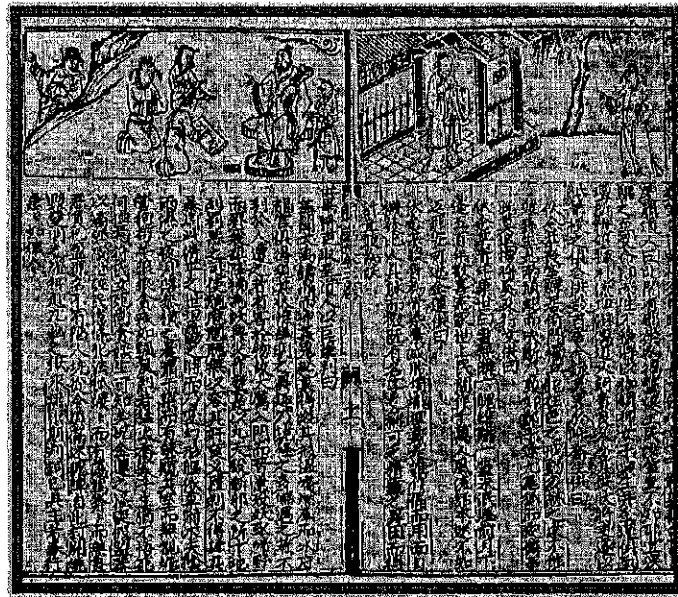


(Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2005)

The Peony Lantern
(Mudandeng ji 牡丹燈記)



...After a short time, the mannequin soldiers return with the girl, the young man, and Jinlian, who were all in wooden yokes and chains...The Daoist scolded them for a long while, and commanded them to confess.

(Illustration from *Chongzeng fulu Jiandeng xinhua* 重增附錄剪燈新話)

The Peony Lantern¹

by Qu You

At the time when Fang Guozhen 方國珍² ruled over eastern Zhejiang 東浙, the people of Mingzhou 明州³ hung out lanterns for five nights starting with every New Year's Eve; and the whole city, men and women, enjoyed the spectacle.

¹ The present translation is based on Qu You 瞿佑, *Jiandeng xinhua wai er zhong* 剪燈新話外二種, Zhou Lengqie 周楞伽, ed. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1981, pp. 49-53; *Jiandeng xinhua jujie* 剪燈新話句解 in *Han'guo cang Zhongguo xijian zhenben xiaoshuo* 韓國藏中國稀見珍本小說. Beijing: Zhongguo dabaiké quanshu chubanshe 中國大百科全書出版社, 1997, pp. 237-246; and Qu You and Li Changqi 李昌祺. *Jiandeng xinhua, Jiandeng yuhua hedingben* 剪燈新話、剪燈餘話合訂本. Shanghai: Huatong shuju 華通書局, 1931. My translation frequently refers to and takes into account the English translations of the story from *The Golden Casket: Chinese Novellas of Two Millennia*, translated by Christopher Levenson from Wolfgang Bauer's and Herbert Franke's German version of the original Chinese, with an introduction by Herbert Franke. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964, and Harmon, Coy León. "Ch'u Yu's *Chien-Teng Hsin-Hua*: The Literary Tale in Transition" Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1985.

² Fang Guozhen (1319-74) was a native of Huangyan 黃巖 district in the coastal region in Zhejiang 浙江. In a rebellion at the end of the Yuan 元 dynasty (1206-1368), "ashore he [Fang Guozhen] controlled the three coastal prefectures of Ch'ing-yuan [Qingyuan 慶元], (in modern Ch'u-chou [Chuzhou 處州], Chekiang [Zhejiang]), T'ai-chou [Taizhou 台州], and Wen-chou [Wenzhou 溫州], and almost the entire coast of modern Chekiang from Ningpo [寧波] south into northern Fukien [Fujian 福建]. In addition, he held de facto control over much of Ningpo and Shao-hsing [Shaoxing 紹興] on the shores of Hangchow [Hangzhou 杭州] Bay." After his surrender to the Ming in 1367, Fang was

In the year Gengzi 庚子 of the reign of Zhizheng 至正 (1360), there was a man named Qiao 喬 living at the foot of Zhenming 鎮明 Mountain.⁴ Qiao was a recent widower, and lived alone without any dependents. He did not go out to stroll, but leaned against his door and felt lonely. Toward the end of the third night watch of the fifteenth day, the number of strollers was gradually decreasing. Just then, he saw a maid carrying a double-peony lantern, followed by a very beautiful girl of about seventeen or eighteen. She wore a red gown with kingfisher-blue sleeves. Elegantly and charmingly she passed by, walking toward the west. In the moonlight, the young man caught sight of her splendid features and tender youth.⁵ She was truly the fairest

taken to Nanjing in 1368, and detained there. He died of natural causes in 1374. See Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, *The Cambridge History of China – Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part I*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 36-37.

³ Mingzhou is now Yin 鄞 prefecture of Zhejiang.

⁴ Zhenming Mountain is located in the south of Ningpo prefecture.

⁵ The Chinese text reads, “韶顏稚齒.” According to Kondo Haruo 近藤春雄. “Sento Shinhwa to Todai Shosetsu 剪燈新話と唐代小説.” *Setsuria 説林*, 25 (February, 1977, p. 56), this expression also appears in “The Story of Huo Xiaoyu” (Huo Xiaoyu zhuan 霍小玉傳). I have not found it in Lu Xun 魯迅, ed. *Tang Song chuanqi ji 唐宋傳奇集*. (Beijing: Wenxue guji kanxing chubanshe 文學古籍刊行出版社, 1956), or Wang Meng’ou 王夢鷗, *Tangren xiaoshuo yanjiu 唐人小說研究* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, 1973). However, this expression is very common and appears frequently in both poetry and prose. Thus, its use alone does not demonstrate the influence of “The Story of Huo Xiaoyu” on “The Peony Lantern.”

in the land. Qiao's soul was so moved that he could not help but stepped out alongside, first a few steps ahead, then falling behind her.⁶ After a few paces, the girl suddenly turned around, smiled kindly at him, and said, "I had not expected it would come to a meeting in the mulberries,⁷ but we now have an encounter under the moon."⁸

⁶ The Chinese text reads, "神魂飄蕩，不能自抑，乃尾之而去，或先之，或後之。" Kondo Haruo (1977, op. cit., p. 56) figures out the similarities of descriptions of movement in this passage with those in "The Story of Miss Ren" (Renshi zhuan 任氏傳), in which the protagonist Zheng finds himself in a quandary when facing the beauty of Miss Ren, "When Chang [Zheng] saw her he was delightfully surprised and whipped his donkey up alongside them, staying a bit behind or in front, wanting to dally with her but not daring to 鄭子見之驚悅，策其驢，忽先之，忽後之，將挑而未敢." See *Tang Song chuanqi ji* (op. cit.), p. 34. The English rendition is from "Miss Jen," translated by William H. Neihouser, Jr. in *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau, eds., New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, p. 339.

⁷ The Chinese text reads, "桑中之期" (i.e., "a rendez-vous in the mulberries"). *Jiandeng xinhua jujie* (from here on *Jujie*, op. cit., p. 242, n. 17) reads this expression along the following lines from "Air of Yong, Yongfeng 鄘風" in the *Classic of Poetry (Shijing 詩經)*: "Who was the woman I longed for? – the noble Jiang's daughter fair. In the mulberries she promised to meet, she called me to her high bower 云誰之思，彼孟姜矣。期我乎桑中，要我乎上宮." (English translation from *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. Edited and translated by Stephen Owen. New York – London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996, p. 55).

⁸ The Chinese text reads, "月下之遇." The *Jujie* traced back the origin of this expression to a poem by Li Bai 李白 (op. cit., p. 242, n. 18). Zhou Lengqie (1981) introduces another expression, "in front of

It does not seem coincidental." The young man hastened forward, bowed, and said, "My humble dwelling is only a few steps away. Could you, fair lady, honor me with a visit?" The girl did not object and called out to her maid, "Jinlian, bring the lantern and come with us." At that Jinlian turned around, and the young man and the girl walked hand in hand to his house. Extremely happy to be near her, he felt that even the meeting with the goddess of the Mount Wu⁹ or the fairy of the Luo River¹⁰ could not have been more wonderful. When Qiao asked her name and where she dwelt, the girl replied, "My surname is Fu; Liqing is my style, and Shufang my given name. I am the daughter of the former Administrative Assistant of Fenghua Prefecture. After my father's death, my family was ruined. Having no brothers and scarcely any relatives, I now live alone with Jinlian to the west of the pond."

flowers and under the moon 花前月下," as a common romantic environment for meetings between young men and women in "feudal times" (p. 53, n. 5).

⁹ The Goddess of Mount Wu 巫山: The *Gaotang fu* 高唐賦 (The Poetic Exposition on Gaotang), attributed to Song Yu 宋玉, tells of the encounter between the King of Chu and the goddess of Mount Wu. The goddess comes as an apparition to the king and spends the night with him. "On leaving, she claims to be the 'clouds and rains,' which gradually became a poetic term for sexual intercourse." (*An Anthology of Chinese Literature...*, op. cit., p. 189).

¹⁰ The fairy of the Luo River 洛神: Inspired by Song Yu's poetic exposition of the goddess, Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232) forded the Luo River on his return from the capital and composed the *Luoshen fu* 洛神賦 (The Goddess of the Luo), in which he described his imaginary encounter with Mifei 宓妃, the river goddess.

The young man kept her overnight at his place. Her whole bearing was elegant and seductive, and her words breathed pleasant attractiveness. Letting the curtain down, she shared his pillow in boundless joy and love. At dawn, she took her leave and departed. As soon as it was night again she returned. And so it went for about a fortnight, until an old man next door became suspicious. He made a hole in the wall and peered through. Horrified, he saw a powdered and bejeweled skeleton¹¹ sitting with Qiao under a lantern. The following morning the old man went to investigate the matter, but Qiao did not want to speak or tell his story. The old neighbor said, "Alas, you've succumbed to calamity! Human beings are the fullness of pure *yang*, and spirits the baneful filth of dark *yin*. You're now living with a spirit of the dark *yin*, but you do not know it. You spend your nights with a demonic, unclean creature, and are unaware. One day your virility will be exhausted and a fatal evil will overtake you. How sad that one who is in his prime will soon become a guest in the yellow earth! How can I not feel pity [when thinking of this]?"

Young Qiao then became terrified and recounted the entire story in detail. "If she claimed that she sojourns to the west of the lake, you should go there and search

¹¹ The Chinese text reads, "髑髏" (a skull). The *Jujie* reads this horrible scene in association with a passage in *Zhuangzi* 莊子, chapter "Zhi le 至樂" (Perfect Happiness): "When Chuang Tzu [Zhuangzi] went to Ch'u [Chu], he saw an old skull, all dry and parched...[H]e dragged the skull over and, using it for a pillow 援髑髏而枕, lay down to sleep." (p. 243, n. 25; English translation is from Burton Watson (tr.), *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968, p. 193).

for such a woman, so that you know more particulars about her," said the old neighbor. Qiao followed his advice and went to the region west of Moon Lake.¹² He walked back and forth along the long embankment and beneath the tall bridge,¹³ questioning the people who lived there as well as asking strangers who passed through. But none could give him any information. As evening approached, he went to the Temple of the Middle of the Lake¹⁴ to rest for a while. He walked along the east corridor, then turned into the west. At the end of the corridor he came upon a dark chamber in which there was a coffin of the style designed for people who had died far from their native lands. On top of the coffin, an inscription on white paper read, "Coffin of Fu Liqing, daughter of the former Administrative Assistant of Fenghua Prefecture." In front of the coffin hung a double-peony lantern, and under the lantern stood the paper figure of a female servant on whose back were written two characters: "Jinlian."

When young Qiao saw this, his hair stood on end and a cold chill ran through his body. He fled from the temple and did not dare look back. That night, worried and

¹² The Chinese text reads, "月湖." The lake is located in the southwest of Ningpo prefecture (*Jujie*, p. 243, n. 30).

¹³ The embankment and the bridge are located in the southwest of the prefecture (*Jujie*, p. 243, n. 32).

¹⁴ The Chinese text reads, "湖心寺." This can be read as a proper name, "Temple of the Middle Lake," or as a description of a location on the lake, "the temple located in the middle of Moon Lake, 寺在月湖中." See *The Golden Casket*... (op. cit., p. 236), and Harmon (1985, p. 195); see also *Jujie* (p. 243, n. 34).

terrified, he stayed at the house of his old neighbor. The old man told him that "Master Wei of the Temple of Dark Mystery¹⁵ was formerly a disciple of the revered Daoist Wang, and is now most experienced in talismans and amulets. You should rush to him and seek his help." The next morning, young Qiao went to the Daoist temple. When the Master saw him coming from far off, he cried out in alarm, "Evil influences surround you in droves. Why are you coming here?" Young Qiao bowed before the Master's seat and told him the entire story. The Master then gave him two red amulets, and instructed him to fasten one to his door and hang the other by his bed. He also warned Qiao not to go to the Temple of the Middle of the Lake. The young man took the amulets, went home, and followed the instructions exactly. From that time on the girl did not return.

More than one month passed, and Qiao went to the Bridge of the Embroidered Robes¹⁶ to visit a friend. He remained there, drank until he was intoxicated, and forgot the Master's warning. Returning home, he took the road that went past the Temple of the Middle of the Lake. Upon reaching the temple gate, he saw Jinlian coming out to meet him. She bowed and said, "My mistress has been waiting for you for a long time. Why have you been so inconstant in your love for her?" She then

¹⁵ The Chinese text reads, "玄妙觀." The temple is located in the southeast of the prefecture (*Jujie*, p. 243, n. 42).

¹⁶ The Chinese text reads, "袞繡橋." The bridge is located in the southwest of the prefecture (*Jujie*, p. 243, n. 44).

walked with Qiao down the west corridor and straight into the chamber. There sat the girl and she proceeded to censure him, "You and I did not know each other before; we met by chance beneath the lantern. Moved by your passion, I devoted myself completely to serving you. I did not neglect you throughout those days and nights. Why do you believe the words of the evil Daoist? Do you doubt me so, that you want to part from me forever? Since you have been so fickle in love, I should hate you deeply. Luckily I have seen you today. How could we bear to part from each other?" Seizing the young man's hand, she walked him to the coffin, which suddenly opened. She drew him in, and it closed again. There, in the coffin, the young man met his fate.

The old neighbor thought it strange that Qiao had not returned. He asked about the young man far and near. Arriving in the temple chamber where the coffin sat, he saw a piece of the young man's gown hanging out of it. He pleaded with the temple monks to open the coffin and they did so, but the young man was already long dead. There in the coffin, his body lay upon the corpse of the girl, who looked as if she were alive. The monks said, "This is the daughter of Mr. Fu, the administrative assistant of Fenghua Prefecture. She died at the age of seventeen and her coffin was placed here temporarily. The whole family moved to the north and nothing has been heard of them for twelve years. We never expected her to perform such mischief." Thereupon they buried the coffin containing the corps outside the west gate.

From that time on, one frequently saw the young man and the girl walking hand in hand on cloudy days or in dark of nights, with a servant girl carrying a double-peony

lantern and walking ahead of them. Anyone who saw them immediately fell seriously ill with chills and fever, and only those who performed meritorious deeds or offered sacrifices of meat and wine could be healed. Otherwise they never recovered. The people were greatly frightened and flocked to the Temple of Dark Mystery to present their complaints to Master Wei. The Master replied, "My talismans and amulets can only protect against things that are not so seriously evil. But now the calamity has reached its peak, and this is beyond my knowledge. I have heard that the Daoist Iron Hat,¹⁷ who dwells on the top of the Mountain of Four Clarities,¹⁸ can exorcise and question

¹⁷ The Chinese text reads, "鐵冠道人." The title "the Daoist Iron Hat" has been used for several historical characters, such as Su Shi 蘇軾 of the Song, Zhan Xi 詹信 of the Yuan, Yang Weizhen 楊維禎, Zhang Zhong 張中, and Fu Zhong 傅中 of the Ming (see *Dai Kanwa jiten*, vol. 11, p. 689(1281)). These persons all wore an iron hats. The title itself was a common term for Daoists as seen in Su Shi's poems: "Intoxicated, the recluse dropped his iron hat 山人醉後鐵冠落." The *Jujie* calls the iron hat "the honorific hat of the Daoist" 鐵冠, 道士法冠. (p. 244, n. 50).

¹⁸ The Chinese text reads, "四明山." The mountain is located in the west of the prefecture (*Jujie*, p. 244, n. 51). The ninth account in the "Thirty-six Cave Heavens 三十六洞天" of *Dongtian fudi ji* 洞天福地記 (Accounts on Famous Grotto Heavens and Spirit Lands) explains the name *Siming* 四明 (Four Clarities) as follows, "On its peaks, the mountain has four gates which connect with the sun, the moon, the stars, and the planets. Thus it is called the "Four Clarities" 上有四門通日、月、星、辰, 故曰四明山." The term *siming* also has an homophone 四溟, which means the "four seas," or "the world." See *Dai Kanwa jiten*, vol. 3, p. 43(2317) and 44(2318).

ghosts, and that his magical powers are remarkably effective. You must go to him and beg for assistance."

The whole crowd of people went off toward the mountain, climbing through thickets and creepers, crossing streams and violent waters, and ascending the highest peak. There they indeed found a thatched cottage, where the Daoist sat at a small table and watched a young boy training a crane. The crowd lined up in front of the cottage, bowed and told him their reason for coming. "As a recluse dwelling in the woods and mountains," replied the Daoist, "I may die any day now. How can I have any mysterious powers? You are too trusting!" The Daoist refused them forthrightly, but the crowd said, "We did not know anything about you at first, but Master Wei of the Temple of Dark Mystery referred us to you." Only then did the Daoist set his mind at rest, saying, "I am an old man, and I have not left this mountain for sixty years; but now the talkative little man troubles me about this matter." Accompanied by the young boy, he walked down the mountain with light and fast steps.

Arriving outside the west gate, the Daoist erected one square *zhang*¹⁹ altar and squatted down in a formal manner on a mat. He wrote a magic spell and burned it. Suddenly there appeared a number of amulet mannequins who wore yellow turbans and brocade gowns. They were all over one *zhang* tall, wearing metal armor and

¹⁹ *Zhang* = a unit of length (= 3 1/4 meters).

ornamented halberds and standing boldly and powerfully beneath the altar. In a discreet and scrupulous manner, they requested their orders. The Daoist said, "There are demons around here causing calamity and frightening people. How is it that you know nothing of it? You must bring them here at once." The mannequins received the order and rushed off. After a short time, they returned with the girl, the young man, and Jinlian, who were all in wooden yokes and chains. They were flogged and beaten with whips and switches, and blood oozed all over their bodies. The Daoist scolded them for a long while, and commanded them to confess. The mannequins gave them brush and paper, and each of them wrote a confession of several hundred words. Their confessions are briefly recorded here. The young man's confession went as follows,

I humbly confess that after my wife died, I lived alone as a widower. Standing lonely at my door, I violated the warning against lust, and was moved by numerous sexual desires. I was unable to learn from Sun Shu'ao who saw the two-headed snake and killed it.²⁰ Rather, I became like Mr.

²⁰ As a young boy, Sun Shu'ao 孫叔敖 went off, saw a two-headed snake, and killed it. Returning home, he wept to his mother. The mother asked him his reasons for crying. He replied, "I've heard that those who see a two-headed snake will die. I saw one, and I am afraid that I will die and leave you alone." She said, "Where is the snake now?" He answered, "Since I was worried that other people might see it as well, I killed and buried it." The mother said, "This is your virtuous merit. Heaven will reward you with blessings, and you will not die from seeing the snake." When he grew up, Sun became a general of Chu 楚. (*Jujie*, op. cit., p. 244, n. 61).

Zheng who ran into the nine-tailed fox fairy and fell in love with her.²¹
Nothing can redeem my bad deeds. How shall I show my penitence?

The confession of Fu's daughter ran as follows,

I humbly confess that in my youth, I left this world. I had no neighbors during the daytime. But while six of my physical souls, had left my body, one was not yet quite extinguished.²² By the lantern, and in the moonlight, I met my lover from ages past,²³ and provided material for lustful stories to myriads of people. Infatuated, I did not know how to turn back; how can I escape my guilt?

And the confession of Jinlian went as follows,

²¹ In ancient times there lived a licentious woman named Zizi 紫紫. After her death, she became a fox. Mr. Zheng 鄭 rode a donkey past the Shengping 升平 gate, and met a beautiful woman, who claimed to be Mistress Ren 任氏. Zheng and the woman immediately became intimate and lived together. After a few years, Zhen was promoted to district defender, and took her to his new office. When they arrived in Mawei 馬崑, she was killed by hunting dogs, and turned out to be a fox. (*Jujie*, p. 244, n. 62).

²² According to *Baopo zi* 抱朴子 [Master Holding Fast to the Simplicity], "Human beings have seven physical souls. When they die, one of these souls remains with the skeleton, while the rest of them will sink into the world 人有七魄，死則一魄守其骨骸，餘皆淪降。" (*Jujie*, p. 244, n. 63).

²³ The Chinese text reads, "五百年歡喜冤家." Buddhism takes five hundred years as a great *kalpa*. A husband and his wife of the present time are said to have karma-bonds from their former lives. See *Jujie*, p. 245, n. 64).

I humbly confess that I am [a figurine] whose skeleton is made of green bamboo slips,²⁴ and covered with colored paper. Buried in the grave, for whom this tomb figure is made? I have a human organism but in a smaller size. I have a name, but lack a spirit to differ [from other effigies]. I only function the way I am made, how could I dare to be a demon?

After their confessions, the mannequins received these writings and submitted them to their superior. With long brush strokes, the Daoist wrote the following verdict:

Generally speaking, the great emperor Yu cast the Tripods, and no evil spirits or mysterious demons could conceal his form.²⁵ When Wen Qiao burned his rhinoceros-horn to shed light on the abyss, all water palaces and dragon halls

²⁴ The Chinese text reads, "殺青爲骨." According to *Qingxi xiabi* 青溪暇筆 (Green Fountain's Writings from Idleness), in ancient China, people wrote drafts on slippery green bamboo bark. After they polished their drafts, they removed the green and wrote their final versions on the white surface of the bamboo. (*Dai Kanwa jiten*, vol. 6, p. 777). The *Jujie* thinks that *shaqing* 殺青 here may be used in a different meaning, which is "to kill green grass in order to make effigies 殺青草爲芻靈." (p. 245, n. 66).

²⁵ According to *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (third year of Xuan 宣三年), "Wang Sunman said, 'In olden times, the Xia was virtuous and received tributes of gold from Jiuzhou, and the Xia king used the gold to cast [nine] tripods, which portrayed myriad things. The tripods taught people how to recognize gods and ghosts. Thus, when people traveled on streams or into groves, none of the river or hill spirits could encounter them.

王孫滿曰昔夏之方有德，貢金九牧，鑄鼎象物，使民知神姦。故民入川澤山林，魑魅魍魎，莫能逢之。" (*Jujie*, p. 245, n. 69).

appeared in their full shapes.²⁶ The ways of the dead and the living have different aims: those of ghosts and monsters are devious.

Meeting ghosts and monsters is unhelpful to human beings and encountering them harmful to other things. Thus, when the ghost Dali entered the gate, Duke Jing of Jin died;²⁷ when the ghostly boar cried on the heath, Duke Xiang of Qi perished.²⁸ Those who send down catastrophes are destructive ghosts; those who bring about suffering are evil.²⁹

²⁶ According to the story of Wen Qiao in the History of the Jin, 晉、溫嶠傳, Wen Qiao travelled in the abyss of Niuzhuji 牛渚磯 [Ox Islet], lit up it with his rhinoceros-horn, and saw aquatic animals in various amazing shapes. That night, in his dream, Wen met a man who told him that "The nether world differs from this world, why did you attempt to reach it?" On the next day, Wen got the toothache and died. (*Jujie*, p. 245, n. 70).

²⁷ The *Zuozhuan* tells the story of Duke Jing of Jin state 晉景公, who killed Zhao Tong 趙同 and Zhao Pi 趙披 and later met the demon Dali 大厲 in his dream. The demon told him that Duke Jing had killed his two grandsons. After telling him, the demon chased him from place to place. Extremely frightened, the Duke woke up and consulted a shaman about his dream. The shaman said, "Please do not eat anything new!" In the sixth month, people from the imperial domain presented new wheat to the Duke. He ate it and his stomach became swollen. The Duke went to relieve himself, missed his step, fell down, and died. See *Jujie*, p. 245, n. 71.

²⁸ Duke Xiang of Qi became involved in an incestuous relationship with his younger sister. The Duke ordered Peng Sheng 彭生 to kill his sister's husband, and later killed Peng to protect his secret. When going hunting in Bei Qiu 貝丘, Duke Xiang saw a big boar. His followers cried out, "That is Peng Sheng!" Angrily the Duke shot it. The boar stood up on its two hind feet like a human being and emitted terrifying cries. The Duke was so frightened that he fell off his chariot. After returning home, he died for unknown reasons. See *Jujie*, p. 245, n. 72.

²⁹ The *Jujie* writes, "Destructive animal ghosts are also called *nie* 禽獸之妖，亦謂孽。" (p. 245, n. 73).

Hence, there are monster-beheading messengers in the nine heavens³⁰ and evildoer-punishing officers in the ten sections of the nether world.³¹ Thus, the nuisance of river spirits is not tolerated, and the violence of *yaksa* demons and malignant *raksasa* devils is under control.

Yet, in the world of peace and in a time of contentment, the spirits deceptively change their forms into those of plants. On cloudy days and rainy nights, or when the moon and the stars are sinking in the gray dawn, they moan in the beams,³² or gaze into one's room without being recognized.³³ Like a swarm of flies or a pack of dogs,³⁴ like fierce goats and greedy wolves,³⁵ they bustle about like a whirlwind and blaze up like raging flames.

³⁰ The Nine Heavens consist of the four directions, the four corners, and the center. See *Jujie*, p. 245, n. 74.

³¹ The ten sections (or the Ten Palaces, *shidian* 十殿) of the Nether World are places where evildoers suffer punishments according to the crimes they committed in the world of the living. See *Jujue*, p. 213, n. 38.

³² "Tracing the origins of Demons, *Yuan gui* 原鬼" by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) reads, "There was the sound of moaning in the beams. However, when people lit up candles and followed the sound, they found nothing 有嘯於梁，從而燭之，無見也。" See *Jujie*, p. 246, n. 79.

³³ The *Jujie* cites a passage from Yang Xiong's 楊雄 "Explaining things when ridiculed, *Jiechao* 解嘲," which reads, "Demons gaze at the houses of noble and rich families 高明之家鬼瞰其室。" (p. 246, n. 80).

³⁴ The *Jujie* reads this set phrase in reference to the *Classic of Poetry* and Han Yu's writing. Han wrote, "Like a swarm of flies and a pack of dogs, they are chased away, but come back again later 蠅營狗苟，驅去復來。" (p. 246, n. 81).

³⁵ The *Jujie* locates the set-phrase "fierce goats, greedy wolves 羊狠狼貪" in the context of the *Records of the Grand Historian*: The story of Xiang Ji, *Shiji*: Xiang Ji zhuan 史記、項籍傳. In the story, Song Yi 宋義 claimed that those who are as fierce as goats and as greedy as wolves are stubborn and must be beheaded (p. 246, n. 82).

The young man of the Qiao family did not realize this when alive, so why should he deserve any pity after death? The daughter from the house of Fu had insatiable lustful desires even after death, so one can see how she must have been when alive! As for the fantastic story of Jinlian, this was to make use of a figurine in order to deceive people. In misleading people, they contravened the laws. They acted like foxes lustfully searching for partners,³⁶ or quail flying after each other in an unseemly fashion.³⁷ The measure of their crimes is full, and accusations cannot be reduced. The pitfall to trap people must now be filled in, and the battle formation to confuse souls must be destroyed.³⁸ Burn the double peony lantern,³⁹ and bring them to the lowest depths of Hell."

When the Daoist finished pronouncing his verdict, those who were in charge respectfully carried out the executions as commanded. The three persons could be seen staggering and sobbing miserably as the mannequins drove them off. The Daoist shook his sleeves and returned to the mountains. The next day, when people went to thank him, they could not find him, but only the thatched cottage standing there. They

³⁶ The expression is from the *Classic of Poetry*: *Airs of Qi*, *Shijing*: *Qi feng* 詩經、齊風: "The lonely male fox goes to search for his partner 雄狐綏綏." (*Jujie*, p. 246, n. 83).

³⁷ This expression is also from the *Classic of Poetry*: *Airs of Yong* (*Yong feng* 庸風): "Quails fly [after one another] 鶉之奔奔." (*Jujie*, p. 246, n. 84).

³⁸ The *Jujie* finds these set phrases in Daoist teaching (i.e., *daoshu* 道書), "Delicate eyebrows are the pitfall to trap people, and a hairdo like the eye of a cicada is a battle formation to confuse souls 蛾眉陷人坑，蟬鬢迷魂陣." (p. 246, n. 87).

³⁹ The Chinese text reads, "燒毀雙明之燈." The *Jujie* explains, "This means the double peony lantern 即牡丹燈也。" (*Jujie*, p. 246, n. 88).

rushed to the Temple of Dark Mystery, looking for Master Wei to find out more, but he had been struck dumb by an illness and could not speak.