



An Introduction to the Chinese Short Story

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A large, colorful pile of various candies and chocolates is scattered on a light-colored, textured surface. The pile includes many recognizable brands such as Reese's (in red and orange wrappers), Butterfinger (in yellow wrappers), KitKat (in red wrappers), Snickers (in brown wrappers), and Hershey's Kisses (in pink wrappers). There are also several lollipops, some wrapped in clear plastic and others in colorful paper. The candies are densely packed in the center and spread out towards the edges of the frame. The lighting is even, highlighting the different colors and textures of the candy packaging.

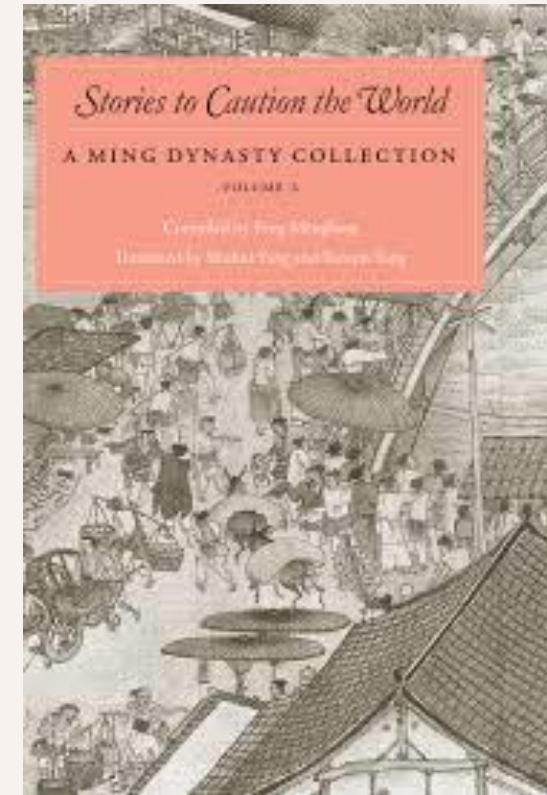
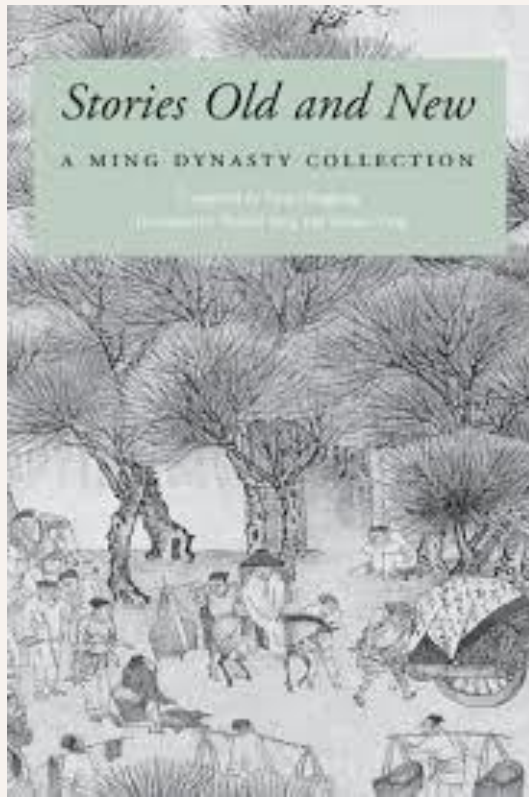
The Chinese Vernacular
Short Story, aka “huaben”

Huaben flourished from
1620 to the 1670s.
They're a great way to
think about genre.



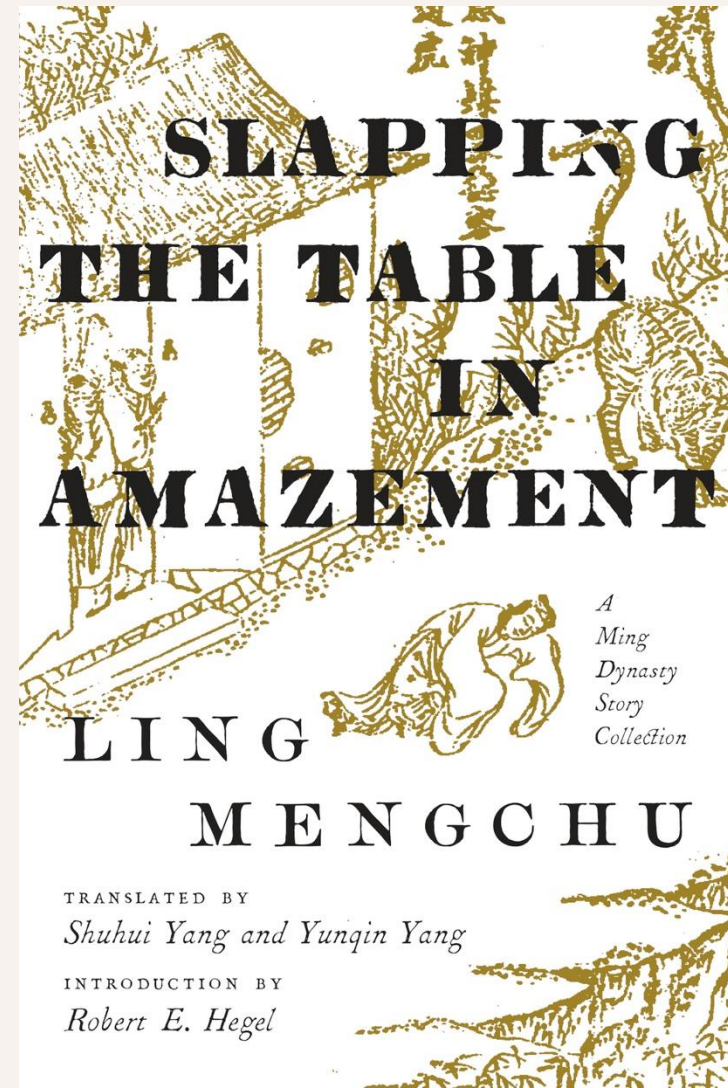
They're written in a language that many people spoke.



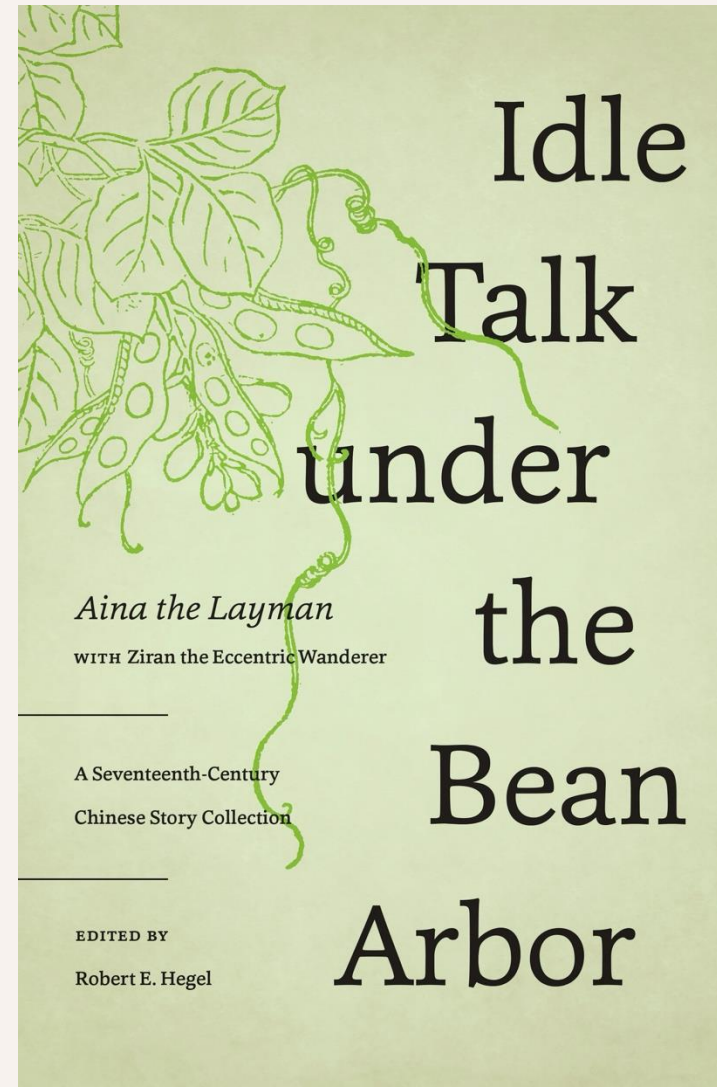


Three Recent Translations by
Shuhui Yang and Yunqin Yang

Also
translated
by Shuhui
Yang and
Yunqin Yang



Edited by
Robert
Hegel



What I'm Doing Today

1. Give you a sense of these stories' content.
-

What I'm Doing Today

1. Give you a sense of these stories' content.
 2. A quick history of the major collections.
-

What I'm Doing Today

1. Give you a sense of these stories' content.
 2. A quick history of the major collections.
 3. A discussion of the first story in the first important collection.
-

What I'm Doing Today

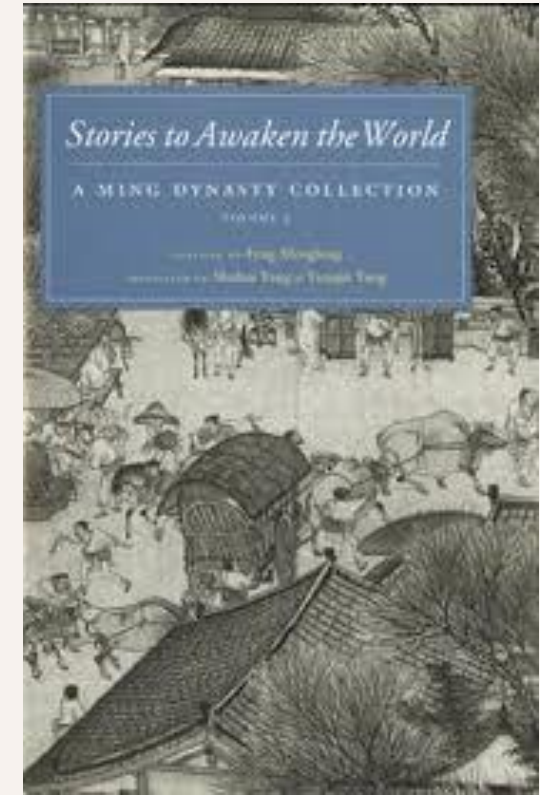
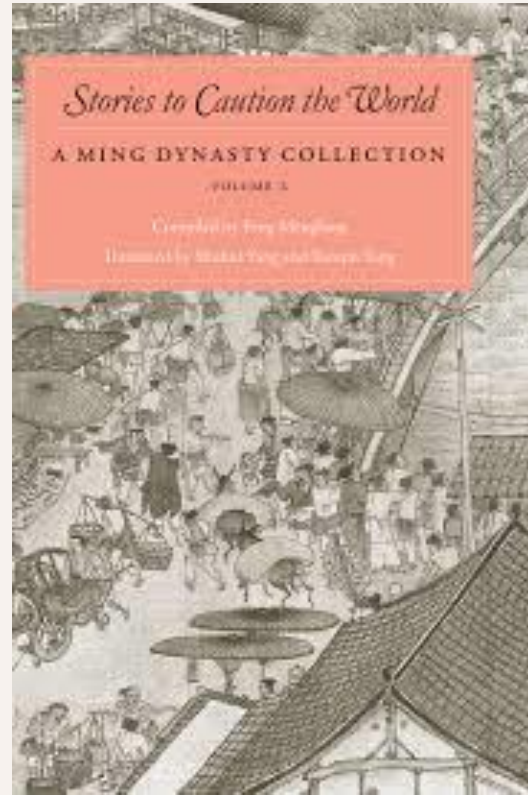
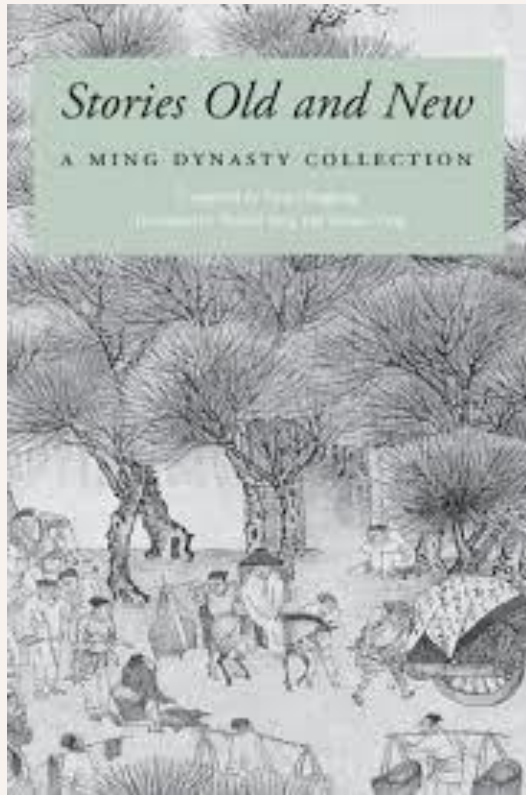
1. Give you a sense of these stories' content.
 2. A quick history of the major collections.
 3. A discussion of the first story in the first important collection.
 4. How to read and teach other stories.
-

What I'm Doing Today

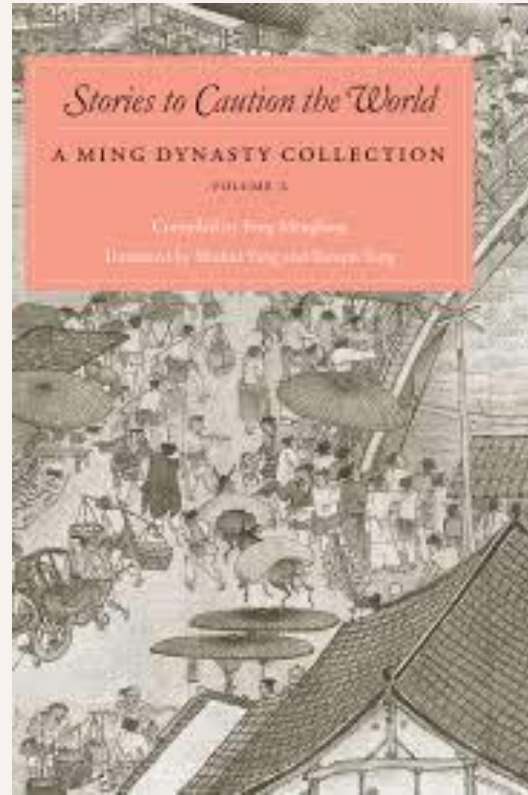
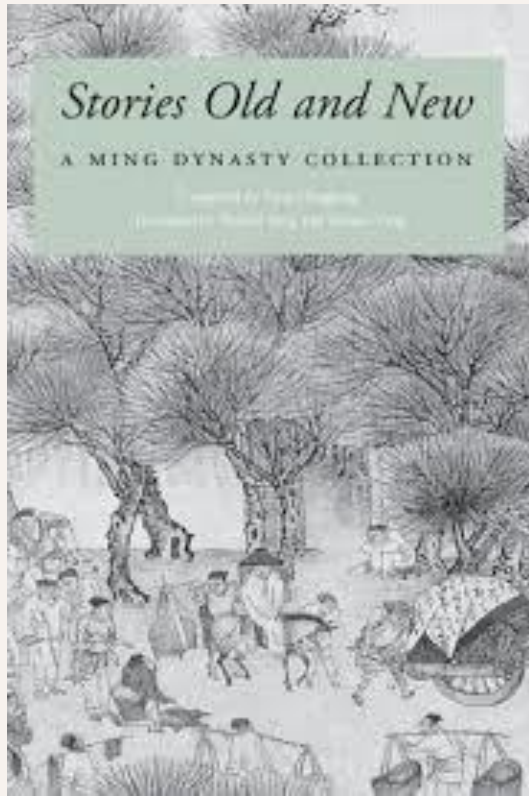
1. Give you a sense of these stories' content.
 2. A quick history of the major collections.
 3. A discussion of the first story in the first important collection.
 4. How to read and teach other stories.
 5. How to read a GENRE.
-

My goal today
is to give you a
snapshot of the
publishing
world of China
of the 1620s--
but also to give
you a sense of
genre.

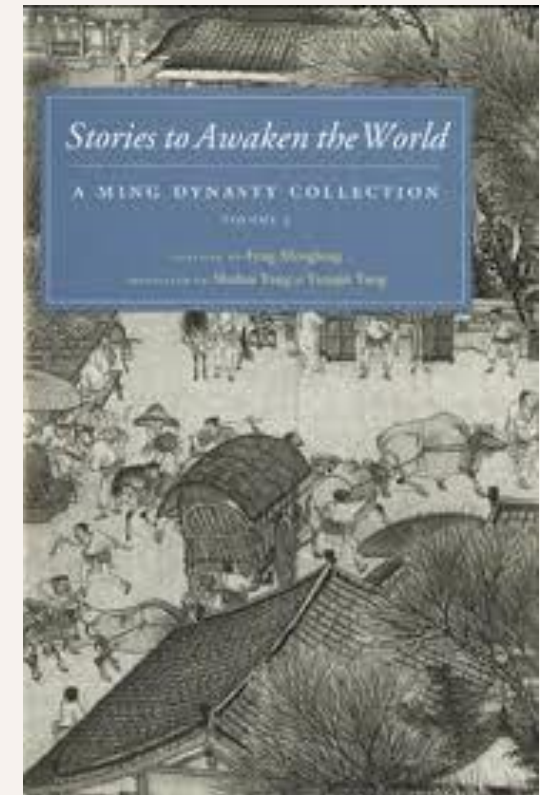




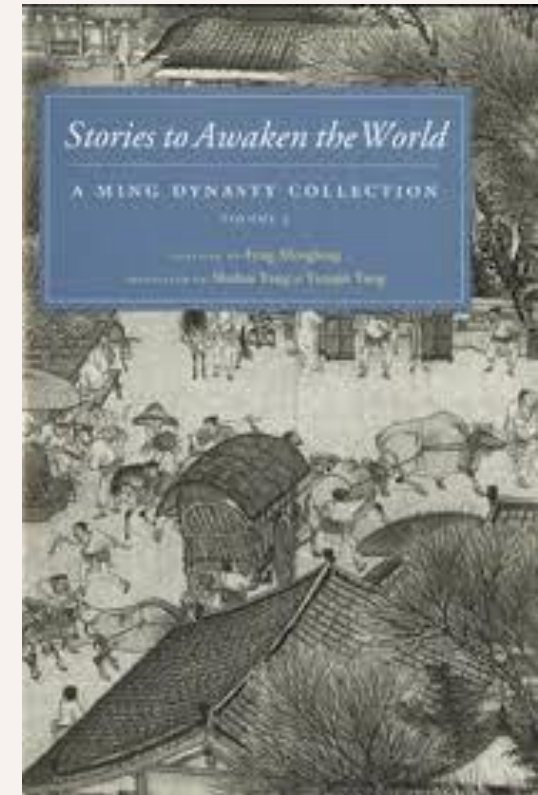
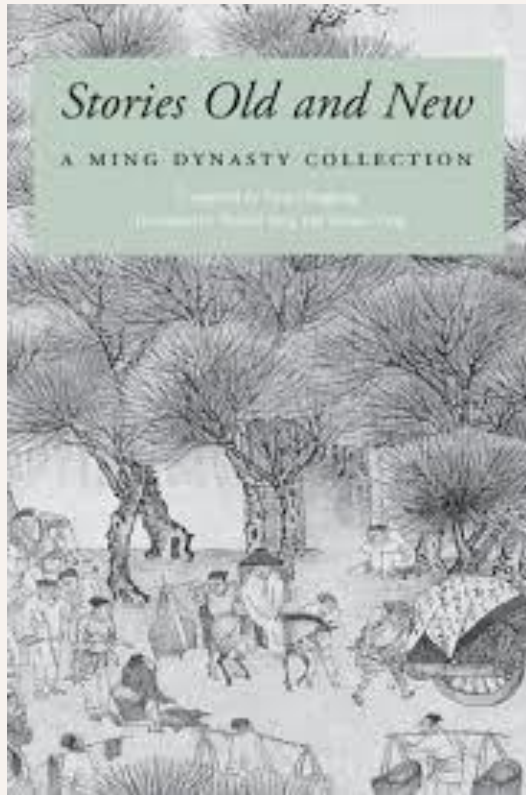
The Sanyan (“Three Words”):
Three collections published in the 1620s



These first are extremely heterogeneous.



This one feels more uniform.



Nonetheless, they share a lot.

古今小說

世恒言

金閩葉敬池校

經國史而外凡著述皆小說也

理或病于艱深修詞或傷于藻繪

不足以觸目耳而振恒心此醒世

言四種所以繼明言通言而刻

All three are closely associated with Feng Menglong (1574-1646)

古今小說

世恒言

Feng Menglong was primarily an editor.

金閨葉敬池校

經國史而外凡著述皆小說也

理或病于艱深修詞或傷于藻繪

不足以觸里耳而振恒心此醒世

言四十種所以繼明言通言而刻

笑府序
古今來莫非話也，話莫非笑也。兩儀之混沌，南闢列聖之揖讓，征誅見者具誰耶？夫亦話之而已耳。後之話今，亦猶今之話昔，話之而疑

寫幾個密字，封固送大理寺獄官，是晚就獄中縊死了。岳飛其子岳雲與張憲、王貴皆押赴南曹處斬，金人聞飛之死，無不置酒相賀。從此和議遂定，以淮水中流及唐鄧二州為界。北朝為大邦，稱伯父，南朝為小邦，稱姪。秦檜加封太師、魏國公，又改封益國公。賜第于望仙橋，壯麗比于皇居。其子秦熺十六歲上狀元及第，除授翰林學士，專領史館。熺生子名埴，襁褓中，便注下翰林之職。熺女方生，即封崇國夫人。一時權勢古今無比。且說崇國夫人六七歲時，愛弄一個獅貓，一日偶然走失，責令臨安府尹立限，挨訪府尹曹泳差人遍訪數日間，拿到獅貓數百，帶景猫王，喫苦使錢，不可盡述。押送到相府檢驗，都非乃圓形。

序
憶丙寅歲，余坐蔣氏三徑齋小樓，近兩月，輯成習叢二十七卷，以清夜吟為序。

三槐堂藏板

後
無無居士曰：竇氏二節古今誦之，夫以村落之女，初無傳母禮義之訓，而能臨難若斯非天植其性者，惡能如此？嘗為之讚曰：巖穴深遂，冀以匿形，耽耽健兒，驅逐借征，忽臨大壑，投死抱貞，璘珣恠石，節共崢嶸。

昔年十九幼者，年十六匿巖穴間，曳出之，驅迫以前，臨壑谷深數百尺，其姊先曰：吾寧就死，義不受辱。即投岸下而死。盜方驚駭，其妹繼之，自投折足，破面流血，群盜乃舍之而去。京兆尹第五騎嘉其貞烈，奏之，詔旌表門閭，永蠲其家丁。

Feng Menglong: A Prolific Editor

How to we
understand
pre-modern
China's
pervasive
silence
around all
commercial
activities?

Publications on urban pleasures

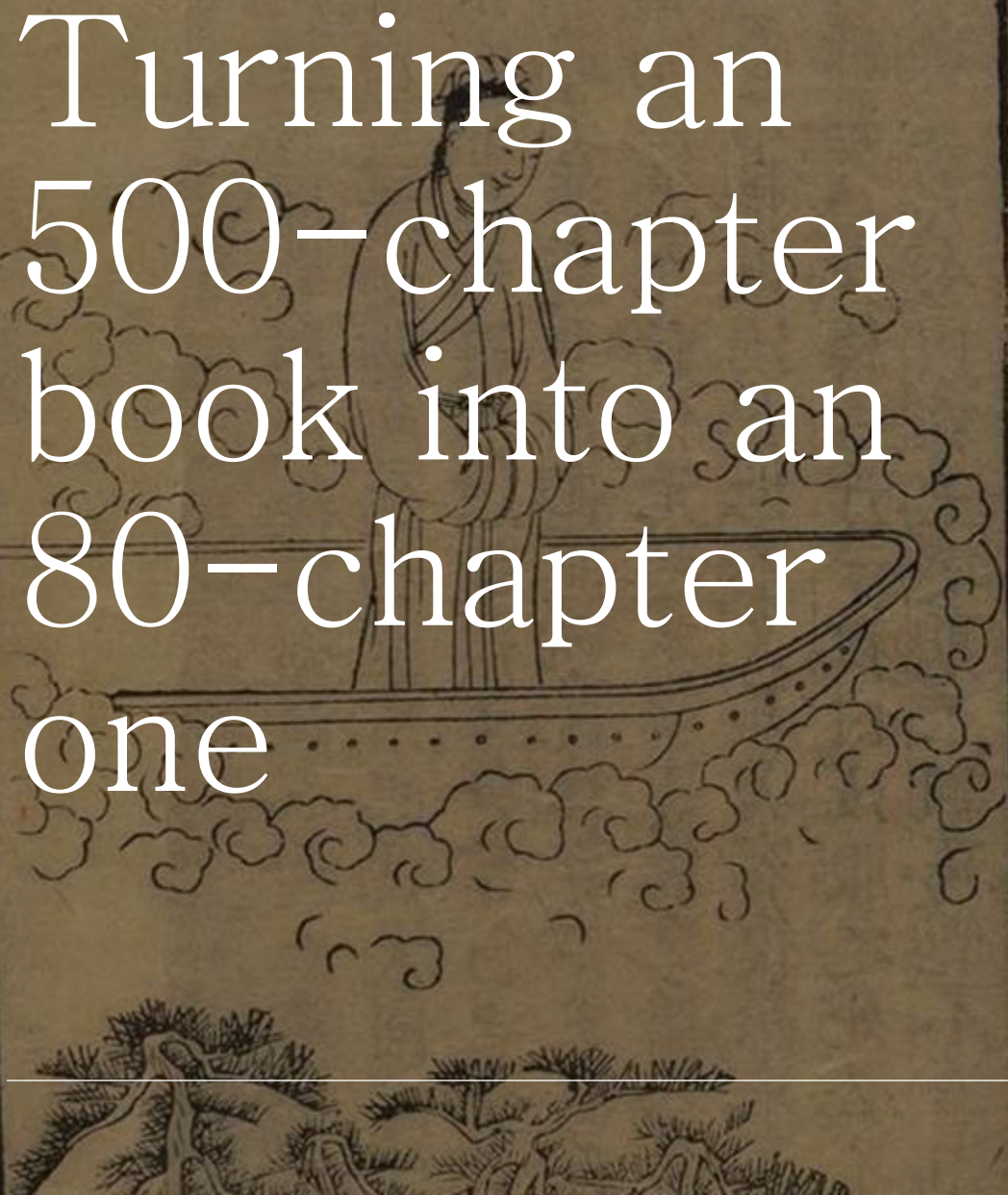
寫幾個密字封固送大理寺獄官是脫就獄中繼死了岳飛其子岳雲與張憲王貴皆押赴帝曹處斬金人聞飛之死無不置酒相賀從此和議遂定以淮水中流及唐鄧二州為界北朝為大邦稱伯父南朝為小邦稱姪秦檜加封太師魏國公又改封益國公賜第于望仙橋莊麗比于皇祐其子秦熈十六歲上狀元及第除授翰林學士專領史館熈生子名瑛襁褓中便注下翰林之職熈女方生卽封崇國夫人一時權勢古今無比且說崇國夫人六七歲時愛弄一個獅貓一日偶然走失責令臨安府尹立限換訪府尹曹沐派人遍訪數日聞拿到獅貓數百帶景福王喫苦使錢不可盡述押送到相府檢驗都非乃圓形

序
憶丙寅歲余坐蔣氏三徑齋小樓近兩月輯成智囊二十七卷以清夜於篋內
三槐堂藏板

笑府序
古今來莫非話也話莫非笑也兩儀之混沌南關列聖之揖讓征誅見者具誰耶去亦話之而已耳後之話今亦猶今之話昔話之而疑

以前臨整谷深數百尺其姊先曰吾寧就死義不受辱即投岸下而死盜方驚駭其妹繼之自投折足破面流血群盜乃舍之而去京兆尹第五騎嘉其貞烈奏之詔旌表門閭永蠲其家丁役
無無居士曰竇氏二節古今誦之夫以村落之女初無傳母禮義之訓而能臨難若斯非天植其性者惡能如此嘗為之讚曰巖穴深遂冀以匿形耽耽健兒驅逐借征忽臨大壑投死抱貞璘珣性石節共崢嶸

Turning an
500-chapter
book into an
80-chapter
one



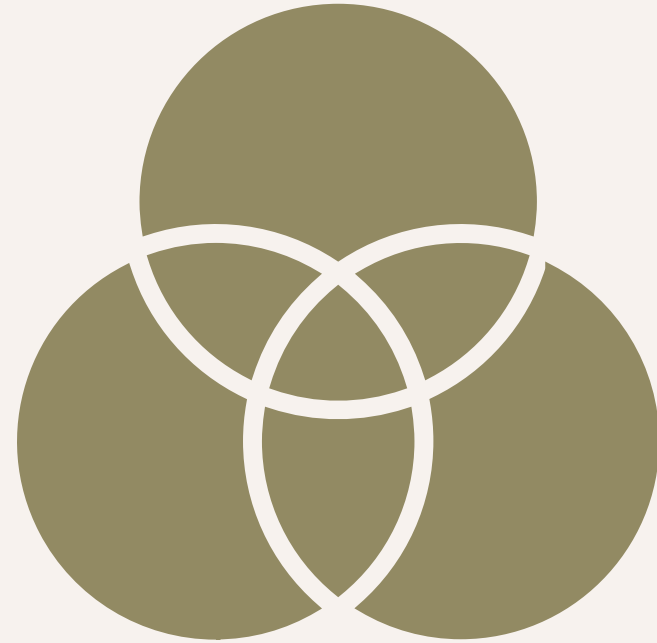
公遠鄂人唐玄宗好仙術開元中中秋宮中勸
請玄宗遊月宮後玄宗學隱形之術於公遠不
或衣帶或巾角不能全隱玄宗詰之公遠曰陛
脫疑天下而以道為戲若盡臣術必懷璽人家
垂腹也玄宗怒慢罵之公遠遂走入殿柱中且
上愈怒令易柱破之復大言於石罅中乃易鴿
明瑩見公遠形在其中長寸餘因碎為十數段
遠形上懼謝不復見後有使者入蜀見公遠黑
笑曰為我謝陛下我姓羅名公遠以蜀當歸寄
玄宗幸蜀始悟當歸之意
子房號冲虛子玄宗開元中父子修行於玉笥

Vernacular
fiction is
always
written under
a pseudonym.



What is a
huaben like?

Karma: the idea that actions have consequences and that comes to mean pervasive moral justice.



“Jiang Xingge Reencounters His Pearl Shirt”

Jiang Xingge, a well-to-do traveling merchant with an heirloom pearl shirt.

Wang Sanqiao, his wife.

Granny Xue, a go-between.

Chen Dalang, her lover, also a traveling merchant.

Ms Ping, Chen Dalang's wife.

Magistrate Wu, a fancy official and Wang Sanqiao's second husband.

Chen Dalang sees Wang Sanqiao for the first time.



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How to analyze this story?

One of the Neo-Confucian Masters was asked whether a woman who had no other source of support should remarry.

One of the Neo-Confucian Masters was asked whether a woman who had no other source of support should remarry.

His answer: To starve to death is a very small matter. To lose one's integrity, however, is a very serious matter.

In fact, the
state honored
women who
never
remarried.



Chen Dalang sees Wang Sanqiao for the first time.



How to analyze this story?

1. Karma (a network of compensation);

How to analyze this story?

1. Karma (a network of compensation);
 2. What people are thinking.
-

How to analyze this story?

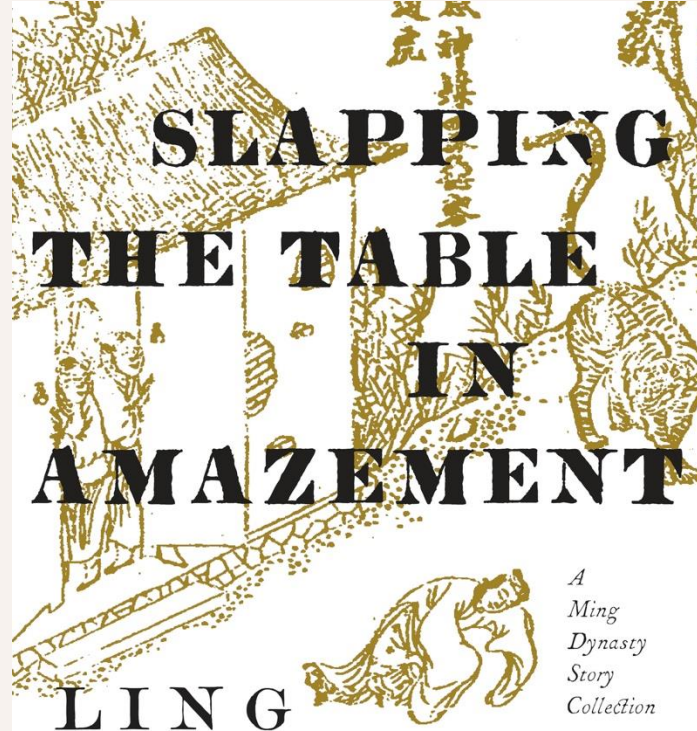
Closely analyze how the scenes
are composed.

The reunion of Sanqiao and Xingge:

A moment later when they finished their tea, the county magistrate invited him into the study in the inner quarters of the yamen and called forth his concubine to greet the guest. This all too unexpected reunion was indeed as unreal as a dream. Without a salute or a word, the two of them fell into a tight embrace with loud sobs that were more heartrending than those ever heard at the funeral of a father or a mother. Overcome with pity, the county magistrate, who was standing on one side, said, "Please do not grieve so. I don't think you look like brother and sister. Tell me the truth; I'll help you out."

The two of them were so shaken by the violent shudders of weeping that neither was ready to speak. However, under the county magistrate's pressing questions, Sanqiao had no other choice but to fall on her knees to say, "I deserve to die ten thousand times for my sins, for this man is, in fact, my ex-husband."

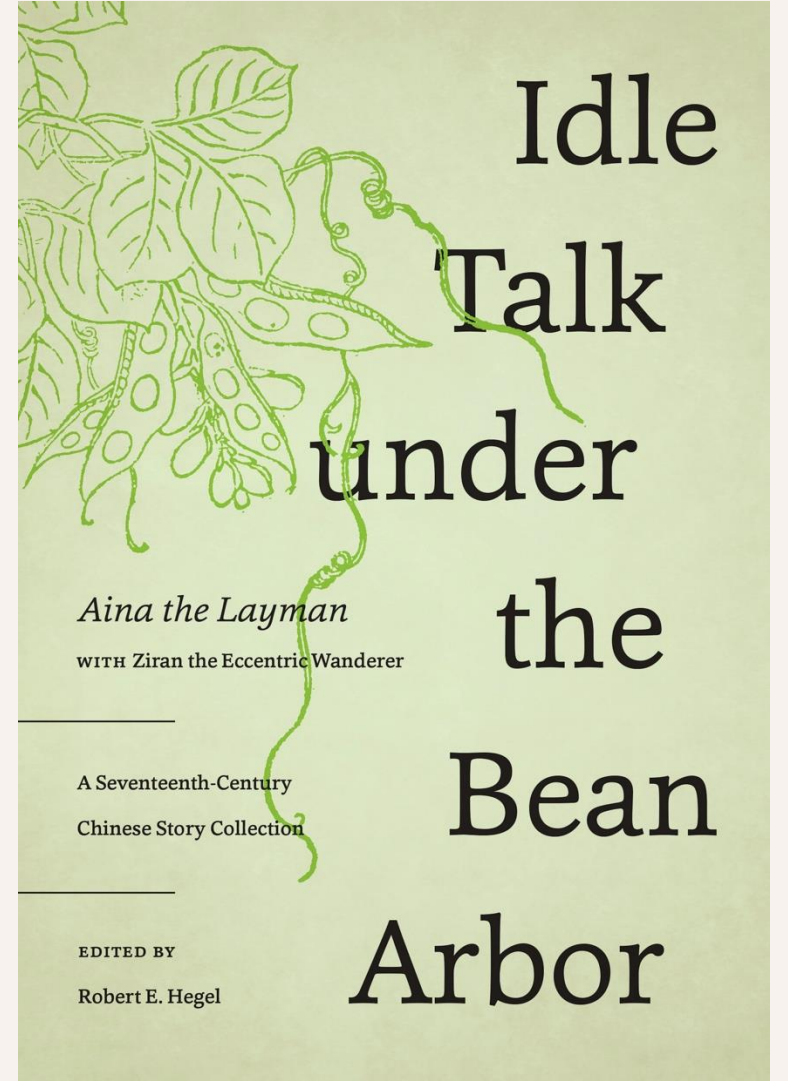
What happens to
the huaben
afterwards?



A collection that dates just a few years later.



In 1644, the Manchus invade,
and the Ming dynasty falls.



Idle
Talk
under
the
Bean
Arbor

Aina the Layman
WITH Ziran the Eccentric Wanderer

A Seventeenth-Century
Chinese Story Collection

EDITED BY
Robert E. Hegel

Thank you!
