dreamed that the right post for him should include the word "yang" 陽. As his earlier dream has been verified, he firmly trusts that this dream will also be fulfilled. The post he is finally offered is the District Defender of Jingyang 汀陽 (in modern Gansu province), a post which has been rejected by the Grand Councilor's son.17

Events revealed in dreams are regarded as destined by Heaven and cannot be changed. The dreamer's duty is to act according to the decree laid out. One's personal fate, such as eminence or humble status, longevity or dying young, is fully documented by the heavenly bureaucracy. Only those who act according to the evolution of heavenly order will get their lives on the right track.18 As dreams are believed to be the prognostication of future events, Fan Xi's response should be understood as the "rational attempt to deal honestly with the mysterious, puzzling phenomenon of human dreams as guides in a world of unpredictable complexity".19

17 TPGJ 277:2200 (no. 29, 樊系). For the translation, see Appendix D.
18 For the detailed analysis of "ming" (or Heavenly order) in Chinese narratives, see Gong Pengcheng 龔鵬程, "Chuantong tianming sixiang zai Zhongguo xiaoshuo li de yunyong" 傳統天命思想在中國小説裏的運用 in Zhongguo xiaoshuo shi luncong 中國小說史論叢(Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1984), pp. 7-34.
19 This ideology was also reflected in a substantial number of dreams reported in Zuozhuan. See R. G. Wagner, "Imperial Dreams in China", pp. 11-24. It was also
Dream Narratives are Regarded as True Accounts like "History"

Not one unfulfilled dream is recorded in our area of study - the waking reality is usually described at the end of the dream narratives, introduced by the word "hou" 後 (later). However, now as then, dreams will not always come true. And as we have said, there were also "wild dreams" (yemeng 野夢) and "freak dreams" (kuangmeng 狂夢) that could lead one astray.

One question we may ask is what prompted the narrators to record a dream? And why the compilers of TPGJ only chose those verified episodes from the whole corpus of dream experience? Rudolf G. Wagner offers an explanation for the former question.

> It should be remembered that these dreams are recorded because of the unusual difficulty in their interpretation, the unusual importance of their eventually disclosed content, and/or the unusual inversion of the common sense assumptions in dream analysis by the eventual outcome. 20

As to the next question, I would argue that the compilers chose only verified dreams because they believed that dreams, if intentionally transmitted by spiritual beings, would indeed eventually come true. Thus the compilers used the medium of dream narratives to provide "concrete evidence" for their beliefs. Hence, a vast array of dream records were presented as the aggregate "evidence" against the skeptics' challenges. 21

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20 Ibid., p. 23.
We should note that although the dream records came to be regarded as fiction later, they were originally recounted as true accounts by narrators, and regarded as such by their readers at that time. Gan Bao's 尚寶 Soushen ji 捕神記, which comprised several hundred brief anecdotes of the supernatural, was written in the style of historical accounts of actual events. In its preface, Gan stated clearly that the "spirit world is not a lie". Critics have often pointed out that his goal was not amusement, but rather demonstrating the reality of supernatural experiences.

Most dream narratives were extracted from collections which were entitled "records", "accounts" and "biographies", and were classified in the "history" section among "miscellaneous biographies" in Suishu. The official historical text Jinshu was also compiled during Tang dynasty but the compilers still referred to zhiguai 志怪 collections such as Youming lu. Jiu Tangshu, finished soon after the Tang dynasty and Xin Tangshu,

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22 Charles E. Hammond, "By the beginning of the T'ang, the Sui shu includes hsiao-shuo in the philosophical category......Significantly, the bibliographical section of the Sui shu places some of the books that we would now consider fiction or folklore under the heading of history. In an explanatory note to the historical section, Wei [Wei Zheng 魏徵] (580-643) speaks of an author who writes 'biographies of transcendants, biographies of scholars, and biographies of women' all in one breath. To him, these subjects are all equally real. Wei admits that many of the works he lists under history have much that is exaggerated and weird, but insists they are historical." Quoted from Charles E. Hammond, "T'ang Legends: History and Hearsay" in Tamkang Review (vol. xx, no. 4, Summer 1990), p. 362. See also Suishu 34:1014 and 33:981-2.

23 See Li Jianguo 李劍國, Tangdai zhiguai xiaoshuo jishi 唐代志怪小說輯釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), pp. 59-60.

composed by Ouyang Xiu 魏陽修 (1007-1071) and Song Qi 宋祁 (989-1061) also demonstrate the belief in the prognostical value of dreams. 25

Specific dream accounts can serve as examples to illustrate our argument that they were believed. Charles E. Hammond makes clear that:

Frequently there is little difference between the hsiao-shuo version and the 'historical' one, even when the marvelous is involved. The modern reader might expect a historian to prune the marvelous elements in processing the legend of Hsieh Hsiao-e [Xie Xiao'e] 謝小娥 (fl. ca. 813-818). In both versions, after her father and husband have been killed, the heroine receives a clue to the killers' identities in a dream. The Sung editor still believes in the content of dreams as very real. 26

A list of dream narratives containing marvelous elements used by both TPGJ and historical writings may serve as more solid evidence. (See Appendix C). In addition, various guidelines for interpreting dream images were compiled into TPYL by nearly the same group of editors. 27 The dream theory section in TPYL together with the first-hand "concrete" experience (or hearsay "evidence") in TPGJ proves the people at that time, at the very least did not deny the veracity of dream.

Hence it is not surprising that many of the formal features of historiography were found in dream records. Most of them were apparently influenced by traditional historical writings to begin with as much information as the

25 Though most of the anthologies of marvel legends were moved to the "fiction" list rather than "history", ironically, "the wu-hsing section and the bibliography demonstrate more acceptance of the marvelous." Charles E. Hammond, "T'ang Legends: History and Hearsay", p. 363.


27 Over fifty entries in TPYL were quoted from dream-books to provide the general guidelines for interpreting dream, see Taiping yulan yinde 太平御覽引得 (Peiping: Harvard Yenching Institute, 1935, no. 23) under the heading of "meng" 夢.
narrators knew, including the surname, personal name, birthplace, official position (if any) of the protagonist, as well as the exact locale and date.  

Wu Zeng 吳曾 (fl. ca. 1127-1162), a Song scholar, still believed the didactic dream record of Yanglin to be true and wondered whether the temple attendant who gave the protagonist a pillow was Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, a Daoist immortal. And the satirical story Zhenzhong ji is "presented in all seriousness as real life by frequent citations of historical facts and other concrete data."  

Skeptic View on the Authenticity of Dream

Of course the skeptical view on the authenticity of dreams also had a long tradition. The dictum of Confucius against "speaking of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders, and spirits" is often quoted to argue against dream authenticity. Regarding dreams as only vision is not an uncommon idea among Chinese philosophers. In the Han dynasty, Wang Chong argues that "people may dream that they have killed somebody. Having killed somebody, they are perhaps themselves murdered by somebody else. But if, on the following day, they look at the body of that person, or examine their own, they will find no trace whatever of a wound inflicted by a sword."  


29 See Nenggai zhai manlu, quoted from C. E. Hammond, T'ang Stories in the Tai-p'ing Kuang-chi, p. 60.


31 Lun-Heng: Philosophical Essays of Wang Ch'ung, p. 200. For the original text, see Lunsu pian in Lunheng zhushi, pp. 1202-3.
He declares that the state of the vital spirit (jingshen 精神) in dream is identical with that of death, "Man's death is like sleep, and sleep comes next to a trance, which resembles death. If a man does not wake up again from a trance, he dies. If he awakes, he returns from death, as though he had been asleep. Thus sleep, a trance, and death are essentially the same."32 The definition of dreaming in Mojing jingshang 墨經經上 also implies some sense of negating the dream world as it is only what one regards as true in one's sleeping stage: "As for the dream, it is what one regards as truly so when one is asleep" 夢, 此而以為然也.33

But the skeptical view of dream authenticity is minimized in TPGJ's dream narratives. Occasionally, when the credibility of a dream is in question, proofs are then stressed to eliminate doubt. For instance, Jiang Ji at first does not trust his wife's dream, but later he finds that the situation really happens as his deceased son foretells.34 A similar opinion is expressed by scholar Li. He first thinks that the occurrence in dream are all unreliable, and he is also proved to be wrong later.35 The men who doubt the validity of dreams all change their minds later. As Leo T. H. Chan remarks, these kind of narrative technique, "by apparently conceding to the skeptics' viewpoint and then suddenly turning the situation around, gain force by striking hard at the doubters."36

33 See Lin Shuen-fu, "Chia Pao-yü's First Visit to the Land of Illusion", p. 82.
34 TPGJ 276:2177 (no. 11, 蔣渙).
There are several methods to "turn the situation around". Sometimes, a physical object is left behind to demonstrate the dream's veracity. For example, King Zhao obtains some medicine while Ming Yizhi 明亊之 has the pills in his hand. More miraculously, after she awakes, Madam Wei has two talismans and an incantation for curing malaria.

In some cases, a recurring dream having the same content is taken as a way of assuring its validity. Huan Shi 桓兮 has a recurring dream of Mei Xuanlong 梅玄龍 wearing funeral clothes to meet him. Shi dies one day before Xuanlong and this is taken as evidence for their meeting in the underworld. Sometimes, the dream messages transmitted to two persons are miraculously identical - this again provides credibility to the dream.

A second dream message transmitted in another dream is also an excellent way to verify dream's veracity. Thus, a spiritual power may come again to thank the dreamer. He would then certainly know the action that he had done according to the given directives in the previous dream was acknowledged by the spiritual being. Jiang Ji's deceased son comes in two consecutive nights transmitting messages to his mother. On the first night, he says he would like her to have his father to enjoin Sun A, who soon will be the Magistrate of Mt. Tai in the nether world, to give him a better post. Knowing that his father will not believe him by just sending one dream, in the following night, he appears in his mother's dream again to

37 TPGJ 276:2173-4 (no. 1, 周昭王) and 276:2185 (no. 39, 明亊之).
38 TPGJ 278:2210 (no. 15, 薛義).
39 TPGJ 276:2187 (no. 45, 桓誓).
40 TPGJ 280:2231-2 (no. 5, 王諸).
41 TPGJ 276:2182 (no. 28, 商仲堪); 276:2184 (no. 34, 宗叔林); 276:2187-8 (no. 48, 桓邈).
voice his plaint. He relates Sun A's physical appearance in great detail and urges his parents to put his words to a test.42 The rational progression of dream messages conveyed by spiritual power in two separate dreams verifies the authenticity of them all.

**Dream and Emotion**

Another important dream theory concerning the psychology of the dreamers (thoughts, emotions, memories) can shed light on the inexplicable phenomenon of Scholar Zhang 張生 and Dugu Xiashu's 獨孤遐叔 ability to travel into their wives' dream in their waking perception43; or that of Xu Jing and his wife, who dream simultaneously in distant places but meet in their dreams, and as a result conceive a child.44

The psychological factors in dreams have been analyzed thoroughly by traditional Chinese writers. In *Zhouli*, six types of dreams relating to the dreamer's psychological state are distinguished. 1. ordinary dreams (zhengmeng 正夢): dreams that occur when our minds are in peace, undisturbed by anything; 2. nightmares (e'meng 惡夢): dreams that occur because of surprise; 3. yearning dreams (simeng 思夢): dreams that result from what we yearn for while awake; 4. daytime dreams (wumeng 朝夢): dreams that result from what we see in daytime; 5. happy dreams (ximeng 喜夢): dreams that occur because of joyfulness in mind; 6. fearful dreams (jumeng 懼夢): dreams that occur because of fear in mind.45

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42 TPGJ 276:2177 (no. 11, 蔣濟).
43 TPGJ 282:2250-1 (no. 5, 張生) and 281:2244-5 (no. 11, 獨孤遐叔).
44 TPGJ 276:2182 (no. 27, 徐精).
45 This explanation of dreams mainly comes from Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 and modern scholar Lin Yin 林尹. See *Zhouli chunguan zongbo II* 周禮春官宗伯下 in
Wang Fu (c. A.D. 78-163) of the Eastern Han composed a treatise on dream types and their interpretations in *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論. Among the ten types of dreams which he lists, he mentions the following three types of dreams which are obviously concerned with the psychological status of the dreamers: dreams produced by the dreamer's mental concentration (yijing zhi meng 意精之夢); dreams derived from one's waking thoughts (jixiang zhi meng 記想之夢); dreams whose meaning varies with the dreamer's temperament (xingqing zhi meng 性情之夢).  

The theory that regarded "thought" (xiang 想) as the cause of dream is introduced by Yue Guang 楊廣 (A.D. ?-304) in the *Wenxue* 文學 chapter of *Shishuo xinyu*. Unfortunately the author Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 failed to record any detailed explanation.  

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46 Ten types of dreams are listed and explained by Wang Fu, see *Qianfu lun jian* 28:315-17. The rendering and analysis of ten types of dreams are mostly based on Lin Shuen-fu, "Chia Pao-yu's First Visit to the Land of Illusion", p. 87.  

47 Yue Guang's theory of "thought" is recorded in Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo xinyu*: When Wei Chieh [Wei Jie 衛玠] was a boy with his hair still in tufts, he once asked Yüeh Kuang [Yue Guang 楊廣] about dreams. Yüeh replied, "They're thoughts (xiang 想)." Wei said, "Dreams occur when body and spirit aren't connected. How can they be thoughts?" Yüeh replied, "They're contingencies (yin 因). Nobody's ever dreamt of entering a rat hole riding in a carriage, or of mincing leeks for eating an iron pestle, because there have never been any such thoughts or contingencies in both cases." Wei pondered over "contingencies" for a month without obtaining any understanding, and consequently became ill. Hearing about this, Yüeh ordered his carriage and went to give him a detailed explanation. Wei immediately recovered a little from his illness. Sighing, Yüeh said, "There will never be any incurable illness in this boy's chest!" The rendering is quoted from Lin Shuen-fu, "Chia Pao-yu's First Visit to the Land of Illusion", p. 88. For the original text, see Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu* 4:62-3.
When Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (A. D. 1574-1646), the compiler of *Xingshi hengyan 醒世恆言*, narrates *Dugu sheng guitu naomeng 獨孤生歸途闇夢* (based on the story of Dugu Xiashu 獨孤遐叔 in *TPGJ*), he provides an elaboration of the significance of thoughts and feelings.\(^48\) Strong emotional desire is the reason for the inexplicable phenomenon of the "three dimensional" dream experience:

Generally, dreams are caused by our thoughts. And when there is something that makes us meditate, then we will have dreams. Madam Pai’s [Bai 白] mind was completely absorbed with concern for her husband and she thought of him constantly. Therefore, her spirit actually left her body while she was dreaming and was possessed of shape, form, and substance. Because Hsia-shu [Xiashu 遐叔] was also thinking of his wife and his innermost thoughts were in deep contemplation, even though he was awake, his soul became part of his wife’s dream. Thus, it is a simple and easy thing to see that these two spirits were able to link up with each other because their thoughts and feelings had connected.\(^49\)

Dan Minglun 但明倫 (A. D. 1795-1853) remarks that "everything encountered in the dream was born of thought and transformed into illusion".\(^50\) It was a projection of one’s "own desires and anxieties" and was due to the "longing and intense anxiety", "the pain flooding" over one’s breast.\(^51\) This idea "overflow of feeling" (qingyi 情溢) is a reason used to explain why the husband, in his waking state, is able to travel into his wife's

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\(^{48}\) Please note that "in traditional China, the heart was understood as the site of both mental and emotional processes, and thinking and feeling were not diametrically opposed concepts." Quoted from Judith T. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 154.

\(^{49}\) In *Xingshi hengyan*, pp. 515-6, quoted from D. R. Hales, "Dreams and the Daemonic in Traditional Chinese Short Stories", p. 86.

\(^{50}\) Quoted from Judith T. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, p. 159.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.
dream. And it is due to deep contemplation that the husband and wife's oneiric union in dream can conceive a child as a result.

The author of *Sanmengji* 三夢記, Bai Xingjian 白行簡 compares these dream narratives favourably with Confucius's historical writing, *Chunqiu* 春秋, and other books of philosophy and history. He records it as if he is preserving historical records. Hu Yinglin 胡應麟, a Ming critic, also accepts the story of the man who enters his wife's dream as real.

**Weaving the Material Reality of Spirits and the Theory of Thoughts**

These inexplicable experiences may be best explained (in Chinese terms) by weaving the theory of strong emotional desire (xiang 想 or qing 情) and the belief of the material reality of spirits together. It would be more sensible not to "speak of a single Chinese oneiric tradition; rather several powerful, potentially contradictory traditions coexist and overlap." The Chinese admit that dreams are indeed caused by thoughts, but at the same time, the

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52 "Qing" 情 is a concept that became increased prominent in the Ming dynasty, Chen Shiyuan emphasizes the power of sentiment and assigns a category for it, see *Mengzhan yizhi* 2:17 and Judith T. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, p. 156, "The theory of dreams and its implication about the power of desire are staples of fiction and drama. In such literature, excessive emotion - love, anger, grief - often produce illness, which, left unappeased, not infrequently results in death."


"psychological etiology" of dream "does not rule out the material reality of ghosts."  

In the chapter Jiebi 解蔽, the Confucian thinker Xunzi 荀子 correlates the mind with dreaming, "When the mind is asleep, it dreams" (xinwo zemeng 心卧則夢). Dreams occur when the mind is thinking during sleep. The mind can also move of its accord to produce daydreaming or fantasies, "When it relaxes, it moves of its own accord" (touze zixing 倚則自行). He again states the mind would be disturbed if dreams occur too frequently, as it would bring disorder to the mind (luanzhi 亂智) which originally possesses the qualities of emptiness (xu 虛), unity (yi 菽) and stillness (jing 靜). 

Wang Chong explains the situation of seeing ghosts in terms of the decay of one's vital force, similar to dying men and insane people, "If during the day their vigour is worn out, and their vital force exhausted, they desire to sleep at night. While they are asleep, their gaze turned inward, hence their spirit perceives the images of men and things" (人之畫也, 氣倦精盡,夜則欲臥, 臥而目光反, 反而精神見人物之象矣). 

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56 Ibid., p. 159.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
Dreams are described as demonic forces at work within the body by Ge Hong 葛洪 in "Methods Within Easy Reach for Use in Emergencies".\textsuperscript{61} Chen Shiyuan 陳士元 (16th c.) weaves together the idea of possession by demonic forces and the emotional state of the dreamer. He argues that ghostly dreams "come from one's own perturbed emotional state" and thereby "ghosts take advantage of this" to enter into one's dream arena.\textsuperscript{62} Shen Defu 沈德符 (A. D. 1578-1642) uses the same argument to explain the origins of a nightmare, "In the end, if you lose your mind, ghosts and gods may take the opportunity to humiliate you."\textsuperscript{63}

As we see from the above quotations, the concept of "thought" and the belief of spiritual existence are two complimentary concepts woven together. The dream accounts of Xu Jing and scholar Zhang can be interpreted as being caused by their deep contemplation; however, after entering the realm of dream, their encounter is as real as normal waking realities. Hence, the couple's union in dream can result in conceiving a baby. And the dream scenario of scholar Zhang's wife matches with what he actually encounters in the real world.

\textsuperscript{61} If demonic possession occurred, the sleeper cannot awaken. Proper treatment is indicated such as "Spit several times in his face, he will come back to life at once. Or blow into his nose through a tube. Or take a few of his hairs and tickle his nostrils with them. Or take blood from the comb of a cock and blow it through a tube into the dreamer's throat. Or plaster his eyes with mud from the bottom of a well; then let his head hang down into the well and call his name. Or place the patient on the ground, draw a circle around him with the tip of a sword; with the same implement make an incision in his nose and hold him down." "Methods Within Easy Reach for Use in Emergencies" 1:9, quoted from M. Strickmann, "Dreamwork of Psycho-sinologists: Doctors, Taoists, Monks", p. 31.


Physical Factors May Affect the Content of Dream

Chinese interpretations "hold that dreams are more often than not affected by the unique conditions of the environment." According to Chinese medical dream theories, the physical condition of the dreamer is connected with dream content. Dream can be stimulated by pathological imbalances in the body. The earliest basic medical text *Huangdi neijing* provides valuable information for dream causation in ancient China in terms of either an excess of *yin* or *yang*.

An excess of *yin* [causes the patient] to dream of crossing a great body of water and then experience anxiety. If, on the contrary, *yang* is in excess, the dream will contain fire and scorching heat. An abundance of both *yin* and *yang* will produce dreams of killing and wounding. Excesses in the upper part [of the body] produce dreams of flying; in the lower part, dreams of falling. A sated person dreams of giving; a famished person, of taking. Superfluity of vital breaths [of *yin* and *yang*] in the liver cause anger in dreams; in the lungs cause weeping. A great amount of small worms [in stomach] produce gathered crowds in dreams; a great amount of large worms [in stomach] produce fighting and wounding in dreams.

This assumes that an excess of vital breaths in the body determines the subject matter of the dream. In other words, the subject matter of the dream indicates the body's specific physical imbalances or deficiencies. Hence,

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64 See Lin Shuen-fu, "Chia Pao-yü's First Visit to the Land of Illusion", p. 102.
65 *Huangdi neijing* was supposed to have been written by Yellow Emperor 黃帝 during the third millennium B.C., but probably it was put in final form during the 2nd century. See J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2, p. 36.
dream can be an important diagnostic tool. Treatments that follow logically "mediate yin and yang and prudently examine twelve blood vessels" 調之陰陽, 在以經脈.

In the book of *Liezi*, the physical environment of the dreamer is also stressed, "When you go to sleep lying on your belt, you dream of snakes; when a flying bird pecks you hair, you dream of flying". Wang Fu also reminds us to be aware of the "internal factors such as emotion and intention" and "exterior considerations". He further relates the dream content to environmental and seasonal changes, as well as to physical imbalances. Among the ten types of dream he listed, type six is the category relating to environment (ganqi zhi meng 感氣之夢). Type seven is dreams that correspond to the seasons (yingshi zhi meng 應時之夢): dreams are auspicious if they are in accordance with the seasons.

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70 Wang Fu remarks, "In divining dreams, then, one must lend meticulous attention to their transformational phenomena, and examine their signs and intimations. One must investigate internal factors such as emotion and intention, and scrutinize exterior considerations such as the season's reigning "king" and "minister". The inauspicious and auspicious correspondences, along with the effects of good and evil, will then all become evident." See *The Art of Han Essay: Wang Fu's Ch'ien-Fu Lun*, p. 123. For the original text, see *Qianfu lun jian* 28:322.
71 Wang Fu further explains, "in autumn and winter, dreaming of death and destruction is regarded as auspicious when such dreams are in accordance with the seasons. But although this is hardly the cause of great harm, it would still be better not to have dreams of this sort at all." See *The Art of Han Essay*, p. 121 and *Qianfu lun jian* 28:318.
nine is dreams produced by physical disorders or imbalances (bingmeng 病夢).\(^{72}\)

As the main concern of dream narratives is their prognostical value, narrators often fail to record the cause of a dream and the dreamer's physical environment. There is only one dream account that relates to this theory. Duan Chengshi's 段成式 cousin, Lu Youze 盧有則, dreams of watching someone hitting drums. After waking, he realizes it is only the sound made by his little brother hitting the door, pretending he was hitting the drum in the government office for fun.\(^{73}\) However, this motif reoccurs in plots and scenes in later stories. For instance, S. F. Lin notes that the noise that awoke Jia Baoyu 賈寶玉 - the protagonist of The Dream of Red Chamber - from a dream, "was a distortion of the noise made by the cats and dogs outside of Ch'în-shih's [Qinshi 秦氏] bedroom."\(^{74}\)

**Lifetime-in-a-dream series**

Dream narratives do not escape realism; but paradoxically, the theme that the mundane world is untrue and illusory, and that worldly success is futile and no more substantial than dreams is explicitly reflected in the "lifetime-in-a-dream" series. Using the ups and downs of dream experience are an excellent way to admonish (feng 諫) readers not to become attached to the mundane world.

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\(^{72}\) Dividing these ten types of dreams into physiological and psychological categories is based on Lin Shuen-fu, "Chia Pao-yü's First Visit to the Land of Illusion", p. 87.

\(^{73}\) TPGJ 282:2246-7 (no. 2, 段成式).

\(^{74}\) Lin Shuen-fu, "Chia Pao-yü's First Visit to the Land of Illusion", p. 102.
Dreams are used extensively in Buddhism. Four types of dreams are classified in the much-quoted Buddhist text, *Samantapasadika* (or Shanjian lü 善見律 in Chinese, a commentary on the *Vinaya*, translated into Chinese in A. D. 489). And some terms with Buddhist overtones may be immediately recalled, such as "meng" 夢 (svapna, also "sleep" in Sanskrit), "huan" 幻 (māyā) and "jing" 鏡 (adarsa). According to *Diamond Sūtra* or *Vajracchedikā-prajāpāramitā Sūtra*, what we regard as real is in fact unreal and a delusion, like a dream, a phantasm, a shadow, the dew and the lightning:

All things phenomenal
Are like dreams, māyā, bubbles;
Like dew and lightning flashes,
Thus one should regard them.

The *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* further states the Buddhist idea of "everything is illusory":

The world has no self-nature and has never been born; it is like a cloud, a ring produced by a firebrand, and castle of the Bandharvas, a vision, a mirage, the moon as reflected in the ocean, and a dream.

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75 For example, Buddhists believe that Buddha had five dreams which warned him of great events before he attained enlightenment. Norman Mackenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1965), pp. 60-1.

76 The four types of dreams are: 1. Dreams caused by imbalance of the four elements within one's body. These are all airy nothing, and not real. 2. Dreams produced by what one has seen earlier in the day, also not real. 3. Dreams caused by a divine being. All of these are real or veridical. 4. Prophetic dreams. In one's past life, one has accumulated both merit (which causes auspicious dreams) and demerit (which makes dreams of ill-omen). Quoted from M. Strickmann, "Dreamwork of Psychologists: Doctors, Taoists, Monks", p. 38.


Anthony C. Yu further points out that according to Buddhist belief, most of us are only attracted to delusion like "castles in the air (kongzhong louge 空中樓閣)" or "flowers in the mirror and moon in the water (jinghua shuiyue 鏡花水月)". Hence "salvation for the deluded must therefore take the form of the removal of illusion (māyā or huan), to disabuse the mind of such mistaken calculations and discriminations (vikalpa), and to purge from it all sorts of undesirable attachments (abhiniveśa), to abandon wealth, fame and glory. The goal to be realized is, of course, Nirvāṇa, which is the symbol of a state of emptiness (śunyata or kong)."^79

The Buddhist flavour is especially strong in the case of Lūzi since he is depicted as falling asleep when he is listening to a monk's preaching in the monastery. Apart from the affinity of theme, even the structure of this series is transformed from a dream in Samyuktaratnapitaka Sūtra (or Zabao zangjing 雜寶藏經 in Chinese), in which the protagonist is described as attaining enlightenment only after he experiences war and defeat and is about to be executed.\(^80\)

However, to speak of "life as a dream is not an insight peculiarly original Buddhist."\(^81\) Zhuangzi's famous butterfly dream and "its verdict on the difficulty of differentiating between waking and oneiric reality" are immediately recalled.\(^82\)

[^79]: Ibid.
[^80]: See Samyuktaratnapitaka Sūtra, ch. 2 in Daizōkyō, quoted from Wang Meng'ou, Tangren xiaoshuo jiaoshi, pp. 39-40.
[^81]: A. C. Yu, "The Quest of Brother Amor", p. 80.
[^82]: Ibid.
Usually we regard dream as something void and fake; life as something solid and real. But for Zhuangzi, it is only by grasping the Dao 道 that we can discern the world clearly, life is just a dream which lasts until death (the "great awakening" 大覚, using Zhuangzi's term). Thus, Zhuangzi comments on the difficulty of differentiating between things such as waking 覺 and dreaming 夢, life 生 and death 死, happiness (hunting 獵 and drinking 飲酒) and sadness (weeping 哭泣), being wealthy (man ruler 君) and poor (herdsman 牧) and so forth.

How do I know that to take pleasure in life is not a delusion? How do I know that we who hate death are not exiles since childhood who have forgotten the way home? ....... How do I know that the dead do not regret that ever they had an urge to life? Who banquets in a dream at dawn wails and weeps, who wails and weeps in a dream at dawn goes out to hunt. While we dream we do not know that we are dreaming, and in the middle of a dream interpret a dream within it; not until we wake do we know that we were dreaming. Only at the ultimate awakening shall we know that this is the ultimate dream. Yet fools think they are awake, so confident that they know what they are, princes, herdsmen, incorrigible! You and Confucius are both dreams, and I who call you a dream am also a dream.

Zhuang Zi and the Lankāvatāra Sūtra both have a passage stating the idea of "life is illusory like a dream" (rensheng rumeng 人生如夢); however, their attitudes are different. Awakening makes the issue more complicated for

83 A. C. Graham (trans.), Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu, pp. 59-60.
84 Wu Kuang Ming has an analysis of their differences: For the Buddhist, things are moving in many circles of causes, co-causing and co-arising to annoy us, making us suffer. For Chuang Tzu [Zhuang Zi] things are not moving but alive, co-arising and co-dying, back and forth, and are equally important...... For the Buddhist, all such annoyance (even joy annoys us) is caused by (rooted in) our desire and ignorance. If we cut our desire-clinging and ignorance, we will arrive at Enlightenment, that is, an awakening to a realization, and go beyond the circles of annoyance. For Chuang Tzu, we are part of such live interdependence among things. We must let go of ourselves so as to overhear, accommodate, and truly participate in the delight of such life flip-floppings. We are awakened to an onerous participation in the vicissitudes of things-
Zhuangzi: he does not know whether the waking state is another dream or not. The title of Qiwu lun, a chapter devoted to describing how equally important things are, suggests that life and dream are of equal importance to Zhuangzi.\(^{85}\) Being awake is only one mode of existence, it is not more palpable than the dreaming state; rather, they are of equal importance.

Dream has a much higher status in Buddhism. The dream state is more substantial than the waking state because the former is "one in which a man's inner knowledge of himself is undisturbed by everyday sensations".\(^{86}\) An ancient Indian work, *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad* (about 1000 B.C.), also has the following passage:

> And there are two states for that person, the one here in this world, the other in the other world, and, as a third, an intermediate state, the state of sleep. When in that intermediate state, he sees both those states together, the one here in this world, and the other in the other world.\(^{87}\)

It places the dream world in the middle, in which one is able to observe the mind "in this world" and "in the other world" simultaneously. Furthermore, *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad* uses a metaphor to tell us that dream is the highest state:

> A man in the embrace of a well-beloved woman knows nothing, neither inside or outside, so does this man when in the embrace of the intelligent self know nothing within or without. This [in the dream state] is the form transforming. Both say ignorance is the cause of annoyance. The Buddhist awakening to knowledge dissolves our ignorance. Chuang Tzu's awakening to uncertainty (are we dreaming or awakened?) amounts to our knowledge of ignorance, affirmation of uncertainty. Buddhists awaken out of dreaming; Chuang Tzu wakes up to dreaming." See *The Butterfly as Companion: Meditations on the First Three Chapters of the Chuang Tzu* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 227.

\(^{85}\) Ibid.

\(^{86}\) Norman Mackenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming*, p. 58.

\(^{87}\) Ibid., p. 59.
in which his desire is filled, in which the self is his desire, in which he has no desire and has passed beyond sorrow. 88

Dream is the highest state as man fully achieves the unity of his self in which "he has no desire and has passed beyond sorrow". 89 The "lifetime-in-a-dream" series are basically constructed in line with Indian or Buddhist philosophies. Dream is regarded as a method for helping protagonists to achieve emptiness. At the end of Yingtao qingyi, Luzi sighs that prosperity and poverty in the mundane world are both vague like the dream which he has made before. And then he changes his mind from seeking prosperity in the mundane world to searching for the Dao. 90 Zhenzhong ji has virtually the same moral, making explicitly the affinity the lifetime-in-a-dream narratives have with Buddhist beliefs rather than Daoist ones. 91

Didactic Mandate

A didactic mandate is usually reflected in dream narratives. 92 It is almost an axiom in Chinese that if the dreamer continues to cultivate his virtue,

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88 Ibid., p. 60.
89 On placing the dream world in a higher position than the waking world, Erich Fromm, a modern psychiatrist, comments: it is a "paradoxical fact that we are not only less reasonable and less decent in our dreams but that we are more intelligent, wiser, and capable of better judgement when we are asleep than when we are awake." See E. Fromm, The Forgotten Language, pp. 38-9.
90 TPGJ 281:2242-4 (no. 10, 權桃青衣).
91 Zhenzhong ji, "I now know at last the way of honor and disgrace and the meaning of poverty and fortune, the reciprocity of gain and loss and the mystery of life and death, and I owe all this knowledge to you [Lüweng 呂翁]. Since you have thus deigned to instruct me in the vanity of ambition, dare I refuse to profit thereby?". The rendering of this passage is quoted from Wang Chi Chen's translation in Traditional Chinese Tales (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 23.
92 K. J. DeWoskin, "The didactic mandate was universal in Chinese writings......The precepts of literate culture were such that the act or writing was an act of teaching, and interpretation of text was a gleaning of teachings." See "On Narrative
rectifies his failings, remains cautious and prudent in his actions, making sacrifices and expresses gratitude for the spirits, good fortune will be received no matter how good or bad the portent is. On the contrary, if the dreamer acts recklessly and scornfully, disaster will materialize without fail and auspicious omens will transform into inauspicious one.93

Whenever an unusual dream moves the heart, or when encountering any portent of good or evil fortune - such as the hues that manifest themselves upon a man's face - refrain from inquiring into its good or evil augury, but perfect one's own failings in a spirit of trepidation and cautiousness. Receive these omens in a state of virtue, and thereby prepare to encounter good fortune and the perpetual benefaction of Heaven.94

A similar use of the didactic mandate is observed in the dream narratives of TPGJ. Huan Huo, a virtuous man, is able to escape calamities that the spirit of Longshan intends to befall on him.95 Filial piety is described as the most important device to defend against demon invasion in the narrative of Wang Fangping.96

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93 See Wang Fu's argument in Bulie 卜列 and Menglie 夢列 in Qianfu lun jian 25:293 and 28:322.
94 See The Art of Han Essay: Wang Fu's Ch'ien-Fu Lun, p. 124. For the original text, see Qianfu lun jian 28:323. Wang Fu further illustrates with examples: "When Queen T'ai-ssu [Tai Si 太姒] had an auspicious dream, King Wen 文王 did not dare rejoice in the good fortune, but first made sacrifices to the multitude of spirits and then divined the dream in the Hall of Illumination. Subsequently, they expressed their gratitude for the auspicious dream. The king examined his own heart; he remained cautious and fearful; and by regarding the propitious tiding as if it were a bad tiding, he was able to bring his good fortune to fruition by gaining the empire. The duke of Kuo [Guo 虢] once dreamt that Ju-shou [Rushou 蘚收] had conferred excellent land upon him. The Duke considered the dream lucky, and had the dissenting historiographer Yin 姚 imprisoned while the whole state was forced to celebrate the event. Because he was joyful at what should have worried him, bad fortune was later realized and his principality annihilated." See The Art of Han Essay, p. 124 and Qianfu lun jian 28:322-3.
95 TPGJ 276:2182-3 (no. 30, 桓恪).
96 TPGJ 280:2233 (no. 7, 王方平).
The concept of retribution (baoying 報應) is also frequently manifested in dream narratives of TPGJ. The reciprocity of actions (favour and hatred, reward and punishment) between man and man, and even between man and supernatural beings is as certain as a cause-and-effect relationship. It is deeply rooted in the minds of Chinese people, not only in waking reality, but also in dream.  

Hence, Xuanzong is eager to find out the one who helped him in his dream. His aim is to render his sincere thanks to his helper, either by political or economic reward. Emperor Wu of Han obtains a pair of pearls at the bank of a pond after fulfilling the fish's request in a dream. The slave woman of the Zhou family gets a pair of golden rings after picking grass out from rotten bones.

As popularly understood, retribution is primarily a Buddhist concept because it demonstrates the workings of karma; but it also could be regarded as Chinese indigenous thought. The Confucian classic, Liji, had the famous passage: "If I give a gift and nothing comes in return, that is contrary to propriety; if the thing comes to me, and I give nothing in return, that also is contrary to propriety." Legge, Liji, p. 65. But before the advent of Buddhism, retribution was believed to operate on a family basis. Baopuzi 抱朴子 stressed the mechanical, quantitative aspect of retribution, "It is said that Heaven and Earth are possessed of crime-recording spirits. According to the lightness or gravity of his transgressions, the sinner's term of life is reduced......If one dies before the total deductions are made, the evil luck will be transferred to children and grandchildren." Quoted from J. R. Ware, Alchemy, Medicine & Religion in the China of A. D. 320: The Nei Pien of Ko Hung (New York: Dover Publication, 1966), p. 58. Hence we know that rewards and punishments were all transferable within a family. But early Chinese religious thinkers had no adequate answer to the fatalistic uncertainty that sometimes good acts was not requited with rewards and bad deeds was not met with punishments. This problem could not be solved until Buddhism converted China with its concepts of karma and transmigration of souls, which explained retribution not only in one life but through a chain of lives. For the detailed analysis of Chinese concept of retribution, see L. S. Yang, "The Concept of Pao as a Basis for Social Relations in China" in Chinese Thought and Institutions (ed. John K. Fairbank. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 291-309 and K. S. Y. Kao, "Bao and Baoying: Narrative Causality and External Motivations in Chinese Fiction" in Chinese Literature Essays, Articles, Reviews (vol. 11, Dec 1989), pp. 115-138.
Conclusion

The notion that dreams foretell the future is one of the oldest beliefs of mankind. The ancients believed that dream was sent by the supernatural beings as unfailing indications of the dreamer's future. Not one unfulfilled dream was recorded in our area of study; dream images were predictions of things to come.

Hence the focus in dream narratives is on hermeneutic technique which is an art: one dream image can sometimes be subject to several different interpretations; and when an image is placed in various contexts, several meanings can be deduced from them. In order to make explicit the veiled mystery, the interpreter requires a considerable amount of intellectual versatility and skill, especially the ability to relate dream images to a wide range of factors such as conventional philosophical and religious authorities, and the cultural and social environment.

Though extraordinary phenomena were commonly found in TPGJ's dream narratives, the happenings in dreams were originally recounted as real accounts of the soul journey and regarded as such by their readers at that time. Sometimes, a dream narrative was compiled into both TPGJ and TPYL (in which the former was an anthology explicitly consisting of strange tales and fiction; and the latter was compiled with a more formal intention for the emperor) by nearly the same group of compilers.\(^1\) In addition, official dynastic records at that time also occasionally took reference to

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\(^1\) See Appendix A.
dream narratives that were also recorded in TPGJ. These dream narratives were situated ambiguously between history and strange tales. While acknowledging them as somewhat less credible than histories they were not intended to be imaginative tales. It is clear that the line drawn for differentiating them into historical records or fiction was far from definite.

Based on models from TPGJ, highly imaginative dream stories with detailed descriptions and complex plots and techniques were composed in the Ming and Qing dynasties, and dream was a widespread and significant subject to be explored after the compilation of TPGJ in the Song dynasty. By studying the dream accounts in TPGJ, this essay has aimed to elucidate the context and understanding of dream narratives in pre-modern China, which serve as models for the dream narratives in later period.

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2 See Appendix C.

3 In *Liaozhai* 聊齋, eighty tales involve dreams, about twenty-five of them taking the dream as a major subject. See Judith T. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*, p. 135. The *Dream of Red Chamber* is one of the famous works employing dream as "a technique to portray the philosophy of life", see Wang I Chün, "Life-Is-A-Dream Theme: Pillow/Dream in Chinese and Japanese Drama", p. 279.
Appendix A:

Dream Narratives Recorded in Both TPGJ and TPYL
(by comparing TPGJ ch. 276-282 and TPYL ch. 397-400)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TPGJ</th>
<th>Quoted from</th>
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1. Ming Chaoben 明鈔本 lists this as 異苑.
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4 Ming Chaoben 明抄本 lists this as 稽神錄.
5 Ming Chaoben 明抄本 lists this as 靈異集.
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Appendix C

Dream Narratives of TPGJ which are also Recorded in Historical Writings

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Appendix D: Translations

TPGJ 276:2177 (no. 11, 蔣濟)

When Jiang Ji 蔣濟 was the Commandant, his wife saw their dead son in a dream. In tears he said to her, "Life and death are different roads! When I was alive, I was the descendant of ministers. Now, beneath the ground, I am a petty sergeant [Wu Bo 伍伯] in Mount Tai's realm of the dead. Because of the lowliness of this position and the hardships it entails, I am indescribably haggard. The singer Sun A 孫阿 who lives west of the Imperial Temple has today received the command to become Magistrate of Mount Tai. I would like you to have the Marquis, my father, enjoin Sun A on my behalf that I might obtain a happier position." When he finished speaking, his mother suddenly awoke. The following day she told Jiang Ji what had occurred. Jiang Ji said, "Dreams are like that. You can't really rely on them."

The following night the mother again dreamed of her son who told her, "I have come to greet the new Magistrate, and have been stationed temporarily beneath the temple. I am able to return to see you for a while just before he departs. The new Magistrate is to start on his journey by noon tomorrow, but before his departure there will be much to do, so that I won't be able come back again. I will make my eternal farewell here and now. The Marquis has a stubborn nature and is not easily prevailed upon. That is why I have voiced my plaint to you, mother. I would like you to beseech the Marquis once more. What would be the harm in putting this to a test!" Thereupon he related Sun A's physical appearance in great detail.

1 Jiang Ji was a native of the state of Chu 楚 who came to be Defender-in-chief in the state of Wei 魏. His biography is in Sanguo zhi 14:450-456.
2 Its duties and functions are not known. From the context, it is probably a very low position in the realm of the dead.
3 Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (Rizhi lu 日知錄 30:28b-19a, Sibu beiyao 四部備要 edition) explained Mount Tai 泰 is Mount Tai-shan 泰山: "Mt. Tai [Tai] is Tai-shan [Tai Shan]. One of the five sacred mountains in China. This is the site on which the Han Emperors performed major sacrifices to Heaven and Earth. With the introduction of Buddhism into China, it became confused with the Tai-shan of the Ten Buddhist Hells and was identified as a branch of Yama's court. Tai-shan Wang, the God of Tai-shan, thus, became the lord of departed souls and judge of the dead", quoted from Karl S. Y. Kao (ed.), Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic, p. 56.
After the sun had risen, the mother spoke to the Marquis once more, saying, "Last night I had another dream of our son's plea. Even though it is said that dreams are nothing to believe in, this is just too coincidental. What would be the harm in trying an experiment?" Jiang Ji thereupon dispatched someone to the Imperial Temple to inquire about Sun A, who, sure enough, was there. His physical appearance proved to be in every way as Jiang Ji's son had described him. Jiang Ji wept and said, "I had almost turned my back on my son!"

He then called Sun A and told him the whole affair. Sun did not fear his imminent death, but was instead pleased that he was to become Magistrate of Mount Tai. He feared only that Jiang Ji's words might not be reliable. Thus he said, "If it is as you say, Commandant, it is as I wish. Yet what position does your worthy son wish to receive?" Jiang Ji answered, "Give him whatever is desirable in the underground." Sun responded, "Then it shall be done as you instruct!" The Commandant then rewarded him amply, and having finished speaking, he sent him home.

Jiang Ji was anxious to know the outcome of his test. He had a man posted every ten paces from the gate of his garrison headquarters to the foot of the Imperial Temple, in order to pass on news of Sun A. Early the next morning the news arrived that Sun had developed a pain in his chest. By mid-morning it was reported that Sun's condition had worsened, and at noon Sun's death was announced. Jiang Ji said in tears, "Even though I am in sorrow over my son's misfortune, I am nonetheless pleased to learn that the dead retain their sentience." A month later, Jiang Ji's son reappeared and told his mother, "I have been made Office Manager!"

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**TPGJ 277:2200 (no. 29, 樊系)**

Vice Director Fan Xi 樊系曾 once had a dream of passing the civil service examination one year before he attended it. The result was promulgated: Wang Zhengqing 王正卿 was the top of all the candidates, in all twenty-six of them. The examination was held one year later. After Xi passed the examination, Wang Zhengqing was really the top of all candidates, and the number was also the same.

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4 The rendering of this passage is mostly based on Pedro Acosta's work, see Karl S. Y. Kao (ed.), *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, pp. 56-7.

5 His biography is in *Yuanhe xingzuan* 元和姓纂 4:8a and *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文 (Qing Jiaqing shijiu nian neifu kanben 清嘉慶十九年內府刊本, 1890) 395:37a.

According to *Quan Tangwen*, he was the "jinshi" 進士 in the reign of Kaiyuan 開元 and was later promoted to the Editor, the District Defender of Jing county 涇縣 and the Vice Director in the Department of State Affairs. His official posts were matched with the anecdote here.
And, Xi was transferred from the post of Editor. Attendant Gentleman of Bureau of Appointments, Daxi Xun 達奚珣 [c. 648-706 A. D.]^6 regarded him with reverence. He first stationed Xi as the District Defender of Jincheng 金城 [in modern Lanzhou province]. Xi did not accept this offer. ^7 Mr. Daxi said, "You turn down serving as an Editor and able to be the District Defender of Jincheng. What post would you like to be offered?" Xi said, "I would not dare to be dissatisfied to be the Commandant near the capital. But this post is not my post." One month over passed, the Bureau of Appointments had no more posts that could be exchanged for him. Mr. Daxi then ordered him to serve for the Swords Office. Xi again did not submit to it.

At that time Cui Yi 崔昐 was stationed the Commandant of Jinyang 涇陽 [in modern Gansu province] by Selector of the East. Because it was a post left by an official whose parent had recently died [youqu 蒼闕], he refused to accept it. ^8 Yi was the son of the Grand Councilor Cui Qiao 崔翬. So he requested to change for another post. By chance, Xi's post was not fixed. That day when the result was promulgated, Mr. Daxi said to him, "Aren't you accepting the offer of District Defender of Jincheng? I have changed the post for you. You say, which post are suitable for you?" Xi said, "I've dreamed that my post should include the character of 'yang' 陽". Mr. Daxi exclaimed, "It's destined." Thereupon he ordered that the post be notified to him. It was the District Defender of Jingyang.

- original collected in 定命錄

TPGJ 278:2206-7 (no. 9, 皇甫弘)

Huangfu Hong 皇甫弘 was going to attend the "jinshi" 進士 civil examination. When he was in Huazhou 華州 [in modern Shanxi province] ^9 to take the civil service examination, Hong was at odds with

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^6 According to Quan Tangwen 345:4b, he was the Attendant Gentleman of Bureau of Appointments in the Kaiyuan reign.

^7 According to Xin Tangshu, nominations to office were publicly announced once decided by the Bureau of Appointments. Candidates were not forced to accept the first posting offered to them. But if they had declined the post more than three times, they had to take the selection examinations again the following winter. See Xuanju zhi 選舉志 in Xin Tangshu 45:1171-2 and P. A. Herbert, Examine the Honest, Appraise the Able: Contemporary Assessment of Civil Service Selection in Early Tang China (Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1988), p. 37.

^8 In general, other officials would try to avoid being appointed to such posts by requesting to change to another one. See ZWDCD vol. 1, p. 153 and vol. 13, p. 246.

^9 Huazhou was under the division of Jingji Dao 京畿道 in Tang dynasty.
Prefect Qian Hui 錢徽 [A. D. 755-829] because of his drunkenness and was expelled by Qian. Then he went to Shanzhou 陝州 [in modern Henan province] to have his transgression cleared. When that was done, he was about to pass through the city-gate, he heard that Qian, coming from Huazhou, was the Examination Administrator. He knew that he certainly could not pass the examination, so he went east toward home.

He went for some distance, and as a result, he fell asleep. He dreamed of his deceased wife's wet nurse, saying, "You were about to attend the civil service examination. Where are you going now?" He told her the story of how the examiner was abhorrent to him. The wet nurse told him, "You should pray to the Old Lady of Stone." Then they went north from the inn together, walking through grass for several miles, and entered a small room, where they saw a ruined statue. The young man paid his respects. The wet nurse said, "My young hostess's husband, Mr. Huangfu, would like to attend the civil examination. Old Lady, will he succeed or not?" The statue nodded her head, saying, "He will succeed." The wet nurse said, "The Old Lady of Stone says you'll succeed, then you're sure to succeed. You should not forget to repay her kindness some day." Hong then bowed down before her in gratitude. His wet nurse accompanied him back to the door of the inn. He then woke up startled, saying, "My dream is so clear and explicit. How could it be not true?" Thereby he went back to the city to attend the civil examination.

Attendant Gentlemen, Qian Hui, wanted to halt his progress, [but] he let him pass the zawen 雜文 [miscellaneous compositions examination].

10 Qian Hui's biography is in Xin Tangshu 177:5271-3.
11 In Tang, Shanzhou was under the division of Daoji Dao 道畿道.
12 According to Xin Tangshu, Qian Hui served as Attendant Gentlemen of Ministry of Works and also was the Prefect of Huazhou.
13 The test for "zawen" 雜文 consisted a poem and a rhyme-prose [jiuli zawen zhe, yishi yifu 舊例雜文者, 一詩一賦], quoted from Fengshi wenjian ji 封氏聞見記. To comprehend the dream narrative here, it seems necessary to give some background information regarding the examination procedure of the "jinshi" in the Tang dynasty. The "jinshi" examination was divided into three sections from A. D. 705. According to Zhiyan 談言, ch.1, "It was only up to the first year of the reign of Shenlong [of Zhongzong 中宗] [A. D. 705], the examination [of "jinshi"] was divided into three sections [zh Shenlong yuannian, fangxing sanchang shi 至神龍元年, 方行三場試]. In Dengke ji 登科記, the name and the sequence of these three sections were given, "The examination was divided into three sections. First was the test of 'zawen' [雜文, miscellaneous compositions examination], later 'tiejing' [帖經 quotation questions examination], finally test the 'ce' [策, essays examination, mainly on current affairs]. After each section, the result would be promulgated immediately, indicating who had succeeded" [shi sanchang, xian zawen, ci tiejing, ci zai ce, mei yichang yi, jibang quliu 試三場, 先雜文, 次帖經].
He thought privately, "Everybody knows that I am angry with Hong, but now, it is not permissible for me to insult him in public, so I simply will not pass his examination. Thus it will be done."

Hong was then commanded to attend the test of \textit{tiejing} 帖經 [quotation questions examination].\footnote{In \textit{Tongdian} 通典, the test of "tiejing" 帖經 is explained as follows: in the questions on quotations from the classics [tiejing], the beginning and end of [a page of] the classic which [the candidate] had studied were suppressed and only one line in the middle was given, the page being cut to form a slip (tie 帖). Each quotation question (tie 帖) consisted of three characters. As time went on, the number of correct answers required varied, being increased or decreased. At times to pass one needed to answer correctly four, five or six. \cite{CH, p. 474}. The English translation is quoted from \textit{P. A. Herbert, Examine the Honest, Appraise the Able}, pp. 172-3. For a more detailed explanation of what "tiejing" is, see the note on pp. 173-4.} When the result placard was about to be written, Qian was perturbed, wanting to substitute one person for another.\footnote{My reading of this passage is that Qian's intention is to replace Hong's name on the list of successful examinees with another name.} He had not made up his mind, pondering the case over and over again, almost up to five-watch\footnote{"Geng" 更 are the watches of the night in former times, starting from seven o'clock in the evening to five o'clock in the morning. Each watch approximately equals to two hours, five-watch thus refers to the time period between three to five o'clock in the morning.} and had not yet gone to sleep. He asked his student, "Could you bring me the next candidate's [jurén 舉人]\footnote{In Tang and Song dynasty, candidates attending the "jinshi" examination were called "jurén" 舉人, see \textit{CH}, p. 1114.} essay." After opening it, he found that it was Hong's examination paper. Qian said, "This is destined by Heaven." Thereupon he did not make any alternations.

Having passed the examination, Hong returned to the east. When he got to Shanzhou, he asked the people in the inn, "Is there an Old Lady of Stone nearby?" They all laughed and said, "How can you know about it? Originally it was a piece of unpolished stone, but later herdsmen and children chipped away at it for fun. As it looks like a person, we called it the 'stone matron'. It is only two to three \textit{li} from the inn."
The young man took wine and dried meat and went there with them. The journey was just as he had experienced in the dream. He then paid his respect by offering food and libations to the stone matron and left.

TPGJ 278:2210 (no. 15, 薛義)

Xue Yi 薛義 [A. D. 678-749] of Hedong 河東 [in modern Shanxi province] was the Editing Clerk of Palace Library. His brother-in-law Cui 崔秘 was the Commandant of Tonglu 桐盧 [in modern Zhejiang province]. Yi lived as a guest with his aunt, whose family name was Wei 韋, residing with Mi's clan. After living there for a long time, Yi contracted chronic malaria. He was sick incessantly for several months and nearly dead. Madam Wei was greatly worried about him. At night, she dreamed of a Daoist deity, wearing white clothes, cap with a simple lined robe. So she put her hands together and paid her respects and asked that Yi's illness be healed. The deity said, "If this illness is not cured quickly, it will become malignant malaria. If that happens, a cure is impossible." Thereupon he gave her two talismans and an incantation.

The incantation was: "Malignant malaria! Malignant malaria! The spirits of the four mountains have sent me to bind you up! Envoys of Liuding 六丁, Generals of Wudao 五道, collect your essence and vital spirit and summon your spirit and soul. Get out quickly! Get out quickly! Never come upon this person. Quickly, quickly according to the regulations and ordinances." [The deity went on saying], "When the illness arises, chant this incantation and hold the talismans. The illness will then be cured."

At the same time, Madam Wei's youngest daughter, who was seven years old, also had the chronic malaria. [In the same dream], Madam Wei saw a creature at the side shaped like a black dog with hairy caterpillars for hair. The deity said, "It is just this creature that is causing the sicknesses. If you can catch and kill it quickly, the diseases will be cured. If you don't do like this, the two little maidservants in your house will also contract malaria." She then killed the dog in her dream.

After waking, she passed on the incantation to Yi. Yi held to it with the most sincere heart, his illness was then recovered. The daughter of Madam Wei also recovered. It was all according to the words of the deity.

TPGJ 279:2216 (no. 1, 蕭吉)

In the reign of Daye 大業 [A. D. 605-618], a person once dreamed that a phoenix perched on his hand. He regarded it as an auspicious omen. He
went to call upon Xiao Ji to divine about it. Ji said, "This is a very inauspicious dream." The dreamer hated this interpretation and thought that he was talking recklessly. Over ten days later, the dreamer's mother died. He then sent a confidant to go to inquire Ji the reason. Ji said, "The phoenix rests on nothing except paulownia, and eats nothing except bamboo fruit. The reason for phoenix resting on your hand is because it has the symbol of paulownia and bamboo. In Liji, 'juzhang' 直杖 is made of bamboo and 'xiezhang' 削杖 is made of paulownia. This is the reason that I know you must have great sorrow."

- original collected in 大業拾遺記

TPGJ 279:2227 (no. 28, 周延翰)

The Editing Clerk of the Prince of Jiangnan was Zhou Yanhan 周延翰. He loved the Dao and often practised affairs relating to ingestion of drugs. He once dreamed of a spiritual being who bestowed a text of one chapter on him. It was like a Daoist Scripture. The writings were all seven words per sentence. The only line that he remembered was the last one, saying, "Cinnabar [dansha 丹砂] is next to the purple-bearded one." After waking, he himself was delighted, as he thought he had got a verification of cinnabar. He devoted himself to it, but died in Jianye [in modern Jiangsu province]. He was buried next to the tumulus of the Great Emperor of Wu. Yanhan had no wife and children, except a maidservant called "Dansha" 丹砂.

- original collected in 廣異記

TPGJ 281:2237-8 (no. 1, 李進士)

A "jinshi" 進士 whose family name was Li, but whose given name has been forgotten, once dreamed that several men arrived. He followed them and arrived at a city. When he entered the gate there was a hall, and the building was stately and magnificent. At first he could see nobody, and he went straight into the hall [tang 堂] turned half round, sat at the corner of the bed. Suddenly there was a man holding a staff to hit him, scolding him, "What sort of newly dead ghost are you! How dare you sit on the king's bed!" Li went straight out. A moment later, he heard the sound of

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18 It was the posthumous title given for Sun Quan 孫權 of the Three Kingdoms period, see ZWDCD, vol. 6, p. 178.
19 Ming chaoben 明鈔本 lists this as 稽神錄.
20 In Shuowen jiezi, "tang, dian ye" 堂, 殿也, "tang" means the "hall". In former times, it referred to a big hall but had no separated rooms, this is why "tang" was also used to refer to "main chamber" (zhengqin 正寢), see CH, p. 322. Probably this is the reason for having the King's bed in the hall.
the king's progress from inside the gate. Then he saw a purple-clothed 
man ascending the throne. [Li] was led up from where he stood by the 
king's servant.

The king asked him why he stole his brother-in-law's money. At first, Li 
did not realize what the king was talking about. King then said, "You sold 
some horses for your brother-in-law, and in all got twenty-seven thousand. 
You immediately took three thousand.21 Is this not stealing money?"

Not long after that, Li saw a red-clothed man coming to plead for him, 
"This man still has life [in the terrestrial world], it is not appropriate to 
detain him here now. We should order him simply to pay back the money. 
Your Majesty can set fifteen days as the time limit. If the transaction22 is 
not completed by then, we should then dun for the exact amount of 
money."

Li then awoke and regarded the dream as a preposterous affair and there 
was no reason to believe it. Over ten days passed, a mirror-polisher came 
to his house. He was also skilled at divination. They [Li's family member] 
asked him to divine, and his divination was verified, so they all told Li. Li 
going to the mirror-polisher's house himself, and interrogated him, "What 
sort of petty man are you! You come to deceive and confuse my family." 
The mirror-polisher replied angrily, saying, "You sold the horses and 
snitched the capital. The king ordered you to complete the transaction. 
Now the time limit is almost due, and you haven't returned one qian 銖.23 
The king will chase you for it. How could you dare to scold the state's 
emissary?" Li was startled and surprised that it related to the dream 
incident. He bowed and paid his respects and asked him how he knew the 
 happenings. The mirror-polisher said, "The red-clothed man who helped 
you that day is your great-grandfather. He is afraid that you will be 
dunned for the money, so he sent me to inform you."

Li said his brother-in-law had already dead, so there was nobody he could 
repay. The mirror-polisher said, "You can just give to the poor beggars 
and disperse it to various monasteries, telling them that you are given on 
behalf of your deceased brother-in-law, then it will be alright." Li

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21 It is clear that Li had stolen some money from his brother-in-law, but the amount that 
he had stolen differs in different versions. According to ZHSJ, 1961 edition, Li had 
stolen thirty thousand. Here I follow the Ming edition where it is written that Li had 
stolen three thousand from his brother-in-law.

22 The original text is "jikuai" 計會 Calculating various small accounts and summing 
up the total is called "ji"; summing up the big accounts is called "kuai", see CH, p. 
654 and ZWDCD, vol. 30, p. 430. For the sake of simplicity, here I render "jikuai" 
as a compound, meaning "transaction".

23 "Qian" 銖 is a unit of weigh, equal to one-tenth of a tael. In the context, it means a 
very small amount of money, see CH, p. 1384.
dispersed the money as he had been told, and nobody ever came to chase him.

- original collected in 廣異記

TPGJ 282:2250-1 (no. 5, 張生)

There was once a man by the name of Zhang 張 who lived at Chicheng Ban 赤城坂, northeast of Zhongmou 中牟 County in Bianzhou 濮州. Since he was very poor, he parted with his wife and children and went to the north of the Yellow River. Five long years passed before he returned. On his way from north of the river to Bianzhou, he went out of the gate of Zhengzhou 鄭州 in the evening; by the time he reached Banqiao 板橋, it was already dark. So he left the main road and took a shortcut along the hillside to return home. Suddenly off in a thicket he saw some brightly burning lamps and five or six people in the midst of a drinking party. Zhang got down from his donkey and approached them; while he was still more than ten paces away, he saw his wife among them, joking and laughing happily with the others. Zhang then hid himself among some white poplars to spy on them. He saw a man with a long beard who raised his cup and said, "Please, madam, sing for us." Zhang's wife was from a scholarly family, and from an early age she had studied literature. She therefore knew a great many songs. She did not want to sing for them, but being earnestly entreated from all sides, she finally sang, "Sighing for the withered grass, How mournful is the cricket's tune. My husband has gone and not yet returned. Tonight, as I sit in sadness, my temples are as white as snow."

"In appreciation of your song. I'll cheer you up with a cup of wine," said the man with a long beard. When she had finished drinking, the wine was passed to a young man with a light complexion. He again asked her to sing. "Once is more than enough," Zhang's wife protested, "How can you ask me again?" The man with a long beard gestured with a bamboo chopstick and said, "Set out the pitcher! Anyone who refuses a request to sing has to drink a cup. And anyone who sings any humorous parts out of old songs has to pay the same penalty." Thereupon, Zhang's wife sang again, "Have a drink; Don't decline. Falling blossoms have encircled the branch in vain; Flowing waters will never return. Trust not your youth; How long can it last?"

The wine came to a man in purple dress, and he, too, raised his cup and requested a song. Zhang's wife was not pleased, but after pondering for a while, she finally sang, "I hate the empty chamber. And in autumn, the

24 The place names mentioned here and below in the dream narrative were all in modern Henan province.
days never seem to end. No news from my groom. And in the distant sky, the wild geese travel in vain."

The wine came to a foreigner in black dress, who also requested a song. Zhang's wife had already sung three or four songs in a row and was slightly out of breath. When she was still hesitating, the one with a long beard pushed the pitcher toward her and said, "You shouldn't refuse, so you're fined a cup!" Zhang's wife sobbed and drank, and then sang while passing the wine to the foreigner, "Mournful and urgent is the evening wind; Dew has moistened the grass in the courtyard. My husband has gone and not yet returned; how could he know that I often cry in my closed chamber?"

The wine came to a youth in green dress. He raised his cup and said, "The night is already late. I fear we cannot linger for much longer, so please don't refuse to sing us another song." Again Zhang's wife sang, "The light of the fireflies threads through the white poplars; the sad wind pierces the wild grass. I wonder if I'm travelling in a dream, and grief has pervaded the old garden path." The wine came to Zhang's wife, and the man with a long beard sang as he passed it to her, "Before the blossoms we met. Beneath the blossoms we parted. Why must you speak of being in a dream. When all of life is but a dream?"

When the wine came back to the foreigner in purple dress, he again requested a song. "This time, make it seductive," he added. Zhang's wife lowered her head, and before she began to sing, the man with a long beard again pushed the pitcher toward her. At that Zhang became angry, and feeling around his feet, he found a tile. He threw it and hit the fellow with a beard right on the head. He threw a second tile, but this time it hit his wife on the forehead. Suddenly everything became quiet, and there was nothing to be seen.

Zhang thought his wife had died; so crying bitterly he resumed his journey throughout the night. In the morning he reached home. Members of his household came out to welcome him in astonishment and delight. When he inquired about his wife, a maidservant said, "Mistress has had a headache since last night." Zhang went into he room and asked his wife the cause of her complaint. "Last night," his wife said, "I dreamed that I was in a thicket, where there six or seven fellows who one after another kept pressing me to drink and urging me to sing. In all, I sang six or seven songs. There was a fellow with a long beard who kept pushing the pitcher to me. While we were drinking, some tiles came flying in. The second one hit me on the forehead. I awoke with a start, and had a headache." Zhang
then realised that what he had seen the night before had been his wife’s dream.\textsuperscript{25} - original collected in 簡異記

\textsuperscript{25} The rendering is mostly based on D. E. Gjertson's work, see Y. W. Ma & Joseph S. M. Lau, \textit{Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations}, pp. 439-440. According to \textit{Tangren shuohui} 唐人說畵, it was composed by the author of \textit{Mengyou lu} 夢遊錄, Ren Fan 任繁, written in A. D. 843, see Liu Kairong, \textit{Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu}, p. 90.
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