

**HOW A CITY SPEAKS:
URBAN SPACE IN CHANG'AN AND
THE CONSTRUCTION OF TANG DYNASTY NARRATIVES**

by

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ABSTRACT

Tang Dynasty China witnessed an unprecedented flourishing of narrative writing. The Tang capital, Chang'an, as an international metropolis populated with talented writers and full of interesting subjects, was an ideal setting for the development of narrative texts. This dissertation argues that the urban space in Chang'an, with the memory, rhythm, and functions of the sub-spaces within it—the subjects of the three chapters to follow—had a significant impact on the formation and circulation of Tang narratives and on the construction of their plots. Besides the pool of cityscape material at the writer's disposal, the historical depth of the capital and its representativeness as “the” Chinese city, gave narratives a special meaning from the very beginning.

As a part of the history of the city, urban memories played a big part. The transformations between the physical spaces of various works of architecture—such as residences, temples, tombs, and palaces—generated numerous urban legends and mysteries, which gave these spaces an enhanced spiritual dimensions. Tang Dynasty writers, therefore, preserved these spaces in literary texts and used the memories to enrich what were originally simple and formulaic stories.

The ongoing daily rhythm of the city was another distinct factor in constructing narratives of Chang'an. The Tang Dynasty curfew system caused the routinized opening

and closing of ward and city gates and thus the alternately separated and connected spaces by these gates. For narrative writers, the daily rhythm of the urban space provided motivations for the delays, progressions, and twists in plots, all of which naturalized and authenticated the narrative.

Last but not least, many public spaces in Chang'an, such as the crowded markets, bustling streets, popular sightseeing spots, and secularized temples, stepped beyond their original roles and became a social stage for citizens to meet, learn, entertain and perform, creating new networks and patterns of behavior. The additional functions of these public spaces were emphasized, exaggerated, and skillfully used to create coincidences, intensify dramatic tensions and advance the plots.

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INTRODUCTION

A city is much more than just a set of physical places. It is a space of everyday life of experience that combines material and social qualities.¹ The social qualities established within the space give it a character, a set of rhythms, and a certain dynamism, without which it would be static and lifeless. These social qualities not only refer to recurring social activities, but also refer to how history and literature of one place come together to make it especially meaningful to its inhabitants.

Urban space has been one of the important subjects of literary writing. Unlike historical writings that try to “explain the city through conceptual systems,” as the cultural geographer Richard Lehan puts it, writers of literature “relied on imaginative systems.”² Literature may not always represent a city’s true situation, but it can reveal social practices that make up a particular life world, in part by shedding light on the cognitive space proper to these social practices.

In representing a city, narrative literature has certain advantages. In the case of both ancient and modern cities, the vast majority of urban dwellers are not elites but commoners. “Their production and consumption patterns form the basis of the city’s economy; their participation in ceremonies affirms the effectiveness of an organizing

¹ This dissertation uses the words “space” and “place” in a sense as they are discussed by the humanistic geographer Yi-Fu Tuan. According to Tuan, “space is more abstract than place,” and he defines “place” with words such as “security” and “stability” while “space” with “openness,” “freedom” and even “threat.” See Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 6.

² Richard Lehan, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), p. 7.

authority; their labor permits the manifestation of an urban ethos as constructed through both fanciful monuments and practical infrastructure.”³ Compared to poetry, which in medieval China was by and large limited to elite consumption, at least to the extent that they have been preserved in writing, narratives were by nature more heterodox in form and content. Even though many of them were also composed by literati, they were still able to touch upon the urban activities and everyday life of both gentry and commoners. Also, due to their limited length, strict prosodic rules, and lack of social realism, poems rarely presented a vivid and detailed picture of civic life, especially that of lay society, for which narratives were better suited.

The narratives this dissertation deals with are loosely labeled Tang Dynasty Chinese *xiaoshuo* 小說 (lit. small talk), which includes tales, anecdotes, random jottings, and miscellaneous histories. None of these is anywhere close to the fiction (which in Chinese is also called *xiaoshuo* 小說) in the modern sense, and their literary features are specific to their historical context.⁴ By modern standards, some of these genres are considered literature while others belong to the writing of history. But as the historian Hayden White argues, historical writing mirrors literary writing in many ways, sharing a strong reliance on the use of narrative for the construction of meaning. Many so-called “histories” actually contain considerable ideological and literary factors that call into question their reliability as representations of fact. White suggests that history writing is most

³ Monica L. Smith, ed., *The Social Construction of Ancient Cities* (Washington, DC and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003), p. I.

⁴ Glen Dudbridge has a discussion on the various medieval Chinese narrative categories, and believes that “formulated as they were by officials for an institutional purpose, they reflect bureaucratic thinking.” See his *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T’ang China: A Reading of Tai Fu’s Kuang-I chi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 38-39.

successful when it embraces its so-called “narrativity,” since that is what allows history to be meaningful.⁵ The concept of history, whose root also means “story,” is that of a narrational account of (past) events pertinent to some social subject or entity.⁶ Although not all narratives contain within them the elements of fictiveness and dramatic invention, as Andrew H. Plaks has suggested, “the distinction between truth-telling and fabrication fails to constitute a clear generic demarcation in the Chinese context.”⁷ Since what all these genres share is their “narrativity,” they will be referred to generally as narratives in this dissertation.

The significance of narratives for the study of history, and more specifically, urban history, has drawn much scholarly attention. The French historian Marc Bloch (1886-1944) has discussed how some extant historical evidence can be considered “intentional” and some not.⁸ Following his idea, those narrative sources that are “literary” do not take reliability as their principle, and they do not attempt to tell their audience about the layout of and the spatial relationships in a city. However, the configurations of urban space are typically visible as part of the backdrop of the stories, and they can be studied as an “unintentional resource” for understanding the city where they were set at the time they were written.

⁵ Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” in *Critical Inquiry* vol. 7, no. 1 (1980), pp. 5-27.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Andrew H. Plaks, “Towards a Critical Theory of Chinese Narrative,” in Andrew H. Plaks, ed., *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 316.

⁸ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, originally titled *Apologie pour l'Histoire ou Métier d'Historien*, trans. from French by Peter Putnam (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), pp. 60-69.

This is true even of supernatural stories, which are absurd to modern eyes, as the imaginary worlds of the time formed a very important part of the sense of space in ancient Chinese society. When men of letters at that time narrated supernatural experiences, they might not have considered themselves to be writing literary works; many believed that the stories they were telling were true. It is important to understand their uses of the supernatural, because we can only obtain a full picture of medieval Chinese urban life when we take both their physical space and spiritual space into consideration.⁹

Using narratives to reinforce historical facts is often rewarding. Scholars have reconstructed a number of historical cities from narrative writings and have discussed extensively how Chang'an served as a place for literary gatherings, where men of letters shared, exchanged, expanded, and polished their narrative material.¹⁰ There are also recently published works on how medieval capital cities, such as Chang'an 長安, the Tang Dynasty capital city, where the *jinshi* 進士 (presented scholar) examination (civil service examination) took place, brought an influx of literati to the city seeking recognition and official status. It has been shown that the city functioned for these

⁹ Glen Dudbridge argues that stories about the alien categories belong “seriously and integrally in the mental map” of their society. See *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China*, p. 49. Robert Ford Campany also has a chapter talking about the “cultural warrant” of narratives of anomalies and justifying the genre of anomaly accounts. See his *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 101-159.

¹⁰ Scholars such as Seo Tatsuhiko have done much to reconstruct Chang'an as the historical Tang Dynasty capital from fragmental literary materials. For example, see his “Tōdai kōhanki no Chōan to denki shōsetsu: ‘Ri Ai den’ no bunseki o chūshin to shite” 唐代後半期の長安と伝奇小説: 《李娃伝》の分析を中心として, in *Hino Kaisaburō Hakushi shōju kinen ronshū* 日野開三郎博士頌壽記念論集 (Fukuoka: Chūgoku shoten, 1987), pp. 476-505.

sojourner-writers as a career launching pad, a performance stage, and a source of inspiration.¹¹ In understanding Chinese narratives at this time, however, it is also worth looking at the way writers made use of real urban space in constructing their narratives. There is insufficient research on how uses of urban spaces lent plausibility to these narratives, how the spatial dynamics were able to twist and complicate plots, and how introduction of the new space allowed stories to develop from a seeming impasse. This dissertation, therefore, will focus on these aspects of the uses of urban space in the narratives.

There is a particular advantage in taking Tang Dynasty narratives as the subject of study. To begin with, compared to late imperial Chinese fiction, they have a special way of handling urban spaces. Tang Dynasty narratives develop plots in real spaces and use real ward names and urban regulations to indicate the directions and relationship between different spaces, but they do not adhere to the use of detailed descriptions of these spaces. Neither do they take pains to portray trivial incidents in urban daily life, as does later fiction. While readers see a prosperous Kaifeng 開封 in *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 and *Jinping mei cihua* 金瓶梅詞話, fascinating Suzhou 蘇州 and Nanjing 南京 in *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢, and a bustling Nanjing in *Rulin waishi* 儒林外史, they can only derive a vague and general image of life in the capital city of Chang'an from Tang narratives. When Chinese narrative writing was still at an early point in its history and had a more succinct style, Tang narrative writers relied more heavily on urban space to enhance the

¹¹ Linda Rui Feng is one of the leading scholars in this respect. See her *City of Marvel and Transformation: Chang'an and Narratives of Experience in Tang Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

sense of reality and the narrational structure of experience, than did writers of later generations, when narrative techniques had become more advanced and fully developed. They had to examine more carefully and select more cautiously what to include in the story, so that they could most efficiently and effectively construct and develop the narrative.

Not only do Tang Dynasty narratives have a special way of representing urban spaces, but the Tang Dynasty capital city of Chang'an also distinguished itself from many other Chinese cities in at least three respects. First of all, Chang'an, with its population reaching one million in the eighth century, is arguably the most famous and influential international metropolis in Chinese history.¹² The scale and prosperity of Chang'an attracted people from all over the world, including many men of letters, to come and reside there. Some of these people wrote numerous stories about Chang'an, while others became characters in the stories. Since they were all living in the capital, men of letters had more chance to gather together to share and discuss the tales they heard.

Secondly, unlike those *zhiguai* 志怪 (lit. records of anomalies) stories from earlier periods, which are predominantly outside of the capital, a large number of Tang Dynasty narratives are based on the life in the capital. For reasons related to those mentioned

¹² During the Tang Dynasty, Chang'an was the biggest city in the world, covering an area of 84 square kilometers, which was 2.4 times its area during the Han Dynasty, 1.2 times that of the Northern Wei Dynasty capital Luoyang 洛陽, 1.8 times that of the Tang Dynasty capital Luoyang, 1.7 times that of the Yuan Dynasty capital Dadu 大都 (modern Beijing), 1.9 times that of the Ming Dynasty capital Nanjing 南京, and 1.4 times that of the Ming-Qing Dynasty capital Beijing. Compared with other metropolises in the world, Chang'an during the Tang Dynasty was 7 times the area of Byzantium, which was founded in 447, 2.7 times of Iraq's capital Baghdad, which was founded in 800, 13 times that of the imperial Japanese capital Fujiwara-kyō, which was founded in 690, 3.73 times that of Heijō-kyō, founded in 708, and 3.67 times of Heian-kyō, founded in 793. See Zhang Yonglu 張永祿, *Tang du Chang'an* 唐都長安 (Xi'an: San Qin Chubanshe, 2010), pp. 24, 192-93.

above, Chang'an played a significant role in Tang Dynasty narratives. Tang Dynasty China witnessed an unprecedented increase in narrative writings in terms of both quantity and literary skills. Although concise and sketchy when compared to later imperial novels, Tang Dynasty narratives show a more elaborate structure and diverse skill when compared to earlier tales. The use of the urban space of Chang'an significantly enriches the plots. For example, Chang'an, the urban space of Chang'an significantly enriches the plots. in terms of both quantity and the Qin (221 B.C.-207 B.C.) and the Han (202 B.C.-220 A.D.) Dynasties. The city was full of historically meaningful relics. The spatial and architectural connections between different time periods led to the accumulation and transmission of stories.

Also, Chang'an was a best example of medieval Chinese ward cities. To comply with the curfew system, ward gates had to be shut during the night. Thus, characters in the stories had to rush or suspend what they were doing, or sometimes give up their original plan, thus conferring on the stories a particular momentum. Furthermore, due to its political and cultural importance, Chang'an constituted an important stage for public display. The public spaces in the city had become a crucial background for the formation and transmission of narratives.

Thirdly, although Chang'an streets maintained a basic grid pattern, from the Northern Song Dynasty 北宋 (960-1127) on, cities started to take on an open structure that formed a sharp contrast with the street map of Chang'an. Some scholars have discussed this transition as an important change between the Tang and Song Dynasties.¹³

¹³ Ever since Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 (1866-1934) proposed the hypothesis of the "Tang-Song transition," scholars have investigated the social, political, demographic, and economic changes

In the study of such a transition, narrative works, which often depict movement into the capital and through its wards, provide scholars with a unique perspective that is lacking in historical records.

that occurred between the mid-Tang and early Song dynasties. For a detailed introduction, see Miyakawa Hisayuku, “An Outline of the Naito Hypothesis and Its Effect on Japanese Studies of China,” in *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14.4 (1955): 533-52. For more discussion or debate on how the economic development led to the collapse of Tang Dynasty ward system and the formation of the Song Dynasty open market system, see Miyazaki Ichisada 宮崎市定, *Tōyōteki kinsei* 东洋の近世, in *Miyazaki Ichisada zenshū* 宮崎市定全集 Vol. II (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1991), p. 133-241; Katō Shigeshi 加藤繁, “Tō Sō judai no ichi ” 唐宋時代の市, *Shina keizai shi kōshō* 支那經濟史考証 (Tōkyō: Tōyō bunko, 1952), pp. 347-79; Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, *Liuchao de chengshi yu shehui* 六朝的城市與社會 (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1992), pp. 441-80; Sheng Huilian 盛會蓮, “Tangdai fangshi zhidu de fazhan bianhua” 唐代坊市制度的發展變化, in *Xibei Shida xuebao* 西北師大學報 vol. 37, no. 3 (2000), pp. 99-102; Li Xiacong 李孝聰, “Tangdai chengshi de xingtai yu diyu jieyou: Yi fangshizhi de yanbian wei xiansuo” 唐代城市的形態與地域結構：以坊市制的演變為線索, in his *Diyu jieyou yu yunzuo kongjian* 地域結構與運作空間 (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 2003), pp. 248-306.

CHAPTER ONE. THE CITY REMEMBERED: RESIDENCES, TEMPLES, TOMBS, AND PALACES

What gives a physical place the particular character and identity it seems to have for us? The physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg pondered a question of this sort when they visited Kronberg Castle in Denmark. Imagining that it might once have been the place of habitation of the mythical Hamlet, prince of that nation, the two scientists recorded how their entire perception of the space altered with the space remaining physically the same.¹⁴ Objective places will always end up transforming into subjective spaces, because personal experience and memory suffuse present perception.

It is a truism that we see things in ways that are colored by social and historical structurations and determinations of appearance, and that our perceptions, while fully presenting the immediate moment of vision, are formed by the past, by the history of the thing now seen. People understand the character of a city not only through their experience of it, but also in terms of what they have heard and read about it. The British historical geographer David Lowenthal suggests that “[w]e selectively perceive what we are accustomed to seeing; features and patterns in the landscape make sense to us because we share a history with them.”¹⁵ Cities that once flourished and, like our own mortal

¹⁴ See discussion in Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, pp. 4-5. See also the original report in Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond: Encounters and Conversations* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1972), p. 51.

¹⁵ David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” in *The Geographical Review* vol. 65, no. 1 (1975), p. 5.

bodies, are no longer, persist in both personal and collective memories, which may seem representational or willfully constructed.¹⁶

Official histories can be confirmed or challenged by particular memories. Personal and collective memories always engage in shaping and molding the history of a city, but they are not always reliable. Sometimes memories challenge history and sometimes they create it. What remains is often only what has been reconstructed, through mental revisions that may be intentionally or inadvertently reconstructed. Both intentional manipulation and unintentional revision are essential components in the reconstruction of memory.

In the process of the reconstruction of the relevant past, inherited items and preserved relics serve important functions. People may rely on them for inspiration or orientation. The enduring streets and buildings of a city are repositories of stories and reminders that this is a place with an enduring past. In the absence of any direct experience of the past, people need tangible reminders of things they have done, places where they have been, things they have seen, and memories of these things. The inhabitants of a physical space can move within it in time and thus come and go, while memories appear to remain, untouched and untouchable, and to accumulate while we stand in place as if knowing in advance that the things appearing at different times are the same now as they were then.

¹⁶ Here I use the term “collective memory” in the sense given the term by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. He considers collective memory as a socially constructed phenomenon. He considers that the society at large provides materials and an environment for the construction of a collective memory, which, however, only exists in the minds of the individuals who are the subjects of acts of consciousness such as remembering. See Maurice Halbwachs, *Le Mémoire Collective* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), 2nd English edition; *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

When reviewing a city and its past, its architecture can contribute to our understanding of the city by providing a vivid, material encapsulation of meaning with which our imagination can engage. Various buildings constitute small but active subspaces within the larger urban framework and create private and public experiences of the city. The structure and design of older architecture of all types, whether that of private residences or temples open to the public, ancient noble tombs or imperial palaces, are also all very informative. These spaces usually reflect the social relations of the time in which they were constructed. Changing architectural structures reflect changing social codes and political trends within a city. An enduring architectural space bridges various time periods, and thus sets up an invisible connection between people in different generations who are related in some way to the space. In doing so, the architectural space also establishes a long thread of memory, along which people in later periods can more easily access earlier times.

Once people have acquired some understanding of the historical and social character latent in a work of architecture, it, in both its inner structure and outer appearance, becomes a cultural symbol that possesses a narrative function in itself. In both oral and written forms of narrative, the mention of certain locations, or certain types of architecture, bring with them designated associations, which in turn imbue the narrative with certain meanings and implications. If something is designed to happen in one specific space but not any others, readers of the narrative will likely expect any narrational turning point to be based on their knowledge about particular features of that work. A narrative series of several spaces of this kind, sorted by their respective connotations and arranged by memories they seem to invoke, might suggest a narrative linking them in

some developmental sequence. For example, a story of the spatial shift from the imperial palace, where newly appointed *jinshi* 進士 (presented scholars) had audience with the emperor, to Qujiang 曲江, where the celebration parties for them were held, and then to the Pingkang Ward, the famous pleasure quarter in Chang'an, well describes how a man often celebrated his success of the civil service exam.¹⁷ The background knowledge and extended meanings of these architectural spaces supply crucial components for a potential narrative. In this way, an architectural space can acquire a narrational function.

Chang'an, the capital city of the Tang Dynasty, is a good example from traditional China of how the personal and collective memories in the city are passed down and reconstructed, with the city's architectural spaces carrying and preserving these memories. As the political and cultural center of the Tang Dynasty, arguably the most flourishing and fully developed period in imperial Chinese history,¹⁸ the city of Chang'an witnessed numerous far-reaching historical events; some helped to push the dynasty to its summit, while others inflicted heavy losses on the empire. Aside from the memory shared by the entire city, there were also smaller scale happenings that took place in every corner of the capital, and which were at first remembered by only a few people, who would discuss and record these events over and over, until their fragmentary and fading

¹⁷ The Qujiang 曲江 area was where newly appointed *jinshi* scholars held celebration banquets and parties. The Tang emperors and high officials would also attend the events in order to honor and welcome new members of the officialdom. The Pingkang ward was famous for its three streets of courtesans, often visited by young scholars.

¹⁸ Victor Cunrui Xiong points out that, "During its existence Chang'an was the most spacious and often the most populous urban center in the world [...] Offering diversity, tolerance, and above all, civilization, Chang'an attracted travelers, merchants, pilgrims, and scholars from all over China and Asia." See his *Sui-Tang Chang'an: A Study in the Urban History of Medieval China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 1.

memories became rounded and reinforced. In this way, private memories entered into the public realm.

This chapter, “The City Remembered: Residences, Temples, Tombs, and Places,” looks at residences and temples and discusses their roles in maintaining and reconstructing the city’s memory. Residences and temples have in common many architectural features that help to explain their frequent conversions. There are many stories representing such transformations and connections. On the other hand, the residences and temples of Chang’an represent two independent architectural types and have very different social functions and meanings. Residential buildings are of course private spaces, while temples containing shared living spaces and serving some external societal functions form many public spaces. During the Tang Dynasty, each was convertible into the other, as residences could be transformed into temples by donation or confiscation, while temples were sometimes purchased by individuals or bestowed on them by the emperor. This potential for transformation suggests a kind of logic wherein architectural works of two quite different types could nonetheless each be converted into the other as a result of political and commercial transactions. The transfer shifted the buildings between private and public spheres with attendant shifts between individual and collective memory, and consequently, made these buildings multi-faceted and multi-layered spaces and thus a popular subject that drew the attention from the writers of narrative in the first place.

Aside from the transformations between residences and temples, there were other spaces that underwent similar transitions. Due to Chang’an’s long history as the capital city of various dynasties, a great number of imperial mausoleums and tombs of

distinguished historical figures were located in the city and its outskirts. Some of them, though not recognizable by later generations, stood in the place where new residences were being built. There was the potential for some occupants of the tombs from previous dynasties to have been buried in the center of the current imperial palace. The interaction between the dead and the living helped to deliver many historical messages. These messages ensured a correct understanding of the past and refreshed memories that may otherwise be lost forever.

Literature plays an important role in representing such interactions within architectural spaces. As a product of social activity, literature participates in the process of retrieving memory, and is at the same time shaped by it. Birgit Neumann's discussion of how literature represents memory is worth noting:

[Literary works] configure memory representations because they select and edit elements of culturally given discourse: they combine the real and the imaginary, the remembered and the forgotten, and, by means of narrative devices, imaginatively explore the workings of memory, thus offering new perspectives on the past.¹⁹

Far from merely perpetuating culturally pre-existing memories, the literature of memory has often played a considerable role in reinforcing new concepts of memory. Narrative writings about a space tend to represent it as characterized by a specific memory, and the events in that space may also converge in new images of that space that are attributed to possible futures.

¹⁹ Birgit Neumann, "The Literary Representation of Memory," in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), p. 334.

In terms of allusions to the history and memory, the poetic traditions of *huaigu* 懷古 (cherishing the past) and *yongshi* 咏史 (chanting the history), which reflect on the past of a place, can be traced back to pre-Qin periods. However, poetry and narrative literature each have their own means for expressing memory. Rania Huntington differentiates the contrasting roles of poetry and *biji* in remembrance, saying, “Poetry is linked to voice and performance, while *biji* is a written genre that may document a performance, or be revived in voice in conversation, but is not in itself performance.”²⁰ Tang tales usually do not deal with memory directly nor perform or document the performance of remembrance as the authors of *biji* do. They tend to tell stories that have been preserved in one character’s memory and use that to awake a shared memory. They also may record current anecdotes that highlight their connection to the past, or they may narrate without any intentional reference to memory, while allowing the readers to sense the presence of the past.

Numerous studies have been written on the process of producing Tang stories, some of which emphasize how much they were altered during oral and written transmission. Sarah Allen, for example, has pointed out that the surviving Tang stories are the product of many alterations, deliberate or accidental, and each story has undergone changes introduced by its transmitters. Transmissions of these stories among men of letters led to the formation of various versions of the narrative texts.²¹ Instead of discussing how the stories were physically composed, the focus of this chapter is on how the narrative is

²⁰ Rania Huntington, “Memory, Mourning, and Genre in the Works of Yu Yue,” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 67, no. 2 (2007), p. 254.

²¹ See Sarah M. Allen, *Shifting Stories: History, Gossip, and Lore in Narratives from Tang Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014).

constructed, along with the communication and reconstruction of memory. Jan Assmann introduces the concept of “communicative memory,” which he defines as including varieties of collective memory that “are based exclusively on everyday communications” and “constitute the field of oral history.”²² In interactions with others, each person composes a memory that is socially mediated and is related to a group to which he belongs. Memories, linguistically mediated as well as perceptual, are fully constituted when articulated in language. Given the public character of language, this means in actual or implied communication with others. Here, the “others,” as Jan Assmann puts it, “are not just any set of people, rather they are groups who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past.”²³ Different individuals belong to different families, neighborhoods, and professional groups, and thus entertain numerous collective self-images and memories. However, Assmann also reminds us that everyday communicative memory needs to be “objectivized” to become “cultural memory,” which Assmann deems as “characterized by its distance from the everyday” and is “maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance).” The great number of narratives, as widely received literary texts, functioned to transfer the daily communicative memory into more objective cultural memory.²⁴

Many of the narratives originated from gossip, which, as Jack W. Chen notes, must be distinguished from the anecdote:

²² Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” trans. by John Czaplicka, in *New German Critique*, No. 65, Cultural History/Cultural Studies (1995), p. 126.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

If gossip is information about a known person or persons that is divulged within a particular network, then anecdote is the narrative form that gossip might take. Anecdote thus becomes the literary vehicle of gossip, as its main interest is not the functional circulation of social information, but the aesthetic pleasure that is taken both in telling and in being told.²⁵

The circulation of gossip depends on the activation of information preserved in memory. When, narrativized, it becomes anecdote, which may then be written down, joining the collective archive of memories. In the city of Chang'an, people frequently created and spread gossip and anecdotes. While gossip was circulating, it would become the subject of communicative memory, which would then be integrated into anecdotes that were later related and read by a broader community and developed into cultural memory.

Gossip and anecdotes could be born more out of an interest in creating narratives for other purposes than from a desire to tell the truth. Sometimes the thoughts that form the basis for the construction of a narrative do not originate from a writer's own experience alone. When an event goes from a private space into the public horizon, many people, including witnesses, message transmitters, and recorders, may be involved in the creation process. Even when a writer intends to write down faithfully what he remembers of what has happened, he may not always achieve his goal due to the inaccuracy of the retellings and the problematic nature of memory itself.

With the past, continuously being lost and retrieved, associated to a space, the latter gains additional spiritual layers and dimensions, and thus becomes a more favorable

²⁵ Jack W. Chen, "Blank Spaces and Secret Histories: Questions of Historiographic Epistemology in Medieval China," in *The Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 69, no. 4 (2010), p. 1073.

focus of narrative. In light of the above considerations, through close-readings of several Tang narrative tales dealing with the memory of the urban space in Chang'an, this chapter will explore three major questions: firstly, what kind of memories were preserved in or tied to the city's architectural spaces? Secondly, how was one simple, basic, or real event that took place in one space experienced, recalled, and processed when it became narrative? Thirdly, in what ways did narratives affect the public life and alter the way in which people recollected the past? All these questions will be studied within the larger picture of the entire city and considered in context of the capital city's distinctive ability to create and accumulate memories.

One Space, a Continuing Story, and an Everlasting Memory

In Tang Dynasty Chang'an, residences were the most dynamic type of architecture, not only in that they were constantly built up, torn down, traded, and confiscated, but also in that they were frequently transformed into other types of architecture, especially temples.²⁶ The architectural similarity between residences and temples made the conversions between them especially common. As Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt explains:

[The architectural forms of residences and temples] are most often supported by a timber frame made of posts and lintels, or vertical and horizontal pieces of wood, and usually have a noticeably decorative roof.

²⁶ For a more detailed discussion, see Chen Zhongkai 陳忠凱 and Yang Xiyi 楊希義, "Tang Chang'ancheng fangli zhaidi bianqian yuanyin chutan" 唐長安城坊里宅第變遷原因初探, in *Wenbo* 文博 No. 4 (1991), pp. 42-47.

Sometimes the posts are implanted directly into the soil, and other times a stone platform into which the pillars or pillar bases are lodged elevates and separates the wood from the earth.²⁷

The shared wood-based structure made the architectural appearance and space of residences and temples quite similar. Courtyards 院, main halls 堂, towers 樓, terraces 臺, pavilions 亭, and corridors 廊 were the basic components of both residences and temples, both of which took the form of courtyards that grouped all of the buildings together. Although the courtyards varied in size, the building grouping methods were by and large the same from one courtyard to the next. Actually, because many Tang Dynasty temples originated as residences and because the residences' complex architectural layouts were difficult to alter, the majority of them did not have pagodas, the building of which would have destroyed the original construction in the central area of the courtyard.²⁸ As a result, most Tang temples, including those in Chang'an, gave prominence to palace halls rather than pagodas, as is evidenced by the Dunhuang mural paintings. By comparing the line drawing of the central complex from a mid-Tang temple (shown in Fig. 1) with that of a Sui Dynasty 隋 (581-618) residence (shown in Fig. 2), and the left-most building complex from a late Tang temple (shown in Fig. 3) with a late Tang residence (shown in Fig. 4), one can see a similarity between their architectural structures and thus the transformative potential these kinds of buildings had.

²⁷ Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "The House: An Introduction," in Ronald G. Knapp and Kai-Yin Lo, eds., *House, Home, Family: Living and Being Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), p. 13.

²⁸ Gong Guoqiang 龔國強, *Sui Tang Chang'an cheng fosi yanjiu* 隋唐長安城佛寺研究 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2006), p.122.

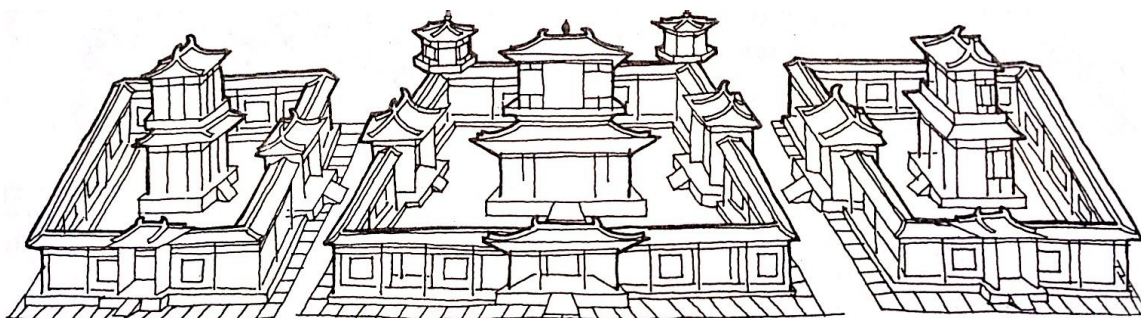


Figure 1. A Tang Dynasty temple, reproduced line-drawing from a Tang mural painted on the northern wall of the 231st cave in Dunhuang. See Xiao Mo 蕭默, *Dunhuang jianzhu yanjiu* 敦煌建築研究 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1989), p. 80, fig. 45.

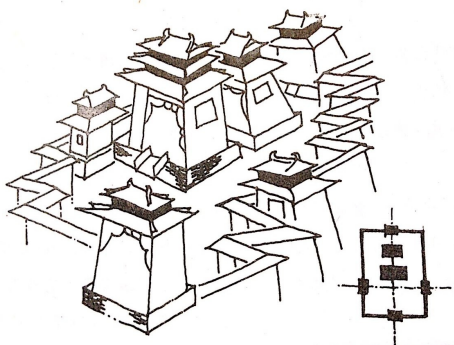


Figure 2. A Sui Dynasty residence, reproduced line-drawing from a Tang mural in the 420th Cave in Dunhuang. See Xiao Mo, *Dunhuang jianzhu yanjiu*, p. 178, fig. 119.

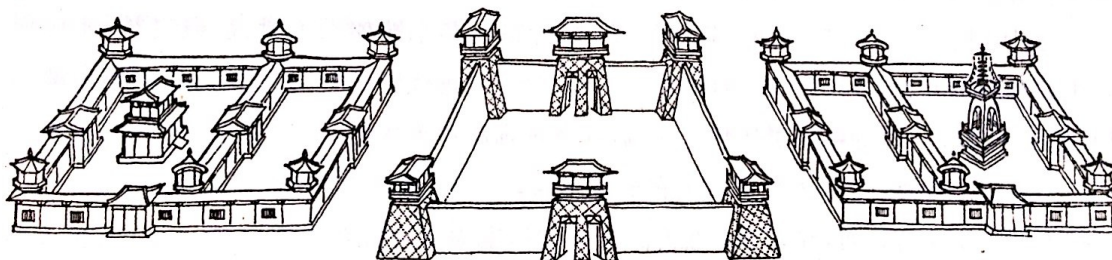


Figure 3. A late Tang Dynasty temple, reproduced line-drawing from a late Tang mural in the 85th Cave in Dunhuang. See Xiao Mo, *Dunhuang jianzhu yanjiu*, p. 81, fig. 46.

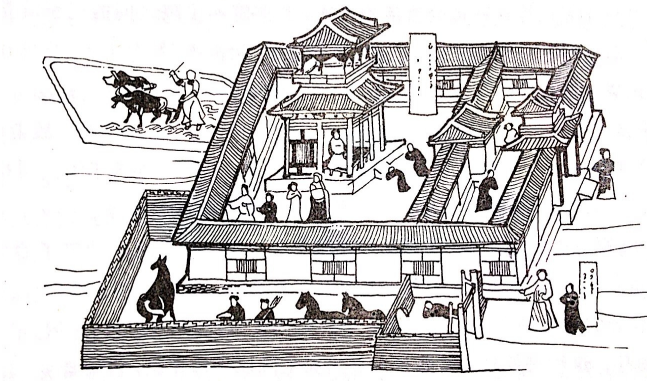


Figure 4. A late Tang Dynasty residence, reproduced line-drawing from a late Tang mural in the 85th Cave in Dunhuang. See Xiao Mo, *Dunhuang jianzhu yanjiu*, p. 179, fig. 121.

As early as the Northern Wei Dynasty 北魏 (386-557), due to the popularity of Buddhism, there were people who would voluntarily give up their residences and transform them into temples; and this practice became more common as time went on. Thanks to Emperor Wen of Sui's 隋文帝 (Yang Jian 楊堅, r. 581-604) promotion of Buddhism, people of the Sui Dynasty were more than willing to donate their residences. When the Tang rulers took power, they continued to raise the status of Buddhism and encourage donation. The Huichang Temple 會昌寺 in the Jincheng Ward 金城坊, the Ximing Temple 西明寺 in the Yankang Ward 延康坊, the Zisheng Temple 資聖寺 in the Chongren Ward 崇仁坊, the Qianfu Temple 千福寺 in the Anding Ward 安定坊, the Da Jianfu Temple 大薦福寺 in the Kaihua Ward 開化坊, the Baoshou Temple 保壽寺 in the Yishan Ward 翊善坊, the Wuliangshou Temple 無量壽寺 in the Yongjia Ward 永嘉坊, and the Baoying Temple 寶應寺 in the Daozheng Ward 道政坊 all originated as

residences of princes, princesses, and high-ranking officials.²⁹ There are also examples of the transition happening the other way around. For instance, the Tang Chief Minister Zong Chuke 宗楚客 (d. 710) occupied a Persian temple in the Liqian Ward 礼泉坊, and used his political power to make it into his own residence. This forced the monks living there to move to the Buzheng Ward 布政坊 in order to build another temple. Although the architectural details may have been rearranged, the overall layout remained the same. Not only did the physical walls, pillars, doors, and windows carry over, but so did the accumulated and enduring memories and stories. The following story tells of the origin of the Xuanfa Temple 玄法寺 and its current condition:

長安安邑坊玄法寺，初，居人張頻宅也。³⁰嘗供養一僧，僧以念《法華經》為業，積十餘年，張門人譖僧通其侍婢，因以他事殺之。僧死後，

²⁹ Some of these temples, such as the Da Jianfu Temple and the Da Anguo Temple, used to be the residences of later emperors. When they succeeded to the throne, their old residences were turned into temples. Some, such as the Qianfu Temple and the Fengci Temple, were donated by their owners; while some others, such as the Ximing Temple, were confiscated by the government. See more details in Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, “Cong wangzhai dao siguan: Tangdai Chang’an gonggong kongjian de kuoda yu shehui bianqian” 從王宅到寺觀：唐代長安公共空間的擴大與社會變遷, in his *Sui Tang Chang’an: xingbie, jiyi ji qita* 隋唐長安：性別、記憶及其他 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2010), pp. 71-76.

³⁰ *Chang’an zhi* 長安志, *Leibian Chang’an zhi* 類編長安志, and *Tang liangjing chengfang kao* 唐兩京城坊考 record the name of the house’s owner as Zhang Ying 張穎, whereas *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎, *Nanbu xinshu* 南部新書, and *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 record it as Zhang Pin 張頻. See Song Minqiu 宋敏求 (1019-1079), *Chang’an zhi* 長安志, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* 宋元方志叢刊 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990), 1:8.118b; Luo Tianrang 駱天壤 (14th century), *Leibian Chang’an zhi* 類編長安志, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:5.308b; Xu Song 徐松 (1781-1848), *Tang liangjing chengfang kao* 唐兩京城坊考, ed. by Fang Yan 方嚴 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985), 3.76; Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803-863), ed., *Youyang zazu*, xuzi 酉陽雜俎 續集 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981), 5.251; Qian Yi 錢宜, *Nanbu xinshu* 南部新書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1958), 7.70; Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) et al., eds., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961), 101.679; Neither Zhang Ying nor Zhang Pin has a biography in the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 or *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書, so it is difficult to decide who was the owner of this residence. Since it was composed earlier, I will follow *Youyang zazu*.

合宅常聞經聲不絕。張尋知其冤，慙悔不及，因捨宅為寺，鑄金銅像十萬軀，金石龕中皆滿，猶有數萬軀。³¹

The Xuanfa Temple in the Anyi Ward in Chang'an was earlier Zhang Pin's residence. Zhang once patronized a monk, who took chanting the *Lotus Sutra* as his profession. After more than ten years, one of Zhang's disciples falsely charged that the monk had engaged in an affair with Zhang's serving maid. Therefore, Zhang found another pretext and killed him. After the monk died, all the residents would often hear the undying sounds of the monk chanting sutras. Soon after, Zhang understood that the monk had been wronged, and was extremely ashamed and regretful. He thereupon gave up his residence to have it turned into a temple, and [had people] cast 100,000 statues in gilt bronze statues. Even when all the metal and stone niches [on the walls] were filled in, there were still tens of thousands of statues left over.

Although the moral of this story is just that wrongs should be righted, especially when the wronged person is a monk, it is still interesting to look at the concept of memory in this narrative. After the monk was first wronged and then killed, his voice lingered within the residence. Unlike in many other ghost stories, the ghost of the dead monk did not appear to people; instead, he haunted the house with his sutra-chanting, which was his professional activity while he was alive. The chanting appeared to be a means of his occupying and taking over the residence as well as the owner of the house's memory. His voice was loud and persistent and formed a space of its own.³² The undying sutra-chanting voice filled the entire residence, sending sound waves to the physical walls and ceilings and exerting considerable pressure on the residents within them. In this sense, the vocal and architectural spaces may be said to be overlapping. From that time onward, the

³¹ *Youyang zazu*, xuji, 5.251.

³² Yi-fu Tuan argues, "Sound itself can evoke spatial impressions...Low musical tones are voluminous whereas those of high pitch seem thin and penetrating...Spatial illusions are created in music quite apart from the phenomenon of volume and the fact that movement logically involves spaces." See *Space and Place*, p. 15.

residence belonged in a way to the dead monk and became associated with the memory of him.

That they heard the sound of sutra-chanting might have been only an imagined phenomenon generated by the Zhang family's guilty conscience, but it nonetheless caused Zhang to attempt reparative action for his wrongdoing. Rather than escape the abode of the haunting voice of the murdered monk, he chose to offer a donation, converting this very place into a temple. There, the voice that had troubled his own peace would continue to echo in the hearing of pious and generous seekers of tranquility, who would constantly be reminded that its obverse was the violence, unease, and guilt of the man of action.

Zhang's bequest to later generations included not only the temple, but also its founding narrative. Although the Xuanfa Temple later became the gathering place for monks of, successively, the Lotus Sect 法華宗, the Satyasiddhi Sect 成實宗, and the Old Insight Sect 舊唯識宗, forming a remarkable religious space on its own right, all the extant local gazetteers only discuss the Xuanfa Temple in terms of the supernatural story associated with Zhang.³³ It has been suggested that "the significance of the temple remains wedded to a ghost story, which is also its founding narrative. No mention is made of the temple as a site of social or religious importance; it is a site of a haunting and little else."³⁴ It seems not only the author of this narrative reckoned that the memory of the transformation from the residence to the temple deserved his efforts to record it, but

³³ For example, see *Chang'an zhi*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:8.118b; *Leibian Chang'an zhi*, 1:5.308b; *Tang liangjing chengfang kao*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 3.76.

³⁴ Jack W. Chen, "Social Networks, Court Factions, Ghosts, and Killer Snakes: Reading Anyi Ward," in *T'ang Studies* vol. 29 (2011), p. 53.

the later compilers of local gazetteers also thought this founding narrative, which was wedded to the memory of the manifestation of anomalies, more valuable than other accounts. The Zhang family's story became the crucial event in the temple's official history and the temple in turn the end result of what could be seen as an etiological tale.

Compared to that of the Xuanfa Temple, the history of the Fengci Temple 奉慈寺 in the Xuanyang Ward 宣陽坊 is much more complicated and involves political power relations:

楊貴妃姊虢國夫人，恩寵一時。大治宅第，棟宇之華盛，舉無與比。所居韋嗣立舊宅，韋氏諸子方偃息於堂廡間，忽見婦人衣黃羅帔衫，降自步輦，有侍婢數十人，笑語自若，謂韋氏諸子曰：“聞此宅欲貨，其價幾何？”韋氏降階曰：“先人舊廬，所未忍舍。”語未畢，有工數百人，登東西廂，撤其瓦木。韋氏諸子乃率家童，繫其琴書，委於路中，而授韋氏隙地十數畝，其宅一無所酬。虢國中堂既成，召匠圻塤，授二百萬償其值，而復以金盞瑟瑟三斗為賞。後復歸韋氏，曾有暴風拔樹，委其堂上，已而視之，略無所傷。既撤瓦以觀之，皆承以木瓦，其制作精緻，皆此類也。³⁵

Precious Consort Yang's elder sister, the Lady of Guo State, enjoyed imperial favor at that time. She had her residence built lavishly. Her house was so gorgeous and luxuriant that nothing could compare with it. The house in which she dwelled was originally Wei Sili's old residence. One day, while the Wei brothers were resting in their hallways, they suddenly saw a woman wearing a yellow silk robe step out of a sedan chair. She was followed by dozens of serving maids. She laughed and spoke at ease, saying to the Wei brothers, "I heard that you intend to sell this residence. How much is it?" The Weis walked down the stairs and answered, "This is the old house of our ancestors, which we cannot bear to give up." Before they could finish these words, hundreds of workers climbed up into the east and west wings and tore down the tiles and timbers. The Weis then ordered their boy servants to help them gather their zithers and books and pile them up in the street. The Lady

³⁵ Zheng Chuhui 鄭處誨 (fl. 834), *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄, ed. by Tian Tingzhu 田廷柱, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1994), 2.29-30.

of Guo State gave the Weis a dozen *mu* (approximately 2 acres) of open land, but nothing with which to pay for the residence. Once the central hall of the Lady of Guo State had been completed, she ordered the craftsmen to whitewash the walls and gave them two million cash for the job, plus three pecks of gold goblets and green gems as a bonus. Later, the residence was returned to the Weis. Once a storm uprooted the trees, one of which fell on the roof of their main hall. When the storm was over, people checked the roof and found it intact. They thereupon removed the tiles and found that every tile was supported by a shingle. The entire residence contained this type of masterful workmanship.

The story vividly describes how the Lady of Guo State 虢國夫人 (d. 756) forcibly seized the Wei family's residence and had it rebuilt lavishly. When Precious Consort Yang 楊貴妃 (719-756) was favored by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (Li Longji 李隆基, r. 712-756), the Yang family became exalted and powerful. The Consort's distant cousin Yang Guozhong 楊國忠 (d. 756) was promoted to Chief Minister and her sisters all conferred the title of Ladies of States.³⁶ According to the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書, Consort

³⁶ As is depicted in "Changhen ge zhuan" 長恨歌傳:

叔父昆弟皆列位清貴，爵為通侯。姊妹封國夫人，富埒王宮，車服邸第，與大長公主侔矣。而恩澤勢力，則又過之。出入禁門不問，京師長吏為之側目。故當時謠詠有云：“生女勿悲酸，生男勿喜歡。”又曰：“男不封侯女作妃，看女却為門上楣。”其人心羨慕如此。Her uncles and brothers all ranked as nobles or were appointed as lords. Her sisters were also conferred the title of Ladies of States. Their wealth was on a par with that of the royal household, while their chariots, garments, residences, and mansions were equal to those of the Grand Senior Princess, yet the favor and power they enjoyed even surpassed hers. They went in and out of the forbidden gates without being questioned, and the senior officials in the capital saluted them with their eyes when they passed by. Therefore, a contemporary ditty went like this: “Once you give birth to a girl, don't be sad; once you give birth to a boy, don't be glad.” Another one was: “When the son fails to be conferred as a marquis, the daughter becomes a consort; watch the daughter's name placed above the door lintel.” People's hearts were filled with admiration and envy like this.

See Chen Hong 陳鴻 (fl. 805), “Changhen ge zhuan” 長恨歌傳, in Li Fang et al., eds., *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chuban Gongsì, 1979), 794.4200.

Yang's second sister was conferred the title of Lady of Guo State in the seventh year of the Tianbao 天寶 Era (748). In the fifteenth year of the Tianbao Era (756), when the An Lushan Rebellion erupted, Yang Guozhong was killed by soldiers; Consort Yang was put to death; and the Lady of Guo State died in prison after attempting unsuccessfully to commit suicide.³⁷ Eight years passed between the conferral of the title Lady of Guo State and her death, and in those eight years she experienced the pinnacle of her power and sudden fall. When the residence was returned to the Weis, it was no longer a simple house but had already become a historic site and a potential subject of narratives.

The residence's changing hands between the Weis and Yangs reflects not only the settling of personal grudges, but also a shift in political power. When the Weis were driven away from their home and had to transport their family property on the road, their private predicament was brought into the public space and became a public spectacle. This must have had a profound impact on all who witnessed it. Such news would likely have spread very quickly throughout Chang'an, yet due to the Yang family's great power, people dared not fight against this injustice. When the Yang family was divested of all its authority, people began to regain their right of speech. The narrative tells not only how the Lady of Guo State acquired the house, but also states the fact that the Weis later regained their property. This means the narrative was written only when the author felt safe enough to discuss the events again. The original events became the focus of an oft-discussed story, with the storytellers including many details about the Lady of Guo State's unreasonable rudeness and her extravagant life style, the descriptions of which

³⁷ Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946) et al., ed. *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), 9.222; 51.2181.

fulfilled people's need to seek novelty. Meanwhile, this need was morally justified as a way of exposing her sin. Even though the Lady of Guo State seems to stay in the center of the event, the real protagonist of the narrative is actually the residence. The gossip of the Lady is just part of the memory associated with the residence, decorating it with another spiritual layer and adding another reason to compose narratives about it.

Chang'an zhi 長安志 records another related narrative:

虢國構一堂，價費萬金。堂成，工人償價之外，更邀賞技之直，復與絳羅五千段，工者段而不顧，虢國問其由，工曰：“某平生之能殫於此矣，苟不以信，願得螻蟻蜥蜴蜂蠆之類，數其目而投於堂中，使有閒隙得亡一物，即不論功直也。”於是又以繒綵珍具與之。³⁸

The Lady of Guo State [once] built a main hall, which cost ten thousand in gold. When the hall had been completed, the workers not only asked to be paid the cost of the construction, but also wanted a bonus for their skills. The Lady then gave them 5,000 bolts of red silk, but the workers did not even look at them. The Lady of Guo State asked why, and the workers said, “We’ve exhausted our ability to do this. If you do not believe us, we request to get such things as mole crickets, ants, lizards, wasps, and scorpions. We should then count their numbers and put them into the hall. If one single insect is ever missing because there is a crack, I will not accept any pay.” Then the Lady gave them more colorful silk and precious artifacts.

There is no direct depiction of the construction, but from the worker's boastful claim one can assume that the new residence was an architectural masterpiece. The more luxurious and gorgeous they found the Lady's residence, the more encouraged people would feel to collect, narrate, and even exaggerate stories about the material life she once enjoyed. The once highly private and secluded residential space was gradually showing a clearer

³⁸ *Chang'an zhi* in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:8.115a.

picture through the process of narration. Consequently, whenever people passed by this place, they would be reminded of its past, what they saw would be greatly enriched by what they remembered. For modern readers of these narratives, the Wei residence was not only the reason why the narratives came into being in the first place, but its twisted fate also gave them a sense of unpredictability and fascination. The Wei residence thus became more than just a setting for this narrative. It became the vehicle through which the extravagance of one of the Tang rulers was portrayed, perhaps eliciting admiration from its readers, but more likely to have appealed to their moral indignation. It is thus a cautionary tale in which the Wei residence figured as a major character.

The residence's legend, however, did not stop there. Soon after the An Lushan Rebellion erupted, it was seized by An. After the famous general Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (697-781) finally defeated the rebels and restored the Tang Empire, the residence was transferred to his son Guo Ai 郭曖 (753-800), who married the daughter of Emperor Daizong 代宗 (Li Yu 李豫, r. 762-779), Princess Shengping 昇平公主 (754-810). When the princess died, the residence was turned into a temple so that its monks would pray for her.

宣陽坊奉慈寺，開元中，虢國夫人宅。安祿山偽署百官，以田乾真為京兆尹，取此宅為府，後為郭曖駙馬宅。今上即位之初，太皇太后為昇平公主追福，奏置奉慈寺，賜錢二十萬，繡幘三車，抽左街十寺僧四十人居之。³⁹

The Fengci Temple in the Xuanyang Ward used to be the residence of the Lady of Guo State during the Kaiyuan era. When An Lushan illegitimately appointed officials, he made Tian Qianzhen the Governor of the Capital.

³⁹ *Youyang zazu*, xuji, 6.256.

Tian took the residence for use as his government office, and subsequently it was made into the imperial son-in-law Guo Ai's residence. When the current Emperor (Emperor Wuzong 武宗, Li Yan 李炎, r. 840-846) first succeeded to the throne, the Grand Empress Dowager (the daughter of Princess Shengping and Guo Ai) suggested building the Fengci Temple to be dedicated to prayers for blessings for Princess Shengping in the underworld. The Emperor then granted twenty million cash and three carts of embroidered scrolls, and transferred forty monks from ten other temples on the left side streets to live in.

Princess Shengping is one of the most renowned princesses in Chinese history, not only because she married into a distinctive family, but also due to the traditional play “Zui da jinzhi” 醉打金枝 (Hit the Daughter of the Royal Family While Drunk), concerning her married life with Guo Ai.⁴⁰ Yet in the record mentioned above, all of the numerous lively and interesting anecdotes about her life were not mentioned. Like An Lushan and his people, who only stayed in the city for a short period of time, the Princess and her husband were no more than “sojourners” in their residence. After they died, their home was turned into a temple dedicated to prayers for their souls. The enduring physical space served to preserve the memory of their names and as testimony that the past was still present. Given that the physical space endures, stories about it and events that took place in or concern it may seem to accumulate year after year. The sense of such an accumulated memory makes a space a “product of time.” The American sociologist and scholar of architecture and urban planning Lewis Mumford notes similarly with regard to cities:

⁴⁰ “Zui da jinzhi,” also named “Da jinzhi” 打金枝, “Fenyang fugui” 汾陽富貴, etc., is a traditional work originally from the Jin 晉 opera, which has been adapted into different versions of almost all local operas. See *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu*, Xiqu quyi 中國大百科全書 戲曲曲藝 (Beijing: Zhongguo Dabaike Quanshu Chubanshe, 1983), p. 50.

...cities are a product of time. They are the molds in which men's lifetimes have cooled and congealed, giving lasting shape, by way of art, to moments that would otherwise vanish with the living and leave no means of renewal or wider participation behind them. In the city, time becomes visible: buildings and monuments and public ways, more open than the written record, more subject to the gaze of many men than the scattered artifacts of the countryside, leave an imprint upon the minds even of the ignorant or the indifferent. Through the material fact of preservation, time challenges time, time clashes with time: habits and values carry over beyond the living group, streaking with different strata of time the character of any single generation. Layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves in the city until life itself is finally threatened with suffocation.⁴¹

Mumford suggests here that the city as “material fact of preservation” provides more information than the “written record” could ever offer and makes the latter more accessible and easier to understand. Indeed, not only is a city a “product of time,” but so is every distinctive urban space. The built up elements of these places bear the clear marks of origin in different times and durations, encompassed in a spatially unified construction. The case of the Fengci Temple is especially suggestive because it ties to the cause of the An Lushan Rebellion and to the reconstruction afterwards. This space's volatile past may suggest for the viewer a strong sense of time and thus become a potential subject to write about. This is articulated by the succession of images included in the space and the implied reference to numerous historical figures and various events in the capital, making the residence a landmark of national history and the narratives of it self-enriching texts.

⁴¹ Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1938), p. 4.

Works of architecture like the Fengci Temple may serve to articulate not only private and public, but other differences as well. When the luxurious personal residence was finally transformed into a temple, a private space was accordingly turned, partially at least, into a public space.⁴² During the Tang Dynasty, the residences of princes and princesses were strictly enclosed and heavily guarded. The multilayered walls and protections formed an extremely private space. According to the *Jiu Tangshu*, “The Tang system requires that officials above the third rank display painted halberds at their residential gates” 唐制三品以上，門列棨戟。⁴³ This is vividly illustrated by the murals discovered in the Tang princes and princesses’ tombs. For example, Fig. 5 below shows the halberds displayed outside of Prince Huizhuang’s 惠莊太子 (Li Wei 李撝, d. 724) residence while he was alive.

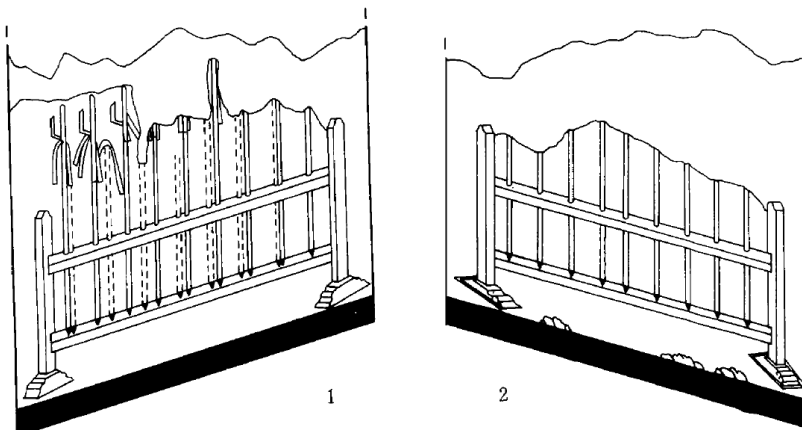


Figure 5. Halberds displayed outside of Prince Huizhuang's residence. See Shaanxisheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo 陝西省考古研究所 and Puchengxian Wenti Guangdianju 蒲城縣文體廣播電局, eds., “Tang Huizhuang Taizi mu fajue jianbao” 唐惠莊太子墓發掘簡報, in *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 no. 2 (1999), p.18.

⁴² The concept of public space is a contested one in design studies. There has been much scholarly debate around what constitutes public space, what role it plays, and how design should approach and deal with it. This dissertation provides a detailed introduction to public space in Chang'an in the third chapter. Here this author use the term to refers to any social space that is generally open and accessible to people.

⁴³ *Jiu Tangshu*, 83.2776.

A large number of the noble residences in Chang'an were transformed into temples. The transformation from residence to temple also meant that everyone, including commoners, could enter the new space, where they would form their own impressions of the building's history, sometimes in connection with legends heard from other visitors. Should the residences remain private spaces and the memory of them purely family histories, their meaning to and influence on the public might have remained very limited, and the formation of such narratives might have been on a much smaller scale.

The gradually enlarged public space not only provided extra places for people to gather together for political, religious, or academic activities, but they also diversified the urban entertainment and encouraged its development, which improved the quality of the local cultural life.⁴⁴ For example, when Princess Changning's 長寧公主 (late seventh to early eighth century) residence in the Chongren Ward⁴⁵ became the Jinglong Taoist Temple 景龍觀, it became a popular sightseeing spot and a name commonly mentioned by both poems and narrative accounts.

崇仁坊西南隅，長寧公主宅。既承恩，盛加雕飾，朱樓綺閣，一時勝絕。又有山池別院，山谷虧蔽，勢若自然。中宗及韋庶人數遊於此第，留連彌日，賦詩飲宴，上官昭容操翰於亭子柱上寫之。韋氏敗，公主隨夫為外官。初欲出賣，木石當二千萬，山池別院乃不為數。遂

⁴⁴ For a detailed discussion, see Rong Xinjiang, *Sui Tang Chang'an: Xingbie, jiyi ji qita*, pp. 77-88.

⁴⁵ Xu Song in his *Tang liangjing chengfangkao* wrongly locates Princess Changning's residence in the Jinggong Ward 靖恭坊. See Li Jianchao, ed., *Zengding Tang liangjing chengfangkao* 增訂唐兩京城坊考 (Xi'an: San Qin Chubanshe, 2006), 3.84, 3.155-56.

奏為觀，請以中宗號為名。詞人名士，競入遊賞。⁴⁶

In the southwestern corner of the Chongren Ward, there was Princess Changning's residence. When she was favored by her father, the emperor, she decorated the residence extravagantly. The vermilion towers and carved chambers surpassed those of anybody else in her time. There were also rockeries, ponds, and an outer courtyard. An artificial mountain valley surrounded the house, giving the illusion that it was naturally formed. Emperor Zhongzong and Commoner Wei (the previous Empress Wei 韋后, d. 710) often amused themselves in this residence and would stay for several days, composing poems while holding banquets. Shangguan Zhaorong took a brush and wrote the poems on the pillars of the pavilion. After Ms. Wei was brought down, the Princess moved out with her husband, who became an official outside of the court. At first, she wanted to sell the residence. The wood and stones were worth twenty million cash, not counting the rockeries, ponds, and courtyard. She therefore requested to be able to make it into a Taoist temple with the name of the reign of Emperor Zhongzong. Thereafter, men of letters and scholars of reputation would crowd round to visit the temple and enjoy the sights.

Princess Changning was the daughter of Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (Li Xian 李顯, r. 684, 705-710). Although she was not as spoiled as her sister Princess Anle 安樂公主 (684-710), another famous princess who was extremely willful and arrogant, she also enjoyed her father's great favor. She and Princess Anle competed with each other to build the most magnificent residences. Her biography in the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 records her efforts:

取西京高士廉第、左金吾衛故營合為宅，右屬都城，左頰大道，作三重樓以馮觀，築山浚池。帝及后數臨幸，置酒賦詩。又併坊西隙地廣鞠場。⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Li Fang et al., eds., *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), 180.1008a. See also Xin Deyong 辛德勇, ed., *Liangjing xinji jijiao, Daye zaji jijiao* 兩京新記輯校·大業雜記輯校 (Xi'an: San Qin Chubanshe, 2006), p. 17;

She took Gao Shilian's residence in the West Capital and combined it with the old camp of the Left Imperial Guards to make her own residence. It connected with the capital on the right side, and on the left it overlooked the main street. [She had people] construct a three-story tower so that she could enjoy the view [with a balcony]. [She also had people] build a hill and dug a pool. The Emperor and Empress visited several times, holding feasts and composing poems. Later she also annexed the broad open space of the ball field to the west of the ward.

Princess Changning built her residence in the southwestern corner of the Chongren Ward, which was immediately to the east of the Imperial City 皇城. The large dot shown in Fig. 6 indicates the position of her residence:

⁴⁷ Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) and Song Qi 宋祁 (998-1061) et al., eds., *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), 83.3653.

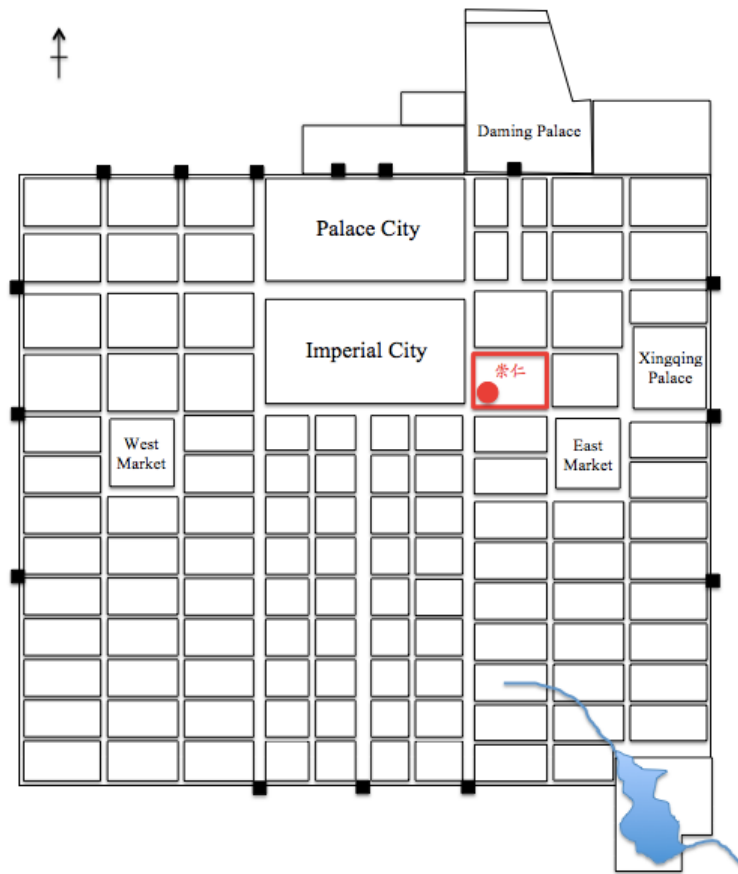


Figure 6. The Chongren Ward and Princess Changning's residence as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

That Princess Changning was allowed to build a three-story tower next to the Imperial City, and make use of the ball field, military camp, and other people's residences to build her own residence, certainly demonstrates how powerful and privileged she was.

While the Princess and her family could overlook the entire city from their three-story tower, their residential space was inaccessible to common people, who were only able to rely on the outer architectural appearance for imagining what life was like inside the walls. Especially when the Emperor and Empress were here, the Princess's residence would be even more tightly protected, in a sense forming a second, smaller scale

“Forbidden City.” From the murals excavated from tombs of the Tang princes and princesses, we are able to form a better picture of the royal family banquet and party.

(Figs 7 & 8)



Figure 7. Royal family banquets as depicted in a mural in Prince Huizhuang's tomb. See Han Wei 韓偉 and Zhang Jianlin 張建林, eds., *Shaanxi xin chu Tangmu bishua* 陝西新出唐墓壁畫 (Chongqing: Chongqing Chubanshe, 1998), p. 170, fig. 135.



Figure 8. Royal family banquets as depicted in a mural in Prince Huizhuang's tomb.

To common residents in Tang Chang'an, however, the spectacular banquet scenes could only be imagined. Even the poems composed during the party were not made public, but instead were written on the pillars inside the residence so that only the party guests would be able to view and appreciate them. In the period before the residence was transformed into a Taoist temple, every thing in it was kept private. When the building opened to the public as a Taoist temple, the private space it had been, including its inner structure and decorations, was suddenly exposed. Like those who visited the Fengci Temple, visitors to the Jinglong Taoist Temple, whether they were officials, scholars, or commoners, could all thoroughly explore a previously forbidden space in their attempt to recollect the past. If the space remained a private imperial residence, the narratives related to it might end up as a couple of dry pieces in the gazetteers or official histories; but the spatial transformation had successfully left some appealing traces for the visitors at that time and also reserved an imagination space for the readers of the narratives in later generations.

Among the traces left by the royal feasts, the poems transcribed by Shangguan Wan'er 上官婉兒 (664-710) on the pillars became a legend with three levels of significance. First, as literary texts they represented the literary accomplishments of the royal house, while evoking enthusiastic discussions among men of letters. Secondly, as a historical record they immortalized the banquets and feasts held in this space, and to some degree revealed the mystery of the life of the imperial family, while opening up for the common people an expanded space of imagination. Finally, the characters on the pillars themselves served as a token of heritage on their own sake. The poems had become part of the architectural space. They not only preserved the memory of the past,

but also could be said to belong to anyone who entered this space. The temple was thus added an extra dimension of meaning, not only as a scenic point in people's daily life, but also as a literary subject in narratives to be handed down. The narratives of the temple, just like Shangguan Wan'er's transcriptions, were also multifunctional. They were constructed upon the memory of the space's past. Through them we get the knowledge of its origin and transformation, and see the private space and the public space overlapped and the traces left by the former interacting with the imagination generated by the latter.

Later poets also wrote poems about this space. One example is Su Ting's 蘇頌 (670-727) poem, "Jinglong Guan song Pei shicao" 景龍觀送裴士曹 (Seeing Off the Levy Clerk Pei at the Jinglong Taoist Temple) below, which portrays a place in which common people enjoyed themselves:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 昔日嘗聞公主第， | I've previously heard that it was the Princess's residence, |
| 今時變作列仙家。 | Yet it is now changed into the home of the immortals. |
| 池傍坐客穿叢篠， | Visitors pass through the bamboo grove to sit by the pond; |
| 樹下遊人掃落花。 | Tourists sweep the fallen pedals under the trees. |
| 雨雪長疑向函谷， | Rainwater and snowmelt seem to flow towards the Hangu Pass; |
| 山泉直似到流沙。 | The mountain spring appears to run to the Western Regions. |
| 君還洛邑分明記， | When you return from Luoyi, ⁴⁸ please do remember, |
| 此處同來閱歲華。 | To come here with me to view the trees and grass. ⁴⁹ |

The Princess's residence, had now turned into a bustling Taoist temple, where people met or bade each other farewell, while enjoying the scenery. The temple was not only a

⁴⁸ Luoyi is a variant name of Luoyang, the Eastern Capital of the Tang Empire.

⁴⁹ Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (1645-1719) et al., eds., *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), 73.805.

religious space, but also one for amusement and recreation. Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678-740) in his “Jinglong Guan shantingji Song Mixian Gao zanfu xu” 景龍觀山亭集送密縣高贊府序 (The Preface to “Seeing Off Vice Magistrate Gao from Mixian at the Hilltop Pavilion in the Jinglong Taoist Temple) describes something similar:

始其置金榜，築鳳臺，窮土木之功，極岡巒之勢。議與磐石同體，造化較力，何其壯哉！自吾君茅茨不翦，采椽不斲，既抑華而務實，將設教以垂範。以故平陽化焉，罷歌舞於其地；麻姑見者，變桑田於此時。所謂長女之宮，鬱為列仙之館。其後嘗有好事，以為勝遊。今日芳辰，攜手接袂，往往而在，祇取樂焉。⁵⁰

In the beginning, people built golden inscribed boards and gorgeous terraces [in the residence], and exhausted the functions of soil and wood to construct the ridges and hills to their extremes, [hoping the construction] to be like a monolith and measure up against the nature. How magnificent it was! Since our emperor (Emperor Xuanzong) [is so frugal that] he does not cut the thatching and never hews the oak rafters, he prohibits sumptuousness and takes a pragmatic approach [to making important decisions], and sets up institutions of education to set a good example. Because of these, Marquis Pingyang may have been encouraged to stop singing and dancing in this place,⁵¹ while Ms. Ma would have witnessed the transformation of the mulberry field right at this time.⁵² What had been known as the eldest

⁵⁰ See Dong Gao 董誥 (1740-1818) et al., eds., *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), 290. 2496b-97a.

⁵¹ Marquis Pingyang refers to Cao Can 曹參 (d. 190 B.C.). When he took over the former Prime Minister Xiao He's 蕭何 (d. 193 B.C.) post, he closely followed Xiao's policies without any change. Meanwhile, he held wine banquets everyday to enjoy himself. Whenever he heard someone coming to stop him, he would quickly get drunk before they arrived so that they could not talk to him. Here the author was using Cao Can's allusion to state that the reformative influence of Emperor Xuanzong's frugal life style could even cause Cao Can to abandon his banquets.

⁵² This allusion originates from Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳. In the story, the immortal Ms. Ma claimed to have witnessed the sea turning into mulberry fields three times. The sea turning into mulberry fields is often used metaphorically to refer to tremendous change happens in a very long time. In this text, the author was exaggerating the greatness and rapidness of the change Emperor Xuanzong had brought. See the original story in Ge Hong, *Shenxian zhuan* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1991), pp. 52-53.

daughter's palace turned into a lovely house of immortals. Since then, many have enthusiastically enjoyed this place as a famous scenic spot. On auspicious days and during lovely seasons, [we can see] people walking hand-in-hand everywhere here, just for fun.

Jinglong Taoist Temple was a popular spot for gatherings due to its relation to the royal family and the feelings of nostalgia it aroused in people. It was also an arena of political competition. The *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 records, "In the thirteenth year of the Tianbao Era (754), [the Jinglong Taoist Temple] was renamed as Xuanzhen Taoist Temple" 天寶十三載，改為玄真觀。⁵³ In fact, there was a prelude to this name change. According to the *Jiu Tangshu*, on the *guiyou* day of the second lunar month (of the thirteenth year, i.e., 754), Emperor Xuanzong conferred upon Emperor Ruizong 睿宗 (Li Dan 李旦, r. 684-690, 710-712) with the posthumous title, "Ruizong Xuanzhen Dasheng Daxing Xiao Huangdi" 睿宗玄真大聖大興孝皇帝 (Emperor Ruizong, the Emperor of Abstruse Truth, Great Sage, Great Prosperity, and Filial Piety).⁵⁴ Emperor Ruizong was Emperor Xuanzong's father, and Emperor Zhongzong was his uncle. Using his father's posthumous title to replace his uncle's reigning title as the new name of the temple, Emperor Xuanzong not only announced his take-over of the physical space, but also proclaimed his father's, and thus his own, legitimacy to the imperial throne. To the readers, the space under concern, with its multiple labels, was a self-enriching literary image. The memory of the changing powers associated with this space enabled the narratives of this space in different times to complement each other and each gain their additional dimensions.

⁵³ Wang Pu 王溥 (922-982), ed., *Tang huiyao*, 唐會要 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1955), 50.878.

⁵⁴ *Jiu Tangshu*, 9.227-28.

The story about Gao Lishi's 高力士 (684-762) residence represents a similar change of power, and is also by every means a "product of time" on its own:

翊善坊保壽寺，本高力士宅，天寶九載捨為寺。初鑄鐘成，力士設齋慶之，舉朝畢至，一擊百千，有規其意，連擊二十杵。經藏閣規構危巧，二塔火珠授十餘斛。河陽從事李涿，性好奇古，與僧智增善，嘗俱至此寺，觀庫中舊物。忽於破瓮中得物如被，幅裂污塗，觸而塵起。涿徐視之，乃畫也。因以縣圖三及縑三十獲之。令家人裝治之，大十餘幅。訪於常侍柳公權，方知張萱所畫《石橋圖》也。玄宗賜高，因留寺中。後為鬻畫人宗牧言於左軍，尋有小使領軍卒數十人至宅，宣敕取之，即日進入。先帝好古，見之大悅，命張於雲韶院。⁵⁵

The Baoshou Temple in the Yishan Ward⁵⁶ was originally Gao Lishi's residence and was given up by him for use as a temple in the ninth year of the Tianbao Era (750). At first, when the bell was cast, Lishi held a banquet to celebrate [the opening of the temple], and all the court officials attended [the ceremony]. [For the privilege of] striking the bell once, one had to donate 100,000 cash [to the temple]. There was one person who catered to Gao's will and made twenty strikes. The sutra depository was very elaborately constructed, and a dozen pecks of precious pearls were put into the two pagodas. Li Zhuo, the Retainer of Heyang, was by nature curious about antiques. He was a friend of the monk Zhizeng, with whom he once visited this temple to view the old things in the storehouse. They suddenly found in a broken urn something resembling a quilt. It had a torn surface covered in thick dirt and once he touched it, the dust rose. Zhuo examined it carefully and found that it was a painting. He therefore bought it, giving three town maps along with thirty bolts of silk in exchange. He then asked his family to mount it. The painting was about ten square meters in size. He went to Liu Gongquan 柳公權 (778-865), the Attendant-in-Ordinary, to inquire about the painting, and only then did he learn that it was painted by Zhang Xuan 張萱 (eighth century), and that it was the famous "Painting of the

⁵⁵ *Youyang zazhi*, Xuji, 6.257.

⁵⁶ Li Jianchao locates Gao Lishi's residence in the Laiting Ward 來庭坊. See *Zengding Tangliangjing chengfangkao*, pp. 70, 75-56. An epitaph excavated from Gao's tomb also serves as a reference. See Shaanxi sheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo 陝西省考古研究所, "Tang Gao Lishi mu fajue jianbao" 唐高力士墓發掘簡報, in *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 no. 6 (2002), pp. 21-32.

Stone Bridge,” which had been housed in the temple since Emperor Xuanzong bestowed it on Gao. The art merchant Zong Mu spoke about this while he was serving in the Army on the Left.⁵⁷ Soon after, an emissary led dozens of soldiers to [Li Zhuo’s] residence, and announced that they had an imperial decree for its removal. The painting was presented to the court on the same day. As the previous emperor (Emperor Jingzong 敬宗, or Li Zhan 李湛, r. 824-826) was fond of antiques, he was greatly pleased when he saw it. He ordered that it be hung in the Yunshao Bureau.

So far as we read, a residence being transformed into a temple is nothing new, and the memory of its former owner and his/her previous honor and privilege is also a familiar topic in the texts discussed above. One thing to note is that the owner of the residence was Gao Lishi 高力士 (684-762), Emperor Xuanzong’s most trusted aide, and one of the most famous eunuchs in Chinese history. As he had once been an extremely influential historical figure, when the residence became the Baoshou Temple and the temple bell was cast, “all the court officials attended [the ceremony]” 舉朝畢至. The tens, sometimes hundreds, of high officials gathering in his courtyard must have attracted numerous spectators and may even have caused a traffic jam. Many visitors donated money to the temple. This story also demonstrates how luxuriously the chambers and pagodas were decorated. However, the author placed his focus on the time after Gao Lishi’s death, when all of the temple’s glory and honor had already passed into history.⁵⁸ The “old

⁵⁷ Starting in the Zhou Dynasty, the emperor organized his army into three major wings: the Army of the Right, the Army of the Center, and the Army of the Left.

⁵⁸ Even though he enjoyed a high political status, while Emperor Xuanzong was on the throne, Gao Lishi lead a difficult life after the An Lushan 安祿山 (703-757) Rebellion, especially after Emperor Xuanzong’s death. He was framed as a rebel and banished to Wuzhou 巫州. See *Jiu Tangshu*, 184.4759; for a more detailed account, see Guo Shi 郭湜 (700-788), *Gao Lishi waizhuan* 高力士外傳, in Ding Ruming 丁如明, ed., *Kaiyuan Tianbao yishi shizhong* 開元天寶遺事十種 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 117-21.

things in the storehouse” 庫中舊物 represented the temple’s connection with its past, the residence, and the past owner. The “old things” also preserved the memory of the space’s previous identity. The painting’s “torn surface covered in thick dirt and dust” 幅裂污塗 indicated how distant that past now was. Since Gao did not have any offspring, his properties were freely traded by the monks in the temple. Although torn and dusty, the painting was part of Gao’s leftover personal property, and was particularly effective in evoking historical remembrances. Tangible objects often carry reliable historical information, deepen the contemporary understanding of the past, and shorten the distance between earlier and later generations.

Tangible items can also serve as proof of the reliability of historical anecdotes. People might have heard or read that Emperor Xuanzong had given Zhang Xuan’s “Painting of the Stone Bridge” 石橋圖 to Gao Lishi, and the physical scroll found in Gao’s residence—the current Baoshou Temple—verified this. The renowned calligrapher Liu Gongquan played an important role in identifying the painting. His evaluation helped to restore the lost pieces of the memory and reintegrate the whole picture. Without Liu, the painting would have lain unknown. Because the past is so distant, sometimes the power to interpret it lies in the hands of a small group of people who are witnesses to it or who have much knowledge about it. Since such interpretation is contingent, it can be very incidental whether memories can be reconstructed or not.

Also, according to the archeological report on Gao Lishi’s tomb, neither the scale of the tomb nor the quantity of tomb murals and funeral objects reached the standards for such an influential figure as Gao Lishi. See Shaanxisheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo, “Tang Gao Lishi mu fajue jianbao,” pp. 21-32.

It is also interesting that a painting that was originally in Emperor Xuanzong's treasury was later taken away by Emperor Jingzong and hung in the Yunshao Bureau, which was devoted to music. The Tang Empire now had a new ruler, who had absolute ownership over everything within his territory, including what once belonged to his ancestors. The narrator does not mention what happened to the painting later, but he refers to Emperor Jingzong as the “previous Emperor” 先帝, as what the latter had referred to Emperor Xuanzong. Jingzong himself joined his ancestors and became part of the history. Subsequently, he no longer had control over what he used to possess. It appears that at this moment, the current architectural space was beginning to lose its traces of the past—the original residence was now a public temple, and the objects that had once been stored in it had been taken away. This fading memory, however, may be the clearest marker of its functioning as an historic site.

The narrative can thus be divided into three major time periods: the period of the Gao residence when Gao Lishi was alive, the period of the Baoshou Temple when the painting was stored in the temple, and the period when the painting was snatched away. Each time period was connected with another and formed a narrative chain: the second period relinks to the first by means of Zhang Xuan's painting, and propels to the third period because of the transfer of the painting. The painting reminds us of the memory, which provides the basic structure of this narrative.

Aside from the account of the Jinglong Taoist Temple, all of the other accounts mentioned in this section (of the Xuanfa Temple, the Fengci Temple, and the Baoshou Temple) are from the “Sita ji” 寺塔記 chapter in Duan Chengshi's *Youyang zazu*. In his foreword, Duan recalls how, in the third year of Emperor Wuzong's Huichang 會昌 Era

(843) , he went with two friends on a tour of the temples in Chang'an and wrote diary entries on what he had seen. He also described his return to the capital in the seventh year of the Dazhong 大中 Era (853), but found most of his diary records worm-eaten and illegible. The pieces preserved in "Sita ji" were the rare survivals. Carrie E. Reed describes the effect of Duan's pieces with their "diary-entry quality" as "overwhelmingly one of linear movement through time, of specificity of time, place, and person, and thus of immediacy."⁵⁹ The physical form of the manuscripts as well as their theme lends itself to the sense that the very idea of an historical memory is one of their themes.

Voice from the Other World

Certain other Tang narratives present the memory of a certain space as having been forgotten by the living; then it could only be accessible through a voice from the underworld. Such voice usually originated from the depths of the past and was delivered through haunting. Unlike the story of the Xuanfa Temple, in these narratives, usually the haunts would present themselves physically to the living and explicitly express their will. Once the residence was possessed by such a "voice," it became a haunted space that people would be scared by. Paradoxically, on the one hand, such fright was usually generated by a personal or collective memory of a haunted experience in the residence; but on the other hand, it was usually also caused by the absence of memory of a vague

⁵⁹ For an introduction in greater depth to "Sita ji" 寺塔記, in Carrie E. Reed, *A Tang Miscellany: An Introduction to Youyang zazu* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), pp. 73-74.

past. Only after some brave men had dared to challenge and explore the haunted space by entering, staying overnight in, and finally leaving the haunted residence safe and sound, could the old memory emerge to the surface. The retrieved memory often successfully unmasked the true face of the haunted space and overturned its previously terrifying associations. The rapid spread of the hero's adventures and his discovery would create a new memory about the residential space built upon the old ones, and a new narrative in place of the former ones. The gossip and anecdotes about the residence would no longer be centered on the horror at its being haunted, but would be redirected to the conquest and exposition of the meaning of the space. New narratives and a new memory might then serve as a start upon which others would accumulate. Thus, this kind of stories normally includes three steps and three more types of voices in response to the voice from the Other world: first of all is the gossip of the haunted space, which represents the voice of the public; second is the legend of the adventure, which is the hero's voice retelling his interaction with the haunted space; and finally is the author's own voice which filters and reshapes the original events to turn the gossip into anecdotes.⁶⁰

As a matter of fact, stories about haunted residences form a distinct category in the Tang tales, but they are not rare. When making Chang'an their backdrop, these stories have at least two features that make them unique. First, famous historical figures who had once lived in Chang'an were often presented as having been invited by the authors to serve as the haunting ghosts. Secondly, imperial mausoleums and tombs of outstanding

⁶⁰ Glen Dudbridge has a chapter discussing the different voices in supernatural stories. He differentiates the inner and outer stories within the narrative and analyzes the distance between the voice of the character and that of the narrator. See his *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China*, pp.1-17.

people, as well as palaces either in the city or its suburban areas, became popular locations for such stories. The image of Chang'an, with its fame and prestige as ancient capital city, was used to relate the ghost stories to influential celebrities and significant historical events.

The following story is a good example of how the residence of a famous person appeared in the haunting story, and how in this story the new narrative substituted itself for the old one:

太常協律韋生，有兄甚兇，自云平生無懼憚耳，聞有凶宅，必往獨宿之。其弟話於同官，同官有試之者。且聞延康東北角有馬鎮西宅，常多怪物，因領送其宅，具與酒肉，夜則皆去，獨留之於大池之西孤亭中宿。韋生以飲酒且熱，袒衣而寢，夜半方寤。及見一小兒，長可尺餘，身短腳長，其色頗黑，自池中而出，冉冉前來，循階而上，以至生前。生不為之動，乃言曰：“臥者惡物，又顧我耶！”乃遽牀而行。須臾，生迴枕仰臥，乃覺其物上牀，生亦不動。逡巡，覺有兩箇小腳，緣於生腳上，冷如水鐵，上徹於心，行步甚遲。生不動，候其漸行上，及於肚，生乃遽以手摸之，則一古鐵鼎子，已欠一腳矣，遂以衣帶繫之於牀腳。明旦，眾看之，具白其事，乃以杵碎其鼎，染染有血色。自是人皆信韋生之兇而能絕宅之妖也。⁶¹

Scholar Wei, the Assistant for Pitch Pipes in the Office of the Chamberlain for Ceremonials, had an elder brother who was very ferocious. He said that he had nothing to fear in life. Whenever he heard of a haunted residence, he would go and spend the night alone there. His younger brother spoke of this to his colleagues, and one of them wanted to test him. He heard that there was a Ma Zhenxi's residence, located in the northeast corner of the Yankang Ward, where there were always many strange creatures. Accordingly, [the younger brother and his colleagues] led and accompanied the elder brother to the house, and prepared and gave him wine and meat. When night came, all the other people left, leaving him to sleep alone in a solitary pavilion to the east of a big pond. Since the drinking made him feel hot, Scholar Wei took

⁶¹ “Wei Xielü xiong” 韋協律兄, in Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (779-847), *Xuanguai lu*, buyi 玄怪錄 補遺 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1982), pp. 124-25.

off his clothes to sleep and didn't wake up until midnight. Then he saw a young boy. The boy was about one-foot tall, with a short torso and long legs. His coloring was very dark. The boy rose from the pond, advanced slowly, and came forward up the stairs, stopping in front of the scholar. The scholar did not move because of it. Then the boy said, "You evil thing lying there, you dare stare at me again!" He then walked several times around the bed. The scholar turned the pillow over and lay face up. He then felt that someone was climbing onto the bed, but he remained motionless. Then, after a short while, he felt two tiny feet climbing onto his own. [The tiny feet] felt as cold as water and metal, and the cold spread upward and penetrated his heart. The steps of the little feet were very slow, and the scholar stayed still, waiting for it for climb up little by little. When it arrived at his belly, the scholar felt it and found that it was an ancient metal tripod, that had one leg missing. Using his belt, he then tied it to one foot of the bed. The next morning, when they (the younger brother and his colleagues) came to see him, he told them his experience in detail. They then used a pestle to smash the tripod, and it became stained with blood. From then on, people believed that the Scholar Wei in his ferocity was able to drive away the demons from haunted houses.

Here the trick was played not by the ghost of a dead human being, but by "an ancient metal tripod" 古鐵鼎子. As an ancient ritual vessel, a tripod brought with itself a sense of history. It is difficult to determine in what way the tripod might be related to the previous owner of the residence, but it is known that Ma Zhenxi's 馬鎮西 residence was once a splendid private courtyard, and later on became an imperial garden. *Tang liangjing chengfang kao* records Ma Zhenxi and Ma Lin 馬璘 (ca. 721-ca. 776) as maintaining independent residences.⁶² However, according to the historical accounts, Ma Lin was conferred the title of "Zhenxi Jiedushi" 鎮西節度使 (Military Commissioner for

⁶² *Tang liangjing chengfang kao*, 4.110.

Pacifying the West),⁶³ and was sometimes called Ma Zhenxi for short.⁶⁴ Ma Lin's residence was very famous in the capital. One paragraph from the *Jiu Tangshu* shows that the luxuriousness of the residence exceeded the proper standards for Ma Lin:

璘之第，經始中堂，費錢二十萬貫，他室降等無幾。及璘卒於軍，子弟護喪歸京師，士庶觀其中堂，或假稱故吏，爭往赴弔者數十百人。德宗在東宮，宿聞其事，及踐祚，條舉格令，第舍不得踰制，仍詔毀璘中堂及內官劉忠翼之第，璘之家園，進屬官司。自後公卿賜宴，多於璘之山池。子弟無行，家財尋盡。⁶⁵

[The construction of Ma] Lin's residence started by building the central hall, which cost 200,000 strings of money. The presence of other rooms did not lower the standard remarkably. When Lin died while in the army, his children escorted his coffin back to the capital. Both officials and commoners [wanted to] see his central hall. There were a hundred or so people who claimed to be his old subordinates and fell over themselves to offer their condolences. Emperor Dezong 德宗 (Li Kuo 李适, r. 779-805) had already heard about this when he dwelt in the East Palace [as Crown Prince], and when he ascended the throne, he issued a law that the standards of residences should not violate the regulations. He also ordered the tearing down of Lin's central hall and the eunuch Liu Zhongyi's 劉忠翼 (mid-eighth century) residence. Lin's home gardens became the part of a government office. Since then, most court banquets were held in Lin's [garden of] rockeries and ponds. Since Lin's children all behaved badly, the family fortune was completely lost.

⁶³ *Jiu Tangshu*, 121.3480; Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) et al., eds., *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, annot. by Hu Sanxing 胡三省 (1230-1302) (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1956), 222.7134.

⁶⁴ Scholars have already noticed Xu Song's error, for example, see Su Hang 蘇杭, "Ma Lin chiting yu Ma Zhenxi zhai" 馬璘池亭與馬鎮西宅, *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 no. 9 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2003), pp. 247-49.

⁶⁵ *Jiu Tangshu*, 152.4067.

The magnificence of Ma Lin's residence and its popularity as a place for court banquets can be confirmed by the records in *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜.⁶⁶ The above passage portends perhaps the tale of Scholar Wei, since it points out that Ma Lin's residence was destroyed because it was too luxurious and also that his descendants were of an evil sort. What could be a better setting for a tale of a malignant spirit? The tripod could have been thrown into the pond during the destruction of the residence.

Also, it is very likely that Emperor Dezong had people destroy the residence alone but not the garden. The garden was also referred as *tingchi* 亭池 (pavilion and pond), which indicated its inner features. As shown in Fig. 9, it was common in the Tang Dynasty to build a pavilion either next to the pond or in the middle of it.

⁶⁶ For more detailed records of court banquets held in Ma Lin's garden, see the "Yanxiang" 宴享 chapter in the "Diwang bu" 帝王部 section in Wang Ruqin 王欽若 (962-1025) et al., eds., *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1994), 110.1315b.

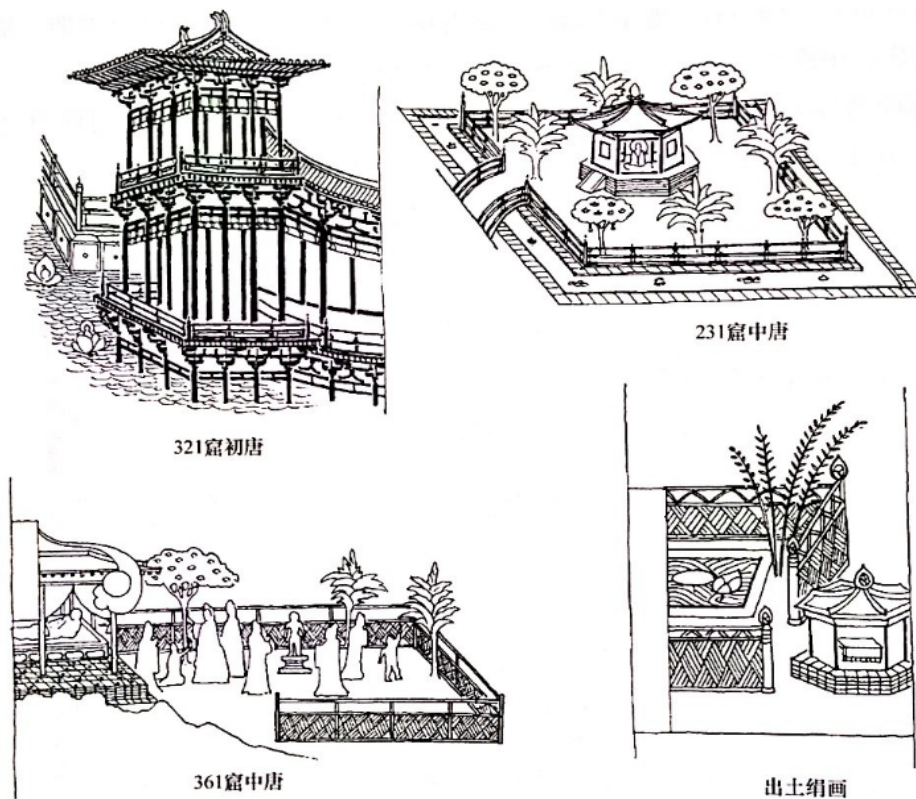


Figure 9. Pavilions and ponds, reproduced line-drawings from murals of Dunhuang. See “Dunhuang tingchi zutu” 敦煌亭池組圖 in Fu Xinian 傅熹年, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi II* 中國古代建築史二 (Beijing: Jianzhu Gongye Chubanshe, 2009), p. 492.

The above *Jiu Tangshu* account records Emperor Dezong and his officials holding banquets in Ma Lin’s garden of “rockeries and ponds” 山池, while in Scholar Wei’s story, he “rested alone in the solitary pavilion to the east of a big pond” 獨留之於大池之西孤亭中宿, and easily noticed the foot-tall child (the tripod spirit) that “hat oot-tall child (自池中而出. It seems that the basic design of the garden remained unchanged at least until the time of Niu Sengru’s 牛僧孺 (779-847), the author of *Xuaiguai lu*, where the above Scholar Wei’s story originates, though the garden itself seems to have badly decayed. The late Tang poet Xu Hun 許渾 (ca. 791-ca. 858), a contemporary of Niu Sengru, composed this poem while passing by the place:

經馬鎮西宅 Passing by Ma Zhenxi's Residence

將軍久已沒，The general has long passed away,
 行客自興衰。Grief arouse from the hearts of the passing travelers.
 功業山長在，His merits and achievements are like enduring mountains,
 繁華水不回。Whereas prosperity is like flowing water that never returns.
 亂藤侵廢井，A muddle of vines invades the disused well,
 荒菊上叢臺。Desolate chrysanthemums climb on the weedy terrace.
 借問此中事，May I ask about the things that happened here?
 幾家歌舞來。⁶⁷ How many households will come, singing and dancing, today?

Here, Xu Hun renders an abandoned residence and garden in the same way that it might have appeared to Niu Sengru. The garden was no longer used for court banquets, but was infested with weeds and wild flowers. The honor of Ma Lin's military exploits dissipated after his death. Xu Hun's depiction offers a poetic annotation to the setting of Scholar Wei's story: the residence was not only abandoned, but also became a place "where there were always many monsters" 常多怪物. It can thus be concluded that by the first half of the ninth century, Ma Lin's residence had already been abandoned and was now a place that could easily be associated with ghost stories.

When the memory of Ma Lin began to fade, the residence's status as haunted space became more firmly entrenched. For many, their fears of the place led to revulsion. Though this did not diminish the public's curiosity, and so the more dreadfully the space was described, the more eager many felt to probe into it. But most did not have the courage to take the action, and this meant the need for a hero to step forward. This is a narrative pattern shared by many stories of haunted residences.

⁶⁷ *Quan Tangshi*, 529.6064.

Close public attention notwithstanding, only the hero had the authority to first tell the story of the adventures in which he figured. Although Scholar Wei was not the narrator of the story, he must have been the first person who initiate the new narrative of the haunted residence. At the same time, the physical tripod tied to the foot of the bed served as evidence of the reality of his narration. People could not only examine the result of his adventure, but could also participate in a post-adventure activities, such as smashing the tripod. The stains of blood, caused by the smashing, indicated the tripod's spiritual powers, and seeing it allowed members of the public to engage vicariously in Scholar Wei's unordinary experience and contribute to the initial narrative. Since it was common for wealthy households to possess many antiques, the metal tripod might have been the personal property of the residence owner. Thus, while the story of the tripod changing into a child to make trouble could be fictional, the tripod was an item that might have been found in such a residence. The defective antique tripod (with one leg missing) together with the dilapidation of the house symbolized a distant past that meant nothing to Wei's contemporaries but constituted an annoyance and threat. The so-called "haunted residence" 凶宅 was notorious only because it was no longer habitable, and thus it gradually became repellent. The more repulsive people found the old haunted space, the more they could appreciate the old space being transformed from into a new peaceful one.

The process of exploring a haunted residence could also be quite complicated, as we seen in a story happened in the Yongping Ward 永平里:

元和十二年，上都永平里西南隅，有一小宅，懸榜云：“但有人敢居，即傳元契奉贈，及奉其初價。”大曆年，安太清始用二百千買得，後賣

與王姁，傳受凡十七主，皆喪長。布施與羅漢寺，寺家賃之，悉無人敢入。有日者寇鄘，出入於公卿門，詣寺求買，因送四十千與寺家。寺家極喜，乃傳契付之。有堂屋三間，甚庫，東西廂共五間，地約三畝，榆楮數百株。門有崇屏，高八尺，基厚一尺，皆炭灰泥焉。鄘又與崇賢里法明寺僧普照為門徒，其夜，掃堂獨止，一宿無事，月明，至四更，微雨，鄘忽身體拘急，毛髮如礫，心恐不安，聞一人哭聲，如出九泉。乃卑聽之，又若在中天，其乍東乍西，無所定。欲至曙，聲遂絕。鄘乃告照曰：“宅既如此，應可居焉。”命照公與作道場。至三更，又聞哭聲。滿七日，鄘乃作齋設僧。方欲眾僧行食次，照忽起，於庭如有所見，遽厲聲逐之，喝云：“這賊殺如許人！”遽庭一轉，復坐曰：“見矣見矣！”遂命鄘求七家粉水解穢。俄至門崇屏，洒水一盃，以柳枝撲焉。屏之下四尺開，土忽頽圯，中有一女人，衣青羅裙、紅袴、錦履、緋衫子，其衣皆是紙灰。風拂，盡飛于庭，即枯骨籍焉。乃命織一竹籠子，又命鄘作三兩事女衣盛之，送葬渭水之沙洲。仍命勿回頭，亦與設酒饌。自後小大更無恐懼。初郭汾陽有堂妹，出家永平里宣化寺。汾陽王夫人之頂謁其姑，從人頗多。後買此宅，往來安置。或聞有青衣不謹，遂失青衣，夫人令高築崇屏，此宅因有是焉。亦云：青衣不謹，洩漏遊處，由是生葬此地焉。⁶⁸

In the twelfth year of the Yuanhe Era (817), there was a small residence in the southwestern corner of the Yongping Ward in the Esteemed Capital (Chang'an) which hung a placard, saying: "As long as someone dares dwell here, we will immediately present the title deed to him and sell [the house] at its original price." During the Dali period (766-779), An Taiqing spent 200,000 cash and bought it. Later he sold it to old lady Wang. The house passed through seventeen owners, all of whom died right afterwards. [The house] was then donated to the monks of the Luohan Temple, who leased it, but not a single person dared enter [the house].

A diviner named Kou Yong, who was a constant guest of high officials, visited the temple and asked to buy it. He thereupon gave 40,000 cash to the owner of the temple. The owner of the temple was extremely delighted, and then gave him the title deed. [The residence] had three central rooms with very low ceilings, and a total of five wing rooms on the east and west sides, approximately three *mu* (approximately half acre) of land and several hundred elm trees and mulberries. At the main gate, there was a giant screen wall, which was eight feet high, with a one-foot high base, and was plastered

⁶⁸ "Kou Yong" 寇鄘, in *Taiping guangji*, 344.2725.

with charcoal ash. Yong was a disciple of Puzhao, a monk from the Faming Temple in the Chongxian Ward. That night, he swept the main room and rested there alone. Nothing happened all night long. The moon was bright, and at the fourth watch, there was a light rain. Yong suddenly felt his body trembling and as if his hair would split apart. He was scared and uneasy, and heard the sounds of one person crying, sounding as if it originated from the Nine Springs [of the Netherworld]. He thus lowered his body and listened carefully; the voice now seemed to come from the sky. It seemed to come from the east and then, suddenly, from the west; it would not settle down. Only when the dawn approached did the voice cease. Yong then told Zhao, saying: "The residence is just like this. We should be able to dwell here." He then asked Puzhao to hold a Buddhist ritual for the dead. At the third watch [midnight], they heard the sounds of crying again. After seven days' ritual, Yong then prepared food and invited some monks [to dinner]. As the monks were about to eat, Zhao suddenly rose up, as if he saw something in the courtyard, which he drove out in a stern voice, shouting: "This villain has killed so many people!" He chased it around the courtyard, and then sat back down, saying: "I saw it! I saw it!" He then asked Yong to obtain powder-dissolved water from seven families in order to remove the filth. Soon thereafter, he went to the giant screen wall at the gate and there sprinkled water from a cup, dipping a willow branch in to spread the water. Four feet under the screen wall, the earth suddenly collapsed and sank. Inside, there was a woman wearing an azure silk skirt, red pants, brocaded shoes, and a scarlet blouse, but all her clothes were [made of] paper ash. When the wind blew, all [the ash] flew over the courtyard. The dry bones [were then seen] scattered on the earth. [Puzhao] then asked some people to knit a bamboo cage and also ordered Yong to make a couple of pieces of women's clothes to contain the bones; he sent them to be buried on the sandbar in the Wei Water. He also ordered the woman not to come back, and also offered the banquet for her. After that, the old and the young had no fear any more.

Previously, Guo Fenyang (Guo Ziyi 郭子儀, 697-781) had a cousin who became a nun in the Xuanhua Temple in the Yongping Ward. Guo's wife, Lady Wang, visited her sister-in-law along with many followers. Later she bought this residence to settle her followers. Someone heard that there was an azure-gown maid who was imprudent, and then she was missing. The lady ordered a giant screen wall built and that was why this residence had such a thing there. Someone else said that the azure-gown maid was imprudent and had given away information on those who associated with her; because of this she was buried alive here.

This story describes a residence being made into a temple and later turned back into a residence. It was reputedly haunted even after it was donated to the Luohan Temple. Apparently, the announcement put up outside of the residence also helped to spread the news. The demonstration effect made the haunted residence a household name, and probably gave rise to many exaggerated retellings of this story.

Kou Yong was one of the spectators of this announcement. He might have been attracted by the cheap price the monks offered to sell the house for, yet his identity as a diviner is also worth noting. As a diviner, a mediator between humans and supernatural beings, he was supposed to be able to communicate with both the *yin* and *yang* worlds and was more capable than ordinary people of connecting the two worlds. As a matter of fact, in the story, the haunting was caused by the lack of communication between those alive in the present and the dead living in the past. It was not just about a ghost who haunts the house, but also about a forgotten history. When the melancholy of remembrance evoked a past that remained remote from the present, misunderstandings could occur and fears grow. The seventeen victims might not have died not of injuries caused by the ghost, but fear of the unknown.

Precisely because of the public fear, the resulting attention, and the hero's isolation, just as in Scholar Wei's story, the adventure was from the very beginning placed in full view of the public. Part of what makes the "Kou Yong" story particularly interesting is that the readers can figure out the process by which the narrative was constructed. To explore a haunted residence is also to search for a lost memory. Kou Yong spent the first night in the building on his own and concluded that it was habitable despite the horrifying sobs that seemed to come from the underworld. The author temporarily turns the

“narrator’s text,” using Mieke Bal’s words, into the “actor’s text” and directs the narrative to move from the first level to the second level.⁶⁹ The narration of Kou Yong himself replaces the author’s narration and becomes the foundation of the whole story. On the second night, he asked the monk Puzhao to join him, and so there were two participants in the adventure who were both potentially contributing to the narrative. Then, after seven days, a group of monks were invited, and they together lifted the mask of the haunted residence and witnessed the climax of the event. Puzhao, the leader of the team, was obviously an experienced geomancer, and he used his sophisticated exorcistic skills to reveal the original face of the phantom. Kou Yong and Puzhao’s adventure thereupon became a collective action under Puzhao’s command, and the contributors to the original story also changed from two men to a group of people. Now every single person in this group had the authority to narrate and would be encouraged by outsiders to contribute his own narratives. The same adventure was taken three times in total, and formed a partial repetition in narration: each time involving different participants and activities. The repetition also helped the new narrative to quickly spread; and as it sank deep into their shared memory, people’s fears diminished. So far, the process in which Kou Yong and his people probed into the mystery overlaps with development of the story. In other words, the process in which the memory gradually resurfaced is also the one in which the narrative was constructed and completed. Nonetheless, the last section shows reversion in time.

The story ends with a sub-story about what had happened in this residence earlier. It is worth noting that this embedded narrative echoes the primary one not only in the way

⁶⁹ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Second Edition) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 52.

that it offers an explanation of the haunting, but also in the way that it tells the background story of the extant architectural space and thus solves the suspense created at the very beginning. The story includes a detailed description of the building's structure at the moment when Kou Yong first entered the residence; its most distinctive feature was the giant screen 崇屏 at the main gate. The miniature residence buried as funerary objects in the Tang landlord Wang Xiutai's 王休泰 (d. 771) tomb, as shown in Fig. 10 below, provides an example of a Tang screen wall.

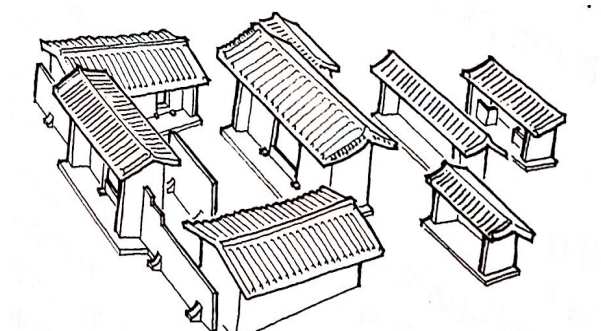


Figure 10. The miniature residence buried in Wang Xiutai's tomb, reproduced line-drawing from Fu Xinian, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi* II, p. 471.

The residence in this story only has three central rooms with very low ceilings, indicating that it was a residence of common people who may not have reached Wang Xiutai's social status. Thus the giant eight feet high screen wall with a one-foot high base will seem unusual to the readers at first. Only when the story of the imprudent maid is revealed in the last moment do readers understand the possible origin and function of it. The maid was refused admittance to the house, both physically and spiritually. As a consequence of her sorrow and resentment, she turned into a ghost. Rania Huntington compares the meaning and effect of the ghost to those of the scar, saying:

It preserves memory, as something which might have vanished lingers; but at the same time, as something human is rendered inhuman, it is a figure for memory's transformations. The ghost story can have a double function to record ghosts and to exorcise them.⁷⁰

In Kou Yong's story, with the screen wall built to defend the household against her, the ghost of the maid was exorcised. But ironically, it still managed to intrude through the barrier and haunt later inhabitants in this space. Eventually, its persistent hauntings enabled a lost memory to be retrieved. The screen wall here also appears like a scar, standing for an unsolved problem handed down by the distant past. David Lowenthal has suggested that, "The past is not only recalled; it is incarnate in the things we build and the landscapes we create."⁷¹ The old memory is preserved in the enduring physical space, which, in Stephen Owen's words, "has a mocking doubleness: it is both its minimal self and at the same time a site, a locus for something else," and the narratives, scenes, and enduring objects "are circumscribed spaces through which the past makes its way back to us."⁷²

The "Kou Yong" story is just one of the many ghost stories that take place in the Yongping Ward, which seems to be readily associated by the capital inhabitants with supernatural experiences and to be used to develop the supernatural imagination of the

⁷⁰ Rania Huntington, "Chaos, Memory, and Genre: Anecdotal Recollections of the Taiping Rebellion," in *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (CLEAR) vol. 27 (2005), p. 78.

⁷¹ David Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," p. 6.

⁷² Stephen Owen, *Remembrances: The Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 7.

tale writers. Following is another story about something that happened at a residence in this ward:

鄜城尉范季輔，未娶。有美人崔氏，宅在永平里，常依之。開元二十八年二月，崔氏晨起下堂，有物死在堦下，身如狗，項有九頭，皆如人面，面狀不一：有怒者、喜者、妍者、醜者、老者、少者、蠻者、夷者，皆大如拳，尾甚長，五色。崔氏恐，以告季輔。問諸巫，巫言焚之五道，災則消矣。乃於四達路積薪焚之。後數日，崔氏母殂；又數日，崔氏死；又數日，季輔亡。⁷³

Fan Jifu, the Commandant of Fucheng, had not yet married. There was a beautiful woman, Ms. Cui, whose residence was located in the Yongping Ward, and who often depended on him. One day, in the second lunar month of the twenty-eighth year of the Kaiyuan Era (740), Ms. Cui got up in the morning and stepped out of her room, [she saw] that there was something that had died at the foot of the stairs. Its body was like a dog, and on its neck there were nine heads, each resembling a human face, but with different appearances: angry, delighted, pretty, ugly, old, young, a southern barbarian, an eastern barbarian. Each of the faces was as big as a fist. [This creature's] tail was very long and five colored. Ms. Cui was afraid and she told this to Jifu. [Jifu] inquired of a sorcerer, who said that if they burned it at [the intersection of] five roads, the calamity would be eliminated. He then built a woodpile at an open intersection and burned it. After several days, Ms. Cui's mother passed away. A couple of days later, Ms. Cui died. After another few days, Jifu perished.

The nine-headed monster found in Ms. Cui's residence had an overwhelming supernatural power that even the sorcerer could not stop. There were two ways a reader might interpret this. First, the weird creature was a message from the otherworld, which foreshadowed a disaster in the household. Even though the message was destroyed, the disaster could still strike. Secondly, it could be that it was the destruction of this weird

⁷³ "Fan Jifu" 范季輔, in *Taiping guangji*, 361, 2868.

creature that triggered the disaster. The other world to which the creature belonged took revenge by taking three lives.

With their memory of weird stories taking place in the Yongping Ward, even before the nine-headed creature was introduced in the narrative, once the name of the Yongping Ward appears, the readers are prepared for the eeriness of the entire narrative. In other words, as an impression of a certain space is created, and the narratives about it appear to suggest a stereotype, this space starts to carry specific meanings that may bear narrative functions themselves. The image of the space will bring with it certain associations and public expectations. Other than the Yongping Ward, the Lanling Ward 蘭陵坊, as it is represented in Tang narratives, is another space which was host to active supernatural phenomena. The *Taiping guangji* preserves many such examples, such as “Pei lao” 裴老, which records an eminent hermit living behind a vegetable garden in the Lanling Ward who changed into a privy keeper;⁷⁴ “Songshu shizhe” 送書使者, which tells of a mail deliverer who witnessed a Taoist carrying dozens of little children in his urns walking through the Lanling Ward and considered him to be a devil;⁷⁵ and “Wen Jingzhao” 溫京兆 and “Li Gan” 黎幹, which describe the governors of the capital offending the immortals living in the Lanling Ward and being punished.⁷⁶ Both the Yongping Ward and the Lanling Ward were located in the extreme south of Chang’an. According to *Chang’an zhi*, “In the region south of the sixth southern latitudinal street to the Zhuque Gate, there

⁷⁴ *Taiping guangji*, 42.265-66.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 346.2738.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.307-308, 195.1464. These two stories will be discussed in details in Chapter Two.

were almost no residents' houses" 自朱雀門南第六橫街以南，率無居人第宅。⁷⁷ These unfrequented wards provide an ideal space for supernatural creatures to haunt. The "Wen Jingzhao" story is collected from Huangfu Mei's 皇甫枚 (ninth century) *Sanshui xiaodu* 三水小牘. According to the "Zhao Zhiwei" 趙知微 story in *Sanshui xiaodu*, Huangfu Mei lived in the Lanling Ward during the Xiantong 咸通 Era (860-874).⁷⁸ The "Wen Jingzhao" story also happened in the Xiantong Era, and it is highly possible that the supernatural anecdotes about the Lanling Ward were not simply fabricated by ghost story writers, but were instead based on gossip that had been circulating in the city. According to Seo Tatsuhiko 妹尾達彦, the extant texts in *Liangjing xinji* indicate that many buildings in Chang'an, whether private or public, religious or secular, had all generated anecdotes and stories surrounding them, which were widely circulated.⁷⁹ In this way, architectural spaces could be transformed into spaces of narrative. Such a transformation also applied to other physical spaces in the city, such as ward spaces. Both the Yongping and Lanling Wards could be regarded as spaces of narrative. The public memory based on a desolate environment and a solitary atmosphere readily produced certain kinds of stories about the wards.

⁷⁷ *Chang'an zhi*, *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:7.110b.

⁷⁸ "In the *xinmao* year of the Xiantong Era (i.e., the twelfth year of the Xiantong Era, 871), ...Huangfu Mei was living in his residence in the Lanling Ward" 咸通辛卯歲，……皇甫枚時居蘭陵里第。See *Taiping guangji*, 85.549-50.

⁷⁹ Seo Tatsuhiko 妹尾達彦, "Wei Shu de *Liangjing xinji* yu ba shiji qianye de Chang'an" 韋述的《兩京新記》與八世紀前葉的長安, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 9 (2003), pp. 21-22.

In other cases, the old and new spaces overlapped. When the new inhabitants in this world managed to live their lives without regard to old memories, they often found themselves in some difficulties. For example:

新昌里尚書溫造宅，桑道茂嘗居之。庭有二栢樹甚高，桑生曰：“夫人之所居，古木蕃茂者，皆宜去之。且木盛則土衰，由是居人有病者，乃土衰之致也。”於是以鐵數十鈞，鎮于栢樹下，既而告人曰：“後有居，發吾所鎮之地者，其家長當死。”唐大和九年，溫造居其宅，因修建堂宇，遂發地，得桑生所鎮之鐵。後數日，造果卒。⁸⁰

The residence of Minister Wen Zao in the Xinchang Ward was once where Sang Daomao had lived. In the courtyard, there were two cypress trees that were very tall. Sang said: “As it is a place where humans live, all the luxuriant ancient trees should be removed. Moreover, if the trees flourish, the soil will become barren. Therefore, the inhabitants’ becoming sick is caused by the barrenness of the soil.” Thereupon he buried dozens of *jun* (1 *jun* is approximately 33 pounds) of iron under the cypress trees and then told others, “If anyone who lives here later unearths the iron that I buried, the head of his family will die.” Wen Zao moved into this residence in the ninth year of the Dahe Era (835). Due to the construction of rooms in the hall, people opened the ground and obtained the iron that Sang had buried. After several days, Zao indeed died.

Sang Daomao 桑道茂 (eighth century) was a famous geomancer who was good at practicing with the Five Elements 五行 and predicting disasters.⁸¹ Thus it made sense to have him evaluate the trees as well as bury iron to ward off the calamities mentioned in the story. Wen Zao 溫造 (765-835) was the Minister of the Ministry of Rites 禮部尚書 and the Vice-Director of the Ministry of War 兵部侍郎. He died in the ninth year of the Dahe Era (835), as the story records. Wen Zao had a fairly high reputation as an official,

⁸⁰ *Taiping guangji*, 144.1035.

⁸¹ *Jiu Tangshu*, 191.5113.

but “in his later years, he hoarded a lot of money and property but never gave alms or donations. His contemporaries criticized him severely” 造於晚年積聚財貨，一無散施，時頗譏之。⁸² When he built the hall rooms in the newly purchased residence of Sang Daomao, he might also have received harsh criticism from members of the public. In the story, while seeking a better life, he died from the consequences of challenging the authority of the previous owner of his residence. Things that had once happened in this physical space were ignored. Given that Sang lived just a few years before Wen, perhaps Wen knew of Sang’s instruction but ignored it deliberately. When the respect to an old admonition gave way to the desire for material things, punishment immediately followed.

Since the past is so easily forgotten, reminders or warnings are sent now and then from the underworld to the human world above. Many reburial stories represent such a collision between the two worlds. Take Shi Wansui’s 史萬歲 (549-600) story for example:

待賢坊，隋左領軍大將軍史萬歲宅。其宅初常有鬼怪，居者輒死。萬歲不信，因即居之。夜見人衣冠甚偉，來就萬歲。萬歲問其由，鬼曰：“我漢將軍樊噲，墓近君居廁，常苦穢惡。幸移他所，必當厚報。”萬歲許諾，因責殺生人所由。鬼曰：“各自怖而死，非我殺也。”及掘得骸柩，因為改葬。後夜又來謝曰：“君當為將，吾必助君。”後萬歲為隋將，每遇賊，便覺鬼兵助己，戰必大捷。⁸³

In the Daixian Ward, there was the residence of Shi Wansui, the Sui Dynasty Great Leading General on the Left. Formerly, this residence was often haunted by ghosts and monsters, and whoever dwelt there would always die. Wansui did not believe this, and accordingly he dwelled in it. One night, he saw a man with a gorgeous hat and clothes coming towards him. Wansui

⁸² *Jiu Tangshu*, 165.4318.

⁸³ *Liangjing xinji jijiao*, 3.67-68; *Taiping guangji*, 327.2597-98.

asked him the reason, and the ghost said, “I am the Han Dynasty general Fan Kuai. My tomb is close to the privy of your residence, and I keep suffering from the filthiness and stink. I beg you to move me to another place, and I will definitely repay you generously.” Wansui gave Fan his promise [that he would do so], and took this opportunity to interrogate him why he had killed living people. The ghost said, “They were all scared to death on their own, not killed by me.” After [Wansui] dug up the coffin, he reburied it. On the next night, [the ghost] returned to thank [Wansui], saying, “You will become a general, and I will definitely help you.” Later, Wansui became a Sui general. Whenever he met enemies, he would feel the ghost army helping him, and he would then always win a great battle.

The beginning of the story is no different than the earlier two, in which the haunted residences “killed” quite a few people and formed its ill reputation. When the hero Shi Wansui did not believe the hearsay and entered the space, the haunting spirit immediately showed up, as if he was right there waiting for Shi. Shi Wansui’s potential to be a good general might be the reason for Fan Kuai, the outstanding Han dynasty general, to choose him to ask for help.⁸⁴ Fan Kuai’s tomb must have already been unidentifiable in the Sui Dynasty; otherwise, people would not have built a residence on this spot. However, as David Lowenthal has argued, “Erosion and decay erase some landmarks, but the cumulations of time mostly surpass its dissolutions.”⁸⁵ But even without any tangible hint, the memories of Fan Kuai’s glorious achievements were still fresh. Shi’s respect for his reputable predecessor and the latter’s complaint about the closeness between the current residence’s privy and his tomb offered Shi an adequate reason to fulfill Fan

⁸⁴ See Shi Wansui’s biography in Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-643) et al., eds., *Sui shu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1973), 53.1353-57; See Fan Kuai’s biography in Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145 BC-87 BC), *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2013), 95.3197-206.

⁸⁵ David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” p. 10.

Kuai's request. Fan Kuai's explanation for the deaths that occurred in this space and probably those deaths in other haunted residences as well was also accepted. Since the mystery had been unraveled, his argument also to some degree terminated any possible previous narratives about this space.

Yet the haunting did not stop with this. The ghost's fidelity to his promise made his earlier haunting forgivable and understandable. After Fan Kuai appeared, he became involved in the new narrative. His name replaced the haunting "ghosts and monsters" 鬼怪 as the new label for the residence. Interestingly, on the one hand, he was reburied in a different tomb, which meant that his corpse had been physically moved to a different space; while on the other hand, he helped Shi Wansui spiritually whenever necessary, and this kept him active in Shi's life. The old memory, once retrieved, did not vanish because of the absence of Fan Kuai's ghost; instead, it was repeatedly reactivated through Shi Wansui's experience. Although during the Tang and after, there are many such stories of army officers or local militias whose battle exploits are helped by spirits/gods, in this particular story, all was realized by retrieving a lost memory in a haunted space in the first place.

The numerous stories of ghosts showing up seeking reburial can be divided into two categories: in one category, the ghosts' reburial request was fulfilled and the relevant living people were repaid; while in the other category, the request was ignored and the living were punished.⁸⁶ In Shi Wansui's case, the young general was repaid by the older and more accomplished general. The moral of the story places it in the category of stories

⁸⁶ For further discussion of stories of this type, see Zhang Yulian 張玉蓮, "Muzang yu gu xiaoshuo" 墓葬與古小說, Ph.D. diss., Nankai University (2009), pp. 84-115.

where “good and evil are always repaid”; and we must ask what this means when the two figures in the story were both famous historical figures. Both Shi Wansui and Fan Kuai were founding generals of their dynasties and their contributions to the nation were very similar. Also, both Shi Wansui’s residence and Fan Kuai’s tomb were located in the Daixian Ward,⁸⁷ and were therefore connected through spatial adjacency. Furthermore, Shi Wansui was brave enough to turn a haunted residence into a habitable one. He also won many battles, and either of these things would have made him a legend. Concerning the fact that Shi gradually became a military hero after he moved into the haunted house, it is easy for people to seek connections between the two phenomena. It is interesting that since Shi Wansui became a Sui general, he always felt the ghost army helping him to win a great battle. It was not just the public that created the legend; Shi himself also engaged in the narrative construction. He not only shared the story of his encounters with Fan Kuai’s ghost, but also shared his mysterious feeling later on during battles. His description of his own feelings constituted the crucial part of the story and awakened the old memory about a historical person who had once belonged to this space. Regarding the exact location of Fan Kuai’s tomb, *Shi ji* 史記 does not specify it. Luo Tianrang in his *Leibian Chang’an zhi* records that “the Han Dynasty Fan Kuai’s tomb was on the south plain of Fanchuan” 漢樊噲墓在樊川南原上,⁸⁸ not in the Daixian Ward. Fanchuan was Fan Kuai’s fief, which was located at the southern outskirts of Chang’an, and so it made sense to bury him there. Of course, it is also possible that Fan Kuai was originally buried in the Daixian Ward and reburied in Fanchuan by Shi Wansui. This story might be

⁸⁷ *Tang liangjing chengfang kao*, 4.126.

⁸⁸ See *Leibian Chang’an zhi*, *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* 1:8.350b.

completely made up, but it shows how its author, or perhaps Shi Wansui himself, tried hard to make use of the historical as well as geographical recourses in Chang'an to build Shi's positive image.

Since the Han dynasty also chose Chang'an as its capital, the capital's inhabitants during the Han and Tang periods shared much of the urban space. The Prince of Wu offers a similar example:

宣政殿初就，每夜夢見數十騎，衣鮮麗，遊往其間。高宗使巫祝劉明奴、王湛然問其所由。鬼云：“我漢楚王戊太子，死葬於此。”明奴等曰：“按《漢書》，戊與七國反誅死，無後，焉得其子葬於此？”鬼曰：“我當時入朝，以路遠不從坐，後病死。天子於此葬我，《漢書》自有遺誤耳。”明奴因宣詔與改葬。鬼喜曰：“我昔日亦是近屬豪貴，今在天子宮內，出入不安，改卜極為幸甚。今在殿東北入地丈餘，我死時天子歛我玉魚一雙，今猶未朽，必以此相送，勿見也。”明奴以事奏聞，有敕改葬苑外。及發掘，玉魚宛然見在，棺槨之屬，朽爛已盡。自是其事遂絕。⁸⁹

When the Xuanzheng Palace Hall was newly built, every night [Emperor Gaozong (Li Zhi 李治, r. 649-683)] dreamed about dozens of horsemen wearing bright and new clothes going back and forth in the palace. Emperor Gaozong sent the sorcerers Liu Mingnu and Wang Zhanran to ask why. The ghost said, “I am the Crown Prince of Wu, the Han Dynasty King of Chu. I died and was buried here.” Mingnu and his men said: “According to the *Han shu*, Wu rebelled with the other seven kingdoms and was killed without any offspring. Why is his son buried here?” The ghost said: “At that time, I was heading to the court, but I was not punished, due to the long distance. Later, I died of illness. The Son of Heaven buried me here. *Han shu* itself has mistakes and omissions.” Mingnu thereupon announced the imperial decree to rebury him. The ghost happily said: “I was also the close relative of the rich and powerful. Now I am living in the [current] Son of Heaven's palace and I feel uneasy when entering and exiting [my place]. It would be much appreciated if I could be reburied. Now, more than ten feet down in the

⁸⁹ *Liangjing xinji jijiao*, 1.6-7; *Taiping yulan* collects a similar account with some textual variants. See *Taiping yulan*, 735.3390a-b.

ground northeast of the palace hall, there is a pair of jade fish that the [Han dynasty] Son of Heaven gave me when I died. They have not decayed yet. Please make sure that they go with me and do not expose them to others.” Mingnu reported these to the Emperor, who then ordered the Prince reburied outside the imperial garden. When people dug the tomb, the jade fish were distinctly seen, but the inner and outer coffins were completely rotten. Since then, the [haunting] phenomenon finally ceased.

Like Shi Wansui’s story, this is also a story about how a reburial request from a Han dynasty ghost was carried out by people from a later generation. But unlike Fan Kuai, the Prince in this case asked to be reburied not because his tomb was close to an unclean place; rather, it was the magnificent palace hall built on the site of his tomb that made him uneasy. In speaking of the Son of Heaven’s palace, he was referring to the Daming Palace 大明宫, built in 634 by Emperor Taizong (Li Shimin 李世民, r. 626-649) and expanded in 662 by Emperor Gaozong, as a replacement for the Taiji Palace 太極宫 as the new palace of the imperial court. As indicated by the circle in Fig. 11 below, the Xuanzheng Palace Hall, where the prince’s ghost appeared, was right in the center of the Daming Palace, where the emperor held court and presided over ceremonies.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Li Linfu 李林甫 (683-753) et al., eds., *Tang Liudian* 唐六典 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1992), 7.218-19.

and the claims of the ghost, and thus helped to make the story sound more real and appealing. The past, with its different layers, had been stored or restored by different means. The story told by the Prince, serving as an internal retroversion in the story, dated back to a different time period and revealed a different fact than the text recorded in the *Han shu*, which was widely accepted by Liu, Wang, their contemporaries, and probably also the writer of this account. In other words, the internal retroversion challenged the external or mainstream understanding of the history and excavated a lost memory. This narrative is constructed upon such challenge and excavation.

The stories of Kou Yong, Shi Wansui, and the Prince of Wu all represent a seesaw battle between remembering and forgetting. Aleida Assmann suggests that “memory, including cultural memory, is always permeated and shot through with forgetting. In order to remember anything one has to forget; but what is forgotten need not necessarily be lost forever.”⁹¹ Chance occasions and relics may help people recollect once-lost memories or recollect past experiences. Once the memories and experiences have been reconstructed, the original space is greatly enriched.

Due to the geographical overlap between the Han capital and Tang Chang’an, stories about Han Dynasty ghosts haunting Tang people seem to have a sense of factuality. Although built to the northwest of the Tang capital, the Qin Dynasty capital Xianyang 咸陽 may also be partially regarded as the predecessor of Tang Chang’an, as the Qin ghosts also appeared in Tang accounts of the greater Chang’an area.

⁹¹ Aleida Assmann, “Canon and Archive,” in *Cultural Memory Studies*, pp. 105-106.

趙佐者，天寶末補國子四門生。常寢疾，恍惚有二黃衣吏拘行至溫泉宮觀風樓西，別有府署，吏引入。始見一人如王者，佐前拜謁，王謂佐曰：“君識我否？”佐辭不識。王曰：“君聞秦始皇乎？我即是也。君人主於我家側造諸宮殿，每奏妓樂，備極奢侈，誠美王也，故我亦如此起樓以觀樂。”因訪問人間事甚眾。又問佐曰：“人間不久大亂，宜自謀免難，無久住京城也。”言訖，使人送還。⁹²

Zhao Zuo was appointed as one of the students in the School of the Four Gates under the Directorate of Education⁹³ at the end of the Tianbao Era (742-756). Once, when he was ill in bed and in a daze, he was escorted by two yellow-gowned officers to the west of the Guanfeng Tower in the Wenquan Palace. There was another government office there, and the officers led him in. Only then did he see a certain king-like man. Zuo, stepped forward and made a bow. The king asked Zuo, saying, “Can you recognize me?” Zuo said he could not. The king then said, “Have you ever heard about the First Emperor of the Qin? I am he. Your ruler built those palaces next to my home and always had musicians play music there, a place that is very luxurious. This is really a king’s ideal life, so I also built a tower likewise to watch and enjoy.” He then inquired about many things in the human world. He also told Zuo, “There will soon be great turmoil in the human world. You’d better plan to avoid the disaster; do not live in the capital for long.” After saying this, he had people send Zuo back.

As indicated in Fig. 12, the First Emperor of Qin’s 秦始皇 (Ying Zheng 嬴政, r. 246 B.C.-210 B.C.) tomb was located to the southwest (not exactly “west” as the story says, though that is close) of the Guanfeng Tower 觀風樓, where Emperor Xuanzong used to receive his court officials.⁹⁴

⁹² *Taiping guangji*, 334.2656.

⁹³ The School of the Four Gates was one of the several schools under the Directorate of Education 國子監 and was open to sons of lesser nobles and officials and to some specially gifted sons of commoners. The name of the school derived from the tradition that in ancient Zhou times schools were established in all of the four suburban areas around the royal capital.

⁹⁴ *Jiu Tangshu*, 9.227.

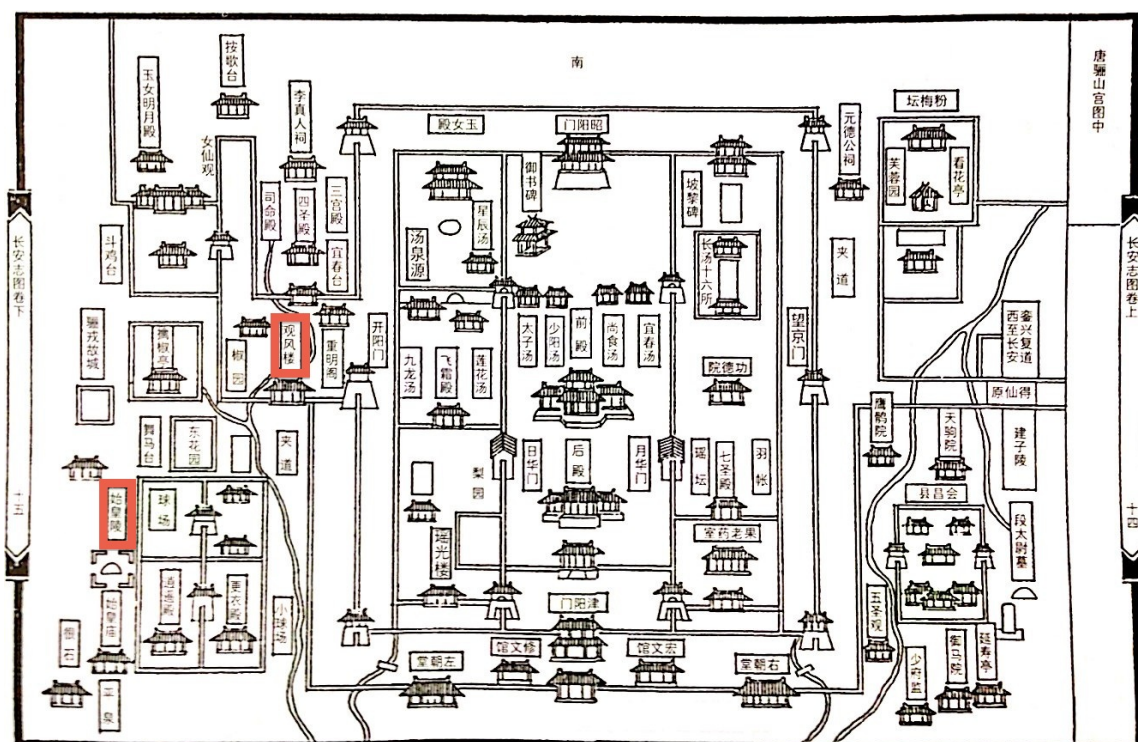


Figure 12. The map of the Palace of Mount Li. From Song Minqiu 宋敏求 (1019-1079), *Chang'an zhi tu* 長安志圖, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* 宋元方志叢刊 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990), 1:2.210b.

Geographical plausibility provides a foundation for this story. Unlike the Prince of Wu, the First Emperor of Qin did not give up his place to the new ruler; rather, he showed his cheery appreciation for what was going on next door by constructing an extra tower for himself. Probably, since he was a man with remarkable ability and wisdom and the First Emperor in Chinese imperial history, there was no reason for him to feel uneasy and embarrassed before Emperor Xuanzong, especially when the latter did not appear to him to be a capable ruler but seemed to know only how to amuse himself. However, the crucial feature of this story that distinguishes it from the previous one is the prophecy of the An Lushan Rebellion. Many stories composed after the rebellion show a strong desire to shed light on what were its signs. Some describe the abnormal phenomena that

prefigure the disaster;⁹⁵ some foretell it through the mouths of immortals;⁹⁶ and because of the close relationship between the Chief Minister Li Linfu 李林甫 (683-752) and the outbreak of the rebellion,⁹⁷ some stories focus on various supernatural indications of Li's destiny and the subsequent national disaster.⁹⁸ This story, on the other hand, first uses the shared space around Mount Li 驪山 near Chang'an to link ancient times and the contemporary era. It then allows the deceased First Emperor of Qin advise a Tang Dynasty National University student to be prepared for the upcoming catastrophe. It is not uncommon to see ghosts in Tang narratives serve as historical narrators who could recall the past and predict the future without any restriction of time. Thanks to the inherent fictional quality of the ghosts, the narrative writers could rely on them to freely express their own opinions and feelings about history that they would otherwise have been unable to voice.⁹⁹ Here, the First Emperor of Qin did not mention a single word about his past, but through his depiction of Emperor Xuanzong's hedonistic lifestyle and his prediction of imminent turmoil, one can still sense the narrator's own critical view towards Emperor Xuanzong and his way of ruling.

⁹⁵ For example, see "An Lushan" 安祿山, *Taiping guangji*, 222.1702-703; "Yang Guozhong" 楊國忠, *Taiping guangji*, 335.2660; "Tianbao ganzhi" 天寶甘子, *Taiping guangji*, 410.3333.

⁹⁶ For example, see "Cheng zhenren" 成真人, *Taiping guangji*, 25.221; "Li Xiazhou" 李遐周, *Taiping guangji*, 30.197.

⁹⁷ See the discussion in Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lushan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 82-103.

⁹⁸ For example, see "Li Linfu" 李林甫, *Taiping guangji*, 19.129-31; "Li Linfu," *Taiping guangji*, 362.2876-77; "Li Linfu," *Taiping guangji*, 451.3688; "Li Linfu," *Taiping guangji*, 457.3739.

⁹⁹ See discussion in Li Jianguo 李劍國 and Rania Huntington, "Wangling yiwang: Tang Song chuanqi de yizhong lishi guanzhao fangshi *shang* and *xia*" 亡靈憶往：唐宋傳奇的一種歷史觀照方式 (上、下), in *Nankai xuebao* 南開學報 no. 3 (2004), pp. 1-11; no. 4 (2004), pp. 97-105.

As the prophet he appears as in this story, the First Emperor of Qin could not stop the catastrophe, but could only recommend to Zhao Zuo that he leave the capital. Chang'an now became the focus. As the capital of quite a few imperial dynasties, Chang'an had been a politically active and culturally flourishing city for a long time and was the site of an accumulation of many important memories. But in this story, it turned into a space of trouble that people were advised to abandon. Because of its important political role and the nature of dynasties rising and falling, the capital city was always a combination of glories and disasters. The seemingly infinite possibilities made it an ideal setting for narratives. In the case of Chang'an, the urban space served as a pool of rich narrative resources, not only because it attracted people from everywhere by its urban fascination, but also because it was a space infiltrated with lasting pains and sorrows.

Nostalgia and Trauma: The City's Memory

Even when personal memories of a residence, temple, tomb, or palace enter into the public realm and become part of a collective memory, they usually are not focused on the city as a whole. It was the An Lushan Rebellion that conferred on Chang'an one of its deepest memories and gave the Tang Dynasty one of the greatest impacts on its literature. Many poems or narratives composed after this rebellion were reminiscent of it directly or indirectly. Such memories did not belong to any single person, but were shared by many of the residents in the capital. "The collective past is no less precious than the personal;

indeed, the one is an extension of the other. The past is valued for its communal associations as well as its private ones.”¹⁰⁰

The collective memory of the rebellion was represented in two ways: one was directly conveyed through representations of the trauma of the disaster, while the other is embedded in nostalgia about the glorious Kaiyuan and early Tianbao Eras. The traumatic memories of the rebellion were more difficult to heal than the fear of a haunted residence, while nostalgic reminiscence lingered even longer. Stephen Legg differentiates nostalgia from trauma as follows:

While nostalgia denotes a positive attachment to a past real or imaginary home, trauma denotes the negative inability to deal effectively with a past event. While both conditions represent problematic engagements with the past, nostalgia often focuses on a time and place before or beyond a traumatic incident.¹⁰¹

Both nostalgic and traumatic attachments to the past reflect dissatisfactions of the present, to which they devote more attention than to the fragments in question from the past. Just as a scar has the twin purposes of closing a wound and marking its presence, according to Rania Huntington, “so the literary records of an age of chaos, recalled from an era of stability, have the same two functions. The stories both narrate disorder and ultimately attempt to restore order.”¹⁰² It would be worthwhile to see how collective memory unifies people through time and over space by providing a narrative frame, a

¹⁰⁰ David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” p. 12.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Legg, “Memory and Nostalgia,” in *Cultural Geographies* no. 11 (2004), p. 103.

¹⁰² Rania Huntington, “Chaos, Memory, and Genre: Anecdotal Recollections of the Taiping Rebellion,” p. 64.

collective story, which integrates the individual and his or her experience into it, and which, because it can be represented as narrative, attains mobility. Ron Eyerman suggests that, “The narrative can travel, as individuals travel, and it can be embodied, written down, painted, represented, communicated and received in distant places by isolated individuals, who can then, through them, be remembered and reunited with the collective.”¹⁰³

The An Lushan Rebellion was eventually successfully suppressed. As Rania Huntington has argued, “Memories of an era of chaos caused by an ultimately failed rebellion have a different moral valence than those concerning dynastic fall. Looking back at rebellion from the perspective of restoration has less political ambivalence than recalling a fallen dynasty.”¹⁰⁴ Readers find, in many post-rebellion Tang narratives, an expression of nostalgia or trauma in a unanimously strong and frank manner. Nevertheless, the narratives are frank in the way not of overtly depicting wounds and deaths during the chaos, but in that of candidly grieving over the loss after the disaster, especially the cultural loss. The following anecdote about the Ximing Temple 西明寺 describes a politically and culturally influential space that suffered from such loss:

長安城西明寺鐘，寇亂之後，緇徒流離，闐其寺者數年。有貧民利其銅，袖鎚鑿往竊鑿之，日獲一二斤，鬻於闐闐，如是經年，人皆知之，官吏不禁。後其家忽失所在，市銅者亦訝其不來。後官欲徙其鐘於別

¹⁰³ Ron Eyerman, “The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory,” in *Acta Sociologica* vol. 47, no. 2 (2004), p. 161.

¹⁰⁴ Rania Huntington, “Chaos, Memory, and Genre: Anecdotal Recollections of the Taiping Rebellion,” p. 65.

寺，見寺鐘平墮在閣上，及仆之，見盜鐘者抱鎚鑿，儼然坐於其間，即已乾枯矣。¹⁰⁵

The bell in the Ximing Temple in the City of Chang'an remained silent in the temple for several years after the rebellion, because all of the monks were forced to wander about. A poor commoner, who realized the bronze could profit [him], put a hammer and a chisel in his sleeves and went on to stealthily chisel the bronze. He obtained one to two catty per day and sold it on the market. He kept doing this for a whole year. Everybody knew it, but the officers did not forbid it. Later, his family suddenly could not find him. The bronze seller also wondered why he no longer showed up. Later, the officials wanted to move the bell to another temple. They saw that the temple bell had fallen over flat in the pavilion. When [people] pushed the bell over, they saw the bell robber holding the hammer and chisel in his arms and sitting solemnly inside the bell. His body was already dried out.

The Ximing Temple, which covered about one-fourth of the area of the Yankang Ward, was the most important work of architecture in it. It was originally the residence of Yang Su 楊素 (544-606), the Sui Dynasty Director of the Department of State Affairs 尚書令, and was then bestowed on Princess Wanchun 萬春公主 (seventh century) by Emperor Gaozu 高祖 of the Tang Dynasty (Li Yuan 李淵, r. 618-626) and then to Prince Pu 濮王 (Li Tai 李泰, 620-652) by Emperor Taizong, before it was finally turned into a temple in the year 658.¹⁰⁶ According to Tang records, the Ximing Temple “cost over two hundred thousand strings of cash” 用錢過二十萬貫. “The temple’s palace halls, noble statues, sutra streamers, and offering flowers are so marvelous that they could inspire heavenly immortals to exert their skills, and they are so exquisite that they could cause ghosts and divines to exhaust their talent” 寺宇堂殿，尊像旛華，妙極天仙，巧窮鬼神

¹⁰⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 116.813.

¹⁰⁶ See *Chang'an zhi*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:10.126a; *Tang huiyao*, 48.845.

.¹⁰⁷ Another comment said: “It is the biggest Buddhist temple in the capital” 都邑仁祠此為最也, and “in total it has ten courtyards, and more than four thousand rooms” 凡有十院, 屋四千餘間.¹⁰⁸ An archeological report shows that the temple was 500 meters long, 250 meters wide, and 125,000 square meters in area; this scale is well above the average size of the extant Ming-Qing temples.¹⁰⁹

Su Ting’s “Tang Chang’an Ximing Si ta bei” 唐長安西明寺塔碑 (The Stele for the Pagoda of the Ximing Temple in Tang Dynasty Chang’an) records that Emperor Gaozong attended the inauguration ceremony of the temple in person, causing a stir in the capital.¹¹⁰ The Ximing Temple quickly became the Buddhist cultural center of not only Chang’an but also all of East Asia. Xuanzang 玄奘 (600-664), Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667), Daoshi 道世 (d. 683), Yuance 園測 (613-696), Huaisu 懷素 (625-698), Shanwuwei 善無畏 (637-735), Huilin 慧琳 (737-820), and many other famous monks had all stayed there,

¹⁰⁷ Zhou Shujia 周叔迦 and Su Jinren 蘇晉仁, annots., *Fayuan zhulin jiaozhu* 法苑珠林校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2003), 100.2898. The excavation report of the Ximing Temple demonstrates traces of the transformation of a residence into a temple. See Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo Xi’an Tangcheng Gongzuodui 中國社會科學院考古研究所西安唐城工作隊, “Tang Chang’an Ximing si yizhi fajue jianbao” 唐長安西明寺遺址發掘簡報, in *Kaogu* 考古 no. 1 (1990), p. 51. See also An Jiayao’s study in his “Tang Chang’an Ximing Si yizhi de kaogu fa xian” 唐長安西明寺遺址的考古發現, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 6 (2000), pp. 337-52.

¹⁰⁸ Huili 慧立 (b. 615) and Yancong 彥悰 (seventh century), *Daci’en si Sanzang fashi zhuan* 大慈恩寺三藏法師傳, eds. by Sun Yutang 孫毓棠 and Xie Fang 謝方 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983), 10.214.

¹⁰⁹ Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo Xi’an Tangcheng Gongzuodui, “Tang Chang’an Ximing si yizhi fajue jianbao,” p. 54.

¹¹⁰ Su Ting 蘇頌 (670-727), “Tang Chang’an Ximing Si ta bei” 唐長安西明寺塔碑, in *Quan Tangwen*, 257.2597b-98a.

expounding the Buddhist texts.¹¹¹ As a national temple, even in the fifth year of the Huichang Era (845) when Emperor Wuzong ordered the destruction all the temples in the capital, the Ximing Temple was one of the very few survivals.¹¹²

According to Crown Prince Zhanghuai's 章懷太子 (Li Xian 李賢, 655-684), "Ximing Si zhongming" 西明寺鐘銘 (The Inscription on the Bell of the Ximing Temple), in the second year of the Linde 麟德 Era (665), the Crown Prince had people cast a bronze bell that weighed ten thousand catties for the Ximing Temple, in the name of his parents, Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu 武后 (r. 690-705).¹¹³ This bell could be the very same one mentioned in the story above. It is very striking to read the above narrative in this context. The dismal scene at the beginning of the narrative indicates that this temple, once a place of great splendor, had changed into a sorrowful wasteland. The Crown Prince's magnificent bell also suffered an unexpected misfortune—even a poor commoner could go on stealing its bronze and selling it for years. Since the temple was located right next to the West Market 西市 (See Fig. 13, below), the thief probably went there directly after he had obtained the bronze and sold it there.

¹¹¹ Luo Xiaohong 羅小紅, "Tang Chang'an Ximing Si kao" 唐長安西明寺考, in *Kaogu yu wenwu* no. 2 (2006), pp. 77-79.

¹¹² *Jiu Tangshu*, 18.605.

¹¹³ *Quan Tangwen*, 99.1019b-1020a.

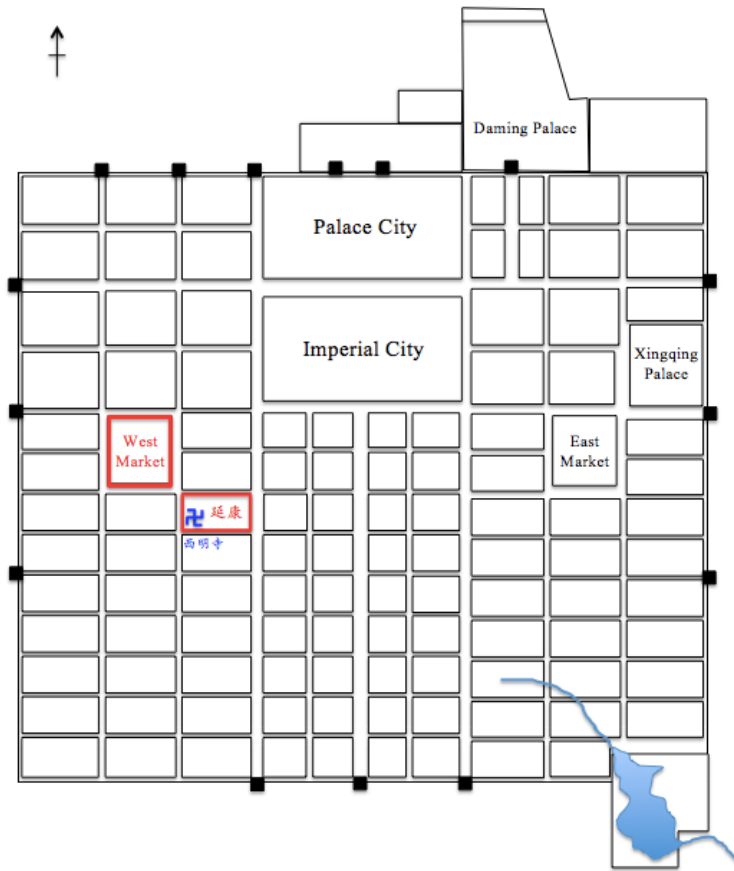


Figure 13. West Market and the Ximing Temple in the Yankang Ward, as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

The public ignorance of the thief might be shocking at first sight, but it could also be that people were too busy with post-rebellion reconstruction to bother. In any case, the more people knew about the temple's glorious history, the more dramatic a contrast they would feel between past and present. This contrast underscored the loss of the temple during the rebellion. Without any memory about the previous Ximing Temple, this narrative would be much plainer.

The Ximing Temple remained in its original position, yet the enduring small physical space reflected the dramatic ups and downs of the life of the city. The loss of the temple was just one part of the city's wounds, but the difficulties that the temple went

through during the rebellion were also shared by everyone living in the capital. The Ximing Temple's status in cultural and religious history made it a holy space. Even during its most difficult period, the temple still seemed to possess a magical power to punish those who showed a lack of respect for it. Not only was the bronze thief punished because he had desecrated a Buddhist space, but his death could also be considered as the price he had to pay for his indifference towards the city's trauma.

Even though the narrator does not actually give any interpretation of his own, the *Taiping guangji* composers put the story under the “Baoying” 報應 (Retribution) category. This encourages readers to appreciate it as a standard Buddhist karma story, in which good is always rewarded and evil punished. However, on the one hand, even if the event itself is real, there could be more than one explanation of the result. For example, the man might have been sitting under or inside the bell chiseling the bronze and could have died from lack of air, or from the deafening resonance of the bell either accidentally made by the man himself with his hammer and chisel, or by others who wanted to play tricks on him or perhaps do him harm. On the other hand, notwithstanding the thief's profiteering or blasphemous behavior, as a denizen of the capital, he was also one of the many sufferers of the disaster, and one who had had his share of painful memories. Seeing his corpse in the bell, most witnesses must have felt that this was moral retribution. The entitlement to interpret the matter in this way for the public derived as much from the general reverence for the Buddha and the temple as from their disappointment at the thief for taking advantage of a sacred space, albeit one in decline. Although no one stopped him from stealing, many who survived turmoil might still have believed the thief would have to answer for his crime. In summary, the construction of

this narrative, including the writing, interpreting, and receiving of it, is based on the public memory of the temple's past.

While the story about the Ximing Temple focuses on a single space that reveals the capital's destiny, the story about Emperor Xuanzong's dancing horses¹¹⁴ unfolds with quick shifts between spaces, reflecting perhaps the unsettled times:

玄宗嘗命教舞馬，四百蹄分為左右，各為部，目為某家寵，某家驕。時塞外亦有善馬來貢者，上俾之教習，無不曲盡其妙。因命衣以文繡，絡以金銀，飾其鬃鬣，間雜珠玉，其曲謂之《傾盃樂》者數十回，奮首鼓尾，縱橫應節。又施三層板牀，乘馬而上，旋轉如飛。或命壯士舉一榻，馬舞於榻上，樂工數人立左右前後，皆衣淡黃衫，文玉帶，必求少年而姿貌美秀者。每千秋節，命舞於勤政樓下。其後上既幸蜀，舞馬亦散在人間。祿山常觀其舞而心愛之，自是因以數匹置於范陽。其後轉為田承嗣所得，不之知也，雜之戰馬，置之外棧。忽一日，軍中享士，樂作，馬舞不能已。廝養皆謂其為妖，擁箠以擊之。馬謂其舞不中節，抑揚頓挫，猶存故態。廋吏遽以馬怪白承嗣，命箠之甚酷。馬舞甚整，而鞭撻愈加，竟斃於櫪下。時人亦有知其舞馬者，懼暴而終不敢言。¹¹⁵

Emperor Xuanzong once ordered people to train dancing horses. Four hundred horses were divided into two groups, one on the left and the other on the right. [The horses] were regarded as "Someone's Favorite" and "Someone's Pride." At that time, some people who were good at horse training came from the northern frontier to pay tribute. The sovereign asked them to teach and train the horses, and they made use of every single piece of music to the fullest. [The emperor] then ordered them to clothe [the horses] with patterned embroidery, wrap their heads with gold and silver, and decorate their manes with pearls and jade intermingled. The music was called "The Happiness of Emptying out the Cups" and included dozens of songs. [The horses] raised their heads, flicked their tails, and moved their steps all to the beat. People also made a three-layered bed of boards, mounting the horses and going up. They ran in circles [on top of the boards] like flying. Or

¹¹⁴ For more on Tang Dynasty dancing horses, see Paul Kroll, "The Dancing Horses of T'ang," *T'oung Pao* no. 67 (1981): 240-68.

¹¹⁵ *Minghuang zalu*, buyi, 45-46; also see *Taiping guangji*, 435.3535-36.

[the emperor] would order a strong man to lift a couch and let the horses dance on it. Several musicians stood around, all wearing pale yellow clothes and patterned jade belts. He certainly sought out young, elegant, and graceful people. Whenever it was the Emperor's birthday, he would order [the horses] to dance at the bottom of the Qinzhen Tower.

Later, the sovereign progressed to Shu, and the dancing horses became scattered among the common people. [An] Lushan once watched them dancing and loved them in his heart. Since then, he kept several horses [with him] in Fanyang. Later, they were obtained by Tian Chengsi. Not knowing about [the horses]; Tian mixed them with his army horses and put them in an outer shed. Suddenly one day, Tian rewarded the soldiers in the army; when music was played, the horses began to dance and could not stop. The grooms all regarded them as demons and took up brooms to beat them. The horses seemed to think that this was because they had failed to keep the beat, so they all paused and danced according to the melody, just as they had done in the past. The stablemen immediately reported the horses' abnormal reactions to Chengsi, who then ordered them to pound the horses even harsher. The horses danced rather neatly, but the beating and whipping became fiercer. Finally, the horses all died in the stable. Some people present knew that they were dancing horses, but they were afraid of [Tian's] tyranny and in the end dared not say anything.

Symbolized in the dramatic experience of Emperor Xuanzong's dancing horses, this story depicts the contrast between the prosperity before and the panic after the An Lushan Rebellion. The dancing horses were so famous at the time that not only were their stories recorded in various literary texts; their images were also captured in many objects and murals that were later unearthed at the site (Fig. 14).



Figure 14. A glided silver flask with a dancing horse design. From Shaanxi Lishi Bowuguan 陝西歷史博物館, ed., *Da Tang yibao: Hejiacun jiaocang chutu wenwuzhan* 大唐遺寶：何家村窖藏出土文物展 (Xi'an: Shaanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 2010), p. 45.

In spite of the spatial shifts from Emperor Xuanzong's fancy training ground to the Qinzhen Tower 勤政樓, to An Lushan's camp, and finally to Tian Chengsi's 田承嗣 (705-779) military shed, the same set of memories remained associated with the dancing horses. After the rebellion, time and space both changed. but, all skills the horses learned in the old days were well remembered now. Yet this memory was not shared by the men around Tian Chengsi, who, apparently misinterpreted the horses' instinctive response and, as a result, tortured them to death.

In fact, the memory of Emperor Xuanzong's dancing horses was not completely forgotten, as some people knew that they were dancing horses, but they just dared not say anything. Here, the memory was suppressed, not necessarily disregarded. On the contrary, just like the broken bell in the Ximing Temple, the horses' tragic experience aroused even more public sympathy and sorrowful nostalgia for the blissful pre-rebellion days. The story is neatly divided in two parts by the rebellion. In the first half, the

detailed depiction of the entertainment demonstrates that the memory was not vague at all; whereas the second half is centered on the sadness, which can only be understood more deeply with the memory from the first half in mind. The contrast between the way the horses were treated early on and in present days intensifies the suffering of residents of the city after the disaster. The chronological boundary between the two halves of the story is also a source of textual tension in the narration.

The drastic shifts in spaces not only stands for the real physical displacement of the dancing horses, but also implies the process through which the story was constructed. The story acquired its current shape gradually as the horses traveled from place after place. From the splendid palace in Chang'an to the rebel's territory far to the north, and then to the military camp of an ignorant warlord, the sequence of spaces, with each space's function and connotation known to people, is sufficient to tell the sad story of the An Lushan rebellion. Although the story is less of a Chang'an story than those discussed earlier, it originated from Chang'an and could easily arouse people's memory of the once lost capital. Moreover, the splendid image of Chang'an in this story was also used to form a sharp contrast with the two places mentioned later, which were full of the chaos and turmoil. That is to say, only by following the change of scenes and bringing the separate plot strands together can we truly appreciate the tragedy. In the consecutive spatial shifts, the horses played the major role in the tragedy as well as being an object of public sympathy. People, especially the Chang'an citizens, sighed for the horses not only because they pitied the horses' misery, but also because the horses reflected their own destitution and homelessness in a turbulent period. Also, to them and also to the readers, the horses' death represented the end of the thriving period of the Tang Empire.

When the rebellion was pacified and the story made its way back to Chang'an, the city had incurred tremendous losses. The capital, which originally stood for unlimited prosperity and strength, was now a site of endless devastation and deprivation. The Qinzhen Tower, at the foot of which the horses used to perform, was still standing in Chang'an, but the previous glories had all disappeared. Song Minqiu writes about the Qinzhen Tower, saying: "Every year on the Emperor's (Emperor Xuanzong) birthday, he would hold a feast in front of the Tower" 每歲千秋節酺飲樓前.¹¹⁶ From this story, one knows that on his birthdays, Emperor Xuanzong always amused himself and his guests at the feasts with the dancing horses. Since the Qinzhen Tower had an open structure and faced the street,¹¹⁷ the emperor's joyous party and his dancing horses were widely known by the Chang'an citizens. In the public conception, both the Qinzhen Tower and the Xingqing Palace 興慶宮 were associated more closely and even exclusively with Emperor Xuanzong than any other Tang emperors, not only because the Xingqing Palace was originally Emperor Xuanzong's residence before he was enthroned, but also because after him, the Xingqing Palace would no longer be used as the imperial court and would become instead the imperial harem.¹¹⁸ The old memories of Emperor Xuanzong, the dancing horses, and their heyday were preserved in the empty tower. But

¹¹⁶ *Chang'an zhi*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:9.120b.

¹¹⁷ There will be a more detailed introduction to the architectural structure and political association of the Qinzhen Tower in the third chapter.

¹¹⁸ See more discussion in Chen Yang 陳揚, "Tangdai Chang'an zhengzhi quanli zhongshu weizhi de bianqian yu 'san da nei' jineng de shanbian" 唐代長安政治權力中樞位置的變遷與"三大內"機能的善變, in *Xi'an Wenli Xueyuan xuebao* 西安文理學院學報 vol. 13, no. 2 (2010), pp. 9-13. Chapter Three of this dissertation will also present a case study of the Qinzhen Tower and its relationship with Emperor Xuanzong.

other than those memories, all had disappeared forever. The place remained the same, but it now seemed to speak a totally different language. The arts of dancing horses became extinct, while the survivors of the rebellion were still struggling to restore their normal life and retrieve their identities, in the process turning the physical and psychological trauma of the rebellion into a broader, cultural one. Ron Eyerman suggests:

As opposed to psychological or physical trauma which involves a wound and the experience of great emotional anguish by an individual, cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion.¹¹⁹

A sense of continuity with the past reinforces the sense of nostalgia. The story about the dancing horses is particularly meaningful, because in this story trauma and nostalgia converge. Here, nostalgic remembrance is saturated with trauma, while traumatic narration is filled with nostalgia. Trauma and nostalgia are mutually reinforcing.

¹¹⁹ Ron Eyerman, "The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory," p. 160.

CHAPTER TWO. URBAN SPACES AND PRACTICES OF SEPARATION AND CONNECTION: ON USES OF WALLS AND GATES IN CITIES AND WARDS

As we have seen, the story of the city of Chang'an is one of temporal transmissions, and the preservation and constitution of memories through them. It is also a story of the rhythm of the city. Various small spaces in the city were separated from their environs and connected with others in such a way as to create spatial interactions and daily rhythms and form a grand dynamic urban space. In terms of spatial separation and connection, walls and gates played a significant role. Like walls everywhere, Chinese walls have generally functioned to keep certain things and persons in and others out. They typically include gates, passes, or other openings the comings and goings through which could with their aid be supervised and controlled. Yet, walls are not always or only constraining, isolating, and divisive, nor do gates always or only provide a means of passage without hindrance. Rather, walls and gates are multifunctional, and they rely on each other to facilitate interactions between the spaces they separate.

As a walled city, Tang Dynasty Chang'an, like almost all Chinese dynastic capitals, was circumscribed by an imposing wall and had within it an Imperial City 皇城 and a Palace City 宮城, which were themselves both surrounded by walls. The rest of the city was divided into strictly ordered walled wards (*li* 里 or *fang* 坊).¹²⁰ Just like its Sui

¹²⁰ Scholars generally use *li* and *fang* interchangeably, though some note that *li* is a term used in the Sui Dynasty and earlier, whereas *fang* was more pervasively seen in later times. Qi Dongfang 齊東方 further distinguishes the two, saying that *fang* stands for the physical area, while *li* also indicates administrative control. See Qi Dongfang 齊東方, "Wei Jin Sui Tang chengshi lifang

Dynasty predecessor Daxing 大興 (lit. Great Prosperity), built on the same site, the Chang'an of the Tang period was based on the supposed Zhou Dynasty model canonized in Han period texts and implemented in the capital designs of both the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Chang'an, however, diverged considerably from the Zhou model from the very beginning. For example, according to *Zhou li* 周禮, the royal audience hall was to be located in the center of the city, facing south, and the markets were to be established behind or north of the palaces, which adjoined the northern wall.¹²¹ Nonetheless, in Chang'an, the palaces were actually placed against the city's northern wall, and the markets were set up southwest and southeast of the palaces (Fig. 15).¹²²

zhidu: Kaoguxue de yinzheng” 魏晉隋唐城市里坊制度：考古學的印證, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 9 (2003), p. 53-59.

¹²¹ See “Dongguan kaogong ji” 冬官考工記, *Zhou li zhu shu* 周禮註疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849), ed., *Chongkan Songben Shisan Jing zhu shu* 重刊宋本十三經註疏 (Taipei: Yiwen Yinshuguan, 1965), 41:642b-43a.

¹²² Arthur F. Wright, “The Cosmology of the Chinese City,” in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), pp. 56-57.

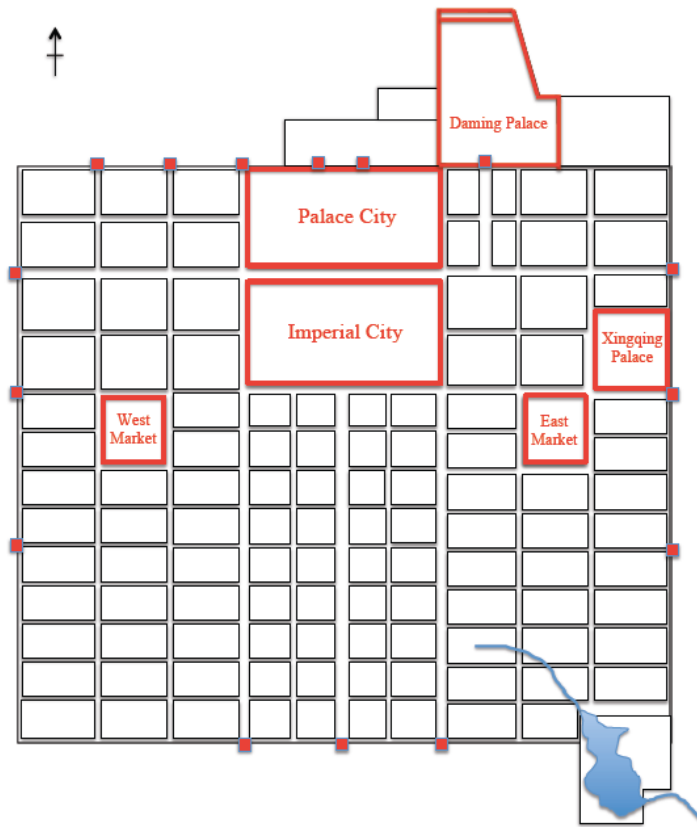


Figure 15. The Palace City, Imperial City, Daming and Xingqing Palaces, and the two Markets, as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

The idea of dividing the city into wards followed the model of earlier capital cities. The system of walled wards may have developed in accordance with the writings of Guan Zhong 管仲 (d. 645 B.C.), an influential administrative theorist and official of the late Spring and Autumn 春秋 era. The system was associated with the idea of collective responsibility, dating back to the Zhou 周 period, according to which groups of families would take responsibility for maintaining order in their communities, and, by extension,

collecting taxes and recruiting troops.¹²³ While these systems were designed to enable close state control over the urban population, they could also be used by the populace to preserve elements of local autonomy or even to assert their private interests. Local autonomy was possible in part because of the relatively small bureaucracy of the Tang state, compared to the large population and territory that it governed.

Modern scholars have already made clear what were many of the features of Chang'an's urban plan and individual residential wards, including their names, positions, shapes, approximate locations, and sizes. The city walls were 36.7 kilometers in circumference and 16 meters in thickness, enclosing a territory of some 84 square kilometers.¹²⁴ As prescribed by *Zhou li*, the walls included three gates in each of the north, south, east, and west walls, but there were more than the prescribed nine east-west and nine north-south streets.¹²⁵ The square capital was divided symmetrically by 14 longitudinal and 11 latitudinal streets, which yielded 110 wards and two markets.¹²⁶

¹²³ Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), p. 67; David Bray, *Social Space and Governance in Urban China: The Danwei System from Origins to Reform* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 24-25.

¹²⁴ Qi Dongfang, "Wei Jin Sui Tang chengshi lifang zhidu: Kaoguxue de yinzheng," p. 76.

¹²⁵ Arthur F. Wright, "The Cosmology of the Chinese City," in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China*, p. 56-57.

¹²⁶ Sources provide at least three variations for the wards in Chang'an. Recent studies suggest that at the founding of the city, the number of wards should have been 109, three more than the *Sui shu*'s 隋書 count of 106. The construction of the Daming Palace in 662-663 necessitated building a north-south thoroughfare starting from the southern terminus of the new palace complex. This avenue bisected two wards, Yishan 翊善 and Yongchang 永昌, creating two new wards, Guangzhai 光宅 and Laiting 來庭, and increasing the number of wards to 111. After 712, the northeastern ward of Yongfu 永福 became the Residence of the Sixteen Princes 十六王宅 and was incorporated into the Forbidden Garden, which lay to the north of the city. In 714 the Xingqing Ward 興慶坊 was converted into the Xingqing Palace 興慶宮, which was later enlarged northward to take up one-half of the Yongjia Ward 永嘉坊. If one counts the Residence of the Sixteen Princes, but excludes the Xingqing Palace, beginning in 714 the total number of

The wards were rectangular, longer east to west than north to south. Although their sizes varied, the wards were all very large, measuring one *li* (about a half kilometer) or more on each side.¹²⁷ Based on modern scholarship, the number of residents of Chang'an rose to about one million people during the Tang period.¹²⁸ In another estimate, assuming only half that population, it has been suggested that the population of the city was roughly 5,700 persons per ward.¹²⁹ The wards in Chang'an were so big that, according to Keyang Tang, while Tang Chang'an shared a basic grid pattern with cities in Europe, North America, and Ming and Qing China, all four sections of each of its wards were many times larger than the blocks and other comparable subdivisions of Western and more recent Chinese cities.¹³⁰

The wards of Chang'an were all circumscribed by walls of 2.5-3 meters in thickness on each of the four sides. Each ward had four gates, one in each wall, and they were connected by streets, dividing the ward into four rectangular subsections.¹³¹ In some large

wards was 110. This matches the number of wards on the archaeological map of Chang'an. See Victor Xiong, *Sui-Tang Chang'an: A Study in the Urban History of Medieval China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000), p. 208.

¹²⁷ Victor Xiong, *Sui-Tang Chang'an*, pp. 195-96.

¹²⁸ Fu Xinian 傅熹年, ed., *Zhongguo gudai jianzhushi II 中國古代建築史（二）* (Beijing: Zhongguo Jianzhu Gongye Chubanshe, 2001), p. 318.

¹²⁹ Sun Hui 孫暉 and Liang Jiang 梁江, "Tang Chang'an chengshi buju yu fangli xingtai de xinjie" 唐長安城市佈局與坊里形態的新解, in *Chengshi guihua* 城市規劃 no. 1 (2003), p. 80.

¹³⁰ Keyang Tang, "The Ward Walls and Gates of Tang Chang'an as Seen in 'The Tale of Li Wa'," in Roger des Forges, ed., *Chinese Walls in Time and Space* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 113.

¹³¹ Some wards, such as the Fengle Ward 豐樂坊 and the Anye Ward 安業坊, two of the smallest in the center city, crossed not central streets but only two parallel streets running east and west. Some wards, such as the Fengle Ward and the Anren Ward 安仁坊, might have had an irregular number of gates, reflecting their various political and administrative roles. The crossing streets in

wards, the four subsections were each further divided into four parts.¹³² A principal purpose of the layout was to organize various groups, defined by origin, ethnicity, class, or occupation, into specific wards and to monitor interactions between them so as to minimize illegitimate contacts, including those involving sexual promiscuity.¹³³ The public and the private, the noble and the humble, and intimate and distant relationships were possibilities distributed via the construction and management of walls and gates, which became crucial for controlling and connecting these spaces. Thus, the city's walls and gates endowed it with some of its order, authority, identity, and vitality.

Since the gates played such a crucial role in urban life, there was strict control over their operation. According to *Tang liudian* 唐六典:

each ward were also a feature inherited from Northern Wei Dynasty cities. See Liu Shufen, *Liuchao de chengshi yu shehui*, p. 421.

¹³² Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, p. 117.

¹³³ Many scholars have noticed the role played by city and ward gates in urban history, and substantial research has been done detailing the functions of these gates in Tang Dynasty politics, rites, and social history. For example, Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969) in his “Zhengzhi geming ji dangpai fenye” 政治革命及黨派分野 discusses the meaning and functions of the Xuanwu Gate 玄武門 in Tang political history in *Sui Tang zhidu yuanyuan luelun gao, Tangdai zhengzhishi lunshu gao* 隋唐制度淵源略論稿, 唐代政治史論述稿 (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 2001), pp. 237-47; Matsumoto Yasunobu 松本保宣 in his “Tōdai no sokumon ronji ni tsuite” 唐代の側門論事について investigates how the various palace gates were used in the delivery and administrative management of imperial documents; see *Tōhōgaku* 東方學 no. 86 (1993), pp. 1-17; Seo Tatsuhiko 妹尾達彦 in his “Tō Choan jō no girei kūkan: kōtei girei no butai o chūshin ni” 唐長安城の儀禮空間: 皇帝儀禮の舞台を中心に explores the significant roles of city and palace gates in Tang Dynasty ritual practices; see *Tōyō bunka* 東洋文化 no. 72 (1992), pp. 1-35. The Taiwanese scholar Liu Zenggui 劉增貴 discusses the social meanings of gates in ancient Chinese socio-political history and argues that the gates functioned not only as spatial passages, but also as boundaries to divide social groups. See Liu Zenggu, “Menhu yu Zhongguo gudai shehui” 門戶與中國古代社會, in *Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 vol. 68, no. 4 (1997), pp. 817-97.

由城門郎主掌京城、皇城、宮殿諸門開闔之節，奉其管鑰而出納之。開則先外而後內，闔則先內而後外，所以重中禁，尊皇居也。¹³⁴

The city gate officials take charge of tallies of the opening and closing of the city gates, the Imperial City gates, and all the palace gates. They take charge of the keys as well as the receiving and lending of them. When opening the gates, first the outer gates are opened and then the inner ones. When closing them, the order is reversed. This is the means by which people value the central forbidden city and respect the imperial residences.

All of the gates were guarded and supervised by special officials, and were regulated in such a way that they would be opened and closed at particular times only, according to a set of rules. If, in case of emergency, the gates needed to be opened at an unusual time, the gatekeeping officials were expected to document the incident and make an official report to the imperial court:

若非其時而有命啟閉，則詣閣覆奏，奉旨、合符而開闔之。受勅人具錄須開之門，宣送中書門下。¹³⁵

If it was not the proper time, but there was an order to open or close the gates, [the officials] must visit the ministry and submit a petition. Only after they have received the decree and piece together the tally halves may they open or close the gates. (The one who receives the imperial decree must record which gates need to be opened and submit a record to the Secretariat-Chancellery.)”

Thus, the opening and closing of the city gates was strictly governed and recorded. What helped to implement the regulations and call public attention to them was the *jiegu* 街鼓 (street-drum) system. The Tang Dynasty ward system had three basic rules. Firstly, except for officials above the third-level rank, no one was permitted to construct a gate to

¹³⁴ *Tang liudian*, 8.249.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.250.

their residence that was open to the street. Secondly, the ward gates were opened in the morning and shut in the evening, and people were prohibited from walking in the street at night. In Chang'an and the Eastern Capital of Luoyang, gate officials would announce the imminent opening or closing of the gates by striking drums; this was called the “street-drum” system. Thirdly, no one was allowed to grow fruits or vegetables along the streets. Among these three rules, the “street-drum” system in particular was a representative phenomenon of Tang Dynasty urban life. The curfew system preexisted the Tang Dynasty and had been widely used for some time, but the street-drum law was first enacted as a method of urban management sometime around the tenth year of the Zhenguan 貞觀 Era (636) during the Tang period. The so-called “street drum” referred to the central drum at the Chengtian Gate 承天門, which was among numerous drums in the city, the others being located in all of its major streets. It was also named *liujie gu* 六街鼓 (the Drum of the Six Streets) or *dongdong gu* 鞀鞀鼓 (the Tom-tom Drum).¹³⁶

The street-drum system was employed to regulate the comings and goings of those who were suspected of being likely to break the curfew. According to *Tanglü shuyi* 唐律疏議:

諸犯夜者，笞二十；有故者，不坐。（注：閉門鼓後、開門鼓前行者，皆為犯夜。故，謂公事急速及吉、凶、疾病之類。）《疏》議曰：《宮

¹³⁶ See the studies on the “street-drum” system in Lin Liping 林立平, “Shilun gu zai Tangdai chengshi guanli zhong de zuoyong” 試論鼓在唐代城市管理中的作用, in *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 no. 2-3 (1987), pp. 403-14; Yang Hongnian 楊鴻年, *Sui Tang liangjing kao* 隋唐兩京考 (Wuhan: Wuhan Daxue Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 195-212; Zhao Zhen 趙貞, “Tangdai Chang’ancheng jiegu kao” 唐代長安城街鼓考, in *Shanghai Shifan Daxue xuebao* 上海師範大學學報 no. 3 (2006), pp. 94-99.

衛令》：“五更三籌，順天門擊鼓，聽人行。晝漏盡，順天門擊鼓四百撻訖，閉門。後更擊六百撻，坊門皆閉，禁人行。”……若坊內行者，不拘此律。¹³⁷

Those who violate the curfew will be caned with twenty strokes. Though if they have an excuse, they will not be punished. (Note: Those who walk [along the street] after the closing-gate drum and before the opening-gate drum are both considered as violating the curfew. The “excuses” here include urgent official errands, weddings, funerals, and sicknesses.) The “Annotation” states, representing the “Palace Guards’ Order”: “At the fifth watch and the third chip¹³⁸ (about 4:12 a.m. in modern reckoning), [the officials start to] strike the drums at the the Shuntian Gate and let people pass. When the day is over and the drums at the Shuntian Gate have been struck for four hundred beats, the city gates are shut. Then there are six hundred more beats until all of the ward gates are closed, after which people are prohibited from walking [on the streets].” ...In walking within the wards, one does not need to follow this law.

The passage prescribes the exact time for opening the gates and the number of drum beats before closing them. A paragraph from *Xin Tangshu* further specifies the assignment of street officers:

左右街使，掌分察六街徼巡。凡城門坊角，有武侯鋪，衛士、驍騎分守。大城門百人，大鋪三十人，小城門二十人，小鋪五人。日暮，鼓八百聲而門閉。乙夜，街使以騎卒循行囂譟，武官暗探。五更二點，鼓自內發，諸街鼓承振，坊市門皆啟，鼓三千撻，辨色而止。¹³⁹

The officers of both the left and right streets take responsibility for patrolling the six streets. Firemen, guards, and night watchmen guard all the city gates and ward corners. Each large city gate requires one hundred people, each large post requires thirty, small city gates twenty, and small posts five. Once dusk

¹³⁷ Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (ca. 597-659) et al., eds., *Tanglü shuyi* 唐律疏議 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983), 26.489-90.

¹³⁸ In imperial China, the night was divided into five watches (wugeng 五更). Since the Han Dynasty, each watch period was subdivided into five smaller units called *chou* 籌 (lit. chip) or *dian* 點 (lit. point).

¹³⁹ *Xin Tangshu*, 49.1285-86.

falls, the gates are shut after eight hundred drumbeats. During the *yi* night (today, 9 p.m.-11 p.m.), street officers send horsemen go around and shout at people to drive them back, while the military officers secretly undertake a search. During the fifth watch, at the second point (3:48 a.m.), drums begin to sound from inside [the Imperial City], and then all of the street drums are sounded. Then the city and ward gates are all opened. After three thousand drumbeats, officers will look at the sky color [and, if they find it is the right time,] they will stop beating the drums.

The curfew system forbade walking on the street during the designated times, specifically, between the sounds of the closing-of-the-gate drums and those proper to the opening-of-the-gate. The drums atop the Shuntian Gate inside the Imperial City, as well as the street drums, functioned as alarms warning people that the curfew would start or end soon. The *Xin Tangshu* and *Tanglü shuyi* texts differ from each other in terms of the counts of drumbeats indicated as well as the starting time for the striking of the opening-gate drum. *Xin Tangshu* records this as “the fifth watch and the second point” 五更二點 (3:48 a.m.), while in *Tanglü shuyi* it is “the fifth watch and the third chip” 五更三籌 (4:12 a.m.). This discrepancy may be attributed to the respective rules for different seasons. In the second year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 Era (786), Emperor Dezong issued a decree stating, “After the first day of the fourth lunar month, send the drumbeat agreement out at the fifth watch and the second point; and after the first day of the ninth lunar month, send the drumbeat agreement out at the fifth watch and the third point” 四月一日以後，五更二點放鼓契；九月一日以後，五更三點放鼓契。¹⁴⁰ In any case, the city of Chang’an adopted a man-made time system in lieu of using the natural transition

¹⁴⁰ *Tang huiyao*, 71.1284.

given by the passage from day to night, so as to regulate and control people's behaviors and activities.

Notably, the curfew did not begin at the first sound of the gate-closing drum, but only after all of the drumbeats had ended. The same rule applied to the gate-opening drum, whose completed sounding alone marked the end of daytime activities. The duration of the drumbeats thus constituted a “third time,” which was not the curfew time, nor was it a time of pure liberty. During this supplementary time, people were urged to hurry back home. During the period of curfew, activities within the wards were unrestricted, which *Tanglü shuyi* makes clear: “When walking within the wards, one does not need to follow this law” 若坊內行者，不拘此律. Therefore, as long as one had arrived in any ward by the time the drumbeats stopped, he would not be punished. If, however, a person failed to reach home or his originally planned destination, he or she might have to enter a nearby ward, or find a place to hide in order to avoid punishment. A line from a story in *Taiping guangji* provides an example: “In the winter of the twelfth year of the Tianbao Era (753), the Manager of Lances, Zhang Wushi, lived in the Buzheng Ward. Once, since he was walking in the street when the night drum stopped sounding and the gates were closed, in the end he [had to] hurry to crouch under a bridge” 唐天寶十二載冬，有司戈張無是居在布政坊。因行街中，夜鼓絕門閉，遂趨橋下而跽。¹⁴¹ If one failed to evade and was caught by the patrol, they might tie him up with restraining ropes until the next morning. *Taiping guangji* also records such a case: “A man of the Tang period whose surname was Cui once returned after drinking and

¹⁴¹ *Taiping guangji*, 100.673.

violated the curfew. He was then caught and tied up by a military officer. By the start of the fifth watch, he still had not been untied. When Liu Xingmin, the Magistrate of Chang'an, was on his way to the court following the morning drums, he met Cui on the street. Only then, [upon Liu's orders], was Cui untied and released” 唐有人姓崔，飲酒歸犯夜，被武侯執縛。五更初，猶未解。長安令劉行敏，鼓聲動向朝，至街首逢之，始與解縛。¹⁴²

There are many Tang stories that concern the street-drum system. As will be shown later, the writers make very skillful use of regularly alternating patterns of spatial connection and separation to construct the narrative and create a sense of reality. More often than not, the turning point occurs when the evening street drums had sounded and the closing of the city or ward gates following the drumbeats redirects the narrative in another direction. For example, when the gate-closing drum started to sound, people would suspend their activities or tasks, even if they were on the edge of completing them. This suspension sometimes leads to a drastically different result than when the tasks were finished as planned. In some other cases, when the city or ward gates were not yet opened, the characters had to wait by the side of the gates together with others whom they had invited to join a conversation. Through their personal interactions, they could gain important information or learn of opportunities that they would otherwise miss.

The Tang narrative writers were also good at using the direction, location, and distance of various spaces, as well as the times of the opening and closing of the gates, to validate the spatial shifts or the activities of people rushing away through the street,

¹⁴² Ibid., 254.1975.

staying by the gates overnight, being barred from entering the gates, and so on. The narrative manipulation of Chang'an's spaces and the corresponding plot arrangements in these stories represent a transformational pattern that was widely used by Tang narrative writers. The spaces of regular separation and connection in Chang'an had created a special daily rhythm of the city and had already become a pool of narrative sources for writers, which might be used to introduce plot twists when the story seemed too plain and straightforward.

Aside from those stories that are directly related to the street drum and curfew systems, there are also stories about crossing the walls, considered as boundaries between social spaces. As will be discussed later in this chapter, characters in these stories sometimes openly violated the curfew or secretly crossed over the wall or through its gate. These cross-boundary actions are sometimes represented as being performed through the efforts of the persons performing them alone, and other times through the use of supernatural abilities. Crossing boundaries is a way for characters to transgress spatial limitations, and also helps the author in organizing the plot progression. When a story reaches an impasse, a boundary-crossing may break the deadlock and serve as a transition permitting new elements to be introduced into the narrative. Although composed out of a literary imagination, stories of this type, through their affirmation of boundary-crossing acts, implicitly revealed the desire of many residents of Chang'an to break away from the closed "grid" pattern of their urban space.

The remainder of this chapter will explore ways in which the walls and gates of the city of Chang'an and its wards functioned during the Tang Dynasty in its practices of urban management, and how the street-drum system, as well as the corresponding

opening and closing of the wall gates, structured and affected civic life in the capital. Most importantly, the chapter will examine the roles played in narrative construction and plot development by the regularly and alternately separated and connected spaces inside and outside the walls. In addition, the chapter will also analyze the “boundary crossing” phenomenon in Tang narratives; that is, those stories about crossing the limits represented by walls and gates, and will discuss the underlying tendency on the part of members of the populace to break away from the circumscribed grid city pattern in favor of the idea of an open-structured city plan.¹⁴³

The Ward System and Plot Development in Tang Love Stories

Contemporary scholarly knowledge about the city of Chang'an, especially as concerns vivid details of urban daily life, comes not only from fragments of maps, local gazetteers, and official histories, but also from art and literature, including narrative texts, some of which contribute a lot of valuable information. The kinds of information that historians and geographers are wont to examine can also be used to analyze Tang tale writers' intentions and techniques in writing these tales.

¹⁴³ On this point, I am indebted to Yang Weigang 楊為剛, for his suggestions in conversation as well as what I learned from reading his essay, “Tangdai dushi xiaoshuo xushi de shijian yu kongjian: Yi jiegu zhidu wei zhongxin” 唐代都市小說敘事的時間與空間：以街鼓制度為中心, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 15 (2009), pp. 111-37.

Scholars have carefully investigated the urban landscape shown in the renowned “Li Wa zhuan” 李娃傳, written by Bai Xingjian 白行簡 (776-826), and in particular how the tale adds significant details to what is known from contemporary research on Chang’an.¹⁴⁴ It is still an unsolved question if the story is fictional, and if so, to what extent; but in any case, the urban landscape depicted in the tale is an historical construct and one can track the characters’ spatial movements in order to see how the narrative unfolds in a geographically real space. In the story, the main character, Scholar Zheng from Xingyang 滎陽鄭生, arrived in Chang’an for the annual *jinshi* 進士 (presented scholars) examination. During his stay in the capital, he met the beautiful courtesan Li Wa 李娃, the story’s other main character, in the Pingkang Ward 平康坊, a residential district that was home mostly to officials and courtesans. Taking advantage of Zheng’s fascination, Li Wa hatched a scheme to drive him away once he had spent all of his money on her. Zheng then found himself down and out, and utterly isolated, in Chang’an. Some time later, Li Wa saw Zheng by accident, and, stung by her conscience, decided to make up for her misdeed. She then took care of Zheng, helping him pass the exam and become an official. The story has a happy ending, with the two protagonists getting married.

A thorough interpretation of “Li Wa zhuan” should take account of the way in which it depicts the ward walls and gates of Chang’an. It is worth noticing how the writer uses

¹⁴⁴ The two most representative studies on this are Seo Tatsuhiko, “Tōdai kōhanki no Chōan to denki shōsetsu: Riaden no bunseki o chūshin to shite,” pp. 476-505; this paper has also been published in Chinese: see “Tangdai houqi de Chang’an yu chuanqi xiaoshuo: Yi ‘Li Wa zhuan’ de fenxi wei zhongxin” 唐代後期的長安與傳奇小說：以《李娃傳》的分析為中心, *Riben zhongqingnian xuezhe lun Zhongguo shi: Liuchao Sui Tang juan* 日本中青年學者論中國史：六朝隋唐卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1995), pp. 509-53. See also Keyang Tang, “The Ward Walls and Gates of Tang Chang’an as Seen in ‘The Tale of Li Wa’,” in *Chinese Walls in Time and Space*, pp. 113-36.

the operation of the ward gates to mark temporal progressions and spatial interactions as well as to develop and create plots. For instance, upon their first meeting, Scholar Zheng, infatuated by Li Wa, was reluctant to leave her place, and so he told a lie in order to be able to stay:

久之日暮，鼓聲四動。姥訪其居遠近，生給之曰：“在延平門外數里。
”冀其遠而見留也。姥曰：“鼓已發矣，當速歸，無犯禁。”生曰：“
幸接歡笑，不知日之云夕。道里遼闊，城內又無親戚，將若之何？”娃
曰：“不見責僻陋，方將居之，宿何害焉？”生數目姥。姥曰：“唯唯
。”¹⁴⁵

Time went by, evening drew on, and the beat of the drums sounded on all sides. The old woman asked whether he lived far away, and the scholar lied to her: “It is some *li* beyond the the Yanping Gate,” for he hoped that they would think this too far to go, and make him stay. The old lady said: “The drum is already sounding! You must hurry back home. Do not break the curfew!” The young scholar said: “I was enjoying the pleasure of conversation and party and did not know that the sun was coming around to evening. The way is far, and I have no kinsmen within the city walls. What shall I do?” Li Wa said: “If you do not object to shabby quarters, since you are just about to come and live here, what harm is there in staying the night?” The scholar glanced several times at the old lady, who expressed her agreement.¹⁴⁶

According to the previous text of the story, Scholar Zheng actually rented a house in the Buzheng Ward 布政坊, a place inhabited mainly by commoners and foreigners. It was also suitable for a student from out of town who had yet to pass the examination. The ward was located directly west of the Imperial City and was just four short blocks away from the Pingkang Ward (Fig. 16). When the evening drum started to sound, Zheng

¹⁴⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3986.

¹⁴⁶ The translation is slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge’s rendering. See Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa: Study and Critical Edition of a Chinese Story from the Ninth Century* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), pp. 121-23.

should have had enough time to go back. However, in order to stay, he lied, saying that he lived somewhere outside the Yanping Gate 延平門. The place name was quite deliberately chosen. First of all, he maintained he did not live in the city, but at a place several *li* beyond the city gate. Secondly, the Yanping Gate was the farthest gate from the Pingkang Ward. Zheng had to travel three blocks southward and seven blocks westward to reach the gate before he could go in the direction of his alleged lodging. The distance was 5628.5 steps¹⁴⁷ (roughly 8500 meters), and it would have taken him about two hours to walk back (Fig. 16).

¹⁴⁷ The numbers here are based on Takeo Hiraoka 平岡武夫 and Kiyoshi Imai 金井清, eds., *Chōan to Rakuyō. Chizu* 長安と洛陽 地図 (Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo Henshū linkai, 1956).

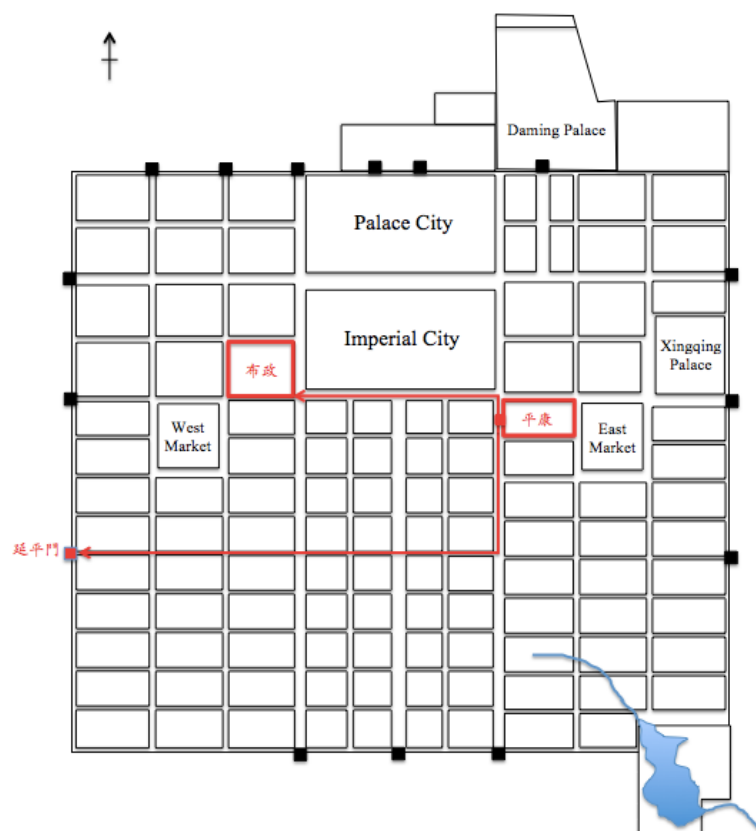


Figure 16. The routes from the Pingkang Ward to the Buzheng Ward and to the Yanping Gate, as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

He believed that anyone familiar with the layout of the city and the curfew system would understand that he had no way to get out of the city before the city gates closed, and so had a legitimate excuse for wanting to stay overnight. Of course, this was exactly what Li Wa and the old lady had hoped for. Without such a calculated lie, Zheng would have had to return to the Buzheng Ward, where he would be in another space and separated from Li Wa. In other words, the directional and spatial relationship provides the “logic of

events,” according to which the series of events can be arranged in a more reasonable sequence and without which the story can hardly be able to continue or develop.¹⁴⁸

Later on, when Scholar Zheng had exhausted his funds and thus became useless to Li Wa, she decided to trick him into leaving her place, and then, further, to prevent him from returning. She led him out by telling him of her wish to have a child with him and suggesting that they both go to worship the God of Fertility:

信宿而返，策驢而後。至里北門，娃謂生曰：“此東轉小曲中，某之姨宅也，將憇而覲之，可乎？”生如其言。前行不踰百步，果見一車門，窺其際，甚弘敞。¹⁴⁹

After two consecutive nights there they returned. The Scholar followed behind, whipping onward his donkey. As they arrived at the north gate of the [Xuanyang] Ward, Li Wa said to the scholar: “In a little serpentine lane turning off east from here is my aunt’s house. May we break off our journey to call on her?” The scholar did as she suggested. As expected, before they had advanced more than a hundred paces, he saw a carriage gate and glimpsed the extent [of the courtyard inside it], which was very wide and spacious.¹⁵⁰

On their way back, Li Wa proposed to visit her “aunt,” who lived in a serpentine lane 曲 to the east of the north gate of the Xuanyang Ward, which lay to the south of the Pingkang Ward. According to Seo Tatsuhiko, this lane lay about 700-800 meters from Li Wa’s house. At this moment, Li Wa directed Scholar Zheng to leave his familiar residential ward and enter a new space. With the spatial switch, Zheng’s hedonic life in

¹⁴⁸ The term “logic of events” is borrowed from Mieke Bal’s *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁹ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3987.

¹⁵⁰ The translation is slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge’s rendering in his *The Tale of Li Wa*, p. 131.

the pleasure quarter ended and his tragic journey began. Zheng's being away from the Pingkang Ward drove the old lady to relinquish her old residence in favor of a temporary hiding place. Even though the Pingkang and Xuanyang Wards were adjacent to each other, under the curfew system all of the ward gates were closed during the night, and the two wards were completely separated from each other. This temporary spatial separation would later prove useful for carrying out the scheme:

食頃，有一人控大宛，汗流馳至曰：“姥遇暴疾頗甚，殆不識人，宜速歸。”娃謂姨曰：“方寸亂矣！某騎而前去，當令返乘，便與郎偕來。”生擬隨之，其姨與侍兒偶語，以手揮之，令生止于戶外，曰：“姥且歿矣。當與某議喪事，以濟其急。奈何遽相隨而去？”乃止，共計其凶儀齋祭之用。¹⁵¹

Then, after a brief space of time, appeared a man who was reining in a Ferghana horse. He came rushing in, streaming with sweat. He then announced: “The old lady has had a sudden attack. It is rather serious: she hardly knows one person from another. You ought to hurry back home.” Li Wa said to her aunt: “My heart is unsettled. I am going ahead on horseback. I shall have horses sent back here, and then you can come along with my husband.” The scholar meant to follow her, but the aunt, who was speaking privately with a servant, motioned to him with her hand, stopping him outside the gate. She said: “The old lady is at the point of death! You must help in this crisis by discussing with me the arrangements for her funeral. Why be in such a hurry to leave with her [Li Wa]?” So he stopped, and together they worked out the cost of the funeral rites and sacrifices.¹⁵²

Since Scholar Zheng had entered the trap, Li Wa was the first to withdraw from the dinner. Meanwhile, her “aunt” successfully keeps Zheng at her place. Ideally, Li Wa, Scholar Zheng, and the “aunt” would have to leave the Xuanyang Ward at different times

¹⁵¹ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3987.

¹⁵² The translation is slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge's rendering in his *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 135-37.

to carry out the scheme. Li Wa left early, not only because she wanted to get rid of Zheng as soon as possible and did not want him to know where she is headed, but also because upon hearing the news that her old lady was deadly ill, rushing back home immediately was the most prudent response she should make. However, as Li Wa's lover, Zheng was persuaded to stay longer, for an ulterior reason.

日晚，乘不至。姨言曰：“無復命何也？郎驟往覘之，某當繼至。”生遂往。至舊宅，門扃鑰甚密，以泥緘之。生大駭，詰其隣人。隣人曰：“李本稅此而居，約已周矣，第主自收，姥徙居而且再宿矣。”徵徙何處。曰：“不詳其所。”生將馳赴宣陽，以詰其姨。日已晚矣，計程不能達，乃弛其裝服，質饌而食，賃榻而寢。¹⁵³

It was late, and the horses had not appeared. The aunt said: “No word has come back. Why should that be? Hurry over there to see. I shall come on after you.” So the scholar went. When he reached the entrance of the original house, he found that the locks were fastened tight and had been sealed with clay. He was astonished and inquired with the neighbor, who said: “The Lis lived here as tenants. Now their lease has expired, and the owner has taken possession himself. The old lady has moved away, and she did so two nights ago.” He asked where she had moved to, and the reply was: “I don't know exactly where.” The scholar was going to rush back to Xuanyang in order to question the aunt, but it was already late, and he calculated that he would not be able to cover the distance. So he removed some of his clothes to exchange them for food to eat, and hired a bed to sleep on.¹⁵⁴

In this passage, the phrases “it was late” 日晚 and “it was already late” 日已晚矣 play an important role. As evening drew on, the ward gates were going to be shut, which meant that any communication between the two wards would have to be postponed until the next morning. The “aunt” deliberately kept Zheng with her until just before the curfew so

¹⁵³ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3987.

¹⁵⁴ The translation is slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge's rendering in his *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 137-39.

that he had enough time to arrive at the Pingkang Ward. However, he would be unable to return to the Xuanyang Ward once he had learned that Li Wa was no longer at her family's old residence in Pingkang, but had moved to an unspecified place. Also, as planned in advance, she urged him to leave before her rather than going along with her, not only because she did not want to be interrogated by him on the spot, but also, and most importantly, because she had her own task to finish in the Xuanyang Ward, which she did not want Zheng to learn of.

生悲怒方甚，自昏達旦，目不交睫。質明，乃策蹇而去。既至，連扣其扉，食頃無人應。生大呼數四，有宦者徐出。生遽訪之：“姨氏在乎？”曰：“無之。”生曰：“昨暮在此，何故匿之？”訪其誰氏之第，曰：“此崔尚書宅。昨者有一人稅此院，云遲中表之遠至者，未暮去矣。”¹⁵⁵

The scholar's rage was now intense: from dusk to dawn his eyes did not close once. At daybreak he set off, whipping along his wretched mount. Reaching his destination, he pounded insistently on the gate, but for some while no one responded. He then called out loudly several times, and a caretaker sauntered out. The young man urgently asked him: "Is the aunt at home?" He said: "There is no such person here." The young man said: "She was here yesterday evening. Why are you concealing her?" He then asked whose residence this was. The reply was: "It is Minister Cui's residence. Yesterday a woman rented a courtyard in this house, and claimed to be entertaining a cousin arriving from a distant place. She was gone before nightfall."¹⁵⁶

Only at the last moment did Zheng realize that he had been tricked, but it was already "at daybreak" 質明 the next day and everything was too late, since the "aunt" "was gone before nightfall" 未暮去矣. Within one day, Zheng had traveled back and forth between

¹⁵⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3987.

¹⁵⁶ The translation is slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge's rendering in his *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 139-41.

the two wards and the two residences, was received in one residence and rejected in another, and finally found himself rejected by everyone involved.

To be sure, the crucial development in the relationship between Zheng and Li Wa involves the curfew system. Since the story is not historical fact, rather than saying that Li Wa and her accomplices from the pleasure quarter used the curfew system to carry out her scheme, it is better to say that the story relies on real urban time and space in the construction of its plot. On the one hand, the author chooses to enhance the reliability and readability of the story by making use of the actual ward system. Descriptions of the real urban landscape exploit readers' prior knowledge of the scenery in question. On the other hand, in terms of narrative construction, the curfew system also provides the underlying logic of the plot development. Using this system, the author ably makes use of different place names and the spatial relationships and distances between them to advance the plot. The intention of creating a sense of reality within the story then turns into the awareness of using actual urban design as a basis of plot development.

While the "Story of Li Wa" shows a clear awareness of the functions of ward walls, the "Story of Wushuang" 無雙傳, excerpted below, represents the interaction between the two spaces separated by residential, city, or palace walls: those of what lay inside and what was outside them:

唐王仙客者，建中中朝臣劉震之甥也。初，仙客父亡，與母同歸外氏。震有女曰無雙，小仙客數歲，皆幼稚，戲弄相狎，震之妻常戲呼仙客為王郎子。如是者凡數歲，而震奉孀姊及撫仙客尤至。¹⁵⁷

Wang Xianke of the Tang Dynasty was the nephew of Liu Zhen, a court official in the Jianzhong era (780-783). Previously, after Xianke's father died,

¹⁵⁷ *Taiping guangji*, 486.4002.

he returned to live with his mother in her ancestral home. Zhen had a daughter named Wushuang, who was several years younger than Xianke. As they were both little, they played together very intimately. Zhen's wife often jokingly called Xianke "Son-in-law." Life went on like this for several years, and Zhen served his widowed elder sister while taking care of Xianke quite attentively.

Wushuang and Wang Xianke, the two protagonists of the story, were cousins. When Wang went to live with his uncle Liu Zhen, Wushuang's father, the living spaces for the two children were joined. It was in this shared space that Wang and Wushuang became very intimate and Wushuang's mother even treated Wang as her son-in-law. When everything seemed to imply that the two protagonists would live happily ever after in this space, they were separated by Liu Zhen:

時震為尚書租庸使，門館赫奕，冠蓋填塞。仙客既覲，置於學舍，弟子為伍，舅甥之分，依然如故，但寂然不聞選取之議。又於窗隙間窺見無雙，姿質明艷，若神仙中人。仙客發狂，唯恐姻親之事不諧也。遂鬻囊橐，得錢數百萬，舅氏舅母左右給使，達於廝養，皆厚遺之。又因復設酒饌，中門之內，皆得入之矣。諸表同處，悉敬事之。¹⁵⁸

At that time, Zhen was Minister and Special Supply Commissioner. His guestrooms were glorious, and were crowded with officials. Since Xianke paid his audience, he was placed in a school dormitory room together with Zhen's disciples. The relationship between uncle and nephew remained the same, while people kept silent and the discussion about choosing a date for the marriage was never overheard. [One day,] Xianke peeked through a chink in the window and noticed that Wushuang was beautiful and appeared with the brilliance of one of the immortals. Xianke went crazy, fearing that the marriage would not be approved. He therefore sold his luggage, obtaining for it hundreds of thousands in cash. He gave this money to his uncle and aunt's attendant servants and even their footboys. As he also set up banquets a couple of times [to treat the doorkeepers], he obtained access to the rooms

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

beyond the middle gate. He lived together with his other cousins and treated them respectfully.

As Liu was a very influential court official, he intended to marry Wushuang into a family whose status matched his own, rather than to someone not of noble background like Wang Xianke. Since Wang moved to the school dormitory, the residential walls, which in this context symbolized the family's status, now separated the once intimate cousins into different spaces. While Wang's efforts to end this separation and enter the space where Wushuang lived were advanced with great difficulty, a political event occurred that bought him new opportunities. After all, things happened in the Liu family's residence is only a short prelude to their later life, which was full of twists and turns:

一日，震趨朝，至日初出，忽然走馬入宅，汗流氣促，唯言：“鎖卻大門！鎖卻大門！”一家惶駭，不測其由。良久乃言：“涇原兵士反，姚令言領兵入含元殿，天子出苑北門，百官奔赴行在。我以妻女為念，略歸部署。”疾召仙客，“與我勾當家事，我嫁與爾無雙。”仙客聞命，驚喜拜謝。乃裝金銀羅錦二十馱，謂仙客曰：“汝易衣服，押領此物，出開遠門，覓一深隙店安下。我與汝舅母及無雙，出啟夏門，遶城續至。”易¹⁵⁹

One day, Zhen hurried to the court, but when the sun had just risen, he abruptly galloped into the courtyard of his residence. Dripping sweat and out of breath, he merely said: "Lock the main gate! Lock the main gate!" The entire household was thrown into a panic and no one could guess what his reasons were. Only after a long while did Zhen say: "Soldiers from Jingyuan have revolted. Yao Lingyan has led troops into Hanyuan Palace Hall. The Son of Heaven has departed by way of the north gate of the garden, and the officials all hurried to accompany him. I took thought of my wife and daughter, and so I have returned briefly to make some arrangements." He urgently said to Xianke, "You deal with the family affairs along with me, and I will marry Wushuang to you." When Xianke

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 486.4002-23.

heard this, he bowed and thanked Zhen with surprise and joy. Liu Zhen then loaded up twenty horses with gold, silver, and delicate silks and brocades. He told Xianke: “You go change your clothes, escort these things out the Kaiyuan Gate, and find a secluded inn to settle down. Your aunt, Wushuang, and I will go out the Qixia Gate, come round the city walls, and arrive later.”¹⁶⁰

The day started normally. Liu Zhen went to the court as usual. As a court official, he should enter the Daming Palace by the fifth watch and the fifth point (5:00 a.m.).¹⁶¹ As indicated in the later text, Liu Zhen’s residence was located in the Xinghua Ward 興化坊, ¹⁶² which was five blocks to the south and three blocks to the west of the Jianfu Gate 建福門, one of the south gates of the Daming Palace where officials would wait to attend court. The distance between the east gate of the Xinghua Ward and the Jianfu Gate was 4548.5 steps (approximately 6900 meters) and took about one and a half hours by walking (Fig. 17).¹⁶³ Since the Jingyuan Mutiny 涇原兵變 broke out in the tenth lunar month, and the opening-gate drum would start to sound at the fifth watch and the second point (3:48 a.m.), Liu would have enough time to arrive at the court by horse. After he arrived to find that things had gone wrong and then hurried all the way back home, it should be around six o’clock in the morning, and it was reasonable that “t was reasonable that th 日初出.

¹⁶⁰ Translation revised from Paul Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Presss, 2001), p. 228.

¹⁶¹ Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123 - 1195), *Yong lu* 雍錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2002), p. 171.

¹⁶² Xu Song in his *Tang liangjing chengfang kao* states that Liu Zhen’s residence was in the Xinghua Ward; his evidence for this claim is in the “Story of Wushuang.”

¹⁶³ The numbers are based on *Chōan to Rakuyō*, Chizu.

The Jingyuan Mutiny took place in the fourth year of the Jianzhong 建中 Era (783), when Yao Lingyan 姚令言 (d. 784), the Military Commissioner (*jiedu shi* 節度使) of Jingyuan, and his 5,000 soldiers arrived in Chang'an on their way to fight Li Xilie 李希烈, the rebel Military Commissioner of Huaixi 淮西. The troops mutinied in reaction to the poor treatment they had received, forcing Emperor Dezong to flee the capital. As important, however, as this incident was, the mutiny served in the story only as background, and is not given any detailed description.

Having witnessed the rebels rushing into the palace, Liu Zhen understood that once the capital was out of control, his family and property would be in danger, and so when he rushed back home, his first order was to “lock the main gate” 鑰卻大門. At this urgent moment, he relied first on his own residential gate to protect everyone and everything inside from the threats from outside. The mutiny also caused a turning point in the relationship between the two protagonists. The closed residential gates between Wang and Wushuang were opened, and their space of activity extended from the residence to the entire city. The suspended engagement was finally realized, as the marriage was declared possible and imminent. As it was still daytime and the city gates were all open, the designated task did not seem too challenging. If things remained as they were for just a few more hours, the connected spaces inside and outside the city would almost reveal the connection between Wang and Wushuang. Nonetheless, the mutiny did bring about an unusual result:

仙客依所教，至日落，城外店中待久不至。城門自午後扃鎖，南望目斷。遂乘驄，秉燭遶城，至啟夏門，門亦鎖，守門者不一，持白棓，或立或坐。仙客下馬徐問曰：“城中有何事如此？”又問：“今日有

何人出此？”門者曰：“朱太尉已作天子。午後，有一人重戴，領婦人四五輩，欲出此門，街中人皆識，云是租庸使劉尚書，門司不敢放出，近夜追騎至，時驅向北去矣。”仙客失聲慟哭，卻歸店。¹⁶⁴

Xianke did as Liu directed and waited in the inn outside the city until sunset, but they still didn't come. The city gates had been locked since noon, and [Xianke] gazed toward the south without seeing anyone. He then rode a horse of bluish white color and went around the city walls, with candles in his hand, and arrived at the Qixia Gate. This gate too was locked. There were all kinds of gatekeepers grasping clubs, some standing and some sitting. Xianke got off his horse and asked slowly: "What has happened in the city that causes you to be like this?" He also asked: "Who has come out this gate today?" The gatekeepers said: "The Defender-in-Chief Zhu has become the Son of Heaven. In the afternoon, there was a person wearing a head kerchief and a hat leading four or five women and trying to get through this gate. People in the street all recognized him and said that he was Minister Liu, the Special Supply Commissioner. The gate officer dared not let him out. Towards nightfall, the pursuing horsemen arrived, and now they have taken them and run towards the north." Xianke broke into muffled sobs, stepped back, and returned to the inn.¹⁶⁵

Contrary to Wang's expectation, something had gone wrong. After he had exited the city, the city gates were closed and his uncle's family was being detained in the city. The untimely shutting of the city gates indicated that the army had already taken control of the capital. Since the Defender-in-Chief Zhu has become the Son of Heaven,¹⁶⁶ and Liu Zhen was a high official in the former regime, it is not surprising that he and his family were under close supervision and were not allowed to exit the capital. The distance between the west gate of the Xinghua Ward and the Kaiyuan Gate was 4362.5 steps

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 486.4003.

¹⁶⁵ Translation revised from Paul Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies*, p. 229.

¹⁶⁶ The Defender-in-Chief, Zhu 朱太尉, is here referring to Zhu Ci 朱泚 (742-784), a general from Youzhou 幽州, who had been installed by the rebel army as the emperor.

(roughly 6600 meters) and the distance between the east gate of the Xinghua Ward and the Qixia Gate was 3904 steps (roughly 5900 meters) (Fig. 17).¹⁶⁷ Although Wang Xianke's travel distance was shorter, since Liu Zhen and his family set off later,¹⁶⁸ when Xianke managed to exit the city before the gate was closed, they failed to get out in time.

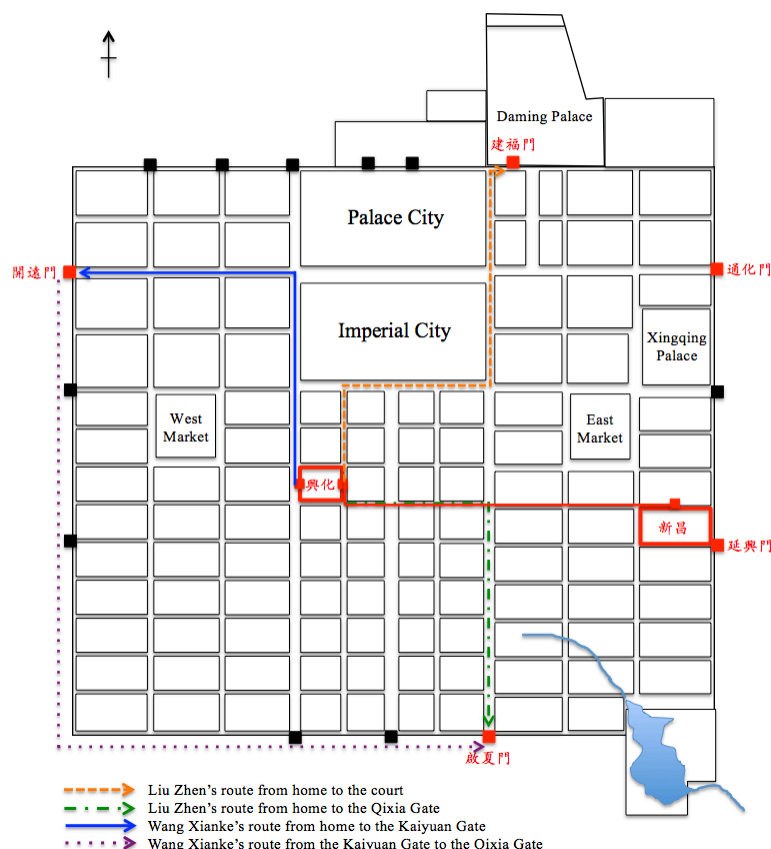


Figure 17. Liu Zhen and Wang Xianke's routes from home to different city gates, the Yanxing and Tonghua Gates, and the Xinchang and Xinghua Wards as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

¹⁶⁷ Numbers based on *Chōan to Rakuyō*, Chizu.

¹⁶⁸ In 1970s, a large number of treasures were excavated from the Hejiacun 何家村 hoard in Xi'an. Some scholars believe that these treasures should have been buried by Liu during the Jingyuan Mutiny in 783 before he left home. This was also the reason why he was late in meeting Wang Xianke. See, for example, Qi Dongfang, "Hejiacun yibao de maicang didian he niandai" 何家村遺寶的埋藏地點和年代, in *Kaogu yu wenwu* no. 2 (2003), pp. 70-74.

Wang could not enter the city and Wushuang could not exit. Their reunion seemed to be close at hand, yet they were separated again. This time it was the city walls rather than residential walls that separated them. The contrast between the inner and outer spaces of the residence was transformed into a tension between the inner and outer spaces of the capital. Although Wang could use his money and friendships with servants to penetrate the space inside the residential gates, now he had no way to cross this giant barrier between them, and so could only wait. This time, he did not wait for long:

三更向盡，城門忽開，見火炬如晝，兵士皆持兵挺刃，傳呼斬斫，使出城，搜城外朝官。仙客捨輜騎驚走，歸襄陽。¹⁶⁹

Toward midnight, the city gate burst open. The torches seemed to him to make things as bright as day. Soldiers holding weapons and lifting swords were yelling and fighting their way out, searching for court officials who had fled the city. Xianke abandoned the horse carriage with his property and escaped in terror, hoping to reach Xiangyang.

The gates were illegally opened at midnight. Even though there was now a passage connecting the inside and the outside, it was too dangerous, at this extremely chaotic moment, to enter the city. Wang Xianke gave up his plan with great fright and escapes. He did not linger, but went all the way to Xiangyang, which might have been the native place of his paternal family. There, his endeavor to reunite with Wushuang was suspended for three years:

¹⁶⁹ *Taiping guangji*, 486.4003.

村居三年，後知剋復，京師重整，海內無事。乃入京，訪舅氏消息。至新昌南街，立馬彷徨之際，忽有一人馬前拜，熟視之，乃舊使蒼頭塞鴻也。鴻本王家生，其舅常使得力，遂留之。握手垂涕，仙客謂鴻曰：“阿舅舅母安否？”鴻云：“並在興化宅。”仙客喜極云：“我便過街去。”鴻曰：“某已得從良，客戶有一小宅子，販繒為業。今日已夜，郎君且就客戶一宿，來早同去，未晚。”遂引至所居，飲饌甚備。至昏黑，乃聞報曰尚書受偽命官，與夫人皆處極刑，無雙已入掖庭矣。仙客哀冤號絕，感動隣里。¹⁷⁰

After living in the country for three years, [Xianke] learned that the regime had been restored. The capital was under reconstruction and there were no more disturbances within the nation. Only then did he go into the capital to inquire into the news of his uncle's family. He arrived at the street to the south of the Xinchang Ward. While he was dawdling and hesitating atop his horse, a man suddenly bowed before it. Through careful observation, he learned that the man was his old servant Sai Hong. Hong had originally been a servant of the Wangs. Since his uncle had often employed Hong and found him capable, he had him stay. Xianke and Sai Hong held their hands and wept. Xianke asked Hong: "How are Uncle and Aunt?" Hong said: "They are both at home in the Xinghua Ward." Xianke was extremely delighted and said: "I will cross the streets now." Hong said: "I have redeemed myself and become a free man. I have a temporary residence and I live by selling silk. Now it is already evening. Please just go to my temporary residence and stay for a night. It will not be late when we go together tomorrow morning." He thus led Xianke to his place, where food and drink were fully prepared. When it became dark, they heard the report that since the Minister (here referring to Liu Zhen) had taken up a post in the illegal government, he and his wife had been sentenced to the death penalty, and Wushuang had been taken to Yeting Palace (site of the imperial harem). Xianke cried sorrowfully about the grievances and wailed desperately, moving his neighbors.

Not a single word had been spoken on the subject of the Jingyuan Mutiny. Here the time of the event is three years, but the time of the story is zero. The ellipsis is well suited here, since the only thing really mattered to Xianke was the fact that the "regime had

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

been restored” 剋復, for he could now safely enter the city. This was the very first thing he set out to do upon hearing the news. Yet his eagerness for the reunion, was, however, discouraged by the upcoming curfew. Since Xiangyang lay to the southeast of Chang’an, Wang should have entered the capital through the Yanxing Gate 延興門, the southernmost gate in the east city wall. the Xinchang Ward 新昌坊, where he met Sai Hong, was right next to the gate. He had to cross five blocks to arrive at the Xinghua Ward, where his uncle’s family lived (Fig. 17). The distance between the north gate of Xinchang and the east gate of Xinghua was about 5800 meters,¹⁷¹ so, as it was already evening, it was impossible for Xianke to arrive at his destination before the ward gates were closed. This was why he agreed to go to Sai Hong’s place, which was nearby though this had not been specified, for the night.

The reunion that Xianke had yearned for for three years was now within his grasp, but as he also understood how the ward system operated, he had to postpone the reunion until the next morning. The bad news did not wait until the next morning but came “at dark” 昏黑 to announce itself. If not for the curfew, he would at least have seen Wushuang one more time before any decree were issued. But equally, if not for the curfew, he would have remained with his uncle’s family and, as one of their relatives, would not have escaped imperial punishment. In any case, he and Wushuang both remained alive but separated, this time by palace walls, a barrier that was even more difficult to cross.

¹⁷¹ This number is based on *Chōan to Rakuyō*, Chizu.

At this point the story reaches a deadlock: Wang Xianke had no way to get into the harem, while as the daughter of a condemned official and currently one of the palace ladies, Wushuang apparently could not be released from the palace. In a manner that succeeds in pushing the plot forward, the story then undergoes a spatial shift. Believing that he had no chance of seeing Wushuang again in the tightly controlled capital, Wang Xianke left Chang'an and took up an appointment as the Governor of Fuping County 富平縣尹, managing the affairs of the Changle Postal Station 長樂驛. Fuping County was located 150 *li* to the northeast of Chang'an, and was where Emperors Zhongzong and Daizong 代宗 (Li Yu 李豫, r. 762-779) were buried. The Changle Postal Station was located seven *li* to the east of the Tonghua Gate 通化門, the northernmost gate in Chang'an's east wall (Fig. 17). It was also the first post along the Chang'an-Luoyang road, as well as at the entrance to the capital.¹⁷² Given the social and political importance of Fuping and Changle, it is not so surprising that they played a role in furthering the plot development.

累月，忽報有中使押領內家三十人往園陵，以備灑掃，宿長樂驛。……仙客謂塞鴻曰：“我聞宮嬪選在掖庭，多是衣冠子女，我恐無雙在焉。汝為我一窺，可乎？”鴻曰：“宮嬪數千，豈便及無雙？”仙客曰：“汝但去，人事亦未可定。”……宮人悉在簾下，不可得見之，但夜語喧譁而已。至夜深羣動皆息，塞鴻滌器搆火，不敢輒寐。忽聞簾下語曰：“塞鴻！塞鴻！”汝爭得知我在此耶？郎健否？”言訖嗚咽。¹⁷³

¹⁷² Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望 (1916-1996), *Tangdai jiaotong tukao* Vol. I 唐代交通圖考 卷一 (Taipei: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo, 1985), p. 4. See also the discussion of the Changle Postal Station in Wang Jing 王靜, “Chengmen yu dushi: Yi Chang'an Tonghua Men wei zhu” 城門與都市: 以長安通化門為主, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 15 (2009), pp. 41-48.

¹⁷³ *Taiping guangji*, 486.4003.

After several months, there suddenly came a report that the eunuchs would escort thirty palace girls to the mausoleums for cleaning and they would spend their night at the Changle Postal Station....Xianke said to Sai Hong, "I heard that most of the palace girls selected for Yeting Palace are daughters from the families of officials. I'm afraid that Wushuang is among them. You go and take a look for me, okay?" Hong said, "There are thousands of palace girls. How is it possible that Wushuang happens to be among them?" Xianke said, "You just go. Human affairs are hard to say."... All of the palace ladies were behind a curtain and could not be seen. There was only the noise of talking throughout the night. When the night deepened and everyone ceased their activities, Sai Hong was washing utensils and building a fire; he dared not sleep even for a moment. Suddenly he heard someone calling him from behind the curtain: "Sai Hong! Sai Hong! How do you know that I am here? Is the gentleman in good condition?" After saying this, she sobbed.

When the characters were away from the closely supervised capital and the strictly organized ward system, the functioning of walls and gates as apparatuses of separation and control disappeared. Nighttime provided a safe environment for people to communicate, rather than being just a time of curfew when all activities outside the ward were forbidden. Xianke and Wushuang were thus able to seize an opportunity that was absolutely impossible in the city. Thanks to Sai Hong's arrangement, the two protagonists finally met. And when Xianke learned that the carriages of the palace girls were going to pass the Bridge over the Wei River 渭橋, he found a pretext to be appointed to supervise the maintenance of the bridge. After she and Xianke had briefly seen each other, Wushuang had to return to the harem and Xianke to the Changle Postal Station. The story thus reaches another impasse, but in the letter that Wushuang had left with Sai Hong, Xianke saw little hope:

花牋五幅，皆無雙真迹，詞理哀切，敘述周盡。仙客覽之，茹恨涕下，自此永訣矣。其書後云：“常見敕使說，富平縣古押衙，人間有心人。今能求之否？”仙客遂申府，請解驛務，歸本官，遂尋訪古押衙。¹⁷⁴

The letter was written on five pages of flowered notepaper and all were in Wushuang's hand. In clear but aggrieved words, she told her story in detail. As Xianke read it, he felt resentful and he cried at the thought that from now on they would be parted forever. But at the end of the letter she said, "I often heard my father, the late censor, mention a Lackey Gu from Fuping County who is a man of true feeling. Now could you seek him for help?" Xianke therefore reported to his supervisor, requesting to be permitted to resign from his job at the post and return to his original position. He then started to search for Lackey Gu.

Wushuang and Xianke both now regarded Gu as representing their only hope for reunion. After finding Gu, Xianke continually gave him all kinds of valuable presents, and did so for an entire year without mentioning his business even once. Gu was deeply moved and promised to repay Xianke. After hearing his story, "Gu stared up at the sky and tapped his head a few times, saying, "This task is not easy at all, but I'll give it a try for your sake. You should not expect success in one day"" 古生仰天，以手拍腦數四曰：“此事大不易，然與郎君試求，不可朝夕便望。”¹⁷⁵

As one can imagine, it was almost out of the question to “steal” a palace lady from the imperial harem. According to the rules, palace ladies usually were unable to leave the palace during their lives. Therefore, Gu used a plan to arrange for Wushuang to be carried out of the palace, as he explained to Xianke later:

¹⁷⁴ *Taiping guangji*, 486.4004.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

比聞茅山道士有藥術。其藥服之者立死。三日卻活。某使人專求得一丸。昨令採蘋假作中使。以無雙逆黨。賜此藥令自盡。至陵下。託以親故。百縑贖其尸。¹⁷⁶

I once heard that a Taoist on Mount Mao has a special medicine. Whoever takes his medicine will immediately die, but will come to life after three days. I sent some people to obtain for me one pill. Yesterday, I asked Caiping to disguise herself as a eunuch and give Wushuang the medicine, telling her that she had been associated with the rebel party and ordering her to commit suicide. When [her body] was being carried to the mausoleum, I claimed to be her relative and obtained the body with a hundred bolts of silk.

The whole process was unconventional and astonishing, yet Gu managed to finish it within two days, so that Wushuang could remain “dead” and the secret undiscovered. Horrifyingly, however, in order to maintain secrecy, Gu killed almost everyone involved in the action and finally committed suicide. Up to this point, Gu had been repaying Xianke’s debt, as he had promised, by breaking through the seemingly impassible barriers between the two protagonists. After being separated by residential walls that stood for the maintenance of family status, city walls that represented the political situation, and palace walls that symbolized the imperial power, Xianke and Wushuang were finally reunited and married.

Looking at the story’s plot development, one finds two distinctive features. First, every time that Xianke and Wushuang were on the verge of getting married, an interruptive event occurs that separates them spatially. For example, when Xianke’s aunt gave her consent to the marriage, his uncle tried to prevent it by sending Xianke away from home to the school dorm. When Liu Zhen agreed to marry Wushuang to Xianke, the rebel army from Jingyuan took control of the capital and shut the city gates, leaving one

¹⁷⁶ *Taiping guangji*, 486.4005.

of the lovers inside the city and the other outside. When the rebels were defeated and Xianke was on his way to be reunited with his uncle's family, the curfew system forced him to postpone his plan and stay in another ward. We as readers see that, the elementary series of the story, with Wang Xianke and Wushuang falling in love with each other and getting married smoothly, is gradually elaborated into a complex series, still following the skeleton of the former, but with all these twists and hinderances.

Secondly, whenever an impasse is reached in the story, a spatial change occurs, bringing in a valuable opportunity for the two protagonists. For instance, when the marriage was suspended and the protagonists separated, the Jingyuan Mutiny broke out and their space of activity was extended from the residence to the city. After Wushuang was taken into the harem, Xianke left the capital, took up a new post in Fuping, a county northeast of Chang'an, and seized the chance to see Wushuang at the Changle Postal Station. While the spatial separations hinder the plot development, the spatial shifts break the deadlock and finally solve the problem. Also, the absence of the ward system beyond the capital enable the author to develop certain plot twists and push the plot in an even more unexpected direction.

In rendering the spatial shifts more meaningful and end the spatial separation, Lackey Gu played a crucial role. The palace walls kept Xianke outside, but could not prevent Gu from sending people in and taking people out. He successfully crossed the boundary between the two protagonists, leading the story to a happy ending.

If Lackey Gu was using his wisdom and courage to "spiritually" cross the boundary, there are many other Tang stories in which capable people physically stepped across a boundary. For example, in "Liushi zhuan" 柳氏傳, when Ms. Liu was snatched away by

the border general Shazha Li 沙吒利 and taken by him to his mansion, the heroic knight Xu Jun 許俊 “broke through the pass and pushed the doors open” 犯關排闥, rushing into Shazha Li’s residence and then returning Liu to her lover Han Hong 韓翃.¹⁷⁷ In “Huo Xiaoyu zhuan” 霍小玉傳, when the unfaithful Li Yi 李益 tried to avoid the place where Xiaoyu, the former lover whom he had abandoned, the gallant man in a yellow jacket “hurriedly ordered a few servants to take hold of him and force him to go on. Walking quickly, they pushed Li into the carriage gate; [the gallant] at once had it locked, and announced, ‘Li the Tenth has arrived!’” 遽命奴僕數人, 抱持而進, 疾走推入車門, 便令鎖卻, 報云: “李十郎至也!”¹⁷⁸ In “Kunlun nu” 崑崙奴, in order to create an opportunity for Scholar Cui 崔生 and the singing girl Hongxiao 紅綃 to meet each other, the Kunlun slave Mole 磨勒 “at the third watch on that night dressed the scholar in an azure costume, and then, with Cui on his back, he jumped over ten walls until he reached the third compound, in the singing girl’s courtyard” 是夜三更, 與生衣青衣, 遂負而踰十重垣, 乃入歌妓院內, 止第三門. Before the next morning, without waking any guards, he “carried the scholar and the singing girl on his back and jumped over more than ten high walls” 負生與姬, 而飛出峻垣十餘重.¹⁷⁹ In each of the above stories, when the male and female protagonists were separated into different spaces, a warmhearted and heroic man voluntarily stepped across the boundary between them,

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 485.3996.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 487.4010. The translation is slightly revised from Zhenjun Zhang’s rendering. See William H. Nienhauser, ed., *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010), p. 254.

¹⁷⁹ *Taiping guangji*, 194.1453.

either by breaking through the gates or leaping over the walls, and thus created an opportunity for the couple to meet each other, meaning also that the momentum of the story can continue and usually move in a positive direction.

The story “Chezhong nūzi” 車中女子, on the other hand, depicts a female knight-errant who resembles a Kunlun slave in terms of her action of stepping over walls, which she did not to aid lovers in coming together, but to uphold justice. In the story, a scholar of Wu Prefecture entered Chang’an for the *mingjing* 明經 (canonical expert) examination and met two young men while strolling in the streets. He joined them for a party in the East Market, where he met a beautiful woman in a carriage who had also come for the party. At the party, he was deeply amazed by the imposing martial skills of all the guests. However, he then unexpectedly became involved in a burglary carried out by the group when he lent them his horse:

至明日，聞宮苑中失物，掩捕失賊，唯收得馬，是將馱物者。驗問馬主，遂收此人，入內侍省勘問。驅入小門，吏自後推之，倒落深坑數丈。……深夜，此人忿甚，悲惋何訴。仰望，忽見一物如鳥飛下，覺至身邊，乃人也。以手撫生，謂曰：“計甚驚怕，然某在無慮也。”聽其聲，則向所遇女子也。云：“共君出矣。”以絹重繫此人胸臍訖，絹一頭繫女人身，女人聳身騰上，飛出宮城，去門數十里乃下。¹⁸⁰

On the next day, people heard that a burglary had occurred in the palace. The burglars escaped arrest, but their horse, which was used to carry the stolen goods, was confiscated. After a search for the horse owner, this man was caught and sent to the Palace Domestic Service for interrogation. Driven by an officer through a small gate, the man pushed him from behind and he fell into a pit dozens of feet deep... That night, this man felt extremely resentful, and did not know where to pour out his misery and sorrow. Looking up, he suddenly saw something flying down towards him, just like a bird. When he

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 193.1540-41.

was aware that it reached him, he discovered that it was a person. [This person] touched the scholar and told him, “I guess you are very scared, but since I am here, you don’t need to worry.” He told from the person’s voice that this was in fact the woman he met earlier. She said, “Let’s go out together.” She tied [one end of a piece of rope] tightly to his chest and the other end to her own body. She then jumped up, ascended into the sky, flying away from the Palace City. She did not come down until they were dozens of *li* beyond the palace gates.

The author did not provide any information about the woman other than that she was beautiful and came on the scene in a carriage. The function of the carriage, with the enclosed space inside and a blocked view from outside, was partly to add to the mystery to her personal image. At the same time, her involvement in the underground burglary explained her mysterious behaviors. While other people were showing off their martial art skills, she withdrew from the party. However, she finally demonstrated her excellence when she went alone to the palace to try to save the scholar. It seems that she was very familiar with the palace’s interior design, as when the scholar was arrested, she was able to figure out where he must be. And when the scholar was pushed into a pit deep inside the palace—an extremely isolated space—she successfully broke through the layers of barriers to reach him. The walls and gates of the city palace served no practical function for her at all, as she could easily fly over them to get in or out. During the rescue, she managed to keep her own activity within a space above that of the palace, until she was dozens of *li* beyond the palace gates. The spatial barriers were not able to arrest her movements.

Notably, no matter whether it is Lackey Gu, Xu Jun, the gallant in the yellow jacket, or the woman in the carriage, whoever crosses a boundary serves the crucial function in these stories and are all portrayed in a very positive light, even if their original

professions are not considered honorable. In other words, crossing the boundary is an act not always considered dangerous, lawless, or contemptible, but the heroic deeds make the adventures during curfew time more thrilling and attractive. The admiration to such cross-boundary actions, in fact, represents Tang Dynasty people's reluctantly-acquiescent attitude toward the ward system. In order to not violate the rules, people often had to change their plans, abandon unfinished tasks, or at least spend time waiting at the ward or city gates. Admittedly, part of what is happening here is due to the drawbacks of the urban grid structure. Beginning in the high Tang period, the ward system began to appear as an obstacle to commercial development, nighttime entertainment, and interpersonal communication. Consequently, the system gradually collapsed and was eventually replaced in the Song Dynasty by an open-style urban plan.¹⁸¹

As various historians have shown, since Emperor Gaozong's time, the two markets in Chang'an, the East Market and the West Market, were so flourishing that the commercial stores began to extend themselves into the neighboring wards and even onto the main streets. The "overflowing" stores made people's lives more convenient but were also very difficult to control. In the move for profit, some night markets emerged that were "boisterous day and night and forever brightly lit" 晝夜喧呼，燈火不絕。¹⁸² Furthermore, although it was prescribed that only officials above the third-level rank had the right to open their residential gates onto the street, since the late eighth century, there

¹⁸¹ See the discussions in Liu Shufen, "Zhonggu ducheng fangzhi de bengjie" 中古都城坊制的崩解, in her *Liuchao de chengshi yu shehui*, pp. 441-71; and Cheng Yinong 成一農, "Zhongshiji chengshi geming de zai sikao" 中世紀城市革命的再思考, in his *Gudai chengshi xingtai yanjiu fangfa xintan* 古代城市形態研究方法新探 (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 66-93.

¹⁸² *Chang'an zhi* in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 8.114a.

was a pervasive phenomenon whereby, “in the wards, markets, streets, and serpentine lanes, people occupied the streets and broke down the walls, as well as building their residences with eaves connected with each other” 諸坊市街曲，有侵街打牆，接簷造舍等。¹⁸³ Some people “opened their gates before the sound of the drums, or did not close the gates even when it was already the dead of night” 或鼓未動即先開，或夜已深猶未。¹⁸⁴ In the face of these problems, “the manpower of the street officers and patrolmen had difficulty taking care of them all” 街司巡檢，人力難周。¹⁸⁵ In the opinion of some scholars, when the walls were broken through, even though the grid pattern still remained, the so-called ward system from then on actually existed in name only.¹⁸⁶

It is difficult to speculate on the intentions of authors of Tang tales in including the boundary-crossing plots in their stories, but these plots confirm the occasional violations of the curfew regulations during the Tang and people's tolerance towards it. The tolerance, and sometimes even support, implies the wish, shared by many Chang'an residents, to break with the current grid structure for a more open and free urban plan.

¹⁸³ *Tang huiyao*, 86:1576.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ For example, see Qi Dongfang, “Wei Jin Sui Tang chengshi lifang zhidu: Kaogu xue de yinzheng,” pp. 69-73.

The Ward System and the Narrative Construction of Tang Supernatural Stories

Despite complaints about the restrictions of the ward system, it remained the system of urban management in use in the Tang Dynasty capitals. When the closing gate drums stopped sounding, Chang'an became a different city. As depicted in many Tang tales, when the curfew started, people would stop their activities in the streets and return to their residential wards. There, while their world gradually turned quiet, a parallel one would awaken. In many stories, a supernatural world co-existed with the human world and frequently interacted with it. One cannot fully appreciate Tang Dynasty urban life without understanding this supernatural world and its uses. Compared to "Li Wa zhuan" and "Wushuang zhuan," which are written in a relatively realistic style, these stories make a more deliberate use of the ward and street-drum systems.

In these tales, the activities of supernatural creatures were partly a response to the curfew system. For example, in *Li Huang*, Liang's response to the curfew snake spirit was based upon the curfew system. Li and the spirit met each other in the East Market, where she intended to purchase from him some silk:

婢輩遂傳言云：“且貸錢買之，請隨到莊嚴寺左側宅中，相還不負。”李子悅，時已晚，遂逐犢車而行。礙夜方至所止，犢車入中門，白衣姝一人下車，侍者以帷擁之而入。¹⁸⁷

The maids then passed on the message, saying: "We will buy it, but owe you the money. Please follow us to the residence to the left of the Zhuangyan Temple, and we will pay you and clear off our debt." Master Li was delighted. The time was already late, so he walked with them, following their oxcart. It was late evening when they arrived where she lived. When the oxcart entered

¹⁸⁷ *Taiping guangji*, 458.3750.

the central gate, the white-gowned beauty stepped off the cart by herself, while her attendants, surrounding her with a curtain, accompanied her inside the courtyard.

When Li decided to follow the woman to her residence, “the time was already late” 時已晚. Zhuangyan Temple 莊嚴寺, next to which the lady resided, was located in the northeast quadrant of the Yongyang Ward 永陽坊. Yongyang was located in the southwest corner of the city and was the furthest ward from the East Market (Fig. 18). The distance between ward and market was 7044.5 steps (roughly 10700 meters) and took about two and a half hours to traverse on foot.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, “it was late evening when they arrived where she lived” 礙夜方至所止, and the ward gates must have been closed by then. The timing was just right for the purpose: if they left the East Market too early, Li Huang might not have enough time to go back; but if too late, they might fail to reach their destination before the start of the curfew. Following the woman’s invitation, Li Huang happily stayed at her place, but as soon as he exited her house, he paid the price.

¹⁸⁸ The numbers are based on those in *Chōan to Rakuyō. Chizu*.

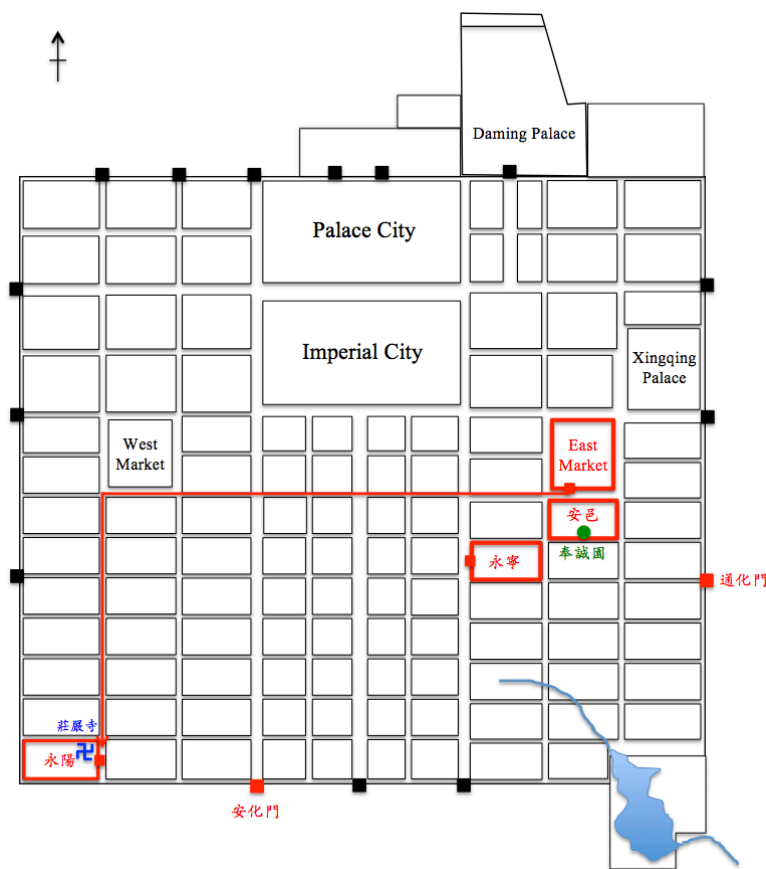


Figure 18. The route from the East Market to the Zhuangyan Temple in the Yongyang Ward, the Fengcheng Garden in the Anyi Ward, the Yongning Ward, and the Tonghua and Anhua Gates as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

僕人覺李子有腥臊氣異常，遂歸宅，問何處許日不見，以他語對。……李已漸覺恍惚，祇對失次，謂妻曰：“吾不起矣。”口雖語，但覺被底身漸消盡，揭被而視，空注水而已，唯有頭存。家大驚懼，呼從出之僕考之，具言其事。及去尋舊宅所，乃空園，有一皂莢樹。……問彼處人云：“往往有巨白蛇在樹下，便無別物。”¹⁸⁹

The servant found Master Li to have an extraordinarily fishy and gamy odor. Then they returned home. [The servant] asked where he had been and why was he missing in recent days, and Li evaded the question by changing the subject...Li already felt more and more stupefied and talked incoherently. He told his wife, “I cannot get up.” While speaking, he felt his body gradually dissolving under the quilt thrown over him. [Some people] raised the quilt and

¹⁸⁹ *Taiping guangji*, 458.3751-52.

saw that his body had become a shell with nothing but water in it; his head alone remained. His family was thrown into a great panic, and called the servant, who went out together with Li and questioned him. [The servant] recounted everything in detail. When they went to look for the original residence, it turned out to be an empty garden with a honey locust in it...They asked the people there about it, and they said: “There were often great white snakes at the bottom of the tree. There was nothing other than that.”

The story line is very straightforward: the young scholar Li Huang was bewitched by the snake spirit and died right after returning home. The snake spirit seduced him in the crowded East Market, but in order to develop further her relationship with Li, she needed a spatial switch to avoid the public. She relied on the ward system to trick Li Huang into coming to the remote Yongyang Ward, which was relatively isolated from the city’s bustling space, in order to secretly draw Li into her trap. Although Chang’an was an international metropolitan center with a population approaching one million, the majority of its people were crowded into the city’s northern half. The southern wards were meagerly populated due to their distance from the Imperial City. As *Chang’an zhi* indicates, “In the region south of the sixth latitudinal street to the south of the Zhuque Gate, there were almost no residents latitudin 自朱雀門南第六橫街以南，率無居人第宅.”¹⁹⁰ When Li Huang’s family returned to see the place in which he stayed, they saw nothing but an empty garden with a honey locust tree. The scene depicted here accords with what was known about the actual situation in the Yongyang Ward.

In another story attached to this one, the main character Li Guan 李琯 shared a similar experience with Li Huang:

¹⁹⁰ *Chang’an zhi*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:7.110b.

自永寧里出遊，及安化門外，乃遇一車子。……從二女奴，皆乘白馬，衣服皆素，而姿容婉媚。琯貴家子，不知檢束，即隨之。將暮焉，二女奴曰：“郎君貴人，所見莫非麗質。某皆賤質，又羸陋，不敢當公子厚意。然車中幸有姝麗，誠可留意也。”……琯既隨之，聞其異香盈路。日暮，及奉誠園。¹⁹¹

He set off for a stroll starting from the Yongning Ward. When he exited the Anhua Gate, he saw a carriage.... [The carriage] was followed by two serving maids, both of whom rode white horses, wore plain-colored clothes, and had a pretty and graceful appearance. Guan was from a noble family and never restrained himself, so he followed them right away. As dusk started to fall, the two maids said: “You, sir, are a nobleman. The people you have seen are all beautiful. We are both humble and gruff, so we dare not accept your generous affection. Yet, fortunately, in the carriage we have a very beautiful lady, who really deserves your attention.”...Guan followed them, and smelt an unusual fragrance everywhere in the road. Upon dusk, they arrived at the Fengcheng Park.

Again, the lady came on the scene in a carriage, which could conceal beings such as snake spirits, who could not have arrived by other means—neither by foot nor on horseback. The enclosed space in the carriage also enhanced her mystery and raised the readers’ curiosity. And again, the serving maids aided in the temptation. The timing in Li Huang’s story was also perfect. When “dusk started to fall” 將暮焉, the maids suggested to Li Guan that he met their mistress; and when they arrived at their destination, it was “almost dusk” 日暮. As point out later, they lived in a residence to the east of the Fengcheng Park 奉誠園, which was located in the central-south part of the Anyi Ward 安邑坊. Indeed, Yongning was joined to Anyi at its southwest corner, but the Anhua Gate was quite far to the southwest. Thus, Xu Song deems that the author has mistaken the

¹⁹¹ *Taiping guangji*, 458.3752.

Tonghua Gate, which was closer to the two wards, for the Anhua Gate (Fig. 18).¹⁹² But as Yang Weigang argues, precisely because of this detour, the plot develops more naturally, since Li Huang and the young lady needed time to nurture their intimacy.¹⁹³ Also, as in the story of Li Huang, if the trip was from the Tonghua Gate to the Anyi Ward, the short distance would enable Li Guan to leave the residence before curfew, when he would still be able to extricate himself.

The Fengcheng Park as setting was not randomly chosen, either. Originally the residence of General Ma Sui 馬燧 (726-795), it was donated by his son for use as the Fengcheng Park.¹⁹⁴ The park soon turned into a wasteland and was often mentioned as a metaphor for the interchangeability between prosperity and decline. For example, the mid-Tang poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) writes:

如何奉一身， How to cultivate oneself,
 直欲保千年。 So as to preserve [your reputation] up to a thousand years?
 不見馬家宅， Don't you see the Ma family's residence,
 今作奉誠園。¹⁹⁵ Which has now become the Fengcheng Park?

Baikenich has now become the 元稹 (779-831) said, become the Fengcheng the Fengcheng Park, which was once crowded with covered carriages” 草沒奉誠園，軒車

¹⁹² Xu Song, *Tang liangjing chengfang kao*, 3.76.

¹⁹³ Yang Weigang, “Tangdai dushi xiaoshuo xushi de shijian yu kongjian,” in *Tang yanjiu* no. 15 (2009), p. 131.

¹⁹⁴ *Chang'an zhi*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:8.119a.

¹⁹⁵ See “Qinzhong yin shishou, shang zhai” 秦中吟十首，傷宅, in Zhu Jincheng 朱金城, annot., *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao* 白居易集箋校 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1988), p. 86.

昔曾滿。¹⁹⁶ One can imagine that it was because the place was very desolate at night that it was commonly featured in ghost stories and bore a convenient narrative function by itself when authors needed to present a ghostly environment more effectively. But in the story, Li Guan had not found anything abnormal, and he enjoyed himself to the fullest:

琯乃下馬，入座於廳中，但聞名香入鼻，似非人世所有。琯遂令人馬入安邑里寄宿。黃昏後，方見一女子，素衣，年十六七，姿艷若神仙。¹⁹⁷

Guan therefore got off the horse and walked in and sat in the hall room. He smelled some precious fragrances, which were unlike anything in the human world. Guan then had his servants and horse lodge in the Anyi Ward. Only after nightfall did he see a young lady in a plain-colored gown who was sixteen or seventeen years old and dazzlingly beautiful, like a goddess or an immortal.

As it was already seventeen years o 黃昏後, the ward gates were closed. By sending his servants to lodge in a different place in the Anyi Ward, Li Guan protected his ability to enjoy a private space with the lady, but at the same time further isolated himself from the outside world. It was within this enclosed inner space that he recognized her seemingly immortal beauty and smelled an unusual fragrance, which his servants would later call unbearably foul.

及出，已見人馬在門外，遂別而歸。纔及家，便覺腦疼，斯須益甚。至辰巳間，腦裂而卒。其家詢問奴僕，昨夜所歷之處。從者具述其事，云：“郎君頗聞異香，某輩所聞，但蛇臊不可近。”舉家冤駭，遽命僕人，於

¹⁹⁶ See “Qian xing” II 遣興二, in Zhou Xianglu 周相錄, annot., *Yuan Zhen ji jiaozhu* 元稹集校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2011), 3.86.

¹⁹⁷ *Taiping guangji*, 458.3752.

昨夜所止之處覆驗之。但見枯槐樹中，有大蛇蟠屈之跡。乃伐其樹，發掘，已失大蛇，但有小蛇數條，盡白。皆殺之而歸。¹⁹⁸

When he came out, he saw that his servants and horse were already [waiting] outside the gate, so he bade farewell [to the lady] and returned home. As soon as he reached home, he felt a headache, which became more and more severe. During the *chen* and *si* hours [roughly 7:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.], his head split open and he died. His family questioned the servant about where he had spent the night. The man who had followed him out recounted everything in detail, saying: “The gentleman smelled an unusual fragrance, but what we smelled was just the foul smell of snakes that kept people away.” The entire family thought this unjust and felt terrified, and immediately ordered its servants to double-check the place where Li had slept the previous night. They saw only a dead locust tree in which there were traces of a great coiling snake, so they cut down the tree and dug [in the soil]. The great snake was already gone, except for several small snakes that were all white. [The servants] killed them all and returned.

Just like Li Huang, Li Guan died the same day that he returned home. Upon questioning, his servants recalled their suspicion. That night, they stayed in a different space from their master, whose sensory world was also opposite of theirs. Unlike the members of Li Huang’s family, who failed to see the snakes, Li Guan’s family, although it missed the larger ones, found several small ones, and “killed them all” 皆殺之. These snakes were all white, which explained why the young lady and her maids were all wearing plain-colored clothes.

In the more famous tale, which explains 任氏傳 (Story of Ms. Ren), one finds another animal spirit in white clothes, though this one was neither evil nor harmful. In the story, the curfew system had an even greater impact on the relationship between the male protagonist Scholar Zheng and the female protagonist, the fox spirit Ms. Ren:

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

唐天寶九年夏六月，崑與鄭子偕行於長安陌中，將會飲於新昌里。至宣平之南，鄭子辭有故，請問去，繼至飲所。崑乘白馬而東，鄭子乘驢而南，入昇平之北門，偶值三婦人行於道中，中有白衣者，容色姝麗。…同行者更相眩誘，稍已狎暱。鄭子隨之，東至樂遊園，已昏黑矣。見一宅，土垣車門，室宇甚嚴。¹⁹⁹

[One day] in the sixth month of the ninth year of the Tianbao Era (747), Yin and Scholar Zheng were riding together in the streets of Chang'an on their way to a drinking party in the Xinchang Ward. When they reached the southern part of the Xuanping Ward, Zheng, claiming that there was some matter that he had to attend to, begged his friend to excuse him so that he could leave. He [promised] that he would go to the place they were drinking later on. Yin then went off towards the east riding his white horse, while Zheng mounted his donkey and went south into the north gate of the Shengping Ward. There Zheng came upon three women walking along the street, of whom the middle one, dressed in a white gown, was a rare beauty... [The other women] who followed them all the way teased him and thus helped them to gradually get on more intimate terms. Zheng followed them and they went eastward. When they finally reached the Leyou Park, it was already dark. There he saw a compound with earthen walls and a carriage gate. The buildings inside were quite well-built and properly proportioned.²⁰⁰

Shengping Ward 昇平坊 was located just to the south of the Xuanping Ward 宣平坊, and the Leyou Park 樂遊園 was located in the northeast corner of Shengping (Fig. 19). Since “it was already dark” 已昏黑矣, one can expect that the ward gates were about to close or already had been and Zheng had to stay with Ms. Ren in her house. Readers have no idea about what had caused Zheng to suddenly change his route or whether he was using that as an excuse for a romantic encounter. In any case, his unaccompanied journey did bring him a welcome surprise. It was because of the curfew that a random encounter

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 462.3692.

²⁰⁰ Translation revised from Stephen Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York and London: Norton, 1996), pp. 518-19.

developed into an intimate association, making the story itself possible. Zheng enjoyed his night at Ms. Ren's house and was struck by the enclosed space (earthen walls and a carriage gate 土垣車門). But soon after, the true character of the romance, as well as of this space, was exposed.

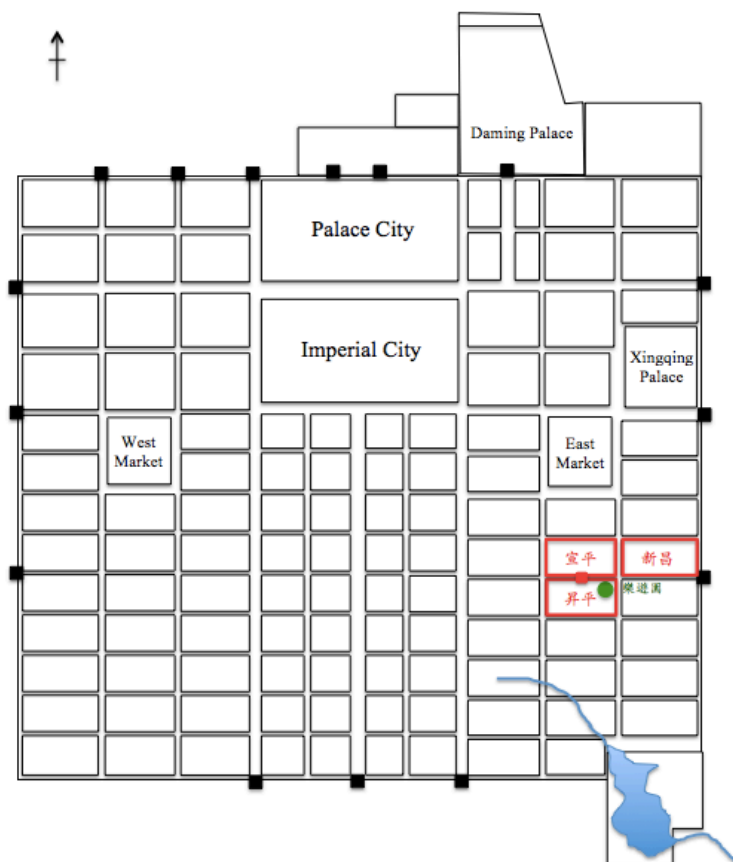


Figure 19. The Xinchang, Xuanping and Shengping Wards and the Leyou Park as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

將曉，任氏曰：“可去矣。某兄弟名係教坊，職屬南衙，晨興將出，不可淹留。”乃約後期而去。既行，及里門，門扃未發。門旁有胡人鬻餅之舍，方張燈熾爐。鄭子憇其簾下，坐以候鼓，因與主人言。鄭子指宿所以問之曰：“自此東轉，有門者，誰氏之宅？”主人曰：“此隕墉棄地，無第宅也。”鄭子曰：“適過之，曷以云無？”與之固爭。主人適悟，乃曰：“吁！我知之矣。此中有一狐，多誘男子偶宿，嘗三見矣。今子亦遇

乎？”鄭子赧而隱曰：“無。”質明，復視其所，見土垣車門如故。窺其中，皆蕪荒及廢圃耳。²⁰¹

When it was almost dawn, Ms. Ren said, “You had best go now. My brothers work at the Music Academy, which is under the jurisdiction of the Southern Guard Command. They are coming here early tomorrow morning, so you cannot linger here.” Then they agreed on their next meeting, and he left. Having set out, he came to the ward gates, which had not yet been unbarred. There was the shop of a Persian pastry seller beside the gate, and its owner was just then hanging up his lanterns and firing his ovens. Scholar Zheng went in through the curtains to rest and sat down to wait for the drums [that would announce the opening of the gates]. [While waiting,] he engaged the storekeeper in conversation. Pointing in the direction of the place where he had just spent the night, Scholar Zheng said, “When you turn east from here, there is a gate. Whose residence is that?” The storekeeper answered, “That is just a wasteland surrounded by a broken-down wall. There are no buildings there.” Scholar Zheng said, “But I have just passed by the place. How can you say that there is nothing there?” As he argued with the man stubbornly, the storekeeper suddenly realized something, and said: “Ah, now I understand. There is a fox there who often seduces men to spend the night with her. I’ve already seen this happen a few times now. Do you also happen to have met her?” Zheng’s face became flushed and he evasively replied with a “no.” When it was daylight, he went back to take another look at the spot. He found that the earthen walls and carriage gate were as before; yet when he peeped inside, it was all overgrown with scrub, and with abandoned garden plots.²⁰²

Ms. Ren understood that in daytime it was not suitable for her, as a fox spirit, to be with human beings. In order to prevent Zheng from discovering her real face, she urged him to leave “when it was almost dawn” 將曉, but this also forced Zheng to wait by the side of the ward gate. The curfew system not only created an opportunity for Ms. Ren and Zheng to stay together overnight, but also offered Zheng the opportunity to learn more about her. The casual chat with the storekeeper to kill time had its shocking effect in

²⁰¹ *Taiping guangji*, 462.3692-93.

²⁰² Translation slightly revised from Owen, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, pp. 519-20.

revealing the true face of the “well-built and properly proportioned” space and that of the beautiful woman he spent the night with.

The beginning of “Renshi zhuan” resembles the story of Li Huang: when dusk fell, the young scholar was tempted to get rid of his companions by entering an enclosed space by himself. Doing so was only permitted at night, so he was urged to leave the next morning. The following development, however, diverges dramatically from the preceding events, as Zheng owned more initiative than Li Huang and Li Guan did. Firstly, it was Zheng himself who discovered the truth, rather than his family or servants. Secondly, even though he was clear about the identity of his lover, he could not help missing Ms. Ren and decided to go back and look for her. Fortunately this time the woman turned out to be virtuous and not only to wish him no harm, but rather wished to protect his reputation in the face of other men who desired her. This particular episode, base on the regulations of the ward system, plays a crucial role in constructing the whole story and makes it distinctive.

Scholar Zheng was not the only one who obtained important information while waiting for the gate to open. The same ward gates that limited the activities of early arrivals could reveal to people the truth, as exemplified by “Renshi zhuan,” and could also provide them with random opportunities that could change the course of their lives, as the following story illustrates:

岳州刺史李俊舉進士，連不中第。貞元二年，有故人國子祭酒包佶者，通於主司，援成之，榜前一日，當以名聞執政。初五更，俊將候佶。里門未開，立馬門側。傍有賣糕者，其氣熾熾。有一吏若外郡之郵檄者，

小囊氈帽，坐於其側，頗有欲糕之色。俊為買而食之，客甚喜，啗數片。²⁰³

Li Jun, the Regional Chief of Yuezhou, took the *jinshi* examination several times but failed every time. In the second year of the Zhenyuan Era (786), his old friend Bao Ji, the Chancellor of the National University, communicated with the Examiner and asked him to help Li Jun fulfill his wishes. [It was agreed that] on the day before the publication the list [of those who had passed the examination], he would let the person in charge know [Li Jun's] name. At the beginning of the fifth watch, Jun was going to wait for Ji. The ward gates were not open yet, so Jun stopped his horse and waited by the side of the gates. Next to him there was a cake seller, and the cakes were steaming hot. There was also an officer who looked like an out-of-town postman. [The officer] sat next to the cake seller, carrying a small bag and wearing a fur-felt hat, and appeared to want the cake. Jun bought the cake and let him eat. The fellow was very delighted and ate several pieces.

After failing the *jinshi* examination several times, Li Jun 李俊 was finally lucky this year. He was so eager to know the result that he went to wait for Bao “at the beginning of the fifth watch” 初五更 (sometime between 3:00 a.m. and 3:30 a.m.), but the ward gates were still not open yet. According to *Dengke jikao* 登科記考, in the second year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 Era (786), the exam was held in the sixth lunar month.²⁰⁴ At this time of year the morning drumbeats would start around 3:45 a.m., and the ward gates would not open until they stopped sounding. This being the case, Li Jun had to wait for about half an hour by the ward gates. Just like in “Renshi zhuan,” a pastry seller was already up for the morning business. But unlike Scholar Zheng, Li Jun did not initiate a conversation with him but helped a stranger who was also waiting by the gates. Li Jun probably did not

²⁰³ *Taiping guangji*, 341.2702.

²⁰⁴ Xu Song, *Dengke jikao* 登科記考, ed. by Zhao Shouyan 趙守儼 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), 12.438.

think too much when he bought the cake for the man, but soon afterwards, he was repaid very generously:

俄而里門開，眾竟出。客獨附俊馬曰：“願請問。”俊下聽之。曰：“某乃冥之吏送進士名者。君非其徒耶？”俊曰：“然。”曰：“送堂之榜在此，可自尋之。”因出視。俊無名，垂泣曰：“苦心筆硯，二十餘年，偕計者亦十年。今復無名，豈終無成乎？”曰：“君之成名，在十年之外，祿位甚盛。今欲求之，亦非難，但於本錄耗半，且多屯剝，纔獲一郡。如何？”俊曰：“所求者名，名得足矣。”……復授筆，使俊自注。從上有故太子少師李夷簡名，俊欲揩之。客遽曰：“不可。此人祿重，未易動也。”又其下有李溫名，客曰：“可矣。”乃揩去溫字，注俊字。²⁰⁵

Soon after, the ward gates were opened, and everyone went out. The fellow approached Li Jun's horse alone and said to him, "May I talk to you for a moment?" Jun got off the horse and listened to him. He said: "I am the underworld officer delivering the list of names of the *jinshi* candidates. Aren't you one of them?" Jun said, "Yes, I am." The fellow said, "The list to be sent to the office is here. You can look for your name by yourself." He then showed it to Li Jun. Seeing that his name was not there, Jun wept and said: "I have made painstaking efforts at writing for twenty years. It has been ten years since I made the decision to take the exam. Now, as I still do not see my name, I wonder if I will ever achieve anything." The fellow said: "You will win a reputation after ten years, and be successful in your career as an official. And if you want to have it today, that is not hard either. However, [in that case] your original salary will be cut into half, you will encounter many difficulties, and [in your career] you will only be [a regional chief of] a commandery. What do you think?" Jun answered: "What I desire is only fame. As long as I get that, I will be satisfied."... The fellow then gave Jun the brush, and let him alter [the list] by himself. At the top of the list there was the name of Li Yijian, the former Junior Preceptor of the Heir Apparent. Jun wanted to scratch his name out. In an urgent manner, the fellow said, "Please don't. This person is destined to have a good career. It will not go well for you if you touch his name." Jun then found another name, Li Wen, under this one. The fellow said, "This one works." Then they crossed off his name and wrote Jun's name instead.

²⁰⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 341.2702-703.

The underworld fellow's real identity explained why he looked like an out-of-town postman and was carrying with him a small bag. However, although he had the authority to allow changes to the name list, his power had its limitations. As an underworld officer, he was able to impact the course of events in the human world, but was also subject to its power, especially when the opening-gate drums had already indicated the official arrival of daytime.

After crossing off Li Wen's 李溫 name, which was listed right below Li Yijian's, Li went to visit Bao Ji, who then attempted to check the list, but only found that Li Junut was also subject to its power. He then found another name, 春官 of the Heir Appar to allow him to change the list:

祭酒開榜，見李公夷簡，欲揩，春官急曰：“此人宰相處分，不可去。”指其下李溫曰：“可矣。”遂揩去溫字，注俊字。及榜出，俊名果在已前所指處。²⁰⁶

The Chancellor opened the list and saw the name of the revered Mr. Li Yijian. When he was about to cross this name off, the official from the Ministry of Rites immediately says, “This man was designated by the Chief Minister. You cannot delete his name.” Then, pointing to Li Wen's name below Li Yijian's, he says, “This one is okay.” Therefore, they scratched out Wen's name and wrote Jun's instead. When the list was posted, Jun's name as expected appeared at the place to which they had pointed previously.

Li Jun's earlier action found its perfect match in this later parallel. Bao Ji had exactly the same experience as Li Jun: he was discouraged from scratching out Li Yijian's name, and then wrote Li Jun's name over Li Wen's instead. Both the names and the place in which

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 341.2703.

they appear on the list were identical in the two stories. The first scene, in which Li Jun's "trade" with the underworld officer, functions as a "mirror-text," in Mieke Bal's words, of the primary text.²⁰⁷ Unlike the embedded narrative in Kou Yong's story which explains the primary story, here it resembles the later story in many ways. The readers may, on the basis of this mirror-text, predict the end of the story. Seemingly, the foreshadowing effect is preserved at the expense of suspense. However, predictability is not necessarily in tension with suspense. Readers have their anticipations when they read the mirror-text and are able to identify some similarities as they start to read the later story, but another kind of suspense may arise. Readers will still wonder how exactly the story will end. Resemblance is never perfect. Until the end, there is always the possibility that the mirror-text resembles the primary story apart from the ending—in our case, if the Chancellor refused to cross off Li Wen's name, the anticipation will not be met. In any case, the moment when Li Jun waited at the ward gate and met the underworld officer is very crucial in the development of the whole story.

Besides this crucial moment, what deserves more discussion is why and how this story came into being. A notable figure in the story is Li Yijian, whose name even the officer from the underworld dared not touch. The official from the Ministry of Rites made it clearer: "This man is designated by the Chief Minister. You cannot delete his name" 此人宰相處分，不可去。Li Yijian indeed had an illustrious family background. He was "the great grandson of [Li] Yuanyi, Prince Hui of Zheng" 鄭惠王元懿四世孫.²⁰⁸ His royal parentage might earn him some support in the examination. His name ranked

²⁰⁷ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, p. 58

²⁰⁸ *Xin Tangshu*, 131.4509.

fourth on the *jinshi* list of the year 786 and was immediately followed by Li Jun's name. This is a fact not only indicated in the story but also evidenced in historical records.²⁰⁹ Li Jun, on the other hand, does not have a biography in official histories. Only through this story can one know that he “achieved only the level of Regional Chief of Yuezhou, and died soon afterwards” 纔得岳州刺史，未幾而終。²¹⁰ As the underworld officer had prophesied, after Li gave up the option of waiting for ten years for greater success, he was doomed to remain a petty official for the duration of his life. His close relationship with Chancellor Bao Ji, and Bao's manipulation of the list, might have caused some disputes at the time. His being on the same list with Li Yijian, who later became a Chief Minister himself, might also have made him famous.

The story also depicts two parallel worlds, using supernatural experience in the first to allude to the unusual practices in the second one. This may reflect backdoor deals lying behind Li Jun's success in the examination and his later rationalizing of the difficulties he encountered in his career. To present the first world, the author skillfully makes use of the curfew system. The time Li Jun spent waiting for the ward gates to open becomes a “third time,” which belongs neither to the night nor to the day, but provides a space of interaction between them. This “third time” is also one of communication and negotiation between the *yin* and *yang* worlds.

If the opening-gate drumbeats create a “third time,” so do the closing-gate ones, as the following story illustrates. The characters' good-heartedness, however, did not meet with the same recompense that Li Jun received:

²⁰⁹ For example, see Xu Song, *Dengke jikao*, 12.439.

²¹⁰ *Taiping guangji*, 341.2703.

唐憲宗葬景陵，都城人士畢至。前集州司馬裴通遠家在崇賢里，妻女輩亦以車輿縱觀於通化門。及歸，日晚，馳馬驟。至平康北街，有白頭嫗步走，隨車而來，氣力殆盡。至天門街，夜鼓時動，車馬轉速，嫗亦忙遽。車中有老青衣從四小女，其中有哀其奔迫者，問其所居。對曰：“崇賢。”即謂曰：“與嫗同里。可同載至里門耶？”嫗荷媿。及至，則申重辭謝。將下車，遺一小錦囊。諸女共開之，中有白羅，製為逝者面衣四焉。諸女驚駭，棄於路。不旬日，四女相次而卒。²¹¹

When Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty (Li Chun 李純, r. 805-820) was buried in the Jing Mausoleum, commoners and officials all came [to pay their respects]. Pei Tongyuan, the former Adjutant of Jizhou, lived in the Chongxian Ward. His wife and daughters also went in a carriage so that they could look on from the Tonghua Gate. When they returned, it was late. The carriage was being driven very fast. When they arrived at the street that bordered the north side of the Pingkang Ward, there was an old lady with white hair walking behind their carriage. She seemed very exhausted. When they arrived at Tianmen Street, the night drum sounded. The carriage speeded up and the old lady also hurried. In the carriage there were four young daughters along with one old maid in an azure gown. One of them pitied the old lady on account of her being urged to rush, and asked where she lived. She replied, “In the Chongxian Ward.” They then told her, “We live in the same ward as you, so we can take you to the ward gate.” The old lady felt a bit embarrassed, though when they arrived she expressed her sincere thanks. As she was descending from the carriage, she left behind a small embroidered purse. The daughters opened it together. There was white silk in it, which took the form of four pieces of face covering for corpses. Startled and terrified, the daughters threw it onto the road. Within ten days [of this incident], they had each died, one after another.

Since there were a number of Tang Dynasty royal mausoleums located in the area outside of and to the northeast of the city of Chang'an, the Tonghua Gate had become a very busy place for funeral processions.²¹² Emperor Xianzong was buried in the Jing

²¹¹ “Pei Tongyuan” 裴通遠, *Taiping guangji*, 345.2734.

²¹² See Wang Jing, “Chengmen yu dushi: Yi Chang'an Tonghua Men weizhu,” in *Tang yanjiu* no. 15 (2009), p. 32.

Mausoleum 景陵, which was located in Pucheng 蒲城, a town just beyond the Tonghua Gate. Thus, it was reasonable that Pei Tongyuan's family would watch the funeral rite from the Tonghua Gate. As indicated in the story, the Peis lived in the Chongxian Ward 崇賢里, so it was also reasonable that they passed the street abutting the north side of the Pingkang Ward and Tianmen Street 天門街 on their way back home (Fig. 20).

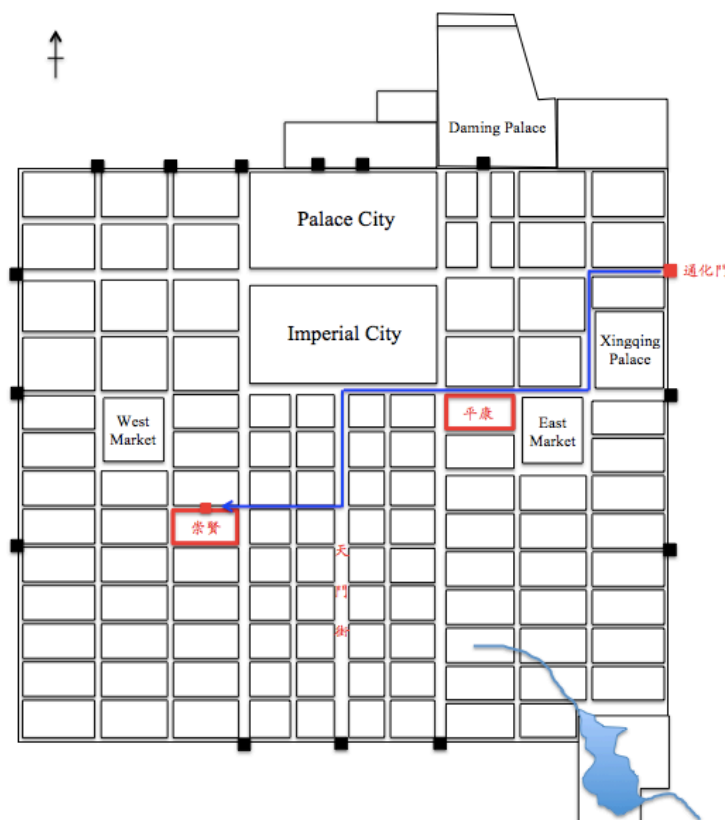


Figure 20. The Pei's route from the Tonghua Gate to the Chongxian Ward, passing the Pingkang Ward and Tianmen Street, as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

The funeral had to be on a very grand scale and lasted for quite a long time, for “when they returned, it was late” 及歸，日晚. Since the curfew was approaching, “the carriage was driven very fast” 馳馬驟. Everyone was aware of the time pressure, and the old lady also tried to walk fast, which caused her to become exhausted. The street drum was a

warning not only to the human world, but also for the underworld. Both the Pei family and the old lady were aware of the rules behind the sounding of the street drums and were anxious to return to their intended place. As with the plots of “Li Jun” and “Renshi zhuan,” here the curfew system temporarily created a certain interpersonal relationship: Minutes earlier, the old woman and the girls were strangers; but minutes later they were sitting in the same carriage; and soon they would part from each other and move on with their own lives. However, this brief meeting caused some astonishing results.

The small embroidered purse, which seemed like a token of appreciation for the free ride, turned out to be a quantity of “white silk” 白羅 that had been made into “four pieces of face covers for dead people” 逝者面衣四. As the story ends, one realizes that the four pieces were designed for the four daughters, who died one after another after they opened the purse. On the surface, this is a story in which the girls’ charity was not rewarded; but if one relates the story to its background, one will see something more complicated. The story happened sometime after Emperor Xianzong’s funeral, and the funeral made reference to interactions of the *yin* and *yang* worlds and the creation of a “third space,” a liminal space belonged to neither of the two. The sound of the night drums indicated the transition from day to night, which was also one from the bright space of human life to a dark one of ghosts. The “third space” created by the funeral and the “third time” created by the street-drum system were connected in this story. They together lent the stories an eerie sense of mystery that combined the transitional period between day and night with the opposition between *yin* and *yang*. Both the ending of the story and the image of the old lady, who might also be on her way back from the funeral where she played a secret role, fit the story’s dark ghostly atmosphere.

While the forces of the human and supernatural worlds were evenly matched during the liminal time that was marked by the sounding of the street drums, the dead of night was when the supernatural powers gain the upper hand:

張庚舉進士，元和十三年，居長安昇道里南街。十一月八日夜，僕夫他宿，獨庚在月下。忽聞異香滿院，方驚之，俄聞履聲漸近，庚屣屣聽之。數青衣年十八九，豔美無敵。推門而入，曰：“步月逐勝，不必樂遊原，只此院小臺藤架可矣。”遂引少女七八人，容色皆艷絕，服飾華麗，宛若豪貴家人。庚走避堂中，垂簾望之。諸女徐行，直詣藤下。須臾，陳設牀榻，雕盤玉樽盃杓，皆奇物。²¹³

Zhang Yu was a *jinshi* scholar. In the thirteenth year of the Yuanhe Era (818), he lived on the street running along the south side of the Shengdao Ward in Chang'an. On the night of the eighth day of the eleventh lunar month, his servant went to sleep in another place while Yu was staying under the moon alone. Suddenly, he smelled an unusual fragrance which seemed to emanate from all over the courtyard. While he was surprised by this, soon he heard the sound of footsteps gradually approaching. Yu scuffed his shoes as he listened. Several eighteen or nineteen-year-old girls in azure gowns, who were incomparably beautiful, opened the door and came in. One of them said, "To stroll beneath the moon and enjoy the wonderful scenery, it is not necessary to go to the Leyou Park. The little terrace and the pergola in this courtyard are just fine." She therefore led seven or eight girls in. All of them had the most beautiful appearance, along with gorgeous clothes and ornaments, as if they were from rich and noble families. Yu ran to hide in the main hall, and observed them behind a curtain. The girls walked slowly and directly to the pergola. Soon after, they set up chairs. The delicate dishes, jade goblets, cups, and spoons they laid out were all peculiar stuff.

The beginning of this story is quite familiar; the male figure stayed alone during the night. Here, a relatively isolated private space provided a good opportunity for the

²¹³ *Taiping guangji*, 345.2730-31.

romantic affair that both Li Huang and Li Guan experienced in the previously discussed stories. Similarly, he smelled an unusual fragrance and saw several extremely beautiful girls. Nevertheless, Zhang Yu was not tempted. Looking only for a place from which to enjoy the moonlight, the girls were satisfied. Zhang's staying under the moon during the night also meant that the courtyard was an ideal place to appreciate the moonlight. Zhang Yu lived in the Shengdao Ward 昇道坊, while the Leyou Park was located in the Shengping Ward, which was just to the west of Shengdao. The girls might have entered the city through the Yanxing Gate, the southernmost gate on the east city wall. When they arrived in the Shengdao Ward, they decided to stay there rather than going further westward to the Leyou Park (Fig. 21).

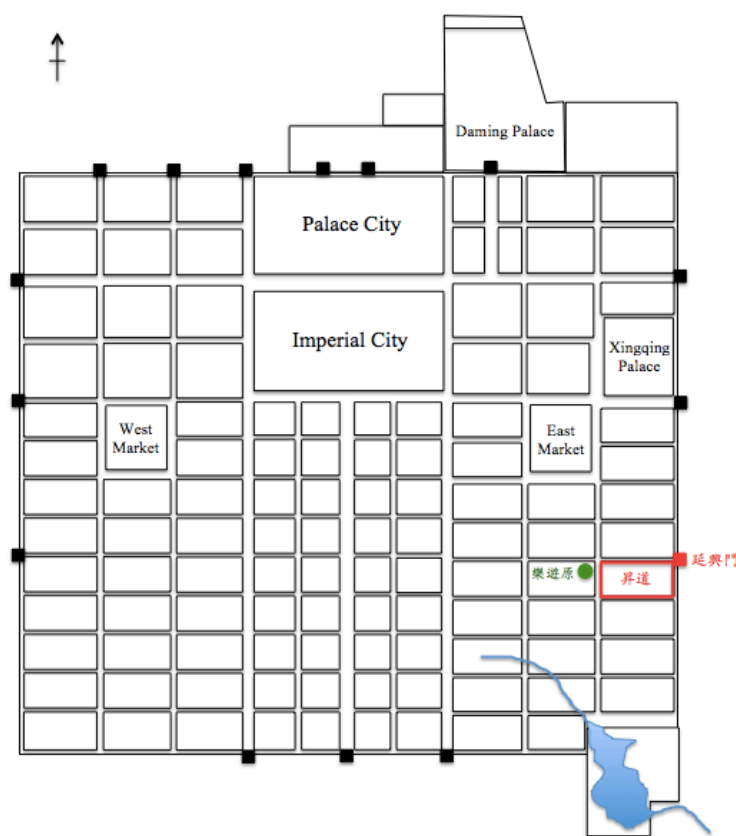


Figure 21. The Yanxing Gate, the Shengdao Ward, and the Leyou Park as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

Even though the girls had intruded into his private space, instead of standing up and chasing them away, Yu chose to escape and hide himself behind a curtain in order to watch a group of strange girls having a party in his courtyard, and was amazed by the peculiar things they owned. Zhang, as the owner of the space, temporarily relinquished it to these strangers, who were the masters not of the residence but of the night.

The girls soon realized that their behavior was inappropriate and sent a serving maid to invite the owner of the house to join the party. But Zhang stuck firmly to his position behind the door:

畏其來也，乃閉門拒之。青衣扣門，庾不應，推不可開，遽走復命。一女曰：“吾輩同歡，人不敢預。既入其門，不召亦合來謁。閉門塞戶，羞見吾徒。呼既不來，何須更召？”²¹⁴

Yu was afraid that she (the maid in the azure gown) would come, so he closed the door to refuse her. The maid in the azure gown knocked on the door, and Yu didn't answer. She pushed the door, but it could not be opened. The azure-gown woman hurried back to report. One of the girls said: "We enjoy ourselves and humans dare not join us. Since we entered his gate, even if we did not summon him, he should have come to pay us audience. Now he has closed the doors and is too shy to see us. Since we already called him but he refused to come, why should we summon him again?"

Here, even though the invitation seems a harmless one, were Zhang Yu to accept the invitation and join the party, it is hard to tell whether he would become another victim of the temptation or if his story will fall into the same pattern as the "Li Huang" stories. Zhang's response is that he "closed the door to refuse her" 閉門拒之. Even though he has

²¹⁴ Ibid., 345.2731.

abandoned the courtyard to these strangers, he refuses them admission to his inner room.

More importantly, he retains a cool head:

庾度此坊南街，盡是墟墓，絕無人住。謂從坊中出，則坊門已閉。若非妖狐，乃是鬼物。今吾尚未惑，可以逐之；少頃見迷，何能自悟？於是潛取搢牀石，徐開門突出，望席而擊，正中臺盤，紛然而散。庾逐之，奪得一盞，以衣繫之。及明視之，乃一白角盞，奇不可名。院中香氣，數日不歇。盞鑲於櫃中，親朋來者，莫不傳視，竟不能辨其所自。後十餘日，轉觀數次，忽墮地，遂不復見。²¹⁵

Yu considered that “on the street running along the south side of this ward, there are all ruins and tombs, but people never live there. They might have come from a ward, but since the ward gates have already been closed, they must be either foxes or ghostly spirits. Now, I have not yet been beguiled and I can still chase them. Later, if I am bewitched, how will I come to my senses?” Therefore, he secretly took a padding stone under the bed leg, slowly opened the door and rushed out, and threw the stone onto the table. The stone hit the tabletop and the girls all dispersed in a hubbub. Yu chased them and seized a goblet. He tied it to his clothes. The next day, he found that it was a horned white goblet. It was very peculiar and hard to describe. The fragrance in the courtyard lingered for several days before it departed. Yu locked the goblet in a cabinet, and whenever his relatives or friends came to visit him, he would pass it around so that they could see it. In the end, no one could tell its origin. More than ten days later, after it was circulated several times, it was suddenly dropped onto the floor, and was not seen thereafter.

Zhang Yu's considerations resembled the distribution of residences in Chang'an. The northern half of the city was much more densely populated, while the southern half was relatively unfrequented. Zhang's speculation of the creatures' identity was also based on his knowledge of the city and its curfew system. As the ward gates could not stop them, they could freely walk in the streets and intrude into enclosed spaces, including Zhang's courtyard. After he recognized the potential bewitching character of these spirits, Zhang

²¹⁵ Ibid.

immediately took action to drive them away and recapture his lost ground. Although Zhang successfully seized the goblet they were using, it disappeared when it was dropped onto the floor. He was thus frustrated not only by the ward gates, but also by his cabinet of kitchenware.

The powers of the supernatural world had a home-field advantage during the night, behind the curtain of darkness. Human beings, on the other hand, were often in a helpless situation when the curfew started. They then became unskillful, timid, and hesitant, as if they were guests in this dark world, desperately in need of help from their supernatural “hosts.” The story of “Shang Shun” 商順 provides a vivid example of such a “host” and “guest” relationship:

丹陽商順娶吳郡張昶女。昶為京兆少尹，卒葬滻水東，去其別業十里。順選集在長安，久之，張氏使奴入城迎商郎。順日暮與俱往，奴盜飲極醉，與順相失。不覺其城門已閉，無如之何，乃獨前行。天漸昏黑，雨雪交下，且所驢甚蹇，迷路不知所之，但信驢所詣。計行十數里，而不得見村墅。轉入深草，苦寒甚戰。少頃，至一澗，澗南望見燈火。順甚喜，行至，乃柴籬茅屋數間。²¹⁶

Shang Shun from Danyang married the daughter of Zhang Chang from the Wu Commandery. Chang was the former Vice-Governor of the capital. After he died, he was buried on the east side of the Chan River, which was ten *li* away from his villa. Once Shun went to Chang'an for an official selection.²¹⁷ After a long while, Ms. Zhang sent a servant to the capital to meet him. After sunset, Shun and the servant went back together. The servant had snuck a lot of drinks and got extremely drunk, and after that he and Shun lost contact. Without his awareness, the city gates had already been closed. Shun had no choice but to walk forward alone. As dusk verged into night, rain and snow fell alternately and Shun's donkey became badly lame. Shun lost his sense of

²¹⁶ Ibid., 338.2683.

²¹⁷ Also known as *quanxuan* 銓選, which is a process through which people were evaluated and selected before they were appointed with official titles.

direction and did not know where he was going, so he just went wherever his donkey led him. He calculated that he had gone for over ten *li*, but was not able to see any country house. [As the road] wound into deep grass, he suffered from the cold and shivered badly. Soon after, he arrived at a mountain brook. He gazed to the south of the brook and saw light and fire. Shun was very happy, and when he arrived there, [he found that they] were several thatched huts with firewood fences.

When Shang Shun had finished his official selection in Chang'an and set off for his home outside the capital, it was "after sunset" 日暮. This was why when he became unaccompanied on his journey, he could not go back to the city, whose gates had already been closed, but had to advance by himself. Due to the curfew, he found himself excluded from the urban space and in an isolated position in a suburb. Having gone through many hardships, he finally stopped at a house:

扣門數百下方應，順問曰：“遠客迷路，苦寒，暫欲寄宿。”應曰：“夜暗，雨雪如此，知君是何人？且所居狹陋，不堪止宿。”固拒之。商郎乃問張尹莊去此幾許，曰：“近西南四五里。”……西南行十餘里，不至莊。

Only after [Shang Shun] knocked hundreds of times on the door did someone answer it. Shun requested, "I am a traveler from afar and I am suffering from the cold, and would like to temporarily lodge here." The man replied: "The night is dark and with the rain and snow are like this. How can I know who you are? Moreover, our place is cramped and crude and cannot accommodate people overnight." He firmly rejected him. Mr. Shang then asked him how far Governor Zhang's manor was from there. The man said, "It is four or five *li* to the southwest."... [Shang] went towards the southwest more than ten *li*, but still did not reach the manor.

After having been refused from the urban space in Chang'an, Shang Shun was refused again from a private space by a mountain brook, a quite desolate place outside the capital. During the snowy night, he had nowhere to stay, and the strength he had during the

daytime dissipated. When he had exhausted his strength and believed that he was going to die, he was miraculously saved from danger:

須臾，見一物，狀若燭籠，光照數丈，直詣順前，尺餘而止。順初甚懼，尋而問曰：“得非張公神靈導引余乎？”乃前拜曰：“若是丈人，當示歸路。”視光中有小道，順乃乘驢隨之。稍近火移，恒在前尺餘。行六七里，望見持火來迎，籠光遂滅。及火至，乃張氏守塋奴也。順問何以知己來，奴云：“適聞郎君大呼某，言商郎從東來，急往迎。如此再三，是以知之。”

Soon after, [Shang] saw something. It appeared like a candle lantern, whose light shone on an area of ten yards or so. It approached Shun directly, stopping about a foot away. At first Shun was very scared, but soon he asked: “Aren’t you the divine spirit of Mr. Zhang who has come here to guide me?” Then he stepped forward and made a bow: “If you are my father-in-law, please show me the way back.” He saw that there was a small path in the light, and he followed along the way on his donkey. When he rode closer, the fire moved away, but it was always about a foot ahead of him. After he had gone for six or seven *li*, he saw in the distance that someone with a torch in his hand was coming to meet him. The light in the lantern then went out. When the torch arrived, he found that this was the servant who had guarded Mr. Zhang’s grave. Shun asked the servant how he had known that he was coming. The servant said: “Just now I heard the master calling me loudly, saying that you are coming from the east, and urged me to come and greet you. It was like this a couple of times, and by means of this I knew.”

The candle lantern that guided Shang Shun’s way was the spirit of his father-in-law. Instead of making himself present to his son-in-law, he transformed himself into the light of a lantern in order to help him, and then carefully maintained a certain distance from him the rest of the way. Finally, when Shang had almost arrived at his place, he sent the tomb guard to greet him and then disappeared, leading Shang to the destination himself. Zhang’s spirit was very conscious of the boundary between his son-in-law and himself, in other words, between the *yin* and *yang* worlds, and was operating on rules that were

formulated on the basis of this boundary. He did not show his true appearance to humans, but returned to his tomb as soon as he had led Shang Shun there. Also, he had a very clear understanding of his powers in the night. While Shang was helpless in the darkness, the spirit seemed very capable. He had a good sense of direction and knew the route better than Zhang.

Shang Shun's story, like many others, when representing the interaction and negotiation between the human world and the underworld, tend to rely on the curfew system to rationalize the plots. At times, one sees not only a great difference in capabilities between the human world and the netherworld, but also a shift in authority between the two. The authority that is publically acknowledged during the daytime is questioned, threatened, and rejected during the night. For example, Wen Zhang 溫璋, the Capital Governor 京兆尹, embarrassed himself by ignoring the real authority of the night:

溫璋，唐咸通壬辰尹正天府。性黷貨，敢殺，人亦畏其嚴殘不犯，由是治有能名。舊制：京兆尹之出，靜通衢，閉里門，有笑其前道者，立杖殺之。是秋，溫公出自天街，將南抵五門，呵喝風生。有黃冠老而且偃，弊衣曳杖，將橫絕其間，驕人呵不能止。溫公命捽來，笞背二十，振袖而去，若無苦者。溫異之，呼老街吏，令潛而覘之，有何言，復命黃冠扣之，既而跡之。²¹⁸

Wen Zhang was Governor of Zhengtian Prefecture during the *renchen* year of the Xiantong Era (872). He was by nature avaricious and murderous. People feared his sternness and cruelty and this kept many from committing crimes. In this way, he became famous for his governing ability. According to the old regulations, when the Capital Governor went out, [the people would have to] clean the major avenues and shut the ward gates. Those who

²¹⁸ Ibid., 49.307-308.

laughed in his face would immediately be beaten to death. This autumn, the revered Mr. Wen had gone out along the Heavenly Street and was soon to arrive at the southern city gate. Pathbreakers shouted loudly in order to turn people away. There then appeared a man with a yellow hat who was old and hunchbacked. Wearing ragged clothes and carrying a cane, he intended to pass by Wen's honor guard. The path-breakers hooted at him but could not stop him. The revered Mr. Wen then ordered them to seize him and cane him twenty strokes on the back. The old man left in a huff, and seemed to feel no pain. Finding this strange, Wen called an old street officer and ordered him to spy on the old man to see what he would say. He ordered people to take the old man's yellow hat and then follow him.

When the Capital Governor went out, the required clean and quiet streets formed a place of honor dedicated to this high official. The Capital Governor represented the imperial power, so the action of cleaning the streets and shouting at people to stay away also stood for the establishment of prestige and authority. Anyone who dared to challenge it would immediately be punished. Thus, when the old man crossed in front of Wen's honor guard without regard to the yelling of pathbreakers, Wen felt it necessary to have the old man beaten severely, just as he had done with other violators before. Everything appeared normal, except that the old man "seemed to feel no pain" 若無苦者. As this unusual reaction drew Wen's attention, he ordered people to follow the old man and spy on him:

迨暮過蘭陵里，南入小巷，中有衡門，止處也。吏隨入關，有黃冠數人出謁甚謹，且曰：“真君何遲也？”答曰：“為凶人所辱。可具湯水。”黃冠前引，雙鬟青童從而入，吏亦隨之。過數門，堂宇華麗，修竹夾道，擬王公之甲第。²¹⁹

When dusk came, the old man went across the Lanling Ward, and travelling southward, entered a narrow lane. In this lane there was a humble hut, and that was where he resided. An officer followed him, entering the gate. Several men

²¹⁹ Ibid.

with yellow hats came to pay their respects modestly, and asked: “Perfected Lord, why are you late?” The old man replied, “I have been humiliated by a fierce man. You may now prepare soup for me.” The men with yellow hats led the way in the front, and boys with double-knot hairstyles followed him and entered. The officer also followed them. After going through several gates, he saw that the palace halls were gorgeous and that slender bamboos lined both sides of the road. The place was like the mansion of a prince or a duke.

The officer being sent for the follow-up investigation found something astonishing. Even though the old man appeared to be helpless during the daytime, “when dusk came” 迨暮, he showed his awe-inspiring dignity. His magnificent residence was located in the Lanling Ward, which was only three blocks away from the main south gate, the Mingde Gate 明德門, and was a very remote ward in the less populated southern part of the capital. More importantly, the old man was very angry with Wen Zhang. After recognizing that he has offended the “Perfected Lord,” Wen Zhang is terrified:

明日將暮，召吏引之，街鼓既絕，溫微服，與吏同詣黃冠所居，至明。吏欵扉，應門者問：“誰？”曰：“京兆溫尚書來謁真君。”既闢重閤，吏先入拜，仍白曰：“京兆君溫璋。”溫趨入拜。真君踞坐堂上，戴遠遊冠，衣九霞之衣，色貌甚峻。溫伏而叙曰：“某任愆浩穰，權唯震肅，若稍畏懦，則損威聲。昨日不謂凌迫大仙，自貽罪戾，故來首服，幸賜矜哀。”真君責曰：“君忍殺立名，專利不厭，禍將行及，猶逞兇威。”溫拜首求哀者數四，而真君終蓄怒不許。……真君悄然，良久曰：“恕爾家族。此間亦非淹久之所。”溫遂起，於庭中拜謝而去，與街吏疾行至府，動曉鐘矣。雖語親近，亦秘不令言。²²⁰

The next day, when evening was about to fall, Wen summoned an officer to lead the way. As soon as the street drums stopped sounding, Wen and the officer went incognito to visit the residence of the man with the yellow hat. The place was extremely bright. The officer knocked, and the door attendant

²²⁰ Ibid.

asked, “who is that?” The officer answered, “Minister Wen, the Capital Governor is here to pay audience to the Perfected Lord.” After the gates of the palace were opened, the officer went in to bow, reporting, “Wen Zhang, the Capital Governor.” Wen hurried in and made a bow. The “Perfected Lord” was squatting in the top position of the hall, wearing a far-roaming hat and radiant clothes, and looking very solemn. Wen prostrated himself and explained: “My duties are too many and varied, and my authority should be respected. If I show even a little bit of fear or timidity, my reputation and dignity will be diminished. Yesterday I did not expect that I would insult you, a Great Immortal. The sin and violence were committed by myself, so I have come here to give myself up to you, and sincerely hope that you can pity and forgive me.” The Perfected Lord rebuked him, saying, “You are famous for being cruel and fond of killing, and you have an unlimited desire for gain. Now disaster is about to come upon you, but you are still acting violently.” Wen kowtowed quite a few times, begging for leniency, but the Perfected Lord was still angry and would not accept his apology... Remaining silent, after quite a while the Perfected Lord said, “I will forgive your family. This is not a place for you to stay long.” At this, Wen stood up, bowed, expressed his thanks, and left. When, hurrying, he and the street officers reached his government office, the morning bell had already struck. Although he told his assistants about his experience, he forbade them to talk about it.

The interaction between Wen Zhang and the old man represented the tension between the human world and the supernatural world. Wen Zhang went to visit the old man “when the evening was about to fall” 將暮, and arrived at his place “as soon as the street drums stopped sounding” 街鼓既絕. This was the time when supernatural forces began to take over the human powers. A prestigious Capital Governor during the day, Wen Zhang had to remove his official garments and release his honor guard before setting off. Wen addressed the old man whom he had punished hours ago as a “Great Immortal” 大仙, and referred to his own behavior as “sin and violence” 罪戾. The Capital Governor now became a humble commoner waiting for his punishment, while the insulted old man was

transformed into a sovereign Lord who scolded the Capital Governor sternly and forcefully. During the daytime, he intruded into Wen's honor guard in the Heavenly Street 天街, the city's axial thoroughfare for significant rituals that symbolized imperial authority, and suffered disgrace and insult because of what he did. Since neither the time nor the space was in his favor, the old man chose to temporarily swallow his anger and leave. But during the night, the desolate Lanling Ward became a place for the "Perfected Lord" to exercise his power, while the daytime governor had to prostrate himself in front of him to beg his pardon. The power relationship had been completely reversed. Yet Wen Zhang's apology, though sincere, only obtained the "Perfected Lord's" concession of forgiving his family, but not Wen himself. Wen hurried back to his government office when "the morning bell has already struck" 動曉鐘矣. This was a time for Wen to regain his suspended powers, but the curse that had been pronounced on him during the night for his mistreatment of the "Perfected Lord" did not lose its effectiveness. At the end of the story, Wen Zhang "drank the poisoned wine and died" 飲酖而死.

From the example of this story, we can see that it is especially effective to portray the power confrontation and transformation between humans and gods/ghosts, or between the *yin* *ang* *yang* realms with Chang'an as the background. On the one hand, the ward and curfew systems in Chang'an were very helpful in presenting the liminal time and space when and where such confrontation and transformation took place. A man-made mechanism was added upon the natural transision between day and night, and therefore, set up a clear-cut scale to track and measure the power transformation. On the other hand, Chang'an was the political center of the Tang Empire, thus a place concentrated with various individual or collective political powers. In addition to the power struggles in the

human world, the power relation between the human world and the supernatural world was also more complicated than other places and their power transformation more dramatic. Since this kind of narrative construction is very effective, we see another story tell another Capital Governor, Li Gan's 黎幹 experience almost in the same way, only that compared to Wen Zhang, he was luckier:

相傳黎幹為京兆尹時，曲江塗龍祈雨，觀者數千。黎至，獨有老人植杖不避，幹怒杖背二十，如擊鞞革，掉臂而去。黎疑其非常人，命坊老卒尋之。至蘭陵里之內，入小門，大言曰：“我今日困辱甚，可具湯也。”坊卒遽返白黎，黎大懼，因弊衣懷公服與坊卒至其處。²²¹

It is said that one day in Qujiang, when Li Gan was the Capital Governor, people prayed for rain with painted dragons, and there were thousands of spectators. When Li arrived, there was only an old man holding a cane who would not yield. Angered, Gan beat him on the back with twenty strokes. It was like striking a leather drum. The old man threw down his arms and left. Li suspected that he was not a common person, so he ordered an old ward soldier to search for him. The old man went into the Lanling Ward, entered by a small gate, and said loudly, “I was badly embarrassed and humiliated today. You can prepare the soup for me.” The ward soldier immediately returned and reported to Li. Li was greatly terrified, and so put on ragged clothes, carried his official gown in his arms, and went to the old man's place along with the soldier.

Like Wen Zhang in the previous story, the old man did not yield to the Capital Governor Li Gand today. You can prepare the soup for me.” The ward soldier immediately returned and he glare of the public eye, the old man harbored resentment in his heart and did not take any action. The following plot elements make this story very similar to that of Wen Zhang: Li Gan found the old man uncommon, sent people to tail him, learned the truth,

²²¹ *Youyang zazu*, 9.88-89. See also *Taiping guangji*, 195.1464.

and “was greatly terrified” 大懼. Like what Wen Zhang did when he paid a visit to the old man, in order to show his sincerity, Li “put on ragged clothes” 弊衣 and “carried his official gown in his arms” 懷公服:

時已昏黑，坊卒直入，通黎之官閥。黎唯而趨入，拜伏曰：“向迷丈人物色，罪當十死。”老人驚起，曰：“誰引君來此？”即牽上階。黎知可以理奪，徐曰：“某為京兆尹，威稍損則失官政。丈人埋形雜迹，非證惠眼，不能知也。若以此罪人，是釣人以賊，則非義士之心也。”老人笑曰：“老夫之過。”²²²

At that time, it was already dark. The ward soldier went straight in and mentioned Li by his title. Li came hurried in. He bowed and prostrated himself, saying, “Just now I was deluded by your appearance. I should die ten times for the sin that I have committed.” The old man rose with surprise, and asked, “Who sent you here?” Then he led Li up the stairs. Li knew that he had a chance to argue with him using his reason, and said slowly: “I am the Capital Governor. If my authority is diminished even slightly, the government affairs will lose their effectiveness. Since you disguised yourself and walked alongside commoners, without eyes that can see past and future, it is impossible to know the facts. If you blame me for this, it is because you wish to seize people by immoral means, but not out of the heart of a righteous knight.” The old man laughed and said: “It is my fault.”

Li Gan reached the old man’s place when “it was already dark” 已昏黑. At a time when the supernatural powers took control, Li showed sufficient respect for the old man to convince him that as Capital Governor, he had to maintain his authority so that the government would not lose its effectiveness. In order to support his argument that he did not recognize that the old man was the Perfected Lord, Li Gan pointed out that the latter had “disguised himself and walked together with commoners” 埋形雜迹, which revealed

²²² *Youyang zazu*, 9.88-89.

the old man's limitations during the day. But when the nighttime deepened, the old man demonstrated his extraordinary skills and power:

乃具酒設席於地，招坊卒令坐。夜深，語及養生之術，言約理辨，黎轉敬懼。因曰：“老夫有一伎，請為尹設。”遂入。良久，紫衣朱鬢，擁劍長短七口，舞於中庭，迭躍揮霍；批光電激，或橫若裂盤，旋若規尺。有短劍二尺餘，時時及黎之衽，黎叩頭股慄。食頃，擲劍植地，如北斗狀，顧黎曰：“向試黎君膽氣。”黎拜曰：“今日已後，性命丈人所賜，乞役左右。”老人曰：“君骨相無道氣，非可遽教，別日更相顧也。”揖黎而揖黎而入。黎歸，氣色如病，臨鏡，方覺鬚剃落寸餘。翌日復往，室已空矣。²²³

He thereupon prepared wine, set up a banquet on the floor, and asked the ward soldier to sit with them. When the night deepened, their conversation touched upon methods of preserving one's health. The old man spoke briefly but to the point. Li became respectful and fearful. The old man then said, "I have a skill that I would like to show you." Then he went in. After a long time, he came back wearing a purple gown and vermillion hair. Holding seven swords of various lengths, he danced in the center of the hall. He repeatedly jumped around, spryly and nimbly. His swords resembled lightening flashes. When brandished horizontally, they were like cracked plates; when swung around, they were like compasses. A short sword that was more than two feet long reached Li's lapels now and then, and Li could not help kowtowing and trembling. After they had finished eating, the old man threw the swords onto the floor in the shape of the Big Dipper. He turned round and said to Li, "Just now I was just testing your courage and audacity." Li bowed and said, "From now on, I shall know that my life was bestowed on me by you. I beg to serve on your side." The old man said: "Your physiognomy does not show a Taoist demeanor, so you cannot be taught right now. Please come back sometime later." He bowed to Li and went inside. Li came back with a sick face. He looked into the mirror, and only then did he realize that his beard had been cut more than one inch. When he went there again on the next day, the house was already empty.

²²³ Ibid.

As demonstrated by his astonishing martial arts, if he had intended to, the old man could easily have taken Li Gan's life. Li Gan's appalling experience in the night made him feel sick, but also aroused his curiosity, but when he decided to explore the place again during the daytime, he only found that the miraculous nighttime space had already been replaced by the normal desolate space of the daytime. The sharp contrast between the same physical space during the daytime and the night reinforced the *yin-yang* boundary.

In the stories of both Wen Zhang and Li Gan, the boundary between the human and the supernatural worlds was established by the warning sound of street drums and the separation of the city and ward walls. During the day, the city of Chang'an was an imperial capital controlled by dignified worldly authorities. When night fell, it became a stage for various supernatural powers. The boundary between day and night also divided the narrative into two parts. When a disguised immortal violated the worldly rules in the daytime and was thus punished by a human official, he could not fight back right away, but had to swallow his anger and wait until nighttime. Afterwards, when a human official learned that he offended the god during the day, he had to pay a visit to the latter during the night as a commoner in order to apologize as well as defend himself.

Both Wen Zhang and Li Gan were real historical figures and both were in disrepute. Li insinuated himself into the favor of the notorious eunuch Yu Chaodrum 魚朝恩 (721 - 770), while Wen was famous for being "harsh and cruel" 嚴酷.²²⁴ Their stories reflect the public antipathy toward them. Both stories start in a very similar way but end quite differently: Wen Zhang was severely punished, while Li Gan was forgiven. The different

²²⁴ *Jiu Tangshu*, 19.653.

endings might have something to do with Wen and Li's real life experience. In the story, the "Perfected Lord's" criticism of Wen as "famous for being cruel and fond of killing" 忍殺立名, and "having an unlimited desire for gain" 專利不厭 is in accordance with the historical record. Also, Wen did die by drinking poisoned wine after the emperor demoted him,²²⁵ a fact which also accords with the story. The basic pattern of Wenes start in a very similar way but end q 報應 story type, in which unsavory characters eventually get what they deserve. Li Gan's story does not entirely belong to this category. It includes a thrilling martial arts performance, which is more commonly seen in traditional Chinese knight-errant stories. In other words, in both Wen and Li's stories, in spite of their discrepancies, one sees old story types integrated with urban features of Chang'an to obtain a certain novelty and vitality. It is possible that since people dislike Li and Wen, they arranged Li and Wen's life into the designed story pattern, making the punishment they received seem more well-earned.

In the stories, the old men, or "Perfected Lords," were very familiar with the Capital Governors' world, but the latter seemed to have ignored the world of the former. More often than not, in the human world, supernatural creatures could freely come and go, but living people had very limited access to the realm of their divine counterparts. If they did get a chance to probe into such mysteries, they usually gained this experience in their dreams or when they were on the verge of death. The experience of the renowned Chief Minister Lou Shide 婁師德 (630-699) is a case in point:

²²⁵ Ibid., 19.676.

婁師德布衣時，常因沉疾，夢一人衣紫，來榻前再拜曰：“君之疾且間矣，幸與某偕去。”即引公出。忽覺力甚捷，自謂疾愈。行路數里，見有廨署，左右吏卒，朱門甚高，曰“地府院”。驚曰：“何地府院而在人間乎？”紫衣者對曰：“冥道固與人接跡，世人又安得而知之？”²²⁶

Once, when Lou Shide was a commoner, he was badly ill, and dreamed that a person wearing a purple gown came and stood in front of his bed, bowed twice, and said, “Your illness is getting better. I hope that you can come with me.” Then he led the Mr. Lou out. Lou suddenly felt very agile, and so he thought that his sickness was cured. Having traveled on several *li*, he saw that there was a government office with officers and soldiers on both sides. There was a vermilion gate that was very tall and was inscribed with the phrase, “The Courtyard of the Netherworld.” Lou was startled and asked: “What is the Courtyard of the Netherworld doing here in the human world?” The man in the purple gown replied: “The way to the netherworld is always connected to humans. But how can common people know that?”

The Netherworld was aware of the human world but not vice versa. The information asymmetry actually became the foundation of many misunderstanding and conflicts between the two worlds, which were commonly represented in Tang narratives. In his dream, Lou Shide successfully stepped into and then began to thoroughly explore the strange space. He also found a booklet that indicated his own destiny. Yet he did not have very much time to scrutinize it, for:

忽有一聲沿空而下，震徹簷宇。桉掾驚曰：“天鼓且動。君宜疾歸，不可留矣。”聞其聲，遂驚悟，始為夢遊耳。時天已曙，其所居東鄰有佛寺，擊曉鍾，蓋桉掾所謂天鼓者也。²²⁷

Suddenly, there was a sound coming from the sky that caused the entire house to shake. The Surveillance Assistant was startled and said, “The heavenly drums have started to sound. You had better hurry back. You cannot stay any longer.” Hearing this sound, he thus woke up with a start. Only then did he

²²⁶ *Taiping guangji*, 277.2194-95.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

realize that he was sleepwalking. At that time, it was already bright and the temple in the east of where he lived started to strike its morning bells. He then realized that these were probably the heavenly drums to which the Surveillance Assistant had referred.

Bells and drums in the capital, which originally functioned to warn the public in the human world, here not only marked the temporal transition, but also enforced a spatial shift. When the morning bells started to sound, Lou Shide was immediately urged to return to the human world, and only then did he realize that it was just a dream. The street-drum system in Chang'an related stories often acted like an alarm clock to change the tempo of people's life and to adjust the momentum of the narrative.

If the street-drum system determines the transition and shifts between the human world and the netherworld, certain spaces, such as the ancestral temples depicted in the story "Xin Cha" 辛察 below, show ideal conditions for such a transition and shift. The story starts with the retainer Wei Shi 魏式 suddenly dying in the Shen family's ancestral temple in the Yanfu Ward 延福里, in the fourth year of the Dahe 大和 Era (830). Then it flashes back to two days earlier when the soul of Xin Cha, the Director of the Transit Authorization Bureau 司門令史, who lived in the Shengye Ward 勝業里, was taken away by an underworld officer in a yellow jacket and later released when he promised to pay a lot of money for the dead in exchange. The underworld officer urged Xin Cha to hire a vehicle to transport the money out of the city. Here follows Cha's reaction:

察思度良久，忽悟其所居之西百餘步，有一力車傭載者，亦常往來。遂與黃衫俱詣其門，門即閉關矣。察叩之，車者出曰：“夜已久，安得來耶？”察曰：“有客要相顧，載錢至延平門外。”車曰：“諾，即來。”

”裝其錢訖，察將不行，黃衫又邀曰：“請相送至城門。”三人相引部領，歷城西街，抵長興西南而行。²²⁸

Cha thought about it for a long while and it suddenly occurred to him that, more than a hundred steps to the west of where he lived, there was a cart puller with whom he often associated. He therefore paid him a visit along with the man in the yellow jacket, but his door was already closed. Cha knocked, and the cart puller came out and said, “It is already late night; why are you here?” Cha said, “I have a guest who wants to use your service to carry money out of the Yanping Gate.” The cart puller said, “Okay, I will be right back.” After they had loaded all the money, Cha decided that he was not going. Then the man in the yellow jacket said, “Please escort me to the city gate.” The three men alternately leading the way, they walked across the western city streets, and along the southwestern part of the Changxing Ward.

As the Yanping Gate was the farthest gate from the Shengye Ward where Xin Cha lived (Fig. 22), they needed a wheeled cart to carry the money. Since the Shengye Ward was right next to the East Market, it was highly likely that Xin would call on the cart puller in the East Market. As revealed later in the story, neither Xin Cha nor the cart puller traveled using their bodies alone: Xin traveled by his soul and the cart puller through this dream. Thus, they were not confined by the curfew system and could freely walk in the streets:

抵長興西南而行。時落月輝輝，鐘鼓將動，黃衫曰：“天方曙，不可往矣，當且止延福沈氏廟。”逡巡至焉，其門亦閉。黃衫叩之，俄有一女人，可年五十餘，紫裙白襦，自出應門。黃衫謝曰：“夫人幸勿怪，其後日當有公事，方來此廟中。今有少錢，未可遽提去，請借一隙處暫貯收之，後日公事了，即當般取。”女人許之。察與黃衫及車人，共般置其錢於廟西北角，又於戶外，見有葦席數領，遂取之覆。纔畢，天色方曉，黃衫辭謝而去，察與車者相隨歸。²²⁹

²²⁸ Ibid., 385.3073.

²²⁹ Ibid.

They passed by the Changxing Ward, and walked towards the southwest. At that time, the falling moon shone and bells and drums were about to sound. The man in the yellow jacket said, "It is almost dawn. We should not go on. Let's stop at the Shen family's ancestral temple in the Yanfu Ward." They went there hesitantly, and upon arrival, found that the door was also closed (as all other residence doors were; for example, the cart puller's door was also closed when Xin Cha visited him). The man in the yellow jacket knocked on the door, and soon a woman of over fifty years old in a purple skirt and a short, white coat answered the door. The man in the yellow jacket apologized, saying, "Please do not blame us. We have business to conduct the day after tomorrow, and we will return to this temple then. Now, as we have some money that we cannot bring with us at once, I ask for a corner at your place to store it temporarily. The day after tomorrow, as soon as we are finished with our affairs, we will return to remove it." The woman agreed. Cha, the man in the yellow jacket, and the cart puller together carried the money to the northwestern corner of the temple. As they saw several reed mats outside the temple, they took them to cover the money. Right after they were done, the sky turned bright. The man in the yellow jacket expressed his thanks and left. Cha returned, along with the cart puller.

Evidently, the street-drum system exerted an influence on the plans of the officer from the underworld. When "the bells and drums were about to sound" 鐘鼓將動, he realized that they should not advance but find a place to store the money. Both the Changxing Ward 長興坊 and the Yanfu Ward 延福坊 were situated along the way from the Shengye Ward to the Yanping Gate, so "they passed by the Changxing Ward and walked towards the southwest" 抵長興西南而行. When they decided to stop en route to rest, they chose the Shen family's ancestral temple 沈氏廟 in the Yanfu Ward.

Later, when Xin Cha had regained consciousness with his soul coming back to his body and the cart puller had awakened from his dream, they recounted to each other their experiences and were astonished by the similarities. When they returned together to the Shen family's ancestral temple, they found that the money was still there, and a man

living there confirmed that the old woman who answered the door the night before was his deceased mother. The story then ends in a manner that corresponds to the death of Wei Shi mentioned at the beginning.

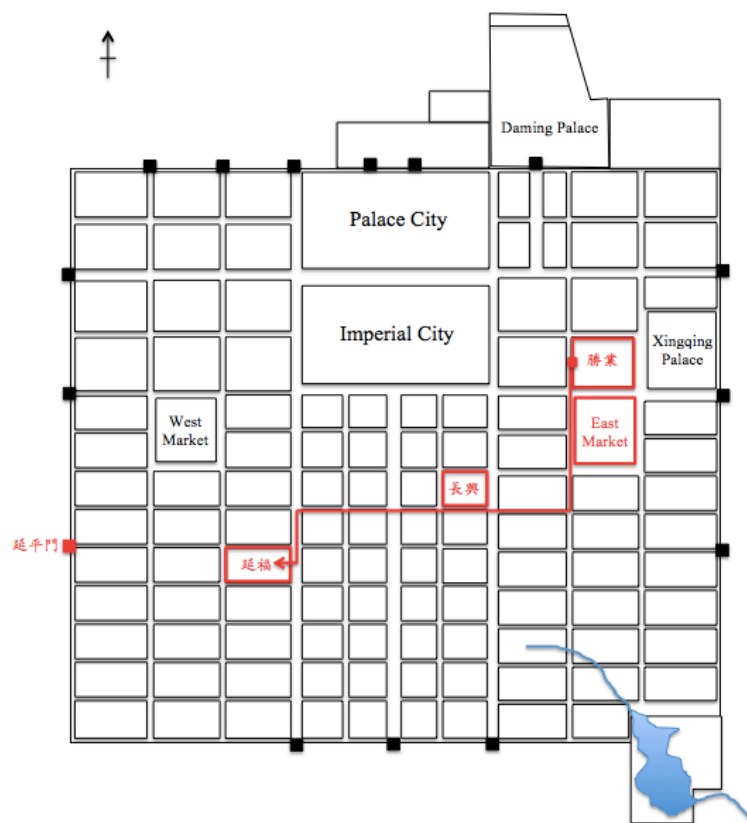


Figure 22. The Shengye, Changxing, Yanfu Wards, the East Market, and the Yanping Gate as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

其夕五更，魏氏一家，聞打門聲，使候之，即無所見，如是者三四，式意謂之盜。明日，宣言於縣胥，求備之。其日，式夜邀客為煎餅，食訖而卒。察欲驗黃衫所言公事，嘗自於其側偵之，至是果然矣。²³⁰

Upon the fifth watch (about 3:00 a.m.), the Wei family heard the sound of knocking. When they asked people to see, nobody was there. This happened three or four times. Shi thought this was the doings of a thief. The next day, he reported this to the county officer and asked for guards to defend the house against the thief. On the same day, Shi invited some guests to eat pancakes in

²³⁰ Ibid.

the night. He died after he had finished eating. Cha wanted to know about the official business that the man in the yellow jacket had mentioned, so he investigated this. Everything was just as he expected.

Only at this moment did the full story come out: the officer from the underworld had come to the human world to collect the dying Wei Shi's soul. This was in fact the "official business" 公事 that he had mentioned to Xin Cha. On his way to Wei officer from the underworld had come to the human world to collect the dying Wei Shi's soul. Like Kou Yong's story, the flashback in this narrative is adopted to create a suspense, which add a sense of thrill to the story's mysterious atmosphere.

With the flashback and suspense, however, the story itself is not unique; but the ancestral temple in the story, used as a place for the *yin* and *yang* transition and interaction, deserves some attention. In traditional Chinese society, ancestral temples were where people offered sacrifices to their deceased ancestors. According to the Tang rules, these temples were usually located in the remote wards where poor people dwelled. Due to their relatively isolated locations, they were also considered places for ghosts and monsters to hide themselves.²³¹ Ancestral temples belonged to neither the human world nor the underworld, but were a space for communication between the two. In other word, ancestral temples formed a meaningful "third space" that corresponded to the "third time" invoked by the sounding of the street drums. To experience the third time and space, one needed to take the form of either a soul or a sleepwalker, as Xin Cha and the cart puller did in the story. Their peculiar experience in the night and resumption of normal life in the day represented their exchange between the two worlds.

²³¹ See the "Baiguan jiamiao" 百官家廟 entry in *Tang huiyao*, 19.387-88.

As for narrative strategies, the real urban layout was again used to rationalize the plot development. The distance between Xin Cha's residence and the Yanping Gate was far enough to facilitate the narrative development. Meanwhile, having heard the drum beat, the underworld official found that he still had enough time to store the money, while Xin Cha and the cart puller managed to return home before sunrise.

In some other, less common cases, the strict boundary between day and night was violated, which means that the ghosts made themselves present to the public during the daytime. Nevertheless, they generally did so with considerable scruples as, if their true face was exposed, they would become very embarrassed:

元和初，調選時，[李僖伯]上都興道里假居。早往崇仁里訪同選人，忽於興道東門北下曲，馬前見一短女人，服孝衣，約長三尺已來，言語聲音，若大婦人，咄咄似有所尤。即云：“千忍萬忍，終須決一場，我終不放伊！”彈指數下云：“大奇大奇！”僖伯鼓動後出，心思異之，亦不敢問。日旰，及廣衢，車馬已鬧。此婦女為行路所怪，不知其由。²³²

At the beginning of the Yuanhe Era, when Li Xibo was transferred to a post in the esteemed capital Chang'an, he rented a house in the Xingdao Ward. One morning, he went to the Chongren Ward to visit his colleague who had also been transferred there. Suddenly, he saw, in the serpentine lane to the north of the east gate of the Xingdao Ward, a short woman in front of a horse wearing mourning clothes. She was about three feet tall, but her voice and the way in which she talked made her sound like a much taller woman. She tut-tutted as if she were complaining. Then she said, "I've endured many things; eventually, we should have a final confrontation. I will never let him go." She then snapped her fingers several times and said, "So strange! So strange!" Xibo went out after the drum sounded. He felt strange but dared not say anything. When dusk fell, he arrived at a grand avenue where the traffic was bustling. Passersby thought the woman weird; no one knew where she came from.

²³² *Taiping guangji*, 343.2722.

When Li Xibo saw the three-foot tall woman complaining aloud, it was before the opening of the ward gates. Li witnessed the strange scene during his wait in front of the gates. Only after Li “went out after the drum sounded” 鼓動後出 did he have a chance to contemplate what had happened. The Xingdao Ward, where Li resided, was located on Zhuquemen Street 朱雀門街 abutting the south side of the Imperial City, while the Chongren Ward, where Li’s friend lived, adjoined the east side of the Imperial City. Since both were in the urban center of Chang’an, “when dusk fell” 日旰, Li Xibo found that “the traffic was already bustling” 車馬已鬧. While people were rushing back home, the short woman drew their attention. From dawn to dusk, Li was no longer the only one who noticed this woman, as her strange behavior had already become a public spectacle:

如此兩日，稍稍人多，只在崇仁北街。居無何，僖伯自省門東出。及景風門，見廣衢中，人鬧已萬萬，如東西隅之戲場大，圍之。其間無數小兒環坐，短女人往前，布幕其首。言詞轉無次第，群小兒大共嗤笑。有人欲近之，則來拏攫，小兒又退。如是日中，看者轉眾。短女人方坐，有一小兒突前，牽其幕首布，遂落。見三尺小青竹，掛一髑髏髑然。金吾以其事上聞。²³³

It was like this for two days and things gradually got a bit more crowded. The woman remained in the street along the north side of the Chongren Ward. Before long, Xibo went out by the east gate of the Department. When he reached the Jingfeng Gate, he saw in the grand avenue thousands of clamorous people. The crowd filled an area as large as the acrobatic fields on the east and west sides combined. A number of children sat in a circle in the middle. The short woman stepped forward, a piece of cloth covering her face. Her speech turned out to be incoherent and the kids sneered and laughed at her loudly. If anyone intended to approach her, she would fight back and the person would then step backward. It was like this until noon, when the

²³³ Ibid.

number of spectators became even larger. While the short woman was sitting, a small child suddenly came forward and grabbed her face cover, so that it fell off. People then saw that, [where she had stood], on top of a three-foot long green bamboo pole, there was an empty and damaged skull. The Lord of the Imperial Insignia reported this to the Emperor.

The short woman not only made herself visible to the public in the human world, to which she did not belong, but also attracted numerous onlookers in the bustling streets. Her proclamation about the final confrontation can be considered as a provocation meant to show intransigence towards the human world. Even so, she still had to use a piece of cloth to cover her face, and whenever people approached her, she seemed very nervous and immediately drove them off. She did so because she knew that she should not have come out in the day, and she would be further violating the rule by exposing herself to the spectators. The piece of cloth was a protective covering for her to use in the human world. The story does not specify the end of the woman, but the abrupt end of the story indicates the end of her activity and the human world's victory over the underworld.

Like this story and many others, the literature of this time often depicts a seesaw battle between the human world and the underworld. In the religious world of the Tang Dynasty, the ward system and the street-drum system in Chang'an regulated not only the lives of common citizens, but also the actions of denizens of the underworld. For narrative writers, the ward and street-drum systems formed a large resource pool. They drew inspiration from it, and took material from this pool to make their stories more verisimilar as well as to twist and enrich the plots. If the story happened to take place in a public space, it had a greater transmission effect. The stories of Wen Zhang's honor guard passing through Tianmen Street, of Li Gan and his people praying for the rain in Qujiang, and of the short woman exposing herself in the Chongren Ward all had public

effects and facilitated the formation of narratives. In the next chapter, the public spaces of Chang'an will be discussed in terms of their role in narrative representations.

CHAPTER THREE. THE CHANG'AN OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES: PUBLIC SPACE AND ITS NARRATIVE REPRESENTATIONS

The discussion of the transformation of residences into temples in the first chapter raises the question of public space in Chang'an. When a private space is transformed into a public one, access to it changes, often becoming easier, and also more dynamic and diversified. Public curiosity stimulates the spread of narratives treating this kind of space. In the second chapter, the image of public space was also very significant. The Heavenly Street in the story of Capital Governor Wen Zhang, the Qujiang area in the story of Capital Governor Li Gan, the East Market in "Chezhong nūzi," and the multiple public streets in the story of Li Xibo all serve as crucial settings for the plot development in the stories in which they figure. The public character of these spaces attracted various kinds of people and extended these spaces with additional functions than their original ones, making them into a social stage for people to meet, learn, perform, and creating new networks and patterns of behavior.

The term "public space" as used in this chapter comes from the work of Western scholars on the urban history of capitalist societies, and refers to a social space that is generally open and accessible to all. Streets, markets, and parks are typically considered public space. According to the American architect and environmental designer Stephen Carr:

Public space is the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds. The streets, squares, and parks of a city give form to the ebb and flow of human exchange. These dynamic spaces are an essential counterpart to the more settled places and routines of work and home life, providing the channels for

movement, the nodes of communication, and the common grounds for play and relaxation.²³⁴

This chapter will use the concept of “public space” in the context of medieval Chinese urban history, where public space was still part of a “communal life” and “human exchange,” and in a way in which it would not be in the modern world. The concept will be used here in two distinct but overlapping ways: to refer to spaces to which all citizens are granted some legal right of access, such as the markets, parks, temples, and squares; and, in a more restrictive sense, to spaces in which citizens gather to form themselves into, and represent themselves as, a public. Public spaces serve as a common ground where people carry out the functional and ritual activities that bind a community, whether in the normal routines of daily life or in periodic festivities.

The sense of community does not spring from nowhere. People meet each other in public spaces to form relationships. What makes public spaces special is that in them one can meet strangers and form relationships with them in which each person remains a stranger to the other. Familial and domestic interactions then begin to give way to social interactions. People may manifest very different personalities when they are in public spaces. Thus, public spaces have an impact on how people behave and react. The American sociologist Richard Sennett considers public spaces as not merely practical or eventful spaces but also as normative ones where, through our encounters with strangers

²³⁴ Stephen Carr et al., *Public Space* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 3.

and foreigners, we are shaped as tolerant fellow citizens of a society.²³⁵ To Sennett, it is the possibility of open encounters between strangers that is the essential feature of a city.

Cities are filled with public spaces that are characterized by a balanced disorder between the strange and the familiar, and between the unsafe and the safe. In such spaces, strangers are likely to meet each other, not necessarily through common activities but often by simply moving around in the same space. When meeting others, a person's identity remains a mystery, which leaves room for the uncontrolled, unpredictable, and spontaneous, and also serves to encourage city dwellers to welcome diversity. Such confrontations can mean that one's own identity is challenged or confirmed. Public spaces also open up the possibility of intimate meetings between strangers, and for new experiences that can bring information and unexpected opportunities.

As the political, economical, and cultural center of the Tang Empire, Chang'an was a gathering place with more resources and opportunities than any place else in China at the time, and an ideal place to meet strangers. People would gather in the capital for various purposes and interact with one another incidentally or on a long-term basis. In the busy and lively public spaces in Chang'an, there was the potential to meet people of all degrees of social status and from every background. This offered opportunities that one would likely otherwise miss. As will be discussed later, during the Tang Dynasty, people were already conscious of relying on the public character of Chang'an to acquire information, make money, or build their reputation. The following story may serve as an example. A man, Pei Hang 裴航, fell in love with a girl named Yunying 雲英. Her

²³⁵ Helle Juul, ed., *Public Space: The Familiar into the Strange*, trans. by Dan A. Marmorstein, (Copenhagen: Architectural Publisher B, 2011), p. 40.

grandmother asked for a precious jade pestle as the betrothal gift. Pei looked for it everywhere but without luck. While he was considered an eccentric when most people didn't know what he was after, he did finally find someone who understood his needs and offered the help he needed:

及至京國，殊不以舉事為意，但於坊曲鬧市喧衢，而高聲訪其玉杵臼，曾無影響。或遇朋友，若不相識。眾言為狂人。數月餘日，或遇一貨玉老翁曰：“近得虢州藥鋪卞老書，云有玉杵臼貨之。郎君懇求如此，此君吾當為書導達。”航媿荷珍重，果獲杵臼。²³⁶

When he arrived in the capital, he forgot entirely any thoughts of the examination, but only inquired loudly about the jade pestle and mortar in wards and alleyways, in bustling markets and noisy avenues. However, he never got any information. Sometimes he would meet his friends, but he would behave as if he didn't know them. People all called him a madman. One day after a few months, he met an old jade trader, who told him, “Recently I received a letter from Mr. Bian, the owner of a drug store in Guozhou. He said he had a jade pestle and a jade mortar to sell. Since you seek for them so earnestly, I will write a letter for you to introduce you to him.” Pei Hang felt deeply indebted to him and appreciated this very much. As expected, he obtained the pestle and the mortar.

Having tried very hard for a long time, Pei Hang finally received the information he desperately needed when he stepped into the capital, especially into its public spaces with their , he met an old ja 坊曲, and tried very hard for a long avenues” v 鬧市喧衢. The public spaces opened up opportunities for Pei in a seemingly very natural way. Through this arrangement the narrative writer successfully reveals both the value of the jade pestle and mortar and Peitrader, who told him, “Recently I

²³⁶ *Taiping guangji*, 50.314.

Due to their great flow of people and hidden opportunities, the bustling public spaces, such as the markets, in Chang'an became a favorable setting for Tang narratives. Accordingly, the first section of this chapter will be devoted to Tang narratives related to the two markets in Chang'an, the East Market and the West Market, and will analyze how narrative writers depicted these markets as information distribution centers, from which characters in the narratives attained enlightenment, fame, and success, as they encountered and negotiated various twists of fate.

Like the markets, the Qujiang area was also an ideal public space for unexpected encounters. With its beautiful natural and artificial scenery, Qujiang became a site of public entertainments and a place of celebration for the newly admitted *jinshi* scholars. Royals, officials, scholars, and common people from various walks of life would frequently flock together and interact with each other in a way that was not commonly seen elsewhere. The second section of this chapter will examine some stories of events in Qujiang and discuss how this particular setting functioned in advancing the plots and intensifying the conflicts.

The increasing public demand for a rich and varied life even pushed many Buddhist temples to modify their layouts to cater to different groups of people. Some temples provided accommodations for scholars preparing for the *jinshi* examination; some hosted theater plays and acrobatic performances; and some designed artificial landscapes to attract the public. All of these innovations worked together to turn a sacred religious space into a vigorous and secular public space. This space welcomed daily a motley assemblage, and also created opportunities for crime (specifically, fraud). The third section of this chapter will look closely at some narratives representing the Buddhist and

Taoist spaces apart from their religious roles, and will investigate how these spaces came to be secularized and as such to create coincidences and build characters in the narratives.

The streets in Chang'an played and acrobatic performances; and some designed artificial landscapes to attend, and it introduced a greater sense of uncertainty and randomness. It also facilitated plot changes in narratives about these spaces, where changes could occur at any moment, and so too the narratives would typically become more tantalizing when placed in such spaces. Among all of the streets in the city, the axial north-south thoroughfares of the capital, Chengtianmen Street 承天門街 and Zhuquemen Street 朱雀門街 (sometimes mentioned interchangeably), were particularly important. These two streets connected the Chengtian Gate 承天門, the Zhuque Gate 朱雀門, and the Mingde Gate 明德門 (the central points of access to, respectively, the Palace City, the Imperial City, and Chang'an to, respectively, the Palace City and the Imperial City). These two streets connected landscapes to attend, and in the Wanning 萬年, into which the capital was divided.²³⁷ The axis also served a dual role as both a shared space for civic activities and a privileged space for national rituals and ceremonies. Along this axial thoroughfare could be found both lively interaction between ordinary people and a strict hierarchical order that every citizen had to be aware of. Narratives with these two streets as the setting were often sites of a seesaw battle between the violation and enforcement of the rules, or between challenging and defending the authorities.

²³⁷ See Ma Dezhi 馬得志, "Tangdai Chang'an cheng kaogu jilüe" 唐代長安城考古紀略, in *Kaogu* no. 11 (1963), p. 600.

Apart from the more typical public spaces such as streets, parks, and markets, privately-owned buildings and property visible from sidewalks and public thoroughfares, though not considered public spaces, might affect the public visual landscape. For example, open-structured imperial towers made it possible for common people to see from outside the activities taking place inside, and thus had contributed to narratives about the mysterious royal family. They also allowed the royals to look into the streets to enjoy the urban view as well as to understand the common people's daily lives. To study this particular phenomenon, the fourth and last section in this chapter presents a case study of the Huaes 花萼 and Qinzheng 勤政 Towers to reveal how this imperial architectural complex, which was by and large related to Emperor Xuanzong, became a semi-public space and a unique literary symbol, due to its open structure and the mutual gazes of the insiders and outsiders.

These public spaces, with the various functions added to their originally designed ones, created many possibilities for narratives of Chang'an. Narrative writers often relied on public spaces to portray characters and to construct plots: when characters were in distress, they would meet their benefactors in public spaces to seek help or obtain crucial information; when the stories reached an impasse, the introduction within them of public spaces would bring in new dimensions and twists, forming a certain narrative tension. As discussed in Chapter Two, the attempt to positively depict boundary-crossing actions implied a potential desire among citizens in Chang'an to abandon the restrictive ward system. Likewise, the enlarged possibilities suggested by public spaces also indicate the possible pursuit of some of the new opportunities introduced by an improved urban structure. When social development in the mid-to-late Tang period met hindrances caused

by the ward system, people expected that broader public spaces and a more open-structured city framework would help them to further pursue their daily needs.

Such a potential for change has its particular origins. Significant changes in Chinese society during the Tang and Song periods have drawn keen attention from scholars since the early twentieth century. Ever since Naito Asahiko (1866-1934) proposed the hypothesis of the Tang and Song periods have drawn keen ardently investigating the social, political, demographic, and economic changes that occurred between the mid-Tang and early Song Dynasties.²³⁸ The theory of the Tang and Song periods have drawn keen ardently investigating scholars Mark Elvin and Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信 published their works on the medieval economic revolution, they both deemed urbanization to be one of the most important changes in the Song Dynasty economic revolution.²³⁹ Later, G. William Skinner enumerated five features of the “medieval urban revolution,” one of which was the disappearance of the enclosed marketplace, along with the walled ward system, and its replacement by a “much freer street plan in which trade and commerce could be conducted anywhere within the city or its outlying suburbs.”²⁴⁰

²³⁸ For a more detailed introduction, see Miyakawa Hisayuku, “An Outline of the Naito Hypothesis and Its Effect on Japanese Studies of China,” in *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14.4 (1955): 533-52.

²³⁹ See Mark Elvin, “The Revolution in Market Structure and Urbanization,” in *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973); Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信, “Hokusō no shakai keizai” 北宋の社会経済, in Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄, ed., *Sekai rekishi taikei, Chūgokushi* 3 世界歴史大系, 中國史 3 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1997); Shiba Yoshinobu, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū*, trans. by Mark Elvin as *Commerce and Society in Sung China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies, 1970).

²⁴⁰ According to Skinner, the five features are: (1) A relaxation of the requirement that each county could maintain only one market, which had to be located in the capital city; (2) the

Even though the transition from the one to the other was a long and often non-linear process influenced by many factors, and it is still a matter of controversy whether the ward system completely “collapsed” during this time period,²⁴¹ scholars have reached a consensus that there was a gradual erosion of the Tang ward system. By the end of the Tang Dynasty, a number of significant changes took place—including the appearance of commercial activities outside of the markets, the disregarding of curfew, and the tearing down of ward walls.²⁴² In fact, beginning in the mid-ninth century, there were already initial signs of a crucial urban transformation. The rigidly zoned city made up of strictly regulated walled wards was loosening up. Businesses prospered in wards that were close to markets, major routes, and even palaces. Restaurants were open late into the night. Small-scale commerce emerged in many wards. Within and without the two markets, businesses, such as pastry shops, and ateliers for carpets and musical instruments, were conducted day and night, defying all sanctions. Wards located close to markets and palaces were especially successful in attracting businesses. Nightlife in these wards thrived. Other signs of the erosion of the severe ward system were also apparent. These were generally known as *qinjie* 侵街, or es. Restaurants were open late into the night.

breakdown and eventual collapse of the official marketing organization; (3) the disappearance of the enclosed marketplace, along with the walled ward system, and their replacement by a “much freer street plan in which trade and commerce could be conducted anywhere within the city or its outlying suburbs”; (4) the rapid expansion of particular walled cities and the growth of commercial suburbs outside their gates; and (5) the emergence of “great numbers of small and intermediate-sized towns” with important economic functions. See G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China*, p. 23-24.

²⁴¹ For example, see a different opinion in Cheng Yinong, *Gudai chengshi xingtai yanjiu fangfa xintan*, pp. 74-88.

²⁴² See the introduction in Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), pp. 67-96.

Small-scale commerce emerged in many wards. Within and without the two markets, businesses, such as pastry structures beyond the street limits obstructing public roadways. Some people were even brazen enough to build structures on public avenues beyond the confines of the wards. Although the imperial authorities made efforts to regain control of the urban system, especially in the es. Restaurants were open late into the night. Small-scale commerce emerged in many wards. Within and without the two markets, businesses, such as pastry structures beyond the street limits obstructing public roadways. Some people were and was preoccupied with more pressing problems than urban matters. This was especially the case after the popular unrest that began in 860 and that culminated in the disastrous Huang Chao 黃巢 (ca. 835-ca. 884) rebellion, which crippled the regime.²⁴³

Spatial change within a city increases its flexibility and consequent carrying capacity. Increased commercial growth and the connections between markets and various social groups promote the transformation of a city's social structures. The improvements of the social structure in turn contribute to maintaining the city's inner vitality, which dictates its sustainable development. The many flourishing marketplaces, the increasingly popular entertainment fields, and the dynamically congested streets and squares all testified to the expansion of the urban public space.

With the continuing growth in public space, people's lives became more diversified; and with urban life becoming more diversified, it attracted many newcomers and hence public space grew. In any case, narratives about people's lives became more flexible and varied accordingly. The previous two chapters showed that the urban space of Chang'an

²⁴³ Ibid., pp. 71-73.

had already become a pool of narrative material that Tang Dynasty writers could artfully and intentionally draw from to construct their stories. This chapter will explore this further by focusing on the additional functions of public spaces. Also, since fictional narratives and historical records have long been used to support and supplement each other, this chapter will also make use of Tang narratives as a means to understand the dramatic shifts in medieval urban Chinese society. In terms of urban design, the gradual evolution from the Tang Dynasty grid pattern to the Song Dynasty open layout adds a note of meaning and distinction to the grander Tang-Song transition, which is reflected in the Tang narratives.

East and West Markets: An Information Distribution Center

Following the tradition of central and municipal authorities, the Tang Dynasty rulers also prioritized administrative functions over commercial activities. The capital city, Chang'an, served mainly as the royal residence and seat of the central government, with commerce playing a less important role. However, as with any great metropolis, Chang'an was full of business activity, and even attracted trade from all over the world. To both facilitate commercial activities and render them more easily manageable, the urban designers planned two vast commercial areas, the East and West Markets, which were situated centrally, in the eastern and western sectors of the city, and with ready access to the Imperial City. The two markets were equidistant from the Imperial City and were also located symmetrically on either side of the axial north-south thoroughfare. Their convenient location facilitated business transactions with the central government

and also benefited the neighboring residential areas. Even though the central government later would open more markets, they were all either abolished after a short period or were limited in their functions.²⁴⁴ The East and West Markets remained, until the city's last days, the prime centers of trading activity.²⁴⁵ Inside the two markets, four main streets formed a pattern resembling the Chinese ideogram *jing* 井 (well) (Fig. 23).²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ During Emperor Gaozong's reign (649-683), a commercial area known as the Middle Market 中市 was created, taking up all of the Anshan Ward 安善坊 and half of the Daye Ward 大業坊 in the middle-southern part of the city. Records also mention a South Market 南市, which remained active until the Chuigong 垂拱 Era (685-688). However, neither the exact date nor the location of its establishment is documented. The Middle Market was abolished in 701, but was revived as a second South Market in 749. That market was located on the premises of the Weiyuan Barracks 威遠營 in the Anshan Ward. At the same time a North Market 北市 was set up in the Huaqing Palace 華清宮 area in the eastern suburbs. While the date of the abolition of the second South Market is not clear, its existence is noted in records of the Kaicheng 開成 Era (836-840). Lastly, the New Market 新市, located south of the Fanglin Gate 芳林門, was constructed in 817.

²⁴⁵ Victor Cunrui Xiong has a detailed introduction to the marketplaces in Chang'an. See his *Sui-Tang Chang'an*, pp. 165-94.

²⁴⁶ In ancient times, markets had always been located by a water source, so marketplaces were also called *shijing* 市井 (lit. market and well).

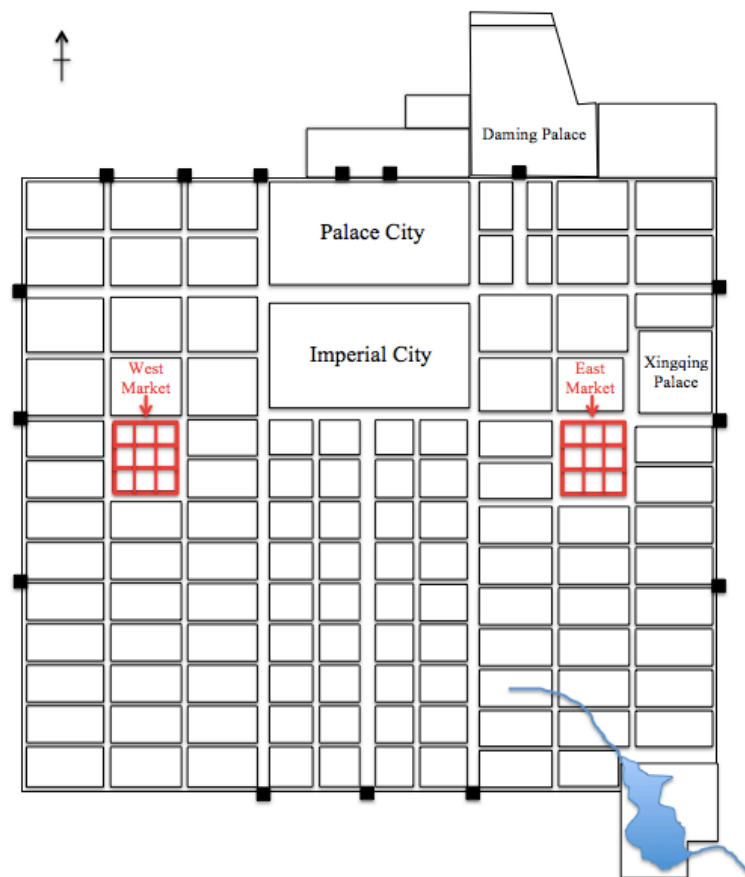


Figure 23. The East and West Markets as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

According to archeological reports, the East Market measured approximately 1,000 meters north-south by 924 meters east-west. The four main streets were each about 30 meters wide, almost double the width of those in the West Market. Each of the four outer walls contained two gates that opened onto a city street.²⁴⁷ The remains of the West Market, which measure 1,031 meters north-south by 927 meters east-west, are better preserved than those of its eastern counterpart. The two main east-west streets were 16 meters wide and were crossed by two main north-south streets of equal width, thus dividing the market into nine sections. The market precincts were delineated by four

²⁴⁷ *Chang'an zhi*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:8.118b.

market walls, along which ran four interior streets, each 14 meters wide. The streets surrounding the market were unusually broad: both the south and north streets were 120 meters wide; the east street was 117 meters wide; and the west street, only partially preserved, was 97 meters wide. Except for the north street, which was the same width as the city street it connected with, the other three were significantly wider than regular city streets. This suggests that the city planners anticipated heavy traffic flow to, from, and around the market. The archeological report also indicates that the goods traded in the markets were in great quantities and ranged from daily necessities to luxury items.²⁴⁸

According to Song Minqiu in his *Chang'an zhi*, “The West Market was called Liren Market (The Market that Benefits People) in the Sui Dynasty ... The stores and hostels in the market resembled the system of the East Market ... There were countless vagrants and transients” 西市隋曰利人市，…市內店肆如東市之制…浮寄流寓不可勝計。²⁴⁹

The situation of the East Market was a bit different. According to Song Minqiu:

東市隋曰都會市…市內貨財二百二十行，四面立邸。四方珍奇皆所積集，……公卿以下民止多在朱雀街東，第宅所占甚多。由是商賈所湊多歸西市，西市戶口少，列律寬。自此之外，繁雜稍劣于西市矣。²⁵⁰

The East Market was called Duhui Market (The Market of the Metropolis) in the Sui Dynasty ... There were 220 bazaars in the market, which was surrounded by residences. Rare treasures from everywhere were all gathered here ... From high officials downward, many people resided at the east area of Zhuque Street. Residences occupied a vast area. Because of this, merchants would mostly go to the West Market, which had fewer

²⁴⁸ See Ma Dezhi, “Tangdai Chang'an cheng kaogu jilüe,” pp. 595-611.

²⁴⁹ *Chang'an zhi*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:10.128a.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:8.118b.

residents and slacker regulations. Other than this, in terms of prosperity and diversity, [the East Market] was inferior to the West Market.

In summary, although the East and West Markets were almost identical in size and shape, their locations predestined them to different roles and development. By the time of Emperor Xuanzong's reign, the East Market was surrounded by the mansions of the noble and powerful.²⁵¹ The West Market, on the other hand, was located at a greater distance from the residences of high-ranking officials and royal relatives. Less subject to official control and interference, the West Market attracted more ordinary business people than did the East Market. The presence of a great number of foreign merchants also gave the West Market a more exotic and cosmopolitan flavor.²⁵²

Despite their different features, the East and West Markets were both flourishing commercial areas. The great diversity of people thronged here made the markets into an information distribution center and a place where one would encounter various people. In Tang narratives, when people were desperately in need of information or eagerly looking for someone, they would often find what they were looking for in one of the two markets. For example, in “Renshi zhuan,” when Scholar Zheng learned that Ms. Ren's real identity was as a fox spirit,²⁵³ he was astonished but still interested in her, while she for her part

²⁵¹ Chief Minister Li Linfu's mansion was in the southeast corner of the Pingkang Ward, while Yang Guozhong and the Lady of the State of Guo had their mansions in the Xuanyang Ward. An Lushan resided in the Qinren Ward 親仁坊, and just northeast of the East Market lay the newly constructed Xingqing Palace. See Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Sui-Tang Chang'an*, p. 170.

²⁵² Xiang Da 向達 has a detailed introduction to the foreign stores in the West Market. See his *Tangdai Chang'an yu xiyu wenming* 唐代長安與西域文明 (Chongqing: Chongqing Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 24-30.

²⁵³ See the related translation and discussion in Chapter Two.

felt ashamed and tried to avoid seeing him. The story reaches an impasse before Scholar Zheng went to the West Market:

然想其艷冶，願復一見之，心嘗存之不忘。經十許日，鄭子遊，入西市衣肆，瞥然見之，曩女奴從。鄭子遽呼之，任氏側身周旋於稠人中以避焉。鄭子連呼前迫，方背立，以扇障其後曰：“公知之，何相近焉？”鄭子曰：“雖知之，何患？”對曰：“事可愧恥，難施面目。”鄭子曰：“勤想如是，忍相棄乎？”對曰：“安敢棄也？懼公之見惡耳。”鄭子發誓，詞旨益切。任氏乃迴眸去扇，光彩艷麗如初。²⁵⁴

Nevertheless, he kept imagining [Ms. Ren's] sensual beauty, and the desire to see her again remained in his heart. A dozen or so days passed. While Scholar Zheng was out, he went into a clothing store in the West Market, and suddenly he saw her, accompanied by her servants as before. Scholar Zheng instantly shouted to her. Ms. Ren turned to the side and tried to hide herself in a crowd to avoid him. But Scholar Zheng kept shouting to her and pushed his way forward. Finally, she stood with her back to him, screening her face from his sight with a fan that she had with her. "You already know, so why do you come near me?" He answered, "I know, but I don't care." She replied, "The situation makes me feel very embarrassed. It's hard to look you in the face." Zheng then said, "Since I think about you so intently, how can you bear to reject me?" She replied, "How could I dare reject you? It is only that I am afraid of being despised by you." Scholar Zheng then swore an oath, and she found his words very moving. At this, Ms. Ren turned her eyes to him and removed the fan, revealing the same dazzling brightness and beauty that she had shown before.²⁵⁵

The crowded West Market not only provided a chance for the lovers to meet again, but also made it possible for Ms. Ren to hide from someone whom she felt embarrassed to talk to. If they had been in an open field, there would have been no way for her to hide. But Scholar Zheng discovered her nonetheless and stopped her from escaping. Upon his

²⁵⁴ *Taiping guangji*, 452.3693.

²⁵⁵ Translation slightly revised from Stephen Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginning to 1911*, p. 520.

earnest request and self-revelation, she submitted. Since they were in a public space, her surrender was also a reasonable reaction meant to avoid drawing attention from the public and making a spectacle of herself.

In the next famous story, provided a chance for 破鏡重圓 (A Broken Mirror Regaining its Intactness), the author makes the role of the West Market more significant:

陳太子舍人徐德言之妻，後主叔寶之妹，封樂昌公主，才色冠絕。時陳政方亂，德言知不相保，謂其妻曰：“以君之才容，國亡必入權豪之家，斯永絕矣。儻情緣未斷，猶冀相見，宜有以信之。”乃破一鏡，人執其半，約曰：“他日必以正月望日賣於都市，我當在，即以是日訪之。”及陳亡，其妻果入越公楊素之家，寵嬖殊厚。德言流離辛苦，僅能至京，遂以正月望日訪於都市。有蒼頭賣半鏡者，大高其價，人皆笑之。德言直引至其居，設食，具言其故，出半鏡以合之，仍題詩曰……陳氏得詩，涕泣不食。素知之，愴然改容，即召德言，還其妻，仍厚遺之。聞者無不感嘆。²⁵⁶

During the Chen dynasty (557-589), the wife of Xu Deyan, Secretary to the Crown Prince, was the younger sister of the last ruler, Shubao (r. 583-589), and was given the title of Princess of Lechang. Her talent and beauty were unparalleled. At this time, the Chen government was in disarray, and Deyan and his wife knew that they would not be able to preserve themselves. He told her, “Because of your talent and beauty you will certainly end up in the household of some tyrant when the dynasty collapses, and we will be separated forever. If our ties of love are to remain unbroken and we hope to see each other again, we should have some proof of it.” Then he broke a mirror in two, and each of them took half. He pledged, “In the days to come you must offer your half for sale in the marketplace of the capital on the full moon of the first month. If I am still living, I will be looking for it on that day.” When the Chen dynasty collapsed, Deyan’s wife indeed ended up in the household of Yang Su, Duke of Yue, where she was favored very highly. Deyan drifted about in dire straits and was barely able to make it to the capital. Then, on the full moon of the first month, he visited the marketplace.

²⁵⁶ Meng Qi 孟榮 (fl. 875), *Benshi shi* 本事詩 (Shanghai: Gudian Wenxue Chubanshe, 1957), p. 5.

There was an old servant asking a greatly inflated price for half a mirror, and everyone was laughing at him. Deyan led him directly back to his lodgings, where he set out a meal for him and explained everything. He brought out the other half of the mirror, fit them together, and then inscribed a poem upon it that read ... When Princess Chen received the poem, she wept and refused to eat. When Yang Su found out, he was anguished, and there was a change in his countenance. He summoned Deyan at once, returned his wife to him, and presented them with generous gifts. Everyone who heard about it was moved to sigh.²⁵⁷

The author does not specify to which market Xu Deyan went, but given that Yang Suas 楊素 (544 - 606) residence was located in the Yankang Ward, which was southeast of the West Market, and that the West Market had more rare and strange merchandise than the East Market due to its exotic flavor, it is highly likely that Princess Lechang sent people to the West Market to sell this half-mirror for an extremely high price. The important role of the markets was not only acknowledged by the couple before they separated, but was also demonstrated by their later reunion. The markets were not sufficiently affected by the dynastic change or the political turmoil. Rather, people's pursuit of their daily needs enabled them to maintain the stable and flourishing character of the markets. Therefore, when Xu Deyan and his wife foresaw the destruction of the state and their separation, they promise to look for each other in the market, using the mirror halves. As expected, years later they did find each other this way. Thus, the market is a crucial setting for the development of the story.

²⁵⁷ Translation slightly revised from Graham Sanders, *Words Well Put: Visions of Poetic Competence in the Chinese Tradition* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 262.

In some other stories, the characters were not in search of any particular person, but were strolling aimlessly in the market when they unexpectedly met their benefactor. For example, in the following story, the main character Du Zichun 杜子春 met an old man who gave him a large fortune when he was suffering from poverty:

杜子春者，蓋周隋間人。少落拓，不事家產。然以志氣閒曠，縱酒閒遊，資產蕩盡。投於親故，皆以不事事見棄。方冬，衣破腹空，徒行長安中。日晚未食，彷徨不知所往，于東市西門，饑寒之色可掬，仰天長吁。有一老人策杖於前，問曰：“君子何歎？”春言其心，且憤其親戚之疎薄也。感激之氣，發于顏色。老人曰：“幾緡則豐用？”子春曰：“三五萬則可以活矣。”老人曰：“未也。”更言之：“十萬。”曰：“未也。”乃言百萬，亦曰：“未也。”曰：“三百萬。”乃曰：“可矣。”于是袖出一緡曰：“給子今夕，明日午時，候子於西市波斯邸，慎無後期。”及時子春往，老人果與錢三百萬，不告姓名而去。²⁵⁸

Du Zichun lived in the era between the Zhou and the Sui. When he was young, he was undisciplined and did not work for his family's livelihood; instead, because of his loose and idle nature, he caroused and whored until all his fortune was squandered. He asked his relatives and friends for aid, but because he didn't apply himself to working, they all refused him. At that time, it was winter. With tattered clothes and an empty belly, he wandered alone in Chang'an. By evening he had not yet eaten. He paced back and forth, not knowing where to go. At the West Gate of the East Market, his feeling of cold and hunger palpable, he looked up to heaven and gave a long sigh. There was an old man leaning on a staff before him who asked, "What are you sighing about, sir?" Zichun said what was in his heart, raging against his relatives' shabby treatment of him, his agitation revealed on his face. The old man said, "How many strings of cash would be enough for your present use?" Zichun said, "If I had thirty to fifty thousand I could live." The old man said, "Not quite, say it again." "One hundred thousand," and he said, "Not quite." Then Du said, "A million," and he again said, "Not quite." Du said, "Three million," then he said, "That's all right." Then he took a string of cash from his sleeve and said, "I will give that to you tonight, and tomorrow at midday I'll wait for you at the Persian inn of the West Market. Be careful not to be

²⁵⁸ *Taiping guangji*, 16.109.

late.” When the time came, Du Zichun went there, and the old man indeed gave him three million, and left without telling him his name.²⁵⁹

When everybody, including his relatives had refused him, an unknown old man that Du Zichun met for the first time in the East Market generously helped him. The old man later turned out to be an immortal who wished to test Du by tempting him, and their meeting was crucial to the story. The old man might have been purposely waiting for Du in the East Market; in any case, when he noticed Du, he approached him to initiate a conversation. The choice of the East Market as the backdrop for the meeting and of the West Market as the place to hand over the money should not be considered accidental. From the old man’s perspective, this was about money and worldly temptation and the two markets were the most ideal placed for such temptation. From Du Zichun’s perspective, he had been starving for a whole day, and wanted to try his fortune in a more crowded place to see if he could receive any charity. As mentioned, the East Market was located in an area inhabited mostly by the nobility, so when the old man showed up, seeming to offer his incredibly generous help, this was less suspicious than it would be if it happened in some other place. Compared to the East Market, which was more “noble,” the West Market was considered exotic. The old man did not haphazardly meet Du in this Persian inn in the West Market just to propose giving him money. Persians in Tang tales, especially those who lived in the vicinity of the West Market, were often described as rich and faithful people, and because of their foreign identity, their deeds, even when they were at odds with the traditional Chinese customs or norms, would still be tolerated and

²⁵⁹ Translation slightly revised from Rania Huntington’s rendering. See William H. Nienhauser, ed., *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader*, pp. 49-50.

accepted. Last but not least, it made sense for the deal to be carried out in a public space. If it were a secret deal that took place in a private domain, Du Zichun would not have reached an agreement with the old man so quickly.

In another story, the main character Wei Tingxun 衛庭訓 also found an unexpected opportunity in the East Market:

衛庭訓，河南人，累舉不第。天寶初，乃以琴酒為事，凡飲皆敬酬之。恒遊東市，遇友人飲於酒肆。一日，偶值一舉人，相得甚歡，乃邀與之飲。庭訓復酌，此人昏然而醉。庭訓曰：“君未飲，何醉也？”曰：“吾非人，乃華原梓桐神也。昨日從酒肆過，已醉君之酒，故今日訪君，適醉者亦感君之志。今當歸廟，他日有所不及，宜相訪也。”言訖而去。後旬日，乃訪之。至廟，神已令二使迎庭訓入廟。庭訓欲拜，神曰：“某年少，請為弟。”神遂拜庭訓為兄。為設酒食歌舞，既夕而歸。²⁶⁰

Wei Tingxun was a native of Henan. He took the *jinshi* examination several times without success. In the early years of the Tianbao era, he indulged himself in zither²⁶¹ and alcohol, and whenever he drank, he would socialize respectfully with other people. He would often stroll in the East Market, meet with friends, and drink in wine shops. One day, he came across a *jinshi* examiner; they got along quite well. He thus invited the examiner to drink with him. When Tingxun made his second toast, the man became dazed and drunk. Tingxun asked, “You didn’t drink anything, why are you drunk?” The man replied, “I am not a human being, but the God of the Catalpa and Parasol Trees in Huayuan. Yesterday, I walked by the wine shop, and as I had already gotten drunk from your alcohol, I came to visit you today. My getting drunk just now is also meant to show my appreciation for your kindness.” Now I have to return to the temple, but if some day in the future you have any trouble, please visit me.” After saying this he left. Ten days later, Tingxun visited him. When he arrived at the temple, the god had already sent two

²⁶⁰ *Taiping guangji*, 302.2395-96.

²⁶¹ Here it refers to the plucked seven-string traditional Chinese musical instrument of the zither family. It has been played since pre-Qin periods, and has traditionally been favored by scholars and literati as an instrument of great subtlety and refinement.

envoys to welcome him into the temple. Tingxun was about to make a bow, when the god stopped him, saying, “I am younger, so I request to be considered the younger brother.” Therefore, the god paid his respect to Tingxun as his elder brother, and prepared for him wine, food, and a singing and dancing performance. Tingxun returned in the evening.

The man Wei Tingxun met in the East Market was the God of the Catalpa and Parasol Trees in Huayuan. Huayuan County was located about 80 kilometers to the north of Chang'an. The god had traveled all the way from Huayuan to Chang'an to drink in a wine shop in the East Market. The author thus made it clear that the East Market was a popular public space that attracted not only common citizens but also supernatural beings. This seemingly accidental behavior, going to the East Market to indulge in drink, later brought him great luck and enabled him to build his social network. Later in this story, the god from Huayuan, who was especially grateful to Wei and decided to repay the kindness, helped Wei pass the examination and advance in rank and position. From the time when he met the god in the wine shop, Wei's life took a sharp turn for the better. Without the episode of the god regaling himself with Wei's wine in the East Market, the rest of the story would be impossible. The public space in the East Market gathered together various capable people and gave Wei the chance to encounter this god, whom he might have had trouble encountering elsewhere.

The markets not only made it possible for people to meet and get to know others, but also helped them to become known to others. For example, in “Huo Xiaoyu zhuan,” Xiaoyu's story was not widely known at first, but was spread by people gathered in the West Market:

雖生之書題竟絕，而玉之想望不移。賂遺親知，使通消息，尋求既切，資用屢空。往往私令侍婢潛賣篋中服玩之物，多託於西市寄附鋪侯景先家貨賣。曾令侍婢浣沙，將紫玉釵一隻，詣景先家貨之。路逢內作老玉工，見浣沙所執，前來認之曰：“此釵吾所作也。昔歲霍王小女，將欲上鬟，令我作此，酌我萬錢，我嘗不忘。汝是何人？從何而得？”浣沙曰：“我小娘子即霍王女也。家事破散，失身於人。夫婿昨向東都，更無消息。怏怏成疾，今欲二年。令我賣此，賂遺於人，使求音信。”玉工悽然下泣曰：“貴人男女，失機落節，一至於此。我殘年向盡，見此盛衰，不勝傷感。”遂引至延先公主宅，具言前事。公主亦為之悲歎良久，給錢十二萬焉。²⁶²

Even though no more letters from the scholar were received, Xiaoyu never ceased to long for his return. She sent money to her relatives and friends, asking to bring her news of him. Her inquiries were so urgent and sincere that her resources were exhausted time and again. She frequently sent her maid out secretly to sell dresses and playthings from her suitcase, and most of them were entrusted to Hou Jingxian's commission store in the West Market to sell. Once she sent the maid, Huansha, with a purple jade hairpin to sell at the residence of Jingxian. On the way, she encountered an old jade craftsman who served in the court. Seeing what Huansha was holding, he came up to identify it and said, "This hairpin was made by me. Many years ago, when the youngest daughter of Prince Huo was going to have her hair pinned up, [the prince] ordered me to make this pin, and he gave me ten thousand cash as reward. I have never forgotten it. Where did you get it?" Huansha replied, "My mistress is in fact the daughter of Prince Huo. Her family was impoverished, and she lost her chastity to a man. Her husband went to the East Capital last year. Further, there was no message [from him]. Being depressed and sorrowful, she fell ill. And it has been nearly two years. She asked me to sell this in order to bribe someone and ask him to seek for news [of her husband]." The jade craftsman shed tears in sadness, saying, "How could the sons and daughters of a nobleman be out of luck and in dire straits like this! My remaining days are nearly at an end, [but] I cannot bear my sorrow, considering this fluctuation of fortune." He then led Huansha to the mansion of the Princess of Yanxian, and told her the story in detail. The Princess also

²⁶² Ibid., 487.4008-4009.

sighed in sadness for a long while, and she gave [the maid] one hundred and twenty thousand cash [for the hairpin].²⁶³

The love story of Huo Xiaoyu and the scholar Li Yi 李益 was originally placed entirely within the private realm. When Li abandoned her, Xiaoyu did not make this public; only a few of her serving maids knew about the matter until she sent her maid to the West Market to sell her hairpin. Even though the maid went directly to the commission store, without visiting any other place or engaging in any irrelevant conversations, the hairpin she was holding drew the attention of an old jade craftsman, who happened to be the person who made this particular hairpin. That an old hairpin accidentally found its original maker after all these years was an event of little likelihood, but the West Market was a place of miracles. Many undiscovered talents and discerning connoisseurs converged there. Certain fortuitous circumstances would allow them to interact with, or be identified by, each other.

Once they had stepped into the public space, the circulation of the story was out of Xiaoyu's or Li Yi's control, and belonged to a new dimension of public influence. It was the jade craftsman's lament and report that brought the matter to Princess Yanxian; and it was her sympathy and economic aid that helped with the spread of the news. As the gossip traveled around the capital, Xiaoyu's miserable experience caused more and more people to feel sympathetic toward her, and some felt obligated to help her. When the story later reached a righteous and gallant man wearing a yellow jacket, he tricked Li Yi

²⁶³ Translation slighted revised from Zhenjun Zhang's rendering. See William H. Nienhauser, ed., *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader*, pp. 248-50.

and forced him to see Xiaoyu.²⁶⁴ As the gallant's heroic deed was decisive to the relationship between Xiaoyu and Li Yi, the jade craftsman made the first and most important move in spreading information on it. If Xiaoyu's maid did not go to the public space and did not run into him in the West Market, her story would remain unknown. The reason why Xiaoyu's personal experience gained so much attention and sympathy was that although it was the experience of one individual, it is an experience that everybody could understand. Thus, as soon as the jade craftsman brought it to the attention of the public, the story passed from mouth to mouth to become one of the most renowned Tang tales in Chinese literary history.

The public space formed by the markets could also help to build up one's reputation. For example, when the eminent early Tang Dynasty poet Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (661-702) first came to Chang'an as a little-known figure, he used the East Market as a stage for distinguishing himself:

陳子昂，蜀射洪人。十年居京師，不為人知。時東市有賣胡琴者，其價百萬。日有豪貴傳視，無辨者。子昂突出於眾，謂左右：“可輦千緡市之。”眾咸驚問曰：“何用之？”答曰：“余善此樂。”或有好事者曰：“可得一聞乎？”答曰：“余居宣陽里，”指其第處，“並具有酒，明日專候。不唯眾君子榮顧，且各宜邀召聞名者齊赴，乃幸遇也。”來晨，集者凡百餘人，皆當時重譽之士。子昂大張讌席，具珍羞。食畢，起捧胡琴。當前語曰：“蜀人陳子昂有文百軸，馳走京轂，碌碌塵土，不為人所知。此樂賤工之役，豈愚留心哉？”遂舉而棄之。昇文軸兩案，遍贈會者。會既散，一日之內，聲華溢都。²⁶⁵

Chen Zi'ang was a native of Shehong in Shu. He had lived in the capital for ten years, but remained unknown. At that time there was a Persian zither seller

²⁶⁴ See translation and discussion in Chapter Two.

²⁶⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 179.1331.

in the East Market whose asking price was one million. Every day the rich and the eminent came and would pass around the zither to peruse it, but none could tell its value. Zi'ang stepped forward from the crowd and told his attendants, "Let's use a carriage to carry a thousand strings of coins to purchase it." People all asked him with astonishment, "What would you use it for?" Zi'ang replied, "I am good at this instrument." Some curious people asked, "Can we hear you play?" "I live in the Xuanyang Ward," replied Zi'ang, pointing at his residence, "I will also prepare some wine tomorrow especially for you to come. Not only are you gentlemen cordially welcome, but if you could invite those celebrities to come along with you, I would greatly appreciate it." The next morning, over a hundred people, who were all reputable scholars at that time, gathered together. Zi'ang set up a lavish banquet and prepared delicate food. After the meal, he rose and took up the zither, and, standing in front of the gathered public, said, "I, Chen Zi'ang from Shu, have a hundred scrolls of prose. I have been rushing about the capital and toiling in the dust, but am still unknown. How can this humble craftsman's instrument be worthy of my attention?" Thereupon he lifted it up and threw it away. Then he brought over two tables with his prose scrolls on them, and distributed them to all the guests. After the gathering, within one day his fame had spread far and wide throughout the capital.

Chen Zi'ang had been living in Chang'an for ten years but remained unknown. As a very talented poet, he was confident that he deserved a more distinguished reputation and wider recognition; he lacked only a platform from which to promote himself. From his experience of living in Chang'an, he understood the power of the East Market in producing public effects and knew that this should be the place where he set out to make his mark. However, the public space in the market could only provide a platform, and he needed to do something sensational within this space to attain the recognition he sought. The incredibly expensive zither was itself something to draw public attention. It was not a traditional Chinese zither, but came from a foreign country, and so carried with it a sense of mystery. Thus, it easily aroused public curiosity. This was also the reason why

Chen Zi'ang spent an extraordinary amount of money purchasing it, as he hoped to attract the attention of the public.

Among the audience, which was astonished by Chen's unusual act, and wondered what he would use it for, there were some 's unusual actntr 好事者 who asked to hear him play the zither. The role of curious people is a common feature of Tang tales, and is often a very important factor in advancing the plots or arranging to have events recorded. In a public space such as the East Market, one could assume that such curious people were quite numerous. Their request was exactly what Chen Zi'ang was hoping for. Instead of playing the zither in the marketplace, Chen decided to present his final show in his own space. There were at least three reasons for him to transfer the space of his performance from the East Market to his personal residence. First of all, playing the zither was just a pretext; his real intention was to promote the prose scrolls that he had stacked up at home. Secondly, at his home he could serve as host and prepare a grand feast to please everyone. Thirdly, although he had drawn people's attention in the East Market, where a delightful performance would be not so surprising, he might not have wanted people to be distracted by other people or things in the market. Therefore, he turned his private residence into a public space, where he became the focus of a virtuoso performance as a form of what might be called "display." Thus, as expected, he rose to fame overnight.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Linda Rui Feng calls such extroverted displays "the theatricality of talent" and argues that "building surfaces in Chang'an doubled as bulletin boards and blank canvases, and public arenas became impromptu stages. These venues drew an audience consisting of a community of beholders...which meant variously newsmongers, enthusiasts, or interested onlookers. These venues and onlookers transformed not only literary production and circulation, but also how literary aspirants thought of themselves and each other." See her book *City of Marvel and Transformation: Chang'an and Narratives of Experience in Tang Dynasty China*, p. 88.

The influence of the East and West Markets on urban life was more vividly depicted in “Li Wa zhuan.” After he was tricked and abandoned by Li Wa,²⁶⁷ Scholar Zheng became seriously sick and was moved into a funeral parlor in the West Market. When he recovered, he learned the mourning chants from the staff there and had thoroughly mastered this art before long. His intelligence soon earned him a good reputation and an offer of engagement from the East Market:

初，二肆之傭凶器者，互爭勝負。其東肆車輦皆奇麗，殆不敵，唯哀挽劣焉。其東肆長知生妙絕，乃釀錢二萬索顧焉。其黨耆舊，共較其所能者，陰教生新聲，而相讚和。累旬，人莫知之。其二肆長相謂曰：“我欲各閱所傭之器于天門街，以較優劣。不勝者，罰直五萬，以備酒饌之用，可乎？”二肆許諾，乃邀立符契，署以保證，然後閱之。士女大和會，聚至數萬。於是里胥告于賊曹，賊曹聞于京尹。四方之士，盡赴趨焉，巷無居人。自旦閱之，及亭午，歷舉輦輦威儀之具，西肆皆不勝，師有慙色。乃置層榻于南隅，有長髯者，擁鐸而進，翊衛數人。於是奮髯揚眉，扼腕頓顙而登，乃歌《白馬》之詞。恃其夙勝，顧眄左右，旁若無人。齊聲讚揚之，自以為獨步一時，不可得而屈也。有頃，東肆長于北隅上設連榻，有烏巾少年，左右五六人，秉篋而至，即生也。整衣服，俯仰甚徐，申喉發調，容若不勝，乃歌《薤露》之章。舉聲清越，響振林木。曲度未終，聞者歔歔掩泣。西肆長為眾所誚，益慙耻，密置所輸之直于前，乃潛遁焉。四座愕眙，莫之測也。²⁶⁸

Now there were two shops renting funeral equipment and that were in keen competition with one another. At the shop on the east side, the carriages and hearses were all fine and splendid, hardly to be matched, but the dirge singers were weaker. When the head of this east side shop learned that the young scholar was an excellent performer, he raised 20,000 cash and made a bid to engage him. The veteran members of his company pooled all their skills and secretly taught him new tunes, assisting him by blending their voices with his. For several weeks, no one knew anything about it. The heads of the two shops now proposed this to one another: “Let us both hold a display in Tianmen

²⁶⁷ See the translation and discussion of the earlier part of this story in Chapter Two.

²⁶⁸ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3987-89.

Street of the equipment we have for hire, to show which is better. And shall we agree that the loser forfeits a sum of 50,000 cash to pay for the food and drink?" Both pledged their word, and then they called for a two-part contract to be drawn up, and had it signed by guarantors, before holding the display. Men and women flocked together in a huge assembly, their numbers reaching tens of thousands. The ward officers then notified the police service, which reported the matter to the Capitol Governor. People from all parts went rushing to the scene. No one remained in the lanes. The display began at dawn, and by noon each piece of equipment—including ceremonial carriages and processional insignia—had all been presented in turn. In each class, the west-side shop was the loser, and the master looked abashed. He now set up couches in tiers at the south end [of the display ground], and there appeared a man with long whiskers who came forward clasping a bell, with several supporting guards. Flourishing his whiskers and raising his eyebrows, clasping his wrist and inclining his head, he mounted the terrace and sang the poem of the "White Horse." Relying on his earlier success, he glanced about left and right, as no one else had come near him. With one voice they acclaimed him. He felt as if he stood in a class of his own among his contemporaries and could not be brought low. After a while, the head of the east-side shop set out some couches in a line at the north end. Along came a youth in a black cap, flanked by five or six attendants, and holding a funeral banner. It was the young scholar. He put his clothing in order and, in a deliberate manner, stretching his throat, and delivered a phrase of song, looking as though he could not bear the effort. Then he sang the verse, "Dew on the Shallots." His voice rose clear and penetrating, and the echoes shook the forest trees. Before the tune was finished, his listeners were already sobbing and sniffing, as they hid their tears. The head of the west-side shop was jeered at by all, and suffered even greater humiliation than before. He quietly put the sum he had lost in front [of his rival] and stole away furtively from the scene. On all sides, people were staring in amazement, for no one had guessed [what would happen].²⁶⁹

"Li Wa zhuan" excels over many other Tang tales not just by means of its fascinating plots and moving scenes, but also through its skillful handling of urban spaces in Chang'an. The documentary representation of the specific spaces, such as the East and

²⁶⁹ Translation slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 143-53.

West Markets and Tianmen Street, increases the sense of reality for the contemporary audience, revealing a vivid picture of the daily life in Chang'an for modern readers and conveying the story in a most logical way.

In the passage quoted above, the scene of a dirge contest between the East and West markets is noteworthy for the following reason. Archaeological excavations around the West Market have confirmed the existence of funeral parlors inside and near the markets.²⁷⁰ The contest described in the story was held in the public space on Tianmen Street and attracted a great crowd of spectators. The only possible place on Tianmen Street that could accommodate such a grand-scale competition or so many people was the area right outside the Zhuque Gate of the Imperial City. According to archaeological reports, this was a rectangular area that measured 150 meters from east to west and 120 meters from north to south.²⁷¹ With the eastern, western, and southern streets added in, the space would be even larger (Fig. 24).

²⁷⁰ See Su Bai 宿白, "Sui Tang Chang'an cheng he Luoyang cheng" 隋唐長安城和洛陽城, in *Kaogu* no. 1 (1978), pp. 417-18.

²⁷¹ See Ma Dezhi, "Tangdai Chang'an cheng kaogu jilüe," pp. 599-601.

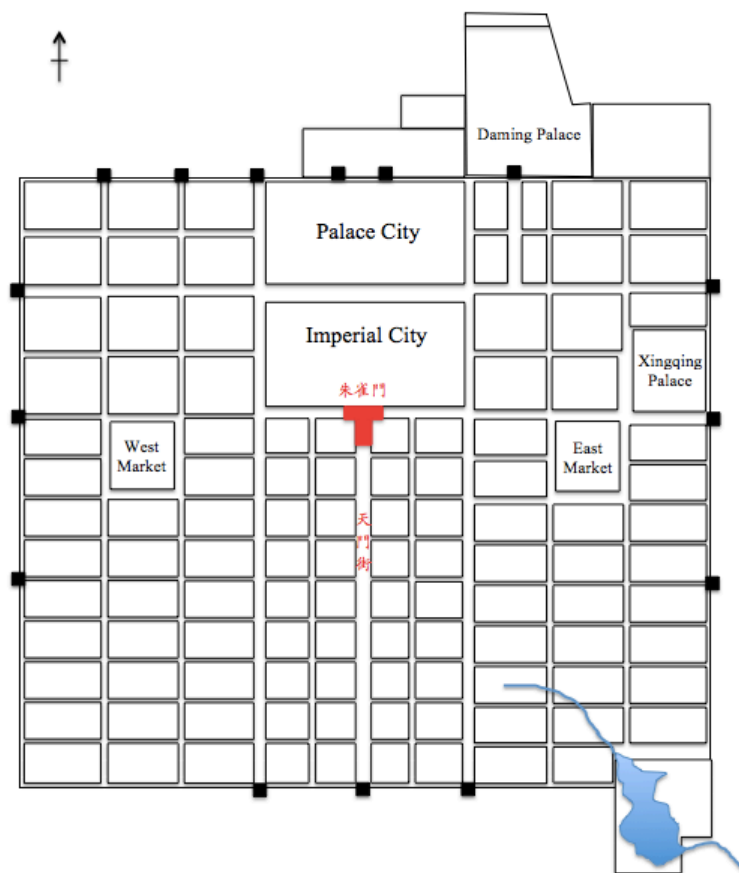


Figure 24. The square in front of Zhuque Gate, as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

A passage from *Yuefu zalu* 樂府雜錄, an important source on music from the late Tang period, records an instrumental contest that resembles the singing contest described in . Archaeological excavations around the West Market have confirmed the existence of funeral parlors inside a

貞元中有康崑崙稱第一手。始遇長安大旱，詔兩市祈雨。及至天門街，市人廣較勝負，及鬪聲樂。即街東則有康崑崙琵琶最工，必謂街西無敵也。遂請崑崙登綵樓，彈一曲新翻羽調《綠要》。其街西亦建一樓，東市大誚之。及崑崙度曲，西市樓上出一女郎，抱樂器，先云：“我亦彈此曲，兼移在《楓香調》中。”及下撥，聲如雷，其妙入神。崑崙即驚

駭，乃拜請為師。女郎遂更衣出見，乃僧也。蓋西市豪族，厚賂莊嚴寺僧善本，以定東鄜之勝。²⁷²

During the Zhenyuan Era (785-804), there was a master performer, Kang Kunlun. It happened that Chang'an was then suffering a severe drought, and an imperial command was issued to the two markets to pray for rain. When they came to Tianmen Street, the market folk were engaged in much competition, including musical contests. The east side had Kang Kunlun, whose skill on the lute was supreme, and people there were convinced that the west side had no one to match him. So they asked Kunlun to mount the festooned tower and play a newly arranged piece in the *yu* mode called "Lüyao." The people on the west side likewise set up a tower, much jeered at by the people in the East Market. When Kunlun had finished his piece, a girl appeared on the West Market's tower with an instrument in her arms. She began by saying, "I shall play the same tune, and in addition I shall modulate into its key 'Fengxiaodiao'." When she struck the instrument with the plectrum, the sounds thundered out, divinely beautiful. Kunlun was abashed, and he humbly begged her to be his teacher. When the girl proceeded to change her clothes and came out to meet him, she turned out to be a monk. The leading families in the West Market had paid a large sum to Shanben, a monk from the Zhuangyan Temple, in order to outdo the East Market's victory.²⁷³

Both the instrumental contest quoted above and the singing contest depicted in "Li Wa zhuan" pitted the East Market against the West Market in the neutral ground between them. Both contests called for the erection of ceremonial stages, and both began with a confident champion on one side who then suffered a surprising defeat from an expensively engaged newcomer on the other. The extravagant display definitely attracted a large audience and obviously triggered an enthusiastic interaction between the

²⁷² See Duan Anjie 段安節 (fl. 894-907), *Yuefu zalu* 樂府雜錄, in *Zhongguo Xiqu Yanjiuyuan* 中國戲曲研究院, ed., *Zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng* 中國古典戲曲論著集成 (Beijing: Zhongguo Xiqu Chubanshe, 1959), 1:50.

²⁷³ Translation slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa*, "Appendix B: Musial Contest in Chang'an," pp. 191-212.

performers and the audience. The unexpected result of the contest must have left a deep impression on the spectators.

Because of the extraordinary amount of the viewers and the distinctive position of the performers, the public space not only helped the young scholar win instant fame, but also allowed his father to join in the crowd and easily identify him:

適遇生之父在京師，與同列者易服章，竊往觀焉。有老豎，即生乳母壻也，見生之舉措辭氣，將認之而未敢，乃泫然流涕。生父驚而詰之，因告曰：“歌者之貌，酷似郎之亡子。”父曰：“吾子以多財為盜所害，奚至是耶？”言訖，亦泣。及歸，豎間馳往，訪于同黨曰：“向歌者誰，若斯之妙歟？”皆曰：“某氏之子。”徵其名，且易之矣。豎凜然大驚，徐往，迫而察之。生見豎，色動回翔，將匿于眾中。豎遂持其袂曰：“豈非某乎？”相持而泣，遂載以歸。²⁷⁴

At the time, it happened that the young scholar's father was in the capital. He and his colleagues had changed out of their official insignia and had secretly gone to watch the display. He had an old servant, the husband of the young scholar's nurse, observe the young man's demeanor and tone of voice; he was on the point of openly recognizing him, but did not venture that far. So he shed a flood of tears. The young man's father was taken aback and asked him why. Then he reported, "The singer strongly resembles your lost son, master!" The father said, "My son was murdered by thieves for his great wealth. How could he have come to this?" And with these words he too wept. When they had gone back, the servant found a free moment to hurry round and ask of some of the members of the same company, "Who is the man who sang just now? And so very finely!" They all said that he was the son of the—family, but when he asked for the man's given name, he learned that it had been changed for the occasion. The servant suffered a severe shock, and he slowly made his way over to observe him at close quarters. The young scholar caught sight of the servant, his color changed, and he flitted here and there, meaning to hide in the crowd. Then, holding on to his sleeve, the servant said, "You must be Master—!" They clasped one another, weeping, and the servant took him back in a carriage.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3988-89.

²⁷⁵ Translation slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 153-55.

If the contest were not between the East and West Markets or were not held publically in Tianmen Street, there would be no way that his father could ever meet him again. The second half of the story, in which his father beat him almost to death, and Li Wa, for reasons of conscience, saved him and assisted him in restoring his official career, would then also be groundless. On the other hand, regarding the origin of this story, scholars believe that Bai Xingjian, the author of “Li Wa zhuan,” adapted his work from a contemporary popular story called story were n 一枝花. This popular story was spoken and sung at length during the night hours by street entertainers in the early ninth century.²⁷⁶ Thus, “Li Wa zhuan” had the character of public art from the outset. There is reason to believe that the singing contest that took place in the public sphere between the East and West Markets offered first-hand narrative material and inspiration to the earliest group of storytellers and performers.

Like a zhuan” had the charact 寶义 story offers another example of the power of public space and the publicre is reason to believe that the sinof the narratives.²⁷⁷ Rather than reading it just as a biography of a wealthy merchant that recounts how he achieved commercial success, one should also consider it as an epitome of the urban landscape of Chang’an. The chart below lists the steps Dou Yi took to accumulate his wealth. Most of his commercial activities took place in public spaces. On the one hand, like Chen Zi’ang,

²⁷⁶ For example, see Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, “Yi zhi hua hua” 一枝花話, *Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, no. 20B (1949), pp. 85-89; Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 20-26; Seo Tatsuhiko, “Tōdai kōhanki no Chōan to denki shōsetsu: Ri Ai den no bunseki o chūshin to shite,” p. 482.

²⁷⁷ See the original text of the story in *Taiping guangji*, 243.1875-79.

Dou Yi aimed to attract strong public interest in order to promote his business; on the other hand, the sensational effect of his performances in the public spaces resulted in a stronger narrative effect.

| Place Name | Activities | Gains/Effects |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Jiahui Ward 嘉會坊 | Collected elm seeds and planted them in the courtyard of a temple in the Jiahui Ward; Sold the elm seeds and wood. | Earned thirty or forty thousand <i>wen</i> . |
| Chongxian Ward 崇賢坊 | Had people wash old hemp shoes at the west gate of the Chongxian Ward; Piled up rubble outside of the gate; Made the above waste material into high-grade firewood. Sold the firewood during Chang'an's rainy season when the city was short of firewood. | Earned enormous profits. |
| | Provided financial aid to Mi Liang, a barbarian, for seven years; Advised by Mi Liang, as a requital, to purchase a residence in the Chongxian Ward; Following Mi Liang's direction, obtained a Khotan jade and many other precious objects in the residence. | Spent two hundred thousand <i>wen</i> to purchase the residence; Sold precious objects in the residence for several hundred thousand strings of cash. |
| | Volunteered to help Cao Suixing cut off the unwanted branches of a tree in his yard and purchased them from Cao; Sold the branches to a gambling house to make gambling devices. | Gained profits of over a hundredfold. |
| The West Market 西市 | Purchased asphalt; Hired people to cook for his workers. | Made into firewood and made profits. |
| | Purchased at a cheap price a large trash pit that was located to the south of the West Market; Designed a game in which children threw rocks into the dump to fill and level up the pit; Built twelve stores on the same spot. | Earned several thousand <i>wen</i> per day due to the desirable location of the stores. The stores still exist today and are called "The Dou Family's Stores." |
| Yanshou Ward 延壽坊 | Summoned a jade master to estimate the value of the Khotan jade. | Made the jade into twenty belts and earned several hundred thousand <i>wen</i> . |
| Li Sheng's | Purchased the haunted residence in front | Earned tens of thousand |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 李晟 residence | of the high official Li Sheng's residence and turned it into a soccer field; Gave the field as a gift to Li Sheng; Introduced to Li Sheng many merchants who later bribed Li to place their sons in profitable official posts. | <i>wen</i> from the merchants. |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------|

The extant material is not sufficient to show whether Dou Yi is an actual historical figure, or if the story is a truthful record. In any case, the presentation of his commercial deeds in such a way as to transform him into an urban legend was a task that relied heavily on certain narrative skills. Between age thirteen and eighteen, Dou Yi earned his first pot of gold by planting elm trees in a temple in the Jiahui Ward. During these five years, people walking in and out the publically accessible temple must have all witnessed his gradual success. The way in which Dou Yi built up his family fortune was never a secret; rather, from the very beginning this was done in a public space and under the public eye. Dou Yi deliberately used the favorable conditions available to achieve his goal, and accordingly, the narrative about him vividly captures the urban features of that entire area. For example, it depicts a flourishing mixed community of Han and foreign people around the West Market, and amid the latter's vigorous commercial atmosphere. It also reveals that noble people mostly dwelt in the eastern part of Chang'an, whereas rich people lived mostly in the western part. People in Chang'an who saw or heard the whole process were surprised and uncomprehending at first, but as Dou Yi's business began to take shape, they became impressed and more curious about what his next action would be. Dou Yi convinced the public through his talent and was able to make people spread his legend. Without the favorable public spaces, Dou Yi could hardly have become wealthy, nor would people have known about his story or passed it on. Dou Yi's story reveals both one

person's struggles and the commercial development in the capital. Dou Yi's success implies an expanding desire for consumption and the growing diversity of urban life. It also demonstrates the increasing value and attraction of the public spaces in Chang'an.

Dou Yi's major commercial deeds took place in three residential wards: Jiahui Ward, which was located two blocks to the south of the West Market; Yanshou Ward, located just to the east of the West Market; and Chongxian Ward, which was one block to the southeast of the West Market (Fig. 25). Thus, the entire process through which Dou Yi built up his wealth was centered on but not limited to the West Market. In other words, the commercial activities were not just confined to the officially authorized markets; rather, many of them took place "illegally" in the wards nearby.

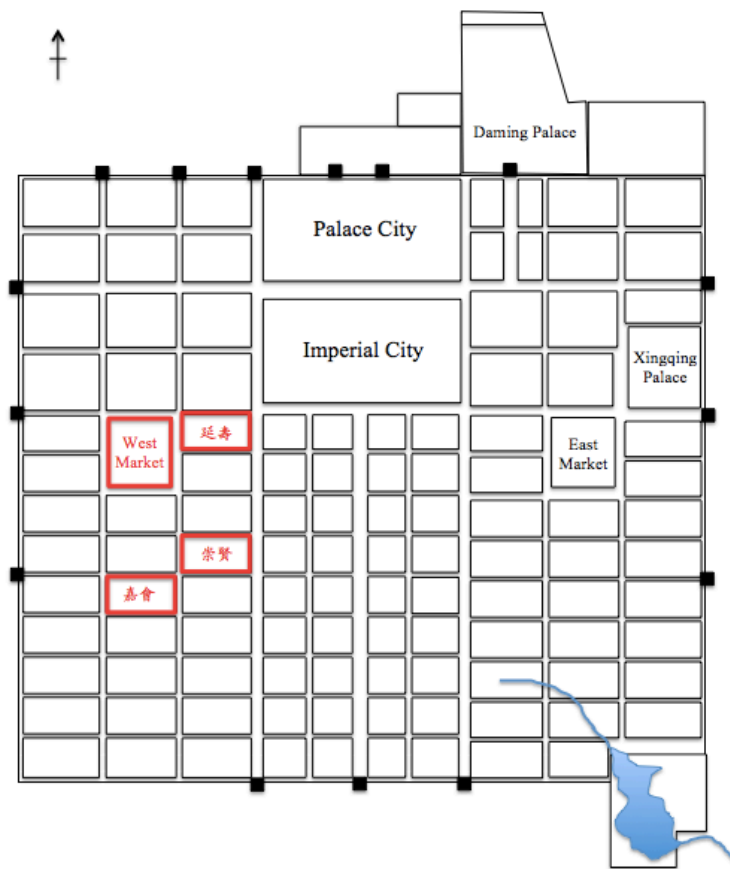


Figure 25. The Yanshou, Chongxian, and Jiahui Wards and the West Market, as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

Deputy Prefect Wang Shi's 王式 story is further testimony to the existence of, and official tolerance towards, such "illegal" activities:

長安坊中有夜攔街鋪設祠樂者，遲明未已，式過之，駐馬寓目。巫者喜，奉主人杯，跪獻於馬前曰：“主人多福！感達官來，顧酒味稍美，敢進壽觴。”式取而飲之。行百餘步，復回曰：“向之酒甚惡，可更一盃。”復據鞍引滿而去。²⁷⁸

In one of the wards of Chang'an, there was someone performing sacred music on the street at night. It was almost dawn, but they were still not done. When Wang Shi passed by, he halted his horse and watched the performance. The shaman was delighted, held up a master's cup, knelt down and presented it in front of the horse, saying, "May you be blessed, master! I appreciate that you, a high official, have come to us. I found that the wine tastes fairly good, so I venture to present this goblet for your longevity." Shi took the cup and drank the wine. After he walked over a hundred steps away, he returned and said, "The wine you just gave me is very bad. You can give me another cup." Sitting on the saddle, he again drank a full cup and left.

When Wang Shi encountered a shaman performing sacred music at night on a street in a residential ward, he not only watched the performance, but even joined the shaman for a drink afterward. This suggests that this sort of activity, taking place outside the markets and during the curfew time, was not of particular concern. However, the occurrence of night business in Chang'an and the tolerance of officials were no doubt evidence of the decline of the ward system.

²⁷⁸ Wang Dang 王讜 (late 11th century to early 12th century), *Tang yulin* 唐語林校證, annot. by Zhou Xunchu 周勛初 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), 2.104-105.

People's increasing daily needs encouraged manufacturing and trading businesses to break with the old spatial limits in looking for the most profitable places to develop. This change, as Denis Twitchett shows, was accompanied by the increased monetization of taxation and trade, by a growth in the numbers, wealth, and power of merchants, and by a softening of the social and official attitudes disparaging trade and the merchant class.²⁷⁹ By the late Tang period, Twitchett argues, it was generally accepted that "since trade could neither be suppressed nor adequately controlled, such control had best be abandoned and commerce exploited as a source of revenue."²⁸⁰ With the wraps off, and under conditions of accelerating commercialization, the specifics of what G. William Skinner calls "the medieval urban revolution" naturally followed. While the commercial and recreational activities depicted in Tang narratives and people's attitude towards them should not be taken verbatim as historical records, they do present a vivid picture of such urban transformations.

The Qujiang Area: An Ideal Place for Encounters

While the East and West Markets formed the largest commercial spaces in the capital, the Qujiang area served as the most popular recreational space for both residents and tourists of Changl and recreational activities depicted in Tang narratives and entered

²⁷⁹ Denis Twitchett, "Merchant, Trade and Government in Late T'ang," *Asia Major*, n.s. 14, part 1 (1968), pp. 74-95.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

around Qujiang Pond, which was originally a natural body of water that was called Qujiang (lit. the serpentine river) in the time of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty 漢武帝 (Liu Che 劉徹, r. 141 B.C.-87 B.C.) because of its zigzagging course. During the Sui Dynasty, in 583, it was enclosed in the southeast corner of Daxingcheng 大興城 and renamed Furong 芙蓉. After the Tang rulers renamed it Qujiang, it underwent successive repairs to bank its edges and improve its amenities. Qujiang became a favorite spot for royals, officials, and newly admitted *jinshi* scholars, especially during Emperor Xuanzong's reign.²⁸¹ In the ninth year of Emperor Wenzong's Dahe 大和 era (835), he issued an imperial decree to renovate the Qujiang area, claiming, "its edges and improve [the] resort in the capital is Qujiangia 都城盛賞之地，唯有曲江， and allowed high officials to build towers, pavilions, and estrades in the area."²⁸² He employed 1,500 people to excavate the pond and reconstruct it on a larger scale, and to construct more buildings in the garden. Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123-1195) records that to excavate the pond and reconstruct it on a larger scale, and to construct more building *li*. During the Tang Dynasty, the circumference was seven *li* and [the pond] covered an area of thirty *qing*. It was expanded again" 漢武帝時池周回六里餘，唐周七里，占地三十頃，又加

²⁸¹ Wang Dingbao 王定保 (870-940) in his *Tang zhiyan* 唐摭言 records the energy devoted to refurbishing Qujiang during the final two decades of Emperor Xuanzong's reign. Wang reveals the rising usage of Qujiang for prestigious gatherings, showing also how a carefully tended landscape and cultural resort emerged as the direct objects of government control. See Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhiyan* (Shanghai: Gudian Wenxue Chubanshe, 1957), 3.28-29. See also the introduction and discussion in Oliver J. Moore, *Rituals of Recruitment in Tang China: Reading an Annual Programme in the Collected Statements by Wang Dingbao (870-940)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 233-38.

²⁸² *Cefu yuangui*, 14.161a.

展拓矣。²⁸³ Modern estimates of its size, depending mostly on Tang literary references, are somewhere in the region of 70,000 square meters.²⁸⁴

During the Tang Dynasty, the Qujiang area included the Qujiang Pond 曲江池, the Qujiang Garden (i.e., Furong Garden 芙蓉園), the Apricot Garden 杏園, the Ci'en Temple, and even the Leyou Park nearby. People flocked to the area, especially during traditional festivals. Kang Pian 康駢 (fl. 877) in his *Jutanlu* 劇談錄 records:

曲江池本秦時隄洲，唐開元中疏鑿遂為勝境。其南有紫雲樓芙蓉苑，其西有杏園慈恩寺。花卉環周，煙水明媚，都人遊翫，盛於中和、上巳之節。綵幄翠幃，匝於堤岸；鮮車健馬，比肩擊轂。上巳節錫宴臣僚，……百辟會於山亭，恩賜太常及教坊聲樂。池中備綵舟數隻，唯宰相三使北省官與翰林學士登焉。每歲傾動皇州，以為盛觀。入夏則菰蒲蔥翠，柳陰四合，碧波紅渠，湛然可愛。好事者賞芳辰，翫清景，聯騎携觴，疊疊不絕。²⁸⁵

Qujiang Pond was originally the Qi Islet in the Qin period. During the Kaiyuan Era, people dug and cut to make it into a scenic spot. The Ziyun Tower and the Lotus Garden were located to its south, and the Apricot Garden and the Ci'en Temple were located to its west. Flowers surrounded the pond and the foggy water looked radiant and enchanting. The people of the capital came here to enjoy the sights, and [the place] was especially spectacular during the Zhonghe Festival²⁸⁶ and the Shangsi Festival.²⁸⁷ Varicolored silk

²⁸³ See Cheng Dachang, *Yonglu*, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, 1:6.458b.

²⁸⁴ Shaanxisheng Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui 陝西省文物管理委員會, "Tang Chang'ancheng diji chubu tance" 唐長安城地基初步探測, in *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報, no. 3 (1958), p. 82.

²⁸⁵ Kang Pian 康駢 (fl. 877), *Jutanlu* 劇談錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1991), 2.135-36.

²⁸⁶ Zhonghe Festival 中和節 was held on the first day of the second lunar month, which was Emperor Dezong's 德宗 birthday; it was made into an official festival in the fifth year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 Era (789).

²⁸⁷ Shangsi Festival 上巳節 was celebrated on the third day of the third lunar month. During the festival people would go for an outing by the water, picnic, and pluck orchids. It was also a day for invoking cleansing rituals to prevent disease and get rid of bad luck.

tents and jade green curtains were set up on the bank. Shining bright carriages and sturdy horses advanced shoulder-to-shoulder and hub-to-hub.

During the Shangsi Festival, [the emperor] would bestow a banquet on his ministers and subjects. The officials would gather together in a hilltop pavilion. [The emperor] would also bestow on them the imperial music from the Court of Imperial Sacrifices. In the pond, [people] prepared several varicolored boats, and only the Chief Ministers, the Three Commissioners, the Northern Department Officials, and the Hanlin Academicians could step into them. Every year, the entire capital was captivated, and considered this a grand occasion.

When summer came, the water bamboos and reeds became verdant, and shades of willow trees surrounded the area. The bluish waves and the reddish lotuses were clear and adorable. Curious people came to enjoy the flower season and appreciate the elegant scenery. In an endless stream, they rode their horses side-by-side with goblets in their hands.

During the springtime, people were more willing to go sightseeing, and Qujiang was their top choice due to its beautiful scenery. Du Fu has a line in his renowned “Liren xing” 麗人行, depicting such lively festive occasions: ling to go sightseeing, and Qujiang was their top choice dr is fresh, there are a lot of beautiful women by the waters of Chang’an” 三月三日天氣新，長安水邊多麗人. In such pleasant weather, the scenic waterside thus became an ideal place for encounters, especially between charming ladies and young scholars. For example, the following story starts with the two protagonists coming across each other during the Shangsi Festival:

華州柳參軍，名族之子。寡慾早孤，無兄弟。罷官，於長安閑遊。上巳日，曲江見一車子，飾以金碧，半立淺水之中。後簾徐褰，見摻手如玉，指畫令摘芙蓉。女之容色絕代，斜睨柳生良久。²⁸⁸

Liu, an Administrator from Huazhou, was a son of a noble family. He became an orphan very young, and had few desires. He was left with no brothers.

²⁸⁸ *Taiping guangji*, 342.2703.

After he quit his post, he hung about in Chang'an. During the Shangsi Festival, he saw a carriage in Qujiang, which was decorated with gold and jade, and half of the carriage stood in the shallow water. When the curtain at the back was slowly rolled up, Liu saw a jade-like tender hand making gestures to order people to pick lotuses. The girl's appearance was peerless, and she gazed at Scholar Liu out of the corner of her eyes for a long time.

The beginning of this story is almost a clichéd example of stories in which a young scholar was seduced by a femme fatale. However, the author does not warn of dangers in the traditional manner, but rather designs a romance that appears to portray love sympathetically. The public recreational space allows strangers to meet and get to know each other, while the shallow water reaching the carriage wheels and the lotuses standing in the pond together decorates the picturesque landscape and creates a romantic atmosphere. Compared to the traditional way of introducing the setting, the description in this story, thanks to its drawing Qujiang into the picture, is more inviting.

Due to its wide and open spatial condition,²⁸⁹ the Qujiang area was also a place to discover people one would otherwise have trouble discovering. Take “Kunlun nu” as an example: The singing girl in red silk has been secretly married to Scholar Cui for two years, and they were never sought out until they went to Qujiang:

姬隱崔生家二歲。因花時，駕小車而遊曲江，為一品家人潛誌認，遂白一品。²⁹⁰

The singing girl remained hidden for two years in Scholar Cui's home. [One day] since it was the blooming season, they drove a carriage and toured

²⁸⁹ Wei Shu 韋述 (d. 757) records, “This place is wide and open from all four directions” 其地四望寬敞. See Xin Deyong 辛德勇, annot. *Liangjing xinji jijiao* 兩京新記輯校 (Xi'an: San Qin Chubanshe, 2006), 2.21.

²⁹⁰ *Taiping guangji*, 194.1543-44.

around the Qujiang area, and were noticed by Yipin's men. They thereupon reported on this to Yipin.

The singing girl escaped from her own house and could not be discovered, because she remained in the private space of Cuin example: The singing girl in red silk has been secretly married to Scholar Cui for long season” 花時, when they were touring in Qujiang, Yipine and could not be discovered, because she remained in the private space of Cuin example: The singing girl in advances the plots towards a climax.

Since Qujiang was a favorite place not only of common people, but also of royals and high officials, the personal encounters here could sometimes occur in a very unexpected way.

裴休廉察宣城，未離京，值曲江池荷花盛發，同省閣名士遊賞。自慈恩寺，各屏左右，隨以小僕。步至紫雲樓，見數人坐於水濱，裴與朝士憇其旁。中有黃衣半酣，軒昂自若，指諸人笑語輕脫。裴意稍不平，揖而問之：“吾賢所任何官？”率爾對曰：“喏，郎不敢，新授宣州廣德令。”反問裴曰：“押衙所任何職？”裴效之曰：“喏，郎不敢，新授宣州觀察使。”於是狼狽而走，同座亦皆奔散。朝士撫掌大笑。不數日，布於京華。後於銓司訪之，云：“有廣德令請換羅江矣。”宣皇在藩邸聞是說，與諸王每為戲談。其後龍飛，裴入相。因書麻制，迴謂樞近曰：“喏，郎不敢，新授中書門下平章事矣。”²⁹¹

Once Pei Xiu was about to investigate Xuancheng. Before he left the capital, the lotuses in the Qujiang Pond were in their full bloom, so he went with some distinguished scholars in the department to enjoy the sights. When they reached the Ci'en Temple, they dismissed their attendants and were followed only by their young footmen. When they arrived at the Ziyun Tower, they saw several people sitting by the water. Pei and the court officials rested next to them. Among them, there was a person in yellow gown who was half-drunk, and arrogantly at ease. He pointed to others and laughed and talked frivolously. Pei felt a bit uncomfortable, so he bowed and asked him, “What

²⁹¹ Ibid., 251.1951.

office do you, worthy man, hold?” The man replied rashly, “Well, I don’t deserve such an honor, but I am the newly appointed Magistrate of Guangde in the Xuan Prefecture.” He then asked Pei in reply, “What post do you, Lackey, hold?” Pei, mimicking him, said, “Well, I don’t deserve such an honor, but I am the newly appointed Surveillance Commissioner of Xuan Prefecture.” After this, the man became embarrassed and ran away. His companions also scattered. The court officials clapped and laughed loudly. Within a few days, the matter was known all over the capital.

Later, he looked for this man in the Ministry of Personnel, but people told him, “The Magistrate of Guangde has asked to be transferred to Luojiang.” When Emperor Xuanzong was still a prince, he heard this, and would always take it as a joke that he shared with other princes. Later, he succeeded to the throne and made Pei the Chief Minister. He thereupon wrote the appointment letter on a piece of flax, and turned round and said to his close high-ranking officials, “Well, I don’t deserve such honor, but I am now the newly appointed Manager of the Secretariat-Chancellery.”

Like the previous two stories, this anecdote also took the springtime Qujiang as its background. At that time, “the lotuses in Qujiang Pond were right in their full bloom” 曲江池荷花盛發 and attracted more people to come and appreciate them. In Chang’an there lived a myriad of officials of various ranks, who did not necessarily know each other. When these officials ran up against each other in this public space, they bore multiple identities, as officials, citizens, and strangers. As strangers, they did not know the identities of any other people in this space, so they tended to step out of their hierarchical roles and act in more carefree and unscrupulous way. The enjoyable public space outside of their official posts also allowed them to temporarily relax and forget themselves in their excitement. However, Chang’an was not any other city or town; it was the imperial capital. Too much relaxation and elation could cause trouble, since one could never know whom he or she might accidentally impress or offend, or how these people, some of whom might be potentially powerful, would impact their life. The newly

appointed low-level official never expected that the person to whom he had spoken arrogantly would happen to be his direct supervisor, so that he would have to transfer to another post to avoid the embarrassment. Also, Pei Xiu could hardly anticipate that his joking reply would fall upon the ear of the future emperor, who would later chose him to be his Chief Minister, but who also, remembering this incident, would continue to make fun of him.

The public space in Qujiang not only created the chance for the two officials to converse with each other, but with the large number of witnesses there, it also accelerated the spread of their dramatic conversation. Also, both common people and the royal house found amusement in this little episode. Emperor Xuanzong's playful adaptation added a new highlight to the original narrative, and even gave it a second life. In summary, this is an anecdote that originated in the civic public space, then made its way to the upper class, and finally returned to the public world, with the old story refreshed by a supplementary new narrative. In this entire process, the Qujiang area was the starting point and place of cultivation.

As introduced above, Qujiang was both a scenic point and a place for newly appointed *jinshi* scholars to celebrate their success in the examination. Each year, *jinshi* scholars gathered around the Qujiang Pond and the Apricot Garden for a celebratory banquet. The banquets held at Qujiang, known as the heicot Garden for 關宴 or cot Garden for a cel 离宴, were the largest banquets of all, and were designed for the annual program as y appointedg ²⁹² Sometimes even the emperor would also attend the party as

²⁹² Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhiyan*, 3.28.

a compliment and encouragement to those who had been successful in the exams. With this in mind, one could better understand the episode in “Li Wa zhuan,” in which Scholar Zheng’s father beat him at Qujiang.

至其室，父責曰：“志行若此，污辱吾門。何施面目，復相見也。”乃徒行出，至曲江西杏園東，去其衣服，以馬鞭鞭之數百。生不勝其苦而斃，父棄之而去。²⁹³

When they came to the house, his father rebuked him, “With ambition and conduct no better than this, you have soiled and dishonored my house. How can you have the face to meet me again?” And he took him out on foot, and when they were to the west of the Serpentine Pool and east of the Apricot Orchard, his father stripped off his clothes and gave Zheng several hundred lashes with a horsewhip. Unable to endure the pain, the young man succumbed. His father abandoned him there and left.²⁹⁴

After encountering his son, Scholar Zheng’s father did not feel any excitement about the reunion, or at least did not appear to, nor did he try to help him out of the difficulty and restore his official career. Rather, he felt deeply ashamed that his son had forgotten his original ambition and dishonored the family. It seemed that, to the father, the family’s reputation was much more of a concern than his son’s happiness, so he deemed it necessary to further punish him. Notably, even though they had already arrived at home when they had the conversation, the father decided to lead the son all the way to Qujiang to carry out the punishment.

Since the area around the Qujiang Pond, the Ci’en Temple, and the Apricot Garden, was one of the most popular tourist attractions in the capital, if not the most popular one,

²⁹³ *Taiping guangji*, 484.3989.

²⁹⁴ Translation slightly revised from Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa*, pp. 155-57.

when Scholar Zheng's father lashed him, there must have been a large crowd of spectators. Due to Zheng's profession-related frequent public exposures (as mentioned, he was a dirge singer employed by a funeral parlor from the East Market), it was highly likely that, among these spectators were people who had heard the son's dirge singing or were familiar with his name and story. As if this were still not embarrassing enough, Qujiang was also a place for newly appointed *jinshi* scholars to celebrate and hold banquets. Under the generic rubric of Qujiang banquets, Wang Dingbao in his *Tang zhiyan* lists feasts and ceremonies structured around hit-ball matches, hunts for tree peonies, cherry banquets, visits to view the Buddhaoyed by a funeral parlor from the East Market), it was highly likely that, among these spectators were people who had 題名 together at the Ci'en Temple.²⁹⁵ All of these, however, had nothing to do with the yong Scholar Zheng.

The sharp contrast between the successful and failures doubled the humiliation. At first, Scholar Zheng was also one of the *jinshi* candidates who had come to Chang'an to take the examination and looked forward to a promising future. But now, when those who were in the same year as him or later than him, and those whose talent was on the same level as his or even lower, all had passed the exam and had been sent to their respective posts, he found himself thrown into extreme difficulties. When those junior novices also succeeded in their official careers and proudly gathered in Qujiang to fully enjoy

²⁹⁵ Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhiyan*, 2.28-29. See also Oliver J. Moore, *Rituals of Recruitment in Tang China*, pp. 233; Seo Tatsuhiko, "Tōdai no kakyo seido to Chōan no gōkaku reigi" 唐代の科擧制度と長安の合格禮儀, in Tōdaishi Kenhyū hen 唐代史研究會, ed., *Ritsuryōsei: Chūgoku Chōsen no hō to kokka* 律令制: 中國朝鮮の法と國家 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1966), pp. 239-74.

themselves, he was forced to submit to his father's abuse, probably within visible distance of their feast tables.

No matter what was his father's intention, whether to just relieve his anger or to spur his son to repent and improve himself, such a public display would have certain notable effects. On the one hand, Zheng's public dishonoring aroused much sympathy, and encouraged the further spread of his story. On the other hand, in addition to the physical torture, the mental humiliation was severe and destructive for the young scholar. His life became more miserable after the punishment, because his poor physical and mental health directly caused his employer to abandon him, causing him to beg in the street to survive. This also provides the condition for Li Wa to discover him and repaired their relationship, so that the rest of the story is possible.

Buddhist Temples and Taoist Temples: Beyond Religious Responsibilities

While Qujiang was a place both for people of various walks to relax and for *jinshi* scholars to celebrate their academic and professional success, the functions and roles of Buddhist temples and Taoist temples were more diverse and went far beyond their religious responsibilities. For example, since temples had a much-visited public space, many people used their association with them to build their reputation. Also, many Buddhist and Taoist temples were sites of various kinds of performances during festivals and made use of many artificial scenic designs to attract tourists. In doing so, their entertainment functions gradually surpassed their original religious ones. Due to their

easy access, temples usually had congregations that included many guests and tourists. This also opened them to many scoundrels, who took advantage of people's unfamiliarity with them to commit deceptions. In general, there was a trend towards secularization in Tang Dynasty temples. The secularized temples formed a more dynamic public space that give birth to many lively narratives.

When the eminent writer and politician Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (779-848) first came to Chang'an, he had trouble holding his ground, until his talent was discovered and appreciated by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Huangfu Shi 皇甫湜 (777-835), two literary giants at that time. The two patrons advised him to rent a room in a temple and there seek a public audience and use it to build his reputation.

僧孺因謀所居，二公沈然良久，乃曰：“可於客戶稅一廟院。”僧孺如所教，造門致謝。二公又誨之曰：“某日可遊青龍寺，薄暮而歸。”二公聯鑣至彼，因大署其門曰：“韓愈、皇甫湜同訪幾官不遇。”翌日，輦轂名士咸觀焉。奇章之名，由是赫然矣。²⁹⁶

Sengru therefore asked for their opinion on where he should reside. The two gentlemen remained silent for a long time and said, “You can rent a room in a temple in the Kehu Ward.” Sengru followed their suggestion [and rented a room there]. [After that] he called on them to express his gratitude. The two gentlemen then told him, saying, “One day you should take a tour to the Qinglong Temple and return at dusk.” [When Sengru left], the two gentlemen drove together to his place, and then wrote in bold characters on his gate, “Han Yu and Huangfu Shi came for a visit without the good fortune of seeing you.” On the second day, distinguished scholars all drove their carriages to come and see. Since then, [Niu Sengru] gained considerable fame for his marvelous essays.

²⁹⁶ *Taiping guangji*, 180.1342.

Niu Sengru's experience reminded people of the story of Chen Zi'ang, discussed earlier in this chapter. Both are about how a young scholar new to the capital quickly became famous, though Chen Zi'ang managed to build up his reputation by himself, whereas Niu Sengru relied on the help of Han Yu and Huangfu Shi. First of all, Han and Huangfu suggested that Niu move to the Kehu Ward. Most residents of Kehu were tenants from other regions and thus Kehu had a more diverse population. Thus, in the Kehu Ward one could find a more energetic and diversified public space, in which much information was rapidly disseminated. Han Yu and Huangfu Shi must have taken this situation into consideration before giving their advice.

Secondly, their suggestion that Niu rent a room in a temple was also carefully thought out. Since the mid-Tang period, temples had gradually become a favorite place for scholars to gather to discuss academic questions and compose literary works. Many *jinshi* candidates who failed the annual examination chose to spend the summer in a temple to prepare for the next year's annual examination chose to spend the summer in a *emic que* 夏課.²⁹⁷ Han Yu and Huangfu Shi's names were well-known among these scholars. Their note, pasted on Niu's door, served as a bulletin board with the power to broadcast and stimulate remarkable celebrity effects. As Linda Rui Feng points out, "leaving a visible trace on Niu Sengru's door would be far more effective in elevating Niu's reputation than an actual visit whose consequences would be short-range and short-lived."²⁹⁸ Their high regard for Niu was so convincing that they easily enhanced Niu's

²⁹⁷ *Nanbu xinshu*, pp. 17-18. See also Rong Xinjiang's discussion in his *Sui Tang Chang'an: Xingbie, jiyi ji qita*, pp. 79-82.

²⁹⁸ Linda Rui Feng, *City of Marvel and Transformation: Chang'an and Narratives of Experience in Tang Dynasty China*, p. 97.

fame among his fellow scholars. As the news spread, the note was intentionally left on display for a couple more days for those curious people who had missed it. Since the temple was open to the public, it became possible for everyone to see the actual note, verify the information, and further spread the news. Without any difficulty, Han Yu and Huangfu Shi achieved their goal and Niu won instant fame.

As inspiring and exciting as the story is, however, according to the scholarly research, the celebrity who guided and supported Niu Sengru was actually Wei Zhiyi 韋執誼 (fl. 805), not Han Yu or Huangfu Shi; and Wei did not help Niu through any elaborate plan.²⁹⁹ In other words, the entire story of Han Yu and Huangfu Shi aiding Niu was made up. The author, or the first narrator of this story, skillfully used Tang Dynasty temples' well-known function as residences, their association with *jinshi* candidates, and their public character to have created an imaginative narrative. All the three characters in the story, Han Yu, Huangfu Shi, and Niu Sengru, were famous men of letters. Their celebrity effect and the transmission effect of the public space together made the narrative more dramatic. Even when the audience didn't fully believe the story, based on their knowledge of Chang'an, they would have been more willing to accept this version, which was both reasonable and appealing.

The same applies to an anecdote of Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi:

長安慈恩寺浮圖，起開元至大和之歲，舉子前名登遊題紀者衆矣。文宗朝，元稹、白居易、劉禹錫唱和千百首，傳於京師，誦者稱美。凡所至寺觀臺閣林亭，或歌或詠之處，向來名公詩板，潛自撤之，蓋有媿於數

²⁹⁹ See Zhu Yuqi 朱玉麒, "Sui Tang wenxue renwu yu Chang'an fangli kongjian" 隋唐文學人物與長安坊里空間, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 9 (2003), p. 90.

公之詩也。會元、白因傳香於慈恩寺塔下，忽視章先輩八元所留詩。白命僧抹去埃塵，二公移時吟咏，盡日不厭。悉全除去諸家之詩，惟留章公一首而已。樂天曰：“不謂嚴維出此弟子。”由是二公竟不為之，詩流自慈恩息筆矣。³⁰⁰

Between the Kaiyuan and the Dahe period, the pagoda in the Ci'en Temple in Chang'an was a popular place where *jinshi* exam candidates went for sightseeing and wrote poems and short prose about the sights before they were officially successful. During Emperor Wenzong's 文宗 (Li Ang 李昂, r. 827-840) reign, Yuan Zhen, Bai Juyi, and Liu Yuxi composed hundreds of poems in reply to each other. Their poems spread all over the capital and were praised by people who recited them. They went to Buddhist and Taoist temples, terraces, open halls, and pavilions. At each place where they went to compose songs and poems, the celebrities would secretly remove their own poetry boards that they had composed earlier on. They did so probably because they found them inferior to the poems of these gentlemen. Once, when Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi were participating in a prayer service at the foot of the Pagoda of the Ci'en Temple, they suddenly found a poem left by their senior colleague Zhang Bayuan. Bai Juyi had some people wipe the dust from off it, and then the two gentlemen read and chanted the poem. They did so for a long time, and did not get tired the whole day. They also removed all of the other poems and left Mr. Zhang's poem alone. Letian said, "I did not expect that Yan Wei would have such a disciple." Therefore, the two gentlemen did not compose any poems by themselves. After that, the poem writing activity at the Ci'en Temple came to an end.

As with the story of Niu Sengru, although fascinating, this story was considered historically unreliable. Bian Xiaoxuan 卞孝萱 in his *Yuan Zhen nianpu* 元稹年譜 asserted that during the Dahe Era (827-835) of Emperor Wenzong, Yuan Zhen and Bai

³⁰⁰ He Guangyuan 何光遠 (tenth century), *Song chongdian zuben Jianjie lu* 宋重雕足本鑑戒錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai Kexue Jishu Wenxian Chubanshe, 2004), 7.40-41.

Juyi were never in Changian Xiaoxuan f it, and then the two gentlemen read them to have visited the Ci'en Temple together and appreciated Zhang Bayuan's poem at that time.³⁰¹

Whether the story is simply anachronous or completely groundless, the situation is well-justified. To begin with, leaving poems in places one has visited was a legitimate practice at that time. People left inscriptions on walls, rocks, trees, or boards in public buildings or at natural spots (mainly temples, inns, taverns, courier stations, and government offices). These poems then became, in Judith T. Zeitlin's words, "written mementos," which "sometimes could not only enhance the cultural value of a spot but even put it on the map."³⁰² Unlike other ordinary published poems, the spatial origin of the inscribed poems was very much relevant. These poems were always defined by a space. In the case of the Ci'en Temple, it was a popular scenic spot within walking distance of the recreational Qujiang area, and the temple's pagoda was famous for its unusual height and breathtaking views at the top. It would be natural for well-versed tourists to record in poems their personal experiences and feelings about this place and leave the poems there after their tours.³⁰³

³⁰¹ Bian Xiaoxuan 卞孝萱, *Yuan Zhen nianpu* 元稹年譜 (Jinan: Qi Lu Shushe, 1980), pp. 497-98. See also Bian's "Yuan Zhen jianbiao" 元稹簡表, *Shanxi Daxue xuebao* 山西大學學報 no. 2 (1981), pp. 36-37.

³⁰² Judith T. Zeitlin, "Disappearing Verses: Writing on Walls and Anxieties of Loss," in Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu, eds., *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 74.

³⁰³ The beginnings of these kinds of poems, in most cases called *tibi shi* 題壁詩 (wall poems), can be traced to the Six Dynasties. The Tang Dynasty witnessed the proliferation of such wall poems. By Christopher Nugent's count, over one thousand poems in *Quan Tangshi* have titles indicating that they originally were inscriptions on some surface other than paper or scroll. See Christopher Nugent, *Manifest in Words, Written on Paper: Producing and Circulating Poetry in Tang Dynasty China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 201-202.

The poems they left then became both literary products and a physical heritage for later observers. They had not only a built-in spatial dimension, but also a temporal dimension. Since scenic spots were open to the public, the initial poems, whether they were meant to be or not, would be encountered by later visitors. The poems would amount to visual displays of time and would themselves become part of the space and the next visitor's experience. The poems might even solicit other poems written in the same spot, producing a potentially infinite chain of responses or competition.

The original scenic public space was thus turned into a field for a poetic contest. The people involved probably never had the chance to meet each other, but they relied on the shared public space to communicate and interact. All of the poems left there would be appreciated, compared, and reevaluated by later viewers, and the results of this might include physical changes to the public space. In the ninth century, wooden plaques called *shiban* 詩板 (poetry boards) appeared for the purpose of accommodating written verses. As Linda Rui Feng indicates, "These poetry boards' portability made it easy for wall poems to be updated or selectively retained...their temporal dimension had a seasonal vitality that drew onlookers."³⁰⁴ Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi once had the privilege of bringing about such spatial updates and maintaining seasonal vitality. In like manner, Yuan and Bai were also aware of the existence of other masterpieces that were worth putting in the place of all of the other works, including the ones they originally wanted to compose themselves. Although people stopped writing poems at the Ci'en Temple ever since, due to Yuan and Bai's reputation and influence, the narrative about this space continued to grow. Since the power of the public space in the Ci'en Temple was well-

³⁰⁴ Linda Rui Feng, *City of Marvel and Transformation*, pp. 100-101.

acknowledged and the poetic activities there well-appreciated, the narrative was also easily established. Even though it violated the truth, people still had no trouble accepting and enjoying it.

Aside from these literary activities, temples in Changsha from these literary activities, as there well-appreciated, the narrative was also easily established. Even 崔煒 was a talented young scholar born into a noble family. He was not good at managing his money and family property, but had always admired knight-errantry:

不數年，財業殫盡，多棲止佛舍。時中元日，番禺人多陳設珍異於佛廟，集百戲于開元寺。煒因窺之，見乞食老嫗，因蹶而覆人之酒甕，當壚者毆之。計其直僅一緡耳，煒憐之，脫衣為償其所直。嫗不謝而去。異日又來告煒曰：“謝子為脫吾難。吾善灸贅疣。今有越井岡艾少許奉子，每遇疣贅，只一炷耳，不獨愈苦，兼獲美艷。”煒笑而受之，嫗倏亦不見。後數日，因遊海光寺，遇老僧贅于耳，煒因出艾試灸之，而如其說。³⁰⁵

In a few years, he squandered all his inherited properties, so most of the time he stayed in a temple. Once, during the Ghost Festival, many foreign people displayed rare treasures in the Buddhist temple and performed acrobatics in the Kaiyuan Temple. Wei had a look at them and saw an old woman begging for food. She tripped and knocked over someone's wine jar, and the wine seller hit her. The cost of the jar was just a string of coins. Pitying her, Wei took off his clothes and gave them to pay for this. The old woman left without thanking him. Another day, she came back to tell Wei, "Thank you for helping me out of the trouble. I am good at using moxa to treat warts. Now I have a little moxa from Yuejinggang to give to you. Whenever you have warts, you only need to burn with one stick of incense, and then not only will your pain be cured, but your appearance will also become bright and charming." Laughing, Wei accepted this, and the old woman disappeared. After several days, Wei visited the Haiguang Temple and met an old monk who had a wart on his ear. Wei thereupon took out his moxa and tried to burn it. It was just as the old woman had told him.

³⁰⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 34.216.

In Cui Wei's story, people, including many foreign people, used the public space in the Kaiyuan Temple to celebrate the Zhongyuan Festival.³⁰⁶ During the mid-Tang period, folk performance became more and more popular. *Nanbu xinshu* records, "Most of Chang'an's acrobatic fields were concentrated in the Ci'en Temple. Small ones were in the Qinglong Temple and even smaller ones in the Jianfu and Yongshou Temples" 長安戲場，多集於慈恩；小者在青龍，其次薦福、永壽。³⁰⁷ Some performances were sponsored by the patrons of the temples or just common citizens, but some temples also trained their own performers: "In the temple, there were enough 'pure people'³⁰⁸ who needed not to be used [for the daily labors in the temple]. Thus, [people] choose twenty people from among them and order them to learn drumming and dancing. Whenever there is a festival, they offer a musical performance before the statues of Buddha." 寺足淨人無可役者，乃選取二十頭，令學鼓舞，每至節日設樂像前。³⁰⁹

No matter what were the performances, whether musical ensembles or acrobatics, the acrobatic fields always attracted a large audience. *Du yi zhi* 獨異志 records, matter what were the performances, whether musical ensembles or acrobatics, the acrobatic

³⁰⁶ The Zhongyuan Festival was held on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month and was also known as the Ghost Festival of China.

³⁰⁷ Qian Yi, *Nanbu xinshu*, 5.50.

³⁰⁸ The so called *jingren* 淨人 or "pure people" refers to those who were previously convicts but who were recruited into temples and were "purified" for Buddhist services.

³⁰⁹ See Shi Daoxuan 釋道宣 (596-667), "Huizhou zhuan" 慧冑傳, *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, in *Dazangjing Kanxinghui* 大藏經刊行會 ed., *Dazheng xinxiu Dazangjing* 大正新脩大藏經 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chubanshe, 1983), 50:29.697c.

performances] everyday” 長安戲場中，日集數千人觀之。³¹⁰ The old lady’s tripping and knocking over people’s wine jars reveals that people flocked to the temple and there was little room for her to walk through the crowd. Moreover, people there were drinking wine while watching the acrobatics. When annoyed, they would not hesitate to fight back, without any concern about staining the dignity of the temple. The solemn religious space had already turned into a lively space of civic entertainment. The temple here was not much different than the markets, park, or any other secular public spaces.

The story then continues with Cui curing many people with the skills he had learned from the old lady, including a snake spirit, and being generously repaid. His later experience was determined by his kind deeds in the temple, while the old lady he helped turned out to be an immortal. In other words, all of his dealings with supernatural beings were eventually traced back to the temple. The first time Cui verified the effects of his medical treatment was also in a temple, when he was cured of the disease of the old monk. Due to its function as place of entertainment, the temple brought people together and supplied the foundation for this story.

Festival performance in a temple is also featured in in a nd supplied the foundation for this story 韋崑 but promised to find him beautiful girls, Wei found one of his targets in the Qianfu Temple 千福寺:

崑曰：“昨者寒食，與二三子遊於千福寺，見刁將軍緬張樂於殿堂。有善吹笙者，年二八，雙鬟垂耳，嬌姿艷絕。當識之乎？”任氏曰：“此寵奴也。其母即妾之內姊也，求之可也。”崑拜於席下，任氏許之。³¹¹

³¹⁰ Li Rong 李冗 (ninth century), *Du yi zhi* 獨異志 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983), 1.8.

³¹¹ *Taiping guangji*, 452.3695.

Yin said, “Yesterday was the Hanshi Festival.³¹² I visited the Qianfu Temple along with a few other companions. There I saw a musical performance arranged by General Diao Mian in the great hall. There was a skilled flageolet player of about sixteen years of age, her hair done in a pair of coils that hung down to her ears. She had an air of sweetness about her and was utterly desirable. Do you know her, by chance?” Ms. Ren replied, “That is Chongnu. Her mother is, in fact, a cousin of mine. You can go after her.” Wei bowed, and Ms. Ren promised to help him.³¹³

This episode confirms that a temple was a place not just for a religious cult, but also for amusement, especially during festivals. The major reason why the rich playboy Wei Yin of “Renshi zhuan” visited the Qianfu Temple during the Hanshi Festival must be that he knew there would be singing and dancing performances and was fascinated by this prospect. Even though this is not a crucial element in the story’s plot, one can still see how the public space in a temple was portrayed in a narrative and how this facilitated romantic encounters.

People in temples not only endeavored to offer entertaining performances, but also made great efforts to beautify their environment by planting flowers or constructing artificial landscapes to attract more tourists. As introduced in the first chapter, many temples were originally residences of royalty or high officials, who already had gardens and flowerbeds of their own. Yet people still spared no pains to renovate the landscape

³¹² The Hanshi Festival, or literally the Cold Food Festival, was a spring festival in which the use of fire was forbidden.

³¹³ Translation slightly revised from Stephen Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginning to 1911*, pp. 522-23.

and develop new breeds of flowers.³¹⁴ In Chang'an, people devoted much energy to cultivating peonies. *Tang Guoshi bu* 唐國史補 indicates:

京城貴遊尚牡丹，三十餘年矣。每春暮，車馬若狂，以不耽翫為耻。執金吾鋪圍外寺觀，種以求利，一本有直數萬者。³¹⁵

People in the capital have been valuing sightseeing and cherishing peonies for over thirty years. Every late spring, carriages and horses were driven around as if people were crazy. People considered it a shame to not go and appreciate them. In the temple outside of the Patrol Office of the Imperial Insignia Guard, people would plant peonies for profit. One stem could be worth up to tens of thousands in profits.

The craze for peonies swept over Chang'an. People planted peonies in temples to cater to the public taste and to make great profits. When the peonies were in full bloom, tourists would throng the temples, enjoying a greater chance of meeting and becoming attached to strangers. In "Huo Xiaoyu zhuan," if not for the enjoyment of the peonies, the yellow-jacketed gallant would have had no way of coming across Li Yi, the male protagonist who had abandoned Xiaoyu, not to mention forcing him to see her:

時已三月，人多春遊，生與同輩五六人詣崇敬寺翫牡丹花。步於西廊，遞吟詩句。有京兆韋夏卿者，生之密友，時亦同行。謂生曰：“風光甚麗，草木榮華。傷哉鄭卿，銜冤空室。足下終能棄置，寔是忍人。丈夫之心，不宜如此。足下宜為思之。”歎讓之際，忽有一豪士，衣輕黃紵衫，挾朱彈，丰神雋美，衣服輕華，唯有一剪頭胡雛從後，潛行而聽之。俄而前揖生曰：“公非李十郎者乎？某族本山東，姻連外戚，雖乏文藻，心嘗樂賢。仰公聲華，常思覲止，今日幸會，得覩清揚。某之敝

³¹⁴ See Rong Xinjiang, "Sui Tang Chang'an de siguan yu huanjing" 隋唐長安的寺觀與環境, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 15 (2009), pp. 15-18.

³¹⁵ Li Zhao 李肇 (late eighth to early ninth century), *Tang Guoshi bu* 唐國史補 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1979), 2.45.

居，去此不遠，亦有聲樂，足以娛情。妖姬八九人，駿馬十數匹，唯公所欲，但願一過。”生之儕輩。共聆斯語，更相歎美。因與豪士策馬同行，疾轉數坊，遂至勝業。生以近鄭之所止，意不欲過，便託事故，欲回馬首。豪士曰：“敝居咫尺，忍相棄乎？”乃輓挾其馬，牽引而行。遷延之間，已及鄭曲。生神情恍惚，鞭馬欲回。豪士遽命奴僕數人，抱持而進，疾走推入車門。³¹⁶

It was the third month of the year, and many people were going on spring outings. In the company of five or six of his friends, the scholar went to Chongjing Temple to enjoy the peonies in bloom. They strolled along the west corridor, taking turns composing verses [for the occasion]. A man of Jingzhao named Wei Xiaqing, who was a close friend of the scholar, was then walking along with the party. He said to the scholar, “The scenery is so beautiful, and the grasses and trees are so luxuriant and glorious. What a pity it is that Miss Zheng should nurse a bitter sense of wrong in her empty chamber! You could really abandon her at last. You are indeed a hard-hearted man! But a real man’s heart shouldn’t be like this. It is proper for you to think it over again.” As Wei was sighing and reproaching Li, a young gallant suddenly appeared, wearing a light yellow silk jacket and carrying a bow. He was handsome, full of vigor, splendidly dressed, and followed only by a boy of the northern tribes with short-cut hair. Following them secretly, he overheard what they were talking about. After a moment, he came forward and greeted the scholar with hands clasped, saying, “Aren’t you Li the Tenth? My family comes originally from Shandong, and we are related by marriage to the relatives of the emperor. Though I am lacking in literary talent, I like to make friends with talented men. Having admired your splendid reputation, I have always longed to meet you. Today I am so lucky to meet you and have an opportunity to look at your exquisite appearance. My humble residence is not far from here, and there are also songs and music that will suffice for entertainment. [Besides,] there are eight or nine bewitching beauties and more than ten fine horses—all of them whom you can do with as you desire. I merely hope that you will come for a visit.” The scholar’s friends all listened carefully to these words, and each in turn sighed with admiration so that they rode along with the young gallant. After winding through a few wards, they then arrived at the Shengye [Ward]. Because it was close to Xiaoyu’s residence, the scholar did not want to go. Thus he made an excuse and wanted to turn his horse’s head back, when the young gallant said, “As my humble residence is well within reach, how can you bear to discard me?” Then he took hold of the scholar’s horse

³¹⁶ *Taiping guangji*, 487.4008-10.

and pulled it along. Delaying in this way, they reached the entrance of the serpentine lane where Miss Zheng lived. The scholar was distracted. Whipping his horse, he intended to turn back. The gallant hurriedly ordered a few servants to take hold of him and force him to go on. Walking quickly, they pushed Li into the carriage gate.³¹⁷

Li Yi did not go alone to admire the beauty of the peonies but went with his friends to enjoy the flowers as well as compose poems. For them and probably many other men of letters, this might have been part of their routine collective activities. Li Yi stayed with his own circle and nobody knew whom he was until his friend Wei Xiaqing mentioned his affair with Xiaoyu. Li Yi and Huo Xiaoyu's story was already widely known at that moment. As discussed earlier in this chapter, after Xiaoyu sent her maid to the West Market to sell her jewelry, the matter was brought to the attention of the princess, and then to the public. Not only did Li's friend kept this in mind, but the stranger in yellow jacket who was eavesdropping was also aware of the whole situation. Once he heard their conversation, he was immediately clear about Li's identity. Secondly, Li must have already been criticized a lot for being inconsistent in love. Even his friend could not help feeling sorry for Xiaoyu and giving him admonitions. The gallant in yellow jacket also made up his mind to take action as soon as he learned about Li Yi's identity. One could imagine that he was standing close enough to be able to hear Li and Wei's private conversation without provoking their doubts. The density of people in the Chongjing Temple must have been very high, so that Li would consider the distance between himself and the stranger to be acceptable in this space.

³¹⁷ Translation slighted revised from Zhenjun Zhang's translation. See William H. Nienhauser, ed., *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader*, pp. 251-54.

When the gallant in yellow jacket approached Li and his friend to introduce himself as well as to invite them to his place, they agreed immediately and with delight. It seemed that both such a chance encounter and the friendly invitation between strangers were natural and common in the public space of Chang'an, and nobody would ever be suspicious. The gallant in yellow jacket relied on the public occasion in the temple to carry out his plan, and his protective cover was the crowded public space. Even though the story of Li Yi and Xiaoyu was well-known, and most people, like Wei Xiaqing, thought felt sympathetic towards Xiaoyu, lacked the courage to stand for fairness; whereas some others, like the gallant in yellow jacket, were brave enough but lacked the opportunity to pursue justice. The blooming peonies attract numerous people to the public space, allow strangers to learn about each other's background stories, and also provide the writer with good narrative materials.

Not only were people in Buddhist temples fond of cultivating flowers, but Taoist temples also used plants to encourage attention. The *yurui* flowers³¹⁸ in the Tangchang Taoist Temple 唐昌觀 were as famous as the peonies in the Chongjing Temple:³¹⁹

長安安業唐昌觀，舊有玉蕊花。其花每發，若瓊林瑤樹。唐元和中，春物方盛，車馬尋玩者相繼。忽一日，有女子年可十七八，衣綠繡衣，垂雙髻，無簪珥之飾，容色婉婉，迥出於眾。從以二女冠，三小僕，皆舁髻黃衫，端麗無比。既而下馬，以白角扇障面，直造花所，異香芬馥，

³¹⁸ Also known as *qionghua* 琼花, a rare and exotic type of flower.

³¹⁹ Bai Juyi often mentions these flowers in his poems. For example, he has a line that reads, "Meetings for the *yurui* flowers in Tangchang Taoist Temple, Appointments for the peonies in the Chongjing Monastery" 唐昌玉蕊會，崇敬牡丹期, and another that reads, "It should be after the [season] of the *yurui* flowers in Tangchang Taoist Temple, and right at the season of the peonies in the Chongjing Monastery" 應過唐昌玉蕊後，猶當崇敬牡丹時. See *Quan Tangshi*, 436.4824; 436.4831.

聞於數十步外。觀者疑出自宮掖，莫敢逼而視之。佇立良久，令女僕取花數枝而出。將乘馬，顧謂黃衫者曰：“曩有玉峯之期，自此行矣。”時觀者如堵，咸覺煙飛鶴唳，景物輝煥。舉轡百餘步，有輕風擁塵，隨之而去。須臾塵滅，望之已在半空，方悟神仙之遊。餘香不散者經月餘。時嚴休復、元稹、劉禹錫、白居易。俱作《玉蕊院真人降》詩。³²⁰

Previously, in the Tangchang Taoist Temple in the Anye Ward in Chang'an, *yurui* flowers were planted. Whenever the flowers bloomed, they were like a jade forest. During the Yuanhe 元和 Era (806-820) in the Tang Dynasty, when spring was at its peak, carriages would arrive to seek for fun one after another. Suddenly one day, a girl of seventeen or eighteen years old wearing green embroidered clothes and double knots showed up. She had no hairpin or earrings to decorate herself, but her countenance was amiable and graceful, and caused her to stand out from the crowd. She was followed by two Taoist nuns and three footboys, all of whom wore pigtail braids and yellow jackets, and were incomparably pretty. Later, she got off the horse, and with a white ox-horn-handle fan covering her face, she walked directly to the flowers. Her exotic fragrance was so rich and strong that it could be smelled ten steps away. The spectators suspected that she might come from the imperial harem, so nobody dared to approach to look at her. The girl stood there for a long time, ordered her serving maids to pick a few stems of flowers, and left. When she was about to mount the horse, she turned round and told the yellow-jacketed people, "Formerly, I've made an appointment at the Jade Peak and I'm leaving for it from here."

At that time, the spectators stood round like a wall. They all felt clouds flying and cranes singing, and the scenery was glorious and radiant. When [the girl and her people] had driven over a hundred steps away, a cool breeze held up a cloud of dust and followed them. Soon after, the dust settled. When people gazed at them, they were already half-way up in the sky. Only then did people realize that they were immortals coming out for fun. It was months before the lingering fragrance finally disappeared. At that time, Yan Xiufu, Yuan Zhen, Liu Yuxi, and Bai Juyi all composed the "Immortals Descending to the Temple of *Yurui* Flowers" poems.

The narrative of the entire event is nothing very special by itself: the *yurui* flowers growing in the Taoist temple not only attracted human beings, but they were also

³²⁰ *Taiping guangji*, 69.427.

appealing to immortals. Many people witnessed, or thought they witnessed, the immortals descending to the courtyard; many more only heard the retelling of the situation. The author also mentions the lingering fragrance, as a cliché, to verify the facticity of the matter. As a matter of fact, since “nobody dared to approach to look at her” 莫敢逼而視之, the mysterious lady who showed up in the courtyard might just be some royal woman who was dazzlingly beautiful, rather than a Taoist immortal. It is also hard to judge whether the first narrators on the occasion exaggerated the real situation or if their zealous belief in Taoism encouraged them to create such a narrative to increase the fame of the temple. It is justified, however, to argue for the significance of the public space in the temple. Public clamor could confound the true with the false. The repeating of the same narrative might gradually have caused people to identify with it. Also, the public character of the event added to its credibility. For those who were not on the scene, knowing that many people were there and had seen it would have been a legitimate reason for them to believe.

One noteworthy aspect of this narrative that distinguishes it from many similar ones is the participation of the eminent literary and political figures. The poems they composed for this occasion, which were consequently attached to this story, showed no evidence that the poets were physically on the spot to witness the scene; they might have been convinced by other people in the same way as the masses were. In any case, all of their poems served as a record and testimony of the narrative and became part of the literary history.³²¹ That is to say, the interaction and communication in the public space

³²¹ All of the poems were included in the *Quan Tangshi*.

not only created the narrative, but also inspired the poems, and they supported each other so as to convince readers of the original miracle.

Since the public space of the Buddhist temples and Taoist temples was easily accessible by people of various social classes and from all walks of life, chances were that there would also come people harboring evil intentions who would cause trouble:

唐懿宗用文理天下，海內晏清，多變服私游寺觀。民間有奸猾者，聞大安國寺，有江淮進奏官寄吳綾千匹在院，於是暗集其群，就內選一人肖上之狀者，衣上私行之服，多以龍腦諸香薰裹，引二三小僕，潛入寄綾之院。其時有丐者一二人至，假服者遺之而去。逡巡，諸色丐求之人，接跡而至，給之不暇。假服者謂院僧曰：“院中有何物？可借之。”僧未諾間，小僕擲眼向僧。僧驚駭曰：“櫃內有人寄綾千匹，唯命是聽。”於是啟櫃，罄而給之。小僕謂僧曰：“來日早，于朝門相覓，可奉引入內，所酬不輕。”假服者遂跨衛而去。僧自是經日訪于內門，杳無所見，方知群丐並是奸人之黨焉。³²²

Emperor Yizong (Li Cui 李漼, r. 859-873) of the Tang Dynasty made use of civil administration and during his reign there was peace and order within the seas. He often would change his clothes and travel incognito to Buddhist and Taoist temples. Some sly and crafty men among the populace once heard that a Capital Liaison Representative from the Jiang-Huai area had temporarily stored a thousand bolts of Wu silk in the cloister of the Da Anguo Temple. Consequently, they secretly gathered their men and selected one who resembled the emperor. This man put on the emperor's commoner's clothes and made them pungent with the incense of borneol and other fragrances. Then he led a few footboys and sneaked into the courtyard where the silk had been left. At that time, a couple of beggars came in, the man in commoner's clothes handed something to them, and they left. Later, various begging people arrived one after another and the man could not satisfy them all, so he asked the monks in the courtyard, "What kind of things do you have here? I'd like to borrow some." Before the monk gave his consent, the footboy winked at him. The monk was astonished and frightened, saying, "There are a thousand bolts of silk in the cabinet, which someone has left. I will do

³²² *Taiping guangji*, 238.1835.

whatever you ask me to do.” He then opened the cabinet and gave them all the silk. The footboy told the monk, “Tomorrow morning you can look for me at the threshold to the palace, and I will lead you in and reward you heavily.” The man in commoner’s clothes then got on his donkey and left. Since that day, the monk visited the court gate every day but saw nobody. Only then did he realize that all the beggars were accomplices of the fraud.

A dynamic public space in a temple could be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it supplied people with entertainment that might enrich their everyday life; but on the other hand, it could also be a place of crime. Like Qujiang, temples in Chang’an could be very diversified spaces. Not only high officials would often go in and out of temples, but even the emperor himself would travel incognito to temples. Otherwise, the monks would never assume that the person they met was the emperor. The emperor’s personal hobby was well-known, and was even used as an opportunity to fawn on him and to seek awards. When the footboy winked at the old monk, he was taking advantage of the common people’s fear of dignitaries as well as their eagerness to please them.

Furthermore, the swindler was very well-informed. He not only understood the emperor’s trick of travelling incognito, but also knew what his mufti looked like. More surprisingly, he even had the inside information about the silk temporarily stored in the temple. As silk was a valuable commodity and a type of currency at that time,³²³ it easily became a target of the swindler. His method of deception was also very well designed. He chose to not act on his own, but planned a perfect cooperation with the footboy and the beggars and successfully earned the monks’ trust. The story shows that those who

³²³ A bolt of silk had a standard monetary value during the Tang. By 850 A.D., a bolt of silk was roughly equivalent in value to a *liang* 兩 (about an ounce) of silver or a string (weighed about 6.4 pounds) of copper coins.

frequently visited temples included, but were not limited to, emperors, officials, monks, ordinary citizens, and beggars. Without any one of these types of people, the fraud would not succeed. The swindler made thorough use of the complexity of the public space in the temple and people's lack of familiarity with each other in this space to carry out the scheme. Through this narrative, readers of Chang'an's public spaces are able to appreciate the other side of the picture.

The Mutual Gaze and the Shift towards Public Space: A Case Study of The Hua'e/Qinzheng Towers

Compared to other works of architecture in Chang'an, royal palaces were normally strongly fortified and enclosed a highly privileged private space. There were three major complexes of imperial palaces in Chang'an: the Taiji Palace 太極宮,³²⁴ the Daming Palace 大明宮, and the Xingqing Palace 興慶宮 (Fig. 26). The Taiji Palace, which was originally called Daxing Palace 大興宮, was constructed as the sole official urban residence of the sovereign and served as home for the court in the Sui Dynasty. It was renamed Taiji Palace in the first year of the Shenlong 神龍 Era (705) of Emperor Zhongzong and Empress Wu, and later became the royal residence of the Tang Dynasty emperors. The Taiji Palace was located along the northern city wall to its south. The East

³²⁴ The Taiji Palace can be broadly defined to refer to the entire Palace City 宮城, which included the Taiji Palace, the East Palace 東宮, and the Yeting Palace 掖庭宮. It can also refer specifically to the central palace enclosure. In this chapter it is used in its narrow sense.

Palace and Yeting Palace served as its protective barriers, and imperial guards guarded both sides of Chengtianmen Street, the city's axial thoroughfare. The location and structure of the Taiji Palace complex symbolized the supreme imperial power and its control over the royal clan, national politics, and the area beyond the Palace City.³²⁵

However, since the Taiji Palace was low-lying and thus very humid and stuffy during the summer, in order to avoid the summer heat, in the eighth year of the Zhenguan Era (634) Emperor Taizong started the construction of a new national palace, the Daming Palace, which was sited in an elevated place. Its construction was suspended halfway due to the death of Emperor Gaozu, and was revived and completed in the third year of the Longshuo 龍朔 Era (663) of Emperor Gaozong.³²⁶ After its completion, the political center of the city shifted permanently from the Taiji Palace to this new compound. It was joined to the Palace City on its northeast corner and was located outside of the city walls. Extant sources record three major royal transportation routes, referred to as concealed passageways (*fudao* 複道), all connected with the main palace. Protected by a double wall (*jiacheng* 夾城), these raised passageways were intended to shield from view the movements of the emperor and his entourage.³²⁷

³²⁵ For further discussion, see Ren Yunying 任雲英 and Zhu Shiguang 朱士光, "Cong Sui Tang Chang'an cheng kan Zhongguo gudai duchengkongjian yanbian de gongneng quxiangxing tezhen" 從隋唐長安城看中國古代都城空間演變的功能趨向性特徵, in *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中國歷史地理論叢 vol. 20, no. 2 (2005), pp. 48-49. For the symbolic meaning and function of the Taiji Palace, see Saehyang P. Chung, "Symmetry and Balance in the Layout of the Sui-Tang Palace City of Chang'an," in *Artibus Asiae* no. 56 1/2 (1996), pp. 5-17.

³²⁶ *Zizhi tongjian*, 194.6106-107, 200.6329; *Tang huiyao*, 30.553.

³²⁷ See Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Sui-Tang Chang'an*, p. 81.

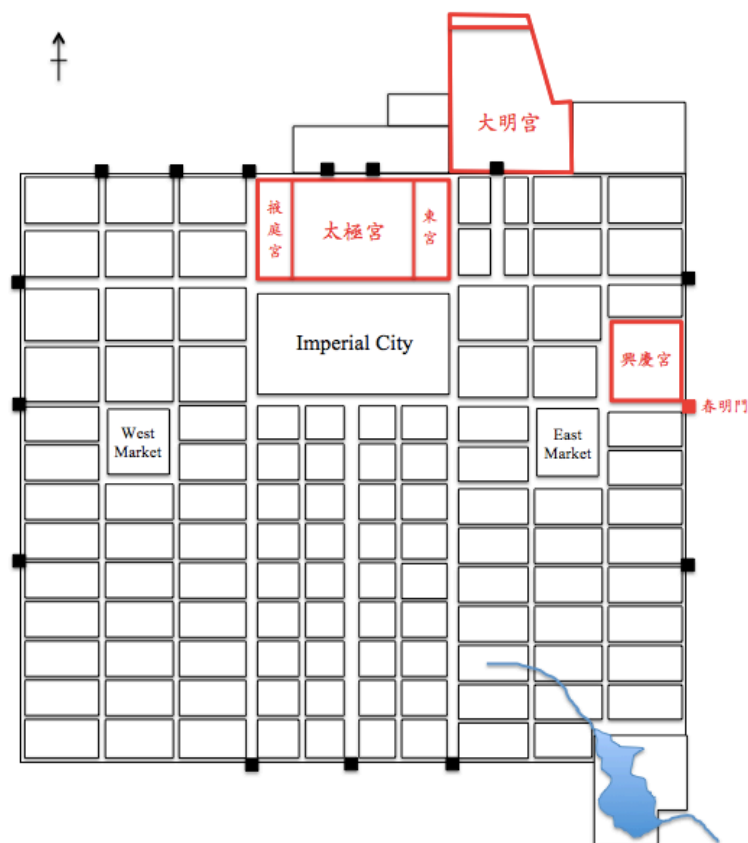


Figure 26. The three palaces as shown in the reconstructed map of Chang'an.

The Xingqing Palace, on the other hand, was distinguished from more traditional palaces in three respects. Firstly, unlike the Taiji and Daming Palaces, the Xingqing Palace was from the beginning not built following the standards for a palace for the sovereign; and it was converted into a national palace in the second year of the Kaiyuan Era (714) of Emperor Xuanzong. Before he rose to power, Emperor Xuanzong lived with his brothers in that palace's predecessor building. The area it covered was originally called Longqing Ward 隆慶坊; it was not much different from other residential wards,

but was significantly smaller than either the Taiji Palace or the Daming Palace.³²⁸ Despite its non-compliance with tradition and conventional practice, the Xingqing Palace was Emperor Xuanzong's favorite palace and remained his official residence even after he ascended the throne. However, after his death, it faded from prominence, and Tang sovereigns once again took up residence in the Daming Palace, which meant that the Xingqing Palace was associated almost solely with Emperor Xuanzong rather than any other Tang emperors. Secondly, the Xingqing Palace was located along the eastern city wall and was inside and immediately at the north near the Chunming Gate 春明門. That means, it was located in a common residential area rather than in the enclosed Palace City or the Imperial City. Also, it was surrounded by four wards from the north, west, and south, and was located near the northeast corner of the bustling East Market. Thirdly, the inner structure of the Xingqing Palace was also distinct. Traditional palaces were usually divided into two parts, with the northern part used as a court and the southern part as a palace harem. The Xingqing Palace kept the north-south layout, but its northern part consisted of residential quarters, while in the southern part were garden and forest areas.³²⁹ In summary, the Xingqing Palace was not designed to be a national palace in the first place, and hence had a more compact scale as well as a unique structure compared to traditional and more standard palaces. Its builders paid scant attention to the canonical

³²⁸ The Taiji Palace had a rectangular shape and measured 1,285 meters east to west by 1,492 meters north to south. The Daming Palace was roughly trapezoidal in shape, with the north side measuring 1,135 meters, the south side 1,674 meters, and the north-south length 2,256 meters. The Xingqing Palace was also rectangular in shape and measured 1,075 meters east to west by 1,250 meters north to south. See Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Sui-Tang Chang'an*, pp. 58, 81, and 98.

³²⁹ For a detailed introduction to the structure of the Xingqing Palace, see Li Danjie 李丹婕, "Cong gongting dao fangli: Xuan Su Dai sanchao zhengzhi quanli shanbian fenxi" 從宮廷到坊里：玄肅代三朝政治權力嬗變分析, in *Tang yanjiu* no. 15 (2009), pp. 231-33.

and cosmological considerations that they were concerned with in building the two earlier palace complexes. It was rooted in a vibrant civic environment, and had the potential to facilitate more active and frequent interaction with the civic society.

Among other buildings in the Xingqing Palace complex, the Hua Among other b
花萼相輝樓 (lit. Tower of Blossom and Calyx Mutually Shining, usually referred to as
the Hua'e Tower 花萼樓 for short) and the Qinzheng Wuben Tower 勤政務本樓 (lit.
Tower of Industrious Government and Devotion to the Fundamentals, usually referred to
as the Qinzheng Tower 勤政樓 for short) attracted the most attention due to their special
location in the palace and its important political functions during Emperor Xuanzong's
reign. The Hua'e/Qinzheng Tower(s) was located in the southern garden, at the
southwest corner of the Xingqing Palace. Due to its special location, the tower was
constructed as an L-shaped corner building. There were two inscribed boards hanging on
the building—one inscribed “Hua'e Xianghui zhi lou” 花萼相輝之樓 and facing
westward to the Shengye Ward 勝業坊, and one whose inscription read “Qinzheng
Wuben zhi lou” 勤政務本之樓, faced southward to Chunmingmen Street 春明門街
(Fig. 27).

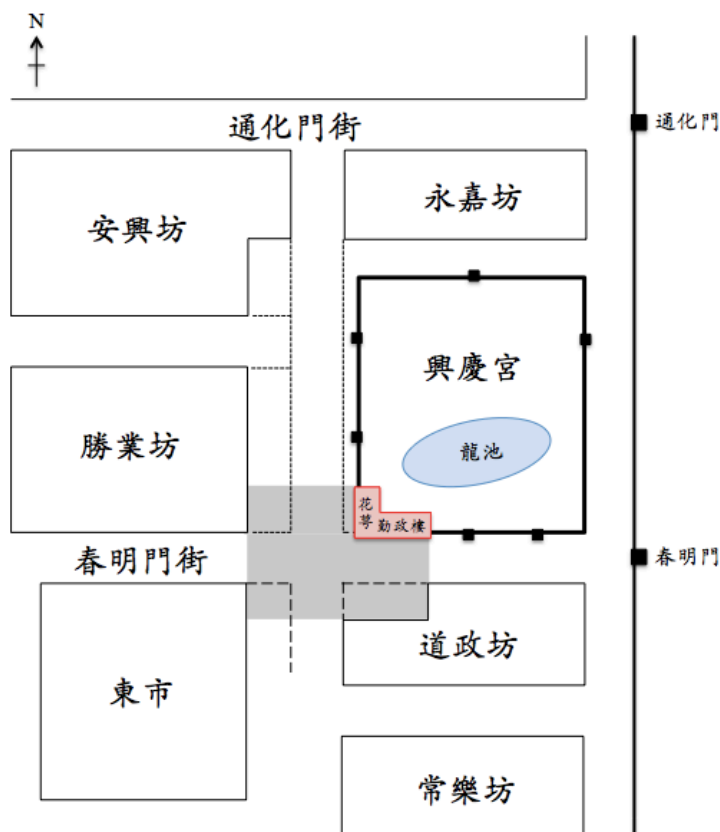


Figure 27. Reconstructed map of Xingqing Palace and its surrounding area.

For a long time, scholars have treated the Hua'e Tower and the Qinzheng Tower as two different buildings that were next to each other, the Hua'e Tower faced west, whereas the Qinzheng Tower faced south. However, Yang Weigang in his recently published paper proposes that they were actually two names of one building that were used at different times. He concludes from having examined all of the texts about these two names that even though the two inscribed boards were both hung on the building, before the twenty-fourth year of the Kaiyuan Era (736) when the tower was expanded, the building was referred to only as the Hua'e Tower. Between the twenty-fourth year of Kaiyuan and the fifth year of the Tianbao Era (746) when the tower was renovated from a single building into an architectural complex, both names were used, but they referred to different

spaces. After the fifth year of Tianbao, the Qinzhen Tower replaced the Hua'e Tower in function and became the new name of the building.³³⁰

In any case, the Hua'e Tower and the Qinzhen Tower were the same height, and had connected and similar structures. Despite the scholarly debate over the relationship between them, one can always consider them together in examining the role they played in Emperor Xuanzong's reign and how their special architectural structures helped in facilitating this role. In order to turn an initially private residence of princes into a political center that symbolized the national authority, Emperor Xuanzong made great efforts to renovate the Xingqing Palace. During the renovation process, he relied heavily on the Hua'e/Qinzhen Tower(s) to build up his personality cult. In the fourteenth year of the Kaiyuan Era (726), he extended the Xingqing Palace grounds to the west, taking up part of the Shengye Ward (see dotted portion in Fig. 27). In the twenty-fourth year of the Kaiyuan Era (736), he expanded the southwestern section of the palace enclosure to permit the enlargement of the front courtyard of the Hua'e/Qinzhen Tower(s). Extant sources also show that both the northeast corner of the East Market and the northwest corner of the Daozheng Ward 道政坊 were subsumed here (see dashed portion in Fig. 27). Chunmingmen Street was about 120 meters wide, and after subsuming the corners of the surrounding wards and the East Market, there was a square in front of the Qinzhen Tower that measured at least 200 meters in width (see the shadow area in Fig. 27).

Meanwhile, Emperor Xuanzong tried to associate his own birthday, the fifth day of the eighth lunar month, with the tower. After he declared his birthday a national holiday

³³⁰ See Yang Weigang, "Jianzhu, kongjia, shuxie: Tang Xingqing Gong Hua'e Xianghui Qinzhen Wuben Lou yanjiu" 建築，空間，書寫：唐興慶宮花萼相輝勤政務本樓研究, in *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* no. 3 (2015), pp. 257-311.

in 729, it was celebrated at this venue with pomp and circumstance as the Qianqiu Festival 千秋節 (Festival of One Thousand Autumns). The Emperor held numerous royal banquets for the occasion to reinforce its political symbolism and his personal authority. *Cefu yuangui* records eight ceremonies for Emperor Xuanzong's birthday, of which six were held at the Hua'e/Qinzheng Tower(s).³³¹ Before Emperor Xuanzong, there were no regular venues for national ceremonies. The giant square in front of the Qinzheng Tower was not only the first fixed place for national events and royal feasts, but was also open to the public. Both the gentry and commoner class were allowed to come to the square and celebrate the events together with the emperor.³³²

The Hua'e/Qinzheng Tower(s) had an open structure and faced the streets, and so people in the square could easily see the emperor and his activities. Moreover, the tower was of unusual height. The Tang scholar Zhang Fu 張甫 (fl. 735) has a line in his "Hua'e Lou fu" 花萼樓賦 that reads, "Sitting in the tower and looking straight, one can see the traffic on the bustling street. Leaning on the balustrade, one can see far beyond the suburbs and the city walls of the heavenly capital" 中坐平望，數香街之往來；馮檻下觀，盡天京之郊郭。He describes the height of the tower as "over vermilion phoenixes and above white cranes" 厲丹鳳，陵白鶴。³³³ When the emperor appeared on top of this high-rise tower, he revealed his image to all of his people and manifested his supreme power. In doing so, Emperor Xuanzong also established a political space

³³¹ *Cefu yuangui*, 2.19; 80.878; 86.956; 110.1199.

³³² Fu Xinian, *Zhongguo jianzhu shi* Vol. 2, p. 323.

³³³ *Quan Tangwen*, 395.4031a.

ranging from the top of the tower to its bottom and then to the public square. In this significant space, he placed himself in the center and used the different heights of seats and their different distances from him to indicate the hierarchy among his subjects and other royal members and their degrees of intimacy with him.

Everyone in this space, therefore, played his or her own role. The emperor stepped out of the inner chamber of his imperial palace and planted his majestic public image in people's minds. At the same time, he also gained a better view of his people by gazing downwards. His companions on the tower, whether officials or relatives, presented their different status to the outsiders through their public exposure. Common people in the square obtained first-hand information about the royals, and so contributed to the narratives of the Hua'e/Qinzheng Tower(s) from a non-official perspective. The originally private imperial activities were made into public performances or ceremonies. The interaction in the public space not only helped to construct the contemporary narratives, but also strengthened the ties between Emperor Xuanzong and the Hua'e/Qinzheng Tower(s), making the tower a symbolic image of his reigning period.

During the early years of his reign, when the Tower was more commonly referred to as the Hua'e Tower, Emperor Xuanzong would frequently go there with his brothers to amuse themselves:

興慶宮，上潛龍之地，聖歷初五王宅也。上性友愛，及即位，立樓於宮之西南垣，署曰花萼相輝。朝退，亟與諸王游，或置酒為樂。³³⁴

Xingqing Palace was where the emperor lived before he ascended the throne. It used to be the residence of the five princes, at the beginning of the Shengli

³³⁴ Li Deyu 李德裕 (787-850), *Ci Liushi jiuwen* 次柳氏舊聞 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2012), p. 9.

Era (698-700). The emperor was well-disposed towards his brothers, so when he succeeded to the throne, he had people build a tower in the southwest corner within the palace walls and inscribe its name as “Hua’e xianghui” (Blossom and Calyx Mutually Shining). After holding court, he would immediately go roaming with the princes, or sometimes prepare a wine banquet for fun.

The name of the tower, Blossom and Calyx Mutually Shining, stood for the bond of loyalty among brothers. Before Emperor Xuanzong turned the tower into a political space, its function was limited to holding family parties. But when the Qinzhen Tower replaced the Hua’e Tower, and this name began to appear frequently in historical and literary texts, the previously private entertainment was now more often open to the public. On some occasions, the building would be swarmed with a multitude of city residents, whose eagerness to see the Emperor he found annoying:

玄宗御勤政樓，大酺，縱士庶觀看。百戲竟作，人物填咽。金吾衛士白棒雨下，不能制止。上患之，謂高力士曰：“吾以海內豐稔，四方無事，故盛為宴，欲與百姓同歡。不知下人喧亂如此，汝有何方止之？”力士奏曰：“臣不能也。陛下試召嚴安之，處分打場。以臣所見，必有可觀也。”上從之。安之至，則周行廣場，以手板畫地，示眾人，約曰：“踰此者死。”以是終五日酺宴。咸指其畫曰：“嚴公界。”無一人敢犯者。³³⁵

Once Emperor Xuanzong visited the Qinzhen Tower and set up a grand banquet. He allowed both men of letters and commoners to watch. Acrobatics were performed unceasingly, and spectators blocked the streets. Even though the sticks of the Guards of the Imperial Insignia rained down upon the people, they could not be stopped. The emperor was worried about this, and he told Gao Lishi: “Since we have a bumper harvest within the seas and there are no disturbances either far or near, I have prepared this great banquet, in the hope of having fun together with my people. Yet I didn’t

³³⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 164.1192.

expect commoners to be in such noisy disorder. Do you have any way to stop this?” Lishi replied, “I cannot. Your Majesty could try to summon Yan Anzhi to deal with the situation and maintain order. In my opinion, it must be worth seeing his performance.” The emperor agreed. After Anzhi arrived, he walked around the immense square, and with a tablet held at the audience he drew a line on the ground. He showed this to it public, and announced this rule: “Anyone who dares to cross this line will die.” By means of this stratagem, the emperor was able to enjoy the banquet for five full days. People all pointed at the line and said, “This is the revered Mr. Yan’s boundary.” Nobody dared to cross it.

Emperor Xuanzong intended to share his joy with his people, but the situation soon got out of control. People were so eager to see the acrobatics or the Emperor himself that even the sticks of the Guards of the Imperial Insignia could not stop them from approaching him. The situation implied that the distance between the Emperor and his people was very close. Those standing at the front of the crowd were able to see a full picture of the royal banquet. Meanwhile, the clamor of the public was so loud that Emperor Xuanzong could not even continue with the banquet. Even so, within such a short distance, there was still a clear boundary. When this boundary could not be drawn by violence, the Emperor had to turn to an official with the reputation for harshness for help in deterring the public.³³⁶ The line that Yan Anzhi drew with his tablet not only divided the physical space into two sections, but also demarcated the space of power. Even though the common people were welcome to view the scene of the royal banquet, they were not allowed to disturb the royals. In this narrative, readers see that the public space enabled the mutual gaze between the Emperor and the people, the situation itself

³³⁶ Yan Anzhi has his biography under the “Kuli” 酷吏 (Cruel Officers) category in the *Jiu Tangshu*, which says that “[Yan’s] nature was malicious and brutal” 性毒虐, and “both commoners and officers were awed by and scared of him” 人吏懼. See *Jiu Tangshu*, 186.4857.

was special enough and worth writing about. However, even though the gaze was bidirectional, the power relation was fixed, and the national authority should not be challenged. The authority's being challenged by the common people created the first plot shift and its being defended by Yan Anzhi created the second one. These two shifts together lay the foundation of this narrative.

While Yan Anzhi relied on his severe administration and awe-inspiring reputation among the people to serve the emperor, other talented people, such as a singer named Yongxin, were able to calm everyone down in a more peaceful and soothing way:

一日賜大酺於勤政樓，觀者數拾萬眾，誼譁聚語，莫得聞魚龍百戲之音。上怒，欲罷宴，中官力士奏請：“命永新出樓，歌一曲必可止喧。”上從之。永新乃撩鬢舉袂，直奏慢聲，至是廣場寂寂，若無一人。義者聞之血湧，愁者聞之腸絕。³³⁷

One day [Emperor Xuanzong] held a grand banquet at the Qinzhen Tower. Hundreds of thousands of spectators gathered there, talking very loudly. Nobody was able to hear the music of the dragon dance and acrobatics. The Emperor was angry, and intended to leave the banquet. The eunuch Gao Lishi made the request, “If you order Yongxin to show up on the tower and sing a song, the clamor will definitely be silenced.” The Emperor followed his suggestion. Consequently, lifting up her hair at the temples and raising her sleeves, Yongxin performed a slow song. At this time, the immense square became tranquil, as if there were nobody there. When righteous people heard her voice, their blood was full of zeal. When sad people heard her voice, their heart broke into pieces.

Again, Emperor Xuanzong was annoyed by the public clamor, which went against his original idea of allowing people to participate in the occasion. If the royals were sitting on the tower, the dragon dances and acrobatics would have to be performed in the open

³³⁷ *Taiping yulan*, 573.2717b.

field in front of the tower. Spectators were expected to stand not far behind the performers, as their noise could easily drown out the music of the performance, and almost force Emperor Xuanzong to give up the banquet halfway. So far the story is similar to that of Yan Anzhi, until the singer Yongxin stepped onto the stage.

As soon as Yongxin opened her mouth, a sharp contrast was manifest: the music of the performance Emperor Xuanzong was enjoying had to be very loud, yet the public noise made it hard to hear. Yongxin's voice could not be louder than the music, but was able to stifle the noise of the crowd. Although the physical square and the population in the square remain the same, the space now seemed to be an entirely different one with its tranquil atmosphere. On the one hand, Yongxin's pacifying singing helped to maintain the hierarchical order in this public square, keeping the upper and lower classes subconsciously but compliantly in their own positions. On the other hand, her beautiful voice reverberated through the tower and the entire square, and dissolved the boundary between the royal family and the common people. Both parties were touched and forgot their social identities and discontent. At that moment, the political function of the Qinzhen Tower and the square in front of the tower was replaced by an artistic charm. The great multitude of people constituted a scene of chaos, but also served as an invitation to Yongxin, whom they would hardly have any chance to see otherwise. To these hundreds of thousands of spectators gathered in the square, Emperor Xuanzong's personal image as well as the national authority he stood for was indeed an object of admiration, yet what fascinated them even more was the singing, which knew no boundaries. The public space bespoke a totally different language, one of quietude. Accordingly, the focus of the narrative shifted from the conventional royal party to the

singing performance. Therefore, Yongxin, whose appearance was triggered by the public, now replaced the outstanding image of Emperor Xuanzong and became the major character on the scene. The new narrative, which could be confirmed by everyone in the public square, thus obtained a new vitality.

On other occasions, a party in the Qinzhen Tower would accidentally become an extension of the court, as a place where Emperor Xuanzong could examine his subjects. For example, in Lu Xuan's 盧綯 story, he was secretly regarded and admired:

玄宗宴於勤政樓下，巷無居人。宴罷，帝猶垂簾以觀。兵部侍郎盧綯謂帝已歸宮掖，垂鞭按轡，橫縱樓下。綯負文雅之稱，而復風標清粹。帝一見，不覺目送之。問左右曰：“誰？”近臣具以綯名氏對之，帝亟稱其蘊籍。³³⁸

Once Emperor Xuanzong held a banquet at the foot of the Qinzhen Tower, when there were no people in the lanes nearby. After the banquet, the Emperor was considering the view behind the curtain, when Lu Xuan, the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of War, thought the Emperor had already returned to the palace. He held his whip, reined in his horse, and casually rode back and forth at the foot of the tower. Xuan always bore a reputation for grace and elegance, and also had a delicate demeanor. As soon as the Emperor saw Xuan, he could not help gazing after him. He asked his attendants: “Who is that?” The minister replied with Xuan's full name. The Emperor immediately praised him for his cultured and restrained quality.

The Qinzhen Tower was not the imperial court, where subjects paid their formal audience to the Emperor. In the story, it was just a place where the Emperor enjoyed holding banquets with his subjects in a relatively casual manner. Also, when both Emperor Xuanzong and Lu Xuan were at the foot of the tower, the emperor did not have

³³⁸ *Minghuang zalu*, 2.25-26.

any dominance over Lu in height. In spite of all these seemingly casual and equal relationships, there was no opportunity for the two parties to look each other in the eye. The curtain hanging in front of the Emperor symbolized the impassable barrier between him and his subjects. Emperor Xuanzong stayed in the dark, while Lu Xuan remained in the open. Lu was then able to behave in a leisurely and unrestrained manner, because Emperor Xuanzong was out of sight; yet the sovereign was only concealed, the power relationship was never absent. There was a clear informational asymmetry between the Emperor and Lu Xuan, and their statuses were markedly contrasted. Lu Xuan had no awareness of himself having offered a performance for Emperor Xuanzong, but the Emperor used this chance to show his appreciation for Lu's elegant demeanor outside of the formal court.

However, this is not the end of the story. The Emperor's admiration for Lu Xuan did not bring Lu any good luck, but indirectly destroyed his official career. After the influential but envious Chief Minister Li Linfu learned about Emperor Xuanzong's comments about Lu, he secretly cajoled Lu into resigning his office before the Emperor announced his promotion. Although Xuanzong kept concealed his motives regarding Lu Xuan, his words and actions were exposed to Li Linfu, who was hiding in an even darker place. The public space at the foot of Qinzhen Tower was not only transformed into an extension of the imperial court, where political selection and power struggles took place, but also facilitated the spread of news. Both Emperor Xuanzong's appreciation of Lu Xuan and Li Linfu's manipulation of power took place with a small circle, but thanks to the openness of the square in front of the Qinzhen Tower and people's knowledge of the

tower and the activities that took place there, both were easily understood and widely accepted.

Though not a formal court, but still an important political space, the Qinzheng Tower was host to a potential danger to the nation:

玄宗御勤政樓，下設百戲，坐安祿山於東間觀看。肅宗諫曰：“歷觀今古，無臣下與君上同坐閱戲者。”玄宗曰：“渠有異相，我欲襁之故耳。”³³⁹

Once Emperor Xuanzong visited the Qinzheng Tower, acrobatics were performed downstairs. He let An Lushan sit in the east wing room to watch. [Later] Emperor Suzong remonstrated: “Throughout history, no subject has sat together with his sovereign to watch acrobatics.” Emperor Xuanzong said: “He has a distinctive appearance.”³⁴⁰ I do this because I want to avoid calamity.”

After the An Lushan Rebellion, many narratives reflected on the causes of the disaster and recalled the signs of An's wild ambitions, which had been consistently ignored by Emperor Xuanzong. In this story, Emperor Xuanzong violated tradition and seated An Lushan to his east on the same floor. An Lushan probably had been standing at the foot of the tower and coveting the upper seat, but was allowed to sit only one step away from the throne. His upward view had changed into a downward view. An Lushan was able to overlook the capital from the same height and angle as the Emperor. The new vertical height and angle of view not only gave An Lushan a better picture of Chang'an, but might also have stimulated him to mull over his ambitious design to take it over. For the

³³⁹ *Taiping guangji*, 222.1702-703.

³⁴⁰ According to his biography in the *Jiu Tangshu*, An Lushan “became even fatter and stronger during his late years. His belly hung over his knees, and he weighed three hundred and thirty catties” 晚年益肥壯，腹垂過膝，重三百三十斤。See *Jiu Tangshu*, 200.5368.

post-rebellion narratives, this moment naturally became a cautionary alarm that worth regretting and reflecting.

When the An Lushan Rebellion erupted, Emperor Xuanzong was forced to abandon Chang'an. Before he left, he ascended the Qinzhen Tower again, but with completely different feelings than when he enjoyed the acrobatics there with An Lushan:

及羯胡犯闕，乘傳遽以告，上欲遷，幸之，登樓置酒，四顧淒愴。……上將去，復留眷眷。因使視樓下有工歌而善水調者乎。一少年心悟上意，自言頗工歌，亦善水調。使之登樓且歌，歌曰：“山川滿目淚霑衣，富貴榮華能幾時。不見只今汾水上，唯有年年秋雁飛。”上聞之，潸然出涕，顧侍者曰：“誰為此詞？”或對曰：“宰相李嶠。”上曰：“李嶠真才子也。”不待曲終而去。³⁴¹

When the barbarians invaded the palace gate, the post officers reported to the Emperor right away. The Emperor had intended to move, and before doing so, he visited it (the Tower). He ascended the tower and prepared wine. When he looked around, he found that everything was miserable and desolate...As the Emperor was about to leave, he felt very reluctant and lingered about the place. He then looked downstairs to see if there was anyone who was good at singing, and who was especially adept at the “Water Tune.”³⁴² One young man knew what the Emperor wanted, so he claimed that he was good at singing and was also adept at the “Water Tune.” The Emperor let him ascend the tower to sing. The lyric was: “Mountains and waters fill my eyes, and tears wet my clothes. Wealth, nobility, honor, and glory, how long can they last? Can’t you see that today above the Fen River, every year there were only autumn wild geese flying?”³⁴³ The Emperor heard this and shed silent tears. He turned round and asked his attendants: “Who wrote this lyric?” Someone replied: “Chief Minister Li Qiao.” The Emperor said: “Li Qiao is indeed a talent.” He left before the song ended.

³⁴¹ *Ci Liushi jiuwen*, p. 9.

³⁴² The so called *shuidiao* 水調 or “Water Tune” was one of the names of the tunes 曲牌. It was created when Emperor Yangdi of the Sui Dynasty 隋煬帝 (r. 604-618) had people dig the Grand Canal from Beijing to Hangzhou 京杭大運河 and was later developed into a long palace tune.

³⁴³ The lyric is from Li Qiao’s “Fenyin xing” 汾陰行. See *Wenyuan yinghua*, 348.1793b.

The Qinzhen Tower remained the same, but Emperor Xuanzong had already lost control over his empire. Everything in the landscape before his eyes that had once belonged to him would soon be given up to the rebels. The Emperor “felt very reluctant and lingered about the place” 復留眷眷 not just because he loved the building, but also because he missed the joyful times he had spent at the tower as well as the glorious days of his reign that it stood for. When his power over the outer world had been eliminated, the Emperor could only exert his influence on a narrow surrounding area. For instance, the musicians downstairs were still at his command. The visual connection and interaction between the insiders upstairs and the outsiders downstairs in the tower was maintained as usual, but facing imminent disaster, the people of Chang’an had no time or inclination to come to see the Emperor, as they had done enthusiastically in peacetime. The desolate square intensified the lonely image of the Emperor, while Li Qiao’s poem on the instability and transience of life further marks the scene with sadness. The consistency of the physical space and spatial relations form a drastic contrast to the inconsistency of the political structure and national sovereignty; and such contrast, along with the sorrows it implied, is the soul of this narrative.

When the An Lushan Rebellion was put down and Emperor Xuanzong managed to return to Chang’an and to the Qinzhen Tower. As a former emperor who had already abdicated, Emperor Xuanzong had all sorts of feelings welling up in his heart:

唐玄宗自蜀回，夜闌登勤政樓，憑欄南望，煙雲滿目，上因自歌曰：“庭前琪樹已堪攀，塞外征夫久未還。”蓋盧思道之詞也。歌歇，上問：“有舊人乎？逮明為我訪來。”翌日，力士潛求於里中，因召與同至，則果梨園子弟也。其夜，上復與乘月登樓，唯力士及貴妃侍者紅桃在焉。遂命

歌涼州詞，貴妃所製，上親御玉笛為之倚曲。曲罷相睹，無不掩泣。上因廣其曲，今涼州傳於人間者，益加怨切焉。³⁴⁴

After Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty came back from Shu, he ascended the Qinzhen Tower late in the night. He leaned on the banister and looked southward into the distance. Mist and clouds met his eyes. The Emperor then sang to himself: “The *qi* trees in front of my hall can already be climbed, but the soldiers at the northern frontier have yet to return.” This was Lu Sidao’s lyric. Having finished singing, the Emperor asked: “Are there any of my old acquaintances left? Go and find some for me tomorrow.” The next day, Lishi secretly searched in the wards and found a man. The Emperor summoned him to come together with Lishi. As expected, he used to be a performer in the Pear Garden. On that night, the Emperor ascended the tower under the moonlight. Only Lishi and the Precious Consort’s serving maid Hongtao were there. The Emperor then ordered him to sing the “Lyric of Liangzhou,” which had been composed by the Precious Consort. The Emperor himself played the flute to accompany the music. After the music was ended, they gazed at each other, and all covered their faces as they started to weep. The Emperor then elaborated the song, which is the one circulating in Liangzhou nowadays, and is even more sorrowful and mournful.

Emperor Xuanzong left Chang’an in 756, and in the same year, his son Emperor Suzong proclaimed himself emperor without informing his father in advance. Over the next two years, Emperor Suzong actively deployed troops to put down the rebellion, and by doing this successfully established his personal authority over his father throughout the nation. In the year 758 when Emperor Xuanzong returned from Shu, the lost capital was recovered and the Tang Empire restored, but neither would ever be returned to his hands. As he stood on the Qinzhen Tower, everything looked both intimate and unfamiliar, and it seemed to him that whatever met his eyes now was marked by the presence of the new and more legitimate ruler. Emperor Xuanzong did not know when he would regain his

³⁴⁴ *Minghuang zalu Buyi*, p. 46.

power before he left, but clearly understood that he would never be able to do so after he returned.

People in the capital were busy rebuilding their homeland and had no time to attend to their old master. Yet, despite the changed environment, the Emperor continued to dwell on his old days. In order to preserve his memory of the past and cherish the old relationships, he had to send his eunuch Gao Lishi to look for his old acquaintance. The old performer whom Gao found in his Pear Garden came and performed a tune composed by Precious Consort Yang, who had been sentenced to death by the Emperor himself, under pressure from his soldiers, at the time of their escape to Shu. The familiar tune aroused Emperor Xuanzong's regret and nostalgia. It reminded people of the days when Emperor Xuanzong had held grand banquets during the daytime and the citizens of Chang'an pushed and shoved to join in the fun. The current dark scene now overshadowed the bright colors of the previous picture. In the story, Emperor Xuanzong ascended the tower twice, both times late at night. Also, the activity was kept rather private with only a eunuch and a serving maid attending him. The open structure of the tower did not change, but the open atmosphere died away. If the narratives of the Qinzhen Tower before the An Lushan Rebellion presented more of a clamorous and festive scene, the ones after the rebellion were largely more sentimental and filled with dolefulness. The public square in front of the Tower always played an important role in helping deliver such different feelings.

Since Emperor Xuanzong's deposition, he was titled *Taishang huang* 太上皇 (Grand Exalted Celestial) and the the Qinzhen Tower was no longer a symbol of his

rule; it became once again merely part of his residential place. Nonetheless, even this simple role was not easy to maintain:

玄宗為太上皇，在興慶宮居。久雨初晴，幸勤政樓。樓下市人及街中往來者，喜且泫然曰：“不期今日再得見太平天子！”傳呼萬歲，聲動天地。時肅宗不豫。李輔國誣奏云：“此皆九僊媛、高力士、陳玄禮之異謀也。”下矯詔遷太上皇於西內。³⁴⁵

When Emperor Xuanzong was revered as the Grand Exalted Celestial, he lived in the Xingqing Palace. One day when the sky had cleared up after a long rain, the Emperor visited the Qinzhen Tower. Common people and passersby in the street said pleasantly but tearfully, “We did not expect that today we could see our Son of the Heaven of the Grand Peacetime again!” People roared “Long life!” one after another and the sound shook both Heaven and Earth. Then Emperor Suzong was not happy. Li Fuguo deceitfully said, “This is all the scheme of Jiuxianyuan, Gao Lishi, and Chen Xuanli.” He then illegally issued an imperial edict to transfer the Grand Exalted Celestial to the Western Inner Palace (i.e., Taiji Palace).

While all of the previously discussed narratives adopt a top-down perspective, that of Emperor Xuanzong, this story employs a bottom-up view from the standpoint of the common people at the foot of the Qinzhen Tower. To the people of Chang'an, the image of the aged Emperor Xuanzong on the tower not only announce his identity as the one-time “Son of Heaven of the Grand Peacetime” 太平天子 and the current Grand Exalted Celestial, but also reminded them of the irretrievable heyday that that image stood for. Having experienced great chaos, many hopes became vain attempts and people f e then illegall 不期 to see Emperor Xuanzong ever appear on the tower again. When “people roared ‘Long life!’ one after another and the sound shook the world” 傳呼萬歲，聲動天

³⁴⁵ *Taiping guangji*, 188.1409.

地, this gives the illusion that, thanks to the preserved public space in front of the tower, the past time has been recalled and the interaction between Emperor Xuanzong and his people resumed. However, Emperor Xuanzong's great prestige among the masses displease his son, the current emperor, who regarded it a threat to his rule. Even though it was Li Fuguo, Emperor Suzong's eunuch, who "illegally issued an imperial edict" 矯詔 to transfer Emperor Xuanzong from his favorite Xingqing Palace to Taiji Palace, there is reason to believe that his son was acting behind the scenes here.

On the one hand, the spatial transfer terminated the relationship between Emperor Xuanzong and the Qinzhen Tower, and deprived him of the space in which he had once enjoyed political power and public esteem. On the other hand, after Emperor Xuanzong left the Xingqing Palace, no other Tang emperors lived there or used it as the site of their official court; thus, the Qinzhen Tower lost its political significance. The aloofness of later emperors toward the space reinforced its special association with Emperor Xuanzong, abstracting it into a symbol of his time. Take the following anecdote, for example:

德宗初登勤政樓，外無知者。望見一人，衣綠乘驢戴帽，至樓下，仰視久之，俛而東去。上立遣宣示京尹，令以物色求之。尹召萬年捕賊官李銘，使促求訪。李尉佇立思之，曰：“得必矣。”出召幹事所由：“春明門外數里內，應有諸司舊職事伎藝人，悉搜羅之。”而綠衣果在其中。詰之，對曰：“某天寶舊樂工也。上皇當時數登此樓，每來，鵝必集樓上，號‘隨駕老鵝’。某自罷居城外，更不復見。今群鵝盛集，又覺景象宛如昔時，必知天子在上，悲喜且欲泣下。”于是敕盡收此輩，卻係教坊。李尉亦為京尹所擢用，後至郡守。³⁴⁶

³⁴⁶ Wang Dang 王讜 (fl. 1089), *Tang yulin jiaozheng* 唐語林校證, annot. by Zhou Xunchu 周勛初, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), 4.388.

The first time Emperor Dezong ascended the Qinzhen Tower, nobody outside knew about it. [The Emperor] saw a man in the distance wearing a green gown and a hat riding a donkey and arriving at the foot of the tower. The man looked up for a long time, and then lowered his head and went eastward. The emperor immediately sent someone to tell the Capital Governor of this, and he ordered him to search for the man. The governor summoned Li Ming, the thief-catching commandant in Wannian, and asked him to seek the man out. Commandant Li stood there and thought for a while, saying: "I will definitely get him." He went out and summoned his administrative secretaries and asked: "Search the area within several *li* from the Chunming Gate. There should be some old professional performers who once served officials. Get all of them." As expected, the man in the green gown was among them. Li questioned him, and the man replied: "I am a former musician from the Tianbao Era. During that time, the Grand Exalted Celestial ascended this tower several times. Whenever he came, horned owls would inevitably gather on the tower. They were called the 'Old Horned Owls accompanying the Emperor'. When I had retired and was living outside the city, I never saw them again. Today, a swarm of horned owls flocked together. I felt that the scene was like that of the old days, so I knew that the Emperor must be up there. The mixed feelings of grief and joy made me want to cry." Emperor Dezong therefore ordered him to recruit all these people and put them to the musical bureau. Commandant Li was also promoted by the Capital Governor and later attained the position of Commandery Governor.

For the musician, the horned owls gathered on the Qinzhen Tower as a signal indicating the Emperor was there still worked well, only the current emperor was not Emperor Xuanzong anymore, but his great-grandson. The musician's explanation of his behavior indicated that Emperor Xuanzong's frequent visits to the Qinzhen Tower were widely known among people in Chang'an. Even if the Emperor did not appear in public, people still had other methods to find out if he was there. The musician stood in the square for a long time and showed deference as he attentively watched. He could not see anybody or anything, but he did so just to show his respect to the late emperor and his excitement about the current emperor's possible visit. According to him, since Emperor Xuanzong

passed away, he had not seen the horned owls flying over the Qinzhen Tower again until Emperor Dezong came. True or not, the musician's words implied that before Emperor Dezong's visit, emperors had not been to this place for a long time.³⁴⁷ This also explained why the musician felt both grieved and joyful. His mixed feelings were generated by the familiar scene before him, which reminded him of the old glorious days. But unlike that in the old days when Emperor Xuanzong made himself visible to the onlookers, the current mutual gaze between the upstairs and the downstairs viewers was implicit. Although the musician standing in the open field could not see Emperor Dezong, who was inside, he knew the Emperor must be on the Tower. What he did not know was that while he was looking up at the Emperor, the Emperor was also looking down at him.

Regardless of whether or not the story is historically reliable, it represents a later generation's knowledge and understanding of the Qinzhen Tower and its meaning and importance in the eyes of the people of the Tang Dynasty. The following story, on the other hand, portrays how Song Dynasty people commonly alluded to the Qinzhen Tower:

潞公坐客有言新義極迂怪者，公笑不答。久之，曰：“頗嘗記明皇坐勤政樓上，見釘鉸者。上呼曰：‘朕有一破損平天冠，汝能釘鉸否？’此人既

³⁴⁷ After the An Lushan Rebellion, the Daming Palace again became the political center, while the Xingqing Palace became a place mainly dwelled by Empress Dowagers. In official records, there were only four imperial visits by Emperor Suzong, Xianzong 憲宗, Muzong 穆宗, and Wenzong 文宗 respectively, to the Qinzhen Tower. For further discussion, see Chen Yang 陳揚, “Tangdai Chang'an zhengzhi quanli zhongshu weizhi de bianqian yu ‘San Da Nei’ jineng de shanbian” 唐代長安政治權力中樞位置的變遷與“三大內”機能的嬗變, in *Xi'an Wenli Xueyuan xuebao* 西安文理學院學報 no. 2 (2010), pp. 9-13.

為完之，上曰：‘朕無用此冠，以與汝為工直。’其人惶恐謝罪。上曰：‘俟夜深閉門後獨自戴，甚無害也。’³⁴⁸

There was someone among the Duke of Luortance in the 文彥博, 1006-1097) guests who talked about the *Xinyi* (New Thoughts)³⁴⁹ in an extremely impractical and absurd way. The Duke smiled but did not respond. After a long while, he said, “I clearly remembered that once Emperor Minghuang (Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang) sat on the Qinzheng Tower and saw a tinker. The Emperor called out to him and said, ‘I have a broken crown. Can you fix it?’ After the man repaired it for him, the Emperor said: ‘I do not use this crown, so I’d like to use it to pay you.’ The man was terrified and offered an apology. The Emperor said: ‘Wait until when the night deepens, and then shut the door and then wear it alone. There will be no harm in this.’”

Wen Yanbo was one of the most prominent politicians and literati in the Northern Song Dynasty, and he was also Wang Anshi’s 王安石 (1021-1086) political opponent. He told this story to satirize the offending guest who ardently supported Wang’s *San Jing xinyi*, which Wen considered to be “extremely impractical and absurd” 極迂怪. In his *San Jing xinyi*, Wang Anshi interprets the classics according to his own understanding and in service of his political propaganda, completely ignoring their documentary origin and historical evolution. Wen Yanbo might have used the image of the broken crown as a metaphor for the disjointed and unsystematic *Xinyi*, and the tinker for its pedantic and ignorant supporters. Wen Yanbo wanted to mock the fact that while the *Xinyi* supporters thought they were serving the emperor most eagerly and painstakingly, the emperor did

³⁴⁸ See Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), *Dongpo zhilin* 東坡志林 in *Wenyuan ge Siku quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1983), 863:10.85.

³⁴⁹ Here *Xinyi* 新義 stands for *San Jing xinyi* 三經新義. Wen Yanbo’s political opponent, the statesman and reformist Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) re-annotated three Confucian classics, the *Shi jing* 詩經, *Shang shu* 尚書, and *Zhou guan* 周官 (i.e., *Zhouli* 周禮) in his own manner, and compiled them into his *San Jing xinyi*, in order to promote his reformist policies.

not take them seriously. Wen also used the story to suggest that the guest should have kept his opinion to himself or talked about the *Xinyi* on a more private occasion, rather than annoying others openly.

Since the elements and plot of the story are highly allegorical and are not found in any other sources, readers have reason to believe that, in order to make his point euphemistically, Wen Yanbo either made up the entire story or borrowed it from the fabrication of his fellow officers, who also objected to Wang Anshi's political views. In any case, the story depicts a much freer and more casual interaction between Emperor Xuanzong and a commoner than is found in any Tang Dynasty story. When Emperor Xuanzong saw the tinker, he immediately called out to him, told him of his need, and might have directly thrown the broken crown down to the tinker. The vivid picture, be it reliable or not, represents the Song Dynasty people's knowledge and understanding of the Qinzheng Tower. The building's widely known open structure stimulated the imagination of easy inside-and-outside communication. When Wen Yanbo and his fellow officers wanted to fabricate a story as sarcasm, they needed to find the most accurate and effective allegory. When they decided to portray a humble craftsman as an allusion to Wang Anshi and his supporters, and an emperor as an allusion to the current emperor, telling how the former was taken lightly by the latter, they chose to employ the image of the Qinzheng Tower, where the interaction between the emperor and common people was believed to be more frequent and active than any at other places. The more fabricated the story might be, the more it represented the special significance of the open-structured Qinzheng Tower and its important role in the pool of stories that were resources for literary narratives.

Some literary images are formed because they are important in certain respect—historical, political, cultural, etc., and some of these images remain to be favored in later times because they are no longer the same as before. The Qinzhen Tower once became a heated subject of poetry and prose because of the frequent presence of Emperor Xuanzong; and it later became the center of the topic again because of his absence. On the one hand, the Tower's becoming the subject or the center is due to its own political significance; and on the other hand, the public square in front of it also ensures its being constantly noticed and portrayed.

No matter how bustling were the East and West Markets, how lively the Qujiang area, how secularized the Buddhist and Taoist temples, or how the square served as site for both imperial ceremonies and civic entertainment, from these things we can see almost endless vitality and infinite possibilities. Within these intensively attractive and freshly vigorous public spaces, people came across, got to know, and fell in love with each other. Their exceptional experiences broadened their horizon; their unexpected encounters changed their lives; and most importantly, their stories enriched the world of Chinese narrative literature.

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

Following the discussion of various stories with the urban space of Chang'an, or the sub-spaces within it, as a distinctive background, it may be worthwhile to look at a story that shares a similar plot with some of the Chang'an stories but does not present a clear image of the city, to fully understand the meaning of Chang'an in the narrative construction of Tang Dynasty stories:

唐吳郡王苞者，少事道士葉靜能。中罷為太學生，數歲在學。有婦人寓宿，苞與結驩，情好甚篤。靜能在京，苞往省之。靜能謂曰：“汝身何得有野狐氣？”固答云無。能曰：“有也。”苞因言得婦始末。能曰：“正是此老野狐。”臨別，書一符與苞，令含，誡之曰：“至舍可吐其口，當自來此，為汝遣之，無憂也。”苞還至舍，如靜能言。婦人得符，變為老狐，銜符而走，至靜能所拜謝。靜能云：“放汝一生命，不宜更至于王家。”自此遂絕。³⁵⁰

During the Tang Dynasty, Wang Bao from Wujun served the Taoist master Ye Jingneng when he was young. He ended his practice and became a student at the National Academy, where he spent several years. Once, a woman was lodging [in the Academy] and Bao started an affair with her. Later, when Jingneng came to the capital, Bao went to pay him a visit. Jingneng asked him, “You smell like a wild fox. Why is that?” Wang Bao insisted that he didn't. Neng said, “You do.” Bao then confessed in detail how he obtained the woman. Neng said, “That is exactly the old wild fox.” Before they parted, Neng provided a written charm for Bao to hold in his mouth, admonishing him, “When you arrive at home, you may spit it into her mouth, and she will come to me by herself. I will dismiss her for you, don't worry.” Bao returned to his lodge and followed Jingneng's word. When the woman received the written charm, she was transformed into an old fox. With the written charm in her mouth, she ran all the way to Jingneng's place and expressed her thanks. Jingneng said, “I will spare your life but you should not return to the Wang family anymore.” From that time on the fox disappeared.

³⁵⁰ *Taiping guangji*, 450.3677.

This above story follows a standard pattern shared by many Tang Dynasty supernatural narratives, in which a woman was transformed into an animal spirit in order to seduce a man. While the man himself was bewitched, other people sensed that something was wrong. If we compare this story with the stories of Li Huang and Li Guan discussed in Chapter Two, we notice that although the latter two are centered on snake spirits rather than a fox spirit, their structures and plots are by and large the same, only with different closures: Wang Bao shared his experience with his capable Taoist master friend, listened to his advice and saved himself from dying, whereas Li Huang and Li Guan tried to conceal their affairs and lost their lives as a result.

Nevertheless, aside from the varied outcomes, their most remarkable contrast lies in the role of the urban spaces in Chang'an. Li Huang and Li Guan's stories explicitly present a proper directional relationship and reasonable geographical distance between different residential wards. In both stories, the "street-drum" and curfew systems successfully prevented the male character from withdrawing from the hazardous situation; instead, he stayed at the snake spirit's place in order to become more deeply involved in the relationship. When compared to the story of Wang Bao, these two stories both present a more calculated process of seduction and make use of a more logical and natural plot progression. While Wang Bao's story omits the detail of how the fox spirit enticed Wang into the relationship, in the stories about Li Huang and Li Guan we see an intentional elaboration of this process, and the use of the Chang'an ward system contributes to the stories' plausibility.

Tang narrative writers showed a clear awareness of the possible uses of the urban spaces of Chang'an. This may have been in part a consequence of these writers gathering together and discussing their work, as scholars such as Sarah M. Allen have reminded us that Tang Dynasty narratives were largely a product of collective creation with different competing versions and shaped by gossip and anecdotes.³⁵¹ This dissertation does not aim to add to the discussion of the collective-production process of Tang narratives or the communities of talk, nor does it dig into writers' personal experiences in Chang'an, an topic that has been thoroughly investigated in Linda Rui Feng's study.³⁵² Rather, it tries to prove that the urban spaces of Chang'an played a role in the construction of narratives in this period. To do so, this dissertation addresses the ways in which these urban spaces helped with the formation and circulation of certain narratives and how they transformed what were originally plain, primitive, and even stereotyped stories into well-developed narratives that unfold in a seemingly logical manner. The images of spaces in Chang'an are not just nice additions to the plot, but necessary elements that support the entire narrative structure. It is in part because of this distinctive feature that the stories of Chang'an have formed a category of their own and the city seems to have gained a power to speak on its own, with a voice as important as that of a narrator.

To analyze this type of Chang'an-related Tang narratives from multiple perspectives, Chapter One of this dissertation focuses on the transformation between residences, temples, tombs, and palaces in a temporal dimension to show what kind of urban memories were tied with and accumulated in the physical spaces of various works

³⁵¹ See Sarah M. Allen, *Shifting Stories*.

³⁵² See Linda Rui Feng, *City of Marvel and Transformation*.

of architecture, how these memories, when retrieved, generated urban mysteries and supernatural stories, and in what ways did narratives about such memories affect the public life and alter the way in which people recollected the past.

Chapter Two concerns the rhythm of the urban space and focuses on the narratives about the “street-drum” and curfew systems. It explores ways in which the walls and gates of the city of Chang’an and its wards functioned during the Tang Dynasty in its practices of urban management, and how the corresponding opening and closing of the wall gates structured and affected civic life in the capital. Most importantly, the chapter examines how the spaces, regularly separated and connected by the gates, provide motivations for the delays, progressions, and twists in plots.

Chapter Three looks at the functions of public spaces of Chang’an, usually beyond their initially designed functions, and closely reads various Tang stories and records about markets, temples, sightseeing spots, and squares. The analysis of these texts reveals how the roles of these public spaces came to be emphasized, exaggerated, and consequently aid in the formation and circulation of certain narratives. All three chapters, from three different angles, endeavor to reveal what the social, political, historical, and cultural connotations of this renowned medieval Chinese capital city meant to its contemporary people and how they made a difference to the stories, which might have remained in a less sophisticated and innovative shape if given a different backdrop than that of Chang’an.

In an extended discussion of the close readings, this dissertation also contributes to the larger topic of the “Tang-Song transition.” Narratives can by no means be read as urban histories; neither can they explicitly or accurately reflect urban vicissitudes.

However, they have captured a feature of urban evolution. The stories about the transformations of private residences to public temples, the positive function of the opened city and ward gates in the narratives, the thrilling adventures during the curfew hours, the heroic role of those who leapt over or broke through the spatial boundaries, and the increasing attraction of the public spaces all betray those restless hearts eager for change. Tang Dynasty narratives implicitly foreshadow the collapse of the medieval rigid grid urban pattern represented by the Tang capital Chang'an and the rise of an open city layout exemplified by the Northern Song capital Kaifeng, and thus add to the discussion of the "Tang-Song transition," in a way that is more vivid and lively than historical records.

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GLOSSARY LIST

Space Related

- 別業 villa
- 池 pond
- 村墅 country house
- 邸 inn
- 殿 palace hall
- 坊/里 ward
- 閣 open hall
- 宮 palace
- 宮城 Palace City
- 觀 Taoist temple
- 廣場 immense square
- 衡門 humble hut
- 皇城 Imperial City
- 家廟 family's ancestral temple
- 間 wing room
- 檻 balustrade
- 街 street
- 欄 banister
- 廊 corridor
- 陵 mausoleum
- 樓 tower
- 墓 tomb
- 屏 screen wall
- 鋪 store
- 衢 avenue
- 曲 serpentine lane
- 闕 palace gate
- 寺 Buddhist temple
- 肆 shop

市 market
 堂 main hall
 堂廡 hallway
 臺 terrace
 廳 hall room
 亭 pavilion
 廂 wing
 巷 lane
 凶宅 haunted residence
 學舍 school dormitory
 驛 postal station
 塋 grave
 園 park
 苑 garden
 院 courtyard
 中堂 central hall
 洲 islet
 莊 manor

Time Related

晨 morning
 遲明 almost dawn
 籌 chip
 點 point
 犯夜 violate the curfew
 更 watch
 黃昏 night fall
 昏 dark
 街鼓 street drum
 暮 dusk
 日旰 when dusk falls
 日暮 after sunset

晚 late
 夕 evening
 曉 dawn
 夜闌 late in the night
 夜深 when the night deepens

Color Related

白襦 white short coat
 黃冠 yellow hat
 黃紵衫 yellow silk jacket
 青衣 azure gown
 素衣 plain-colored gown
 朱鬢 vermillion hair
 紫裙 purple skirt

Supernatural Beings

怪 monster
 鬼 ghost
 精 spirit
 神 god/goddess
 仙 immortal
 妖 demon
 真君 Perfected Lord