A Textual History of Liu Yiqing’s *You ming lu*

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The *You ming lu* (Records of the Hidden and the Visible Worlds), conventionally attributed to Liu Yiqing (劉義慶) (403–444), is one of the most important collections of *zhiguai* (accounts of anomalies) in the Six Dynasties period (222–589) and in the history of Chinese fictional narrative literature; it is also among the earliest of the collections that were heavily influenced by Buddhism and is thus of importance in the studies of Chinese Buddhism.

This essay intends to trace the textual history of the *You ming lu*, including an interpretation of its title, a discussion of its compiler, resources, and authorship, an exploration into its transmission and recompilation, and an evaluation of the important editions and recent scholarship related.

1 *You ming lu*: Its Title, Compilation, and Authorship

1.1 Interpretation of the Title *You ming lu*

There are two variants of the title of this collection: *Youming lu* 幽冥錄 and *You ming lu* 幽明錄. Which one of them is correct? And what does *you ming* mean? Let us address these problems first.

The basic meaning of *you* 幽 is “hidden” or “dark.” Its opposite meaning is, of course, *ming* 明, “bright,” or “exposed to the open air.” *You* has also been linked to the conceptualization of the underworld, a place considered to be dark. In that context, *ming* refers to this world or human world.

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1 Traditionally, tales in the Six Dynasties (420–589) have been classified into two different categories or genres: *zhiguai* and *zhiren* 志人. As Kenneth DeWoskin puts it, *zhiguai* “is the generic name given to collections of brief prose entries, primarily but not exclusively narrative in nature, that discusses out-of-the-ordinary people and events.” See his entry on “Chih-kuai” in *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. by William H. Nienhauser, Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1986, rpt. Taipei: SMC, 1987), 280. On the other hand, *zhiren* works focus mainly on the words and actions of real people. These two genres are often considered to be the earliest forms of Chinese fictional narrative literature.

2 In the bibliographical sections of the dynastic histories of Sui and Tang (cf. fn. 16 and 18) as well as in *Lei shuo* 类說, *Shuo fu* 说郛 and other collectanea containing selections of tales from this collection, only the title *You ming lu* 幽明錄 is used, but in encyclopaedias like *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Recordings from the Taiping Era) and *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era), both ed. by Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) et. al., the title *Youming lu* 幽冥錄 is used as well.


The term youdu (Land of Darkness) first appears in the “Yaodian” (Canon of Yao) of the Shangshu (Book of Documents): “[Emperor Yao] ordered Heshu to dwell in the North [at a place] called ‘Land of Darkness’ (shen ming Heshu, zhai suofang, yue youdu 申命和叔, 宅朔方, 曰幽都).” According to Cai Chen’s annotation (1167–1230), “When the sun travels to this point, it sinks beneath the ground, and all forms or beings become obscure and dark; thus it is named ‘Land of Darkness’” (ri xing zhi shi, ze lun yu dizhong, wanxiang you’an, gu yue “youdu” 日行至是, 則淪於地中, 萬象幽暗, 故曰幽都).⁵

In the Shanhai jing (Classic of Mountains and Seas) there is a Youdu Mountain where all creatures are black.⁶

In “Zhaohun” (Summons of the Soul) from the Chuci (Songs of Chu), youdu was depicted as the nether world:

魂兮归来! 君无下此幽都些。土伯九约, 其角觺觺些。敦脢血拇, 逐人駻駻些。叁目虎首, 其身若牛些。⁸

O Soul, come back! Go not down to the Land of Darkness, Where the Earth God lies, nine-coiled, with dreadful horns on his forehead, And a great humped back and bloody thumbs, pursuing men swift-footed: Three eyes he has in his tiger's head, and his body is like a bull’s.⁹

Youming (幽冥) is another term that suggests the nether world, though it also means subtle, dark, secluded, and muddleheaded.⁰

Cao Zhi’s Wang Zhongxuan lei (Dirge on Wang Zhongxuan) reads: “Alas! The gentlemen! You are in peace forever in the nether world” (jiehu fuzi, yong'an youming 嘉乎夫子, 永安幽冥).¹¹

The term youming has a similar meaning, as we find it, for example, in the Foshuo wuliangshou jing (Sutra of A Boundless Lifespan): “When life ends, the afterlife seems especially abstruse and intense, entering the realm of darkness (youming) to be transmigrated into another body” (shouzhong houshi, you shen you ju; ru qi youming, zhuang sheng shou shen 命終後世, 尤深尤劇。入其幽冥, 轉生受身).¹² It is clear that this understanding of youming does not fit the contents of the You ming lu, because this collection not only includes stories about the nether world (you幽), but also those about this world.

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⁵ Shujing jizhuan (Book of Documents, with collected commentaries), ed. by Cai Chen (Siku quanshu edition) 1.3b.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Shanhai jing (Sibu congkan edition) 18.4a: 北海之内, 有山, 名曰幽都之山, 黑水出焉。其上有玄鸟、玄蛇、玄豹、玄虎、玄狐蓬尾。
⁸ Chuci jizhu (Songs of Chu, with collected commentaries), ed. by Zhu Xi (Beijing, Zhonghua, 1987), 7.4–5.
¹¹ Wenxuan (Selections of Refined Literature), ed. by Xiao Tong (Taipei: Shijie, 1962), 56.780.
The term you ming 幽明 appears first in the “Xizi” 繫辭 (Commentaries) in the Yi jing 易經, “Looking into the celestial phenomena above and examining the geographical features below, one thereby knows the cause of [everything in the] nether world and this world” (yang yi guan 仰以觀於天文, fu yi cha yu dili, shigu zhi you ming zhi gu 俯以察於地理, 是故知幽明之故). You refers to the dark nether world, and ming to the bright real world.

“Wudi benji” 五帝本紀 (Basic Annals of the Five Emperors) of the Shiji 史記 (The Grand Scribe’s Records) also mentions “the divination about nether world and this world and the theories about life and death” (you ming zhi zhan, si sheng zhi shuo 幽明之占, 死生之說). It relates you with death and relates ming with living.

Yan Yannian 颜延年 (384–456), a poet of the Southern Dynasties’ Song Empire, writes: “Men and the spirits are separated into the nether world and this world” (ren shen you ming jue 人神幽明絕). Thus one may conclude that You ming 幽明, rather than Youming 幽冥, is the more apt title of this collection.

1.2 Compilership of the You ming lu

The document that first lists You ming lu under Liu’s name is the bibliographical treatise of the Sui shu 隋書 (Sui History),16 the only extant17 treatise of this kind compiled after that in the Han shu 漢書 (Han History) and before the bibliographical treatises of the Jiu Tang shu 舊唐書 (Old Tang History) and Xin Tang shu 新唐書 (New Tang History). All three treatises consider Liu Yiqing as the compiler of the You ming lu.18

One problem that arises here is that neither in Liu’s biography in Shen Yue’s 沈約 (441–513) Song shu 宋書 (Book of Song) nor in that in Nan shi 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasties) compiled by Li Yanshou 李延壽 (early 7th century AD)19 mention is made of his authorship of the You ming lu.20 The author of the Song shu lived between the Song (420–479) and Liang (502–557) dynasty. It is believed that the biographies in the Song shu were written during the fifth and sixth year of the Yongming era (487–488), some forty-three or forty-four years after Liu Yiqing’s death. Therefore, Shen Yue’s biography of Liu would seem more reliable than that of Li Yanshou. Why then did Shen Yue not mention the You ming lu? Was it because ____________

16 Sui shu (Sui History), by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643) et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1973), 33.980.
17 Wei Zheng added a lot of entries concerning books already lost in his own lifetime, but still extant in 523 AD when Ruan Xiaoxu 蘇孝融 (479–536) finished his catalogue of the palace library of the Liang Dynasty, Qi lu 七錄 (Seven Records), a book still extant in Tang times. Cf. Jiu Tang shu 舊唐書 (Old Tang History), by Liu Xu 劉昫 (877–946), (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975), 46.2011, and Xin Tang shu 新唐書 (New Tang History), by Ouyang Xiu 欧陽修 (1007–1072) and Song Qi 宋祁 (998–1061), (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975), 58.1498. Thus, for many books written between the Han and Tang dynasties the bibliographical treatise of Sui shu has become the only record of their very existence.
20 Cf. fn. 19. Because of this, You ming lu is even considered as a book forged by someone as late as the Tang. See Chang Bide 昌彼得, Shuofu kao 說郛攷 (Study of Shuo fu) (Taipei: Wenshizhe, 1979), 66.
he did not know that Liu had compiled it, or did he think it was not worth mentioning? In discussing the compilation of *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, which is also not mentioned in Liu’s biography, the same problem is encountered. Xiao Hong attempts to explain this omission as follows:

People who write biographies often adopt the events that they think to be important. In Shen Yue’s eyes, *Shishuo*, *Jilin*, as well as *Xuan yan ji* and *You ming lu*, which are recorded in the bibliographical treatise of *Sui shu*, might have been of no importance, therefore he does not mention them at all.\(^{21}\)

Xiao Hong’s inference sounds reasonable. Subjective decisions of certain persons to record some matters and to omit others may often be the reason that something has been transmitted or not. While Shen Yue says that “he (Yiqing) had neither much talent nor many words,”\(^ {22}\) he is obviously commenting in the vein of the conventional view of traditional literature, which disparaged fictional works. In other words, Shen would not have considered a collection of tales as a literary work.

Of course, arguments cannot be based solely on inference. There is other evidence, too. While Shen Yue and Li Yanshou 李延壽 (462–521) did not mention *You ming lu*, Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 (462–521) cited in his commentary to *Shishuo xinyu* four tales from this collection.\(^ {24}\) From this it can be clearly concluded that the *You ming lu* existed before the Sui Dynasty.

But was the compilation of *You ming lu* done by Liu Yiqing himself or by a group of people? Traditionally, Liu was recognized as the compiler, but the modern scholar Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) raised a different argument in his *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* 中國小說史略 (A Brief History of Chinese Fiction):

> **The History of the [Liu] Song** says that Yiqing had little gift in writing himself yet that he assembled men of letters from far and near. Then, it is possible that the books attributed to him were all compiled by multiple hands.\(^ {25}\)

Lu Xun is not referring merely to *You ming lu*, but is talking about all the works by Liu Yiqing. Because the works attributed to Liu Yiqing amount to 225–276 juan,\(^ {26}\) and it is known from his biography that he summoned many writers and scholars to his service, it is likely that Liu compiled those books, including *You ming lu*, with the assistance of the contingent of writers and scholars he had summoned. Many scholars have collected further evidence that the


\(^{22}\) *Song shu* 51.1477: 才詞雖不多[...].

\(^{23}\) Cf. fn. 19.

\(^{24}\) I. e. “Wang Ziqiu” 王子遒 and “Yuan” 元 in his annotation on tale 16 and 19 of section 17, “Shangshi” 喪逝 (Grieving for the Departed), “He men” 鵝門 in his annotation on tale 20 of section 19, “Xianyuan” 賢媛 (Worthy Beauties), and “Yang Hu” 羊祜 in his annotation on tale 3 of section 20, “Shu jie” 術解 (Technical Understanding).

\(^{25}\) Lu Xun, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1973), 67: 宋書言義慶才詞不多，而招集文學之士，遠近必至，則諸書或成於眾手，未可知也。

\(^{26}\) See Xiao Hong, “*Shishuo xinyu zuozhe wenti shangque*,” 9.
A Textual History of Liu Yiqing’s You ming lu

Shishuo xinyu was also compiled by a group of people, rather than by Liu himself.27 This may be true as well for the You ming lu.

1.3 Resources and Authorship of the You ming lu

Aside from the problem of compilership of the You ming lu, another question concerns the authorship of the collection. As with most zhiguai collections, You ming lu must have included stories from a wide variety of sources, written and oral. Yet there are two opposing arguments in academic circles that merit some discussion here.

In his recent influential Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China, Robert Ford Campany says,

[...] Liu’s official biography, as well as the BZL [Bianzheng lun 辯正論], point out that late in life he displayed conspicuous Buddhist piety. It seems likely that he did in fact author the Yml [You ming lu] and Xuanjy [Xuan yan ji] himself; these are written in noticeably less elegant prose than that of the Ssxy [Shishuo xinyu].”28

This conclusion seems to me questionable for two reasons: first, style is an unreliable standard to determine important issues like authorship; second, Liu’s display of conspicuous Buddhist piety may support the argument that he participated in compiling collections bearing Buddhist coloration like Xuan yan ji 宣驗記, but it does not necessarily support the argument that he authored them—especially a collection like You ming lu, in which the Buddhist influence is found in only one part of the work.

An opposite argument was raised nearly a century ago. In his Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue, Lu Xun depicts the compilation of the You ming lu as follows:

Liu Yiqing, Prince of Linchuan (403–444), was a man of simplicity and quiet temperament, and he loved literature. He wrote many works, including Records of Hidden and Visible Worlds in thirty juan, which was classified among the historical anecdotes in the Sui History and was included in the xianzhuan category in the bibliographical treatise of New History of the Tang. Though this book is lost, many quotations from it can be found in other books. It is generally like the sort of works such as In Search of the Spirits and the Arrayed Marvels. Yet it seems that all of the stories were collected from earlier writings, not written by himself.29

Lu Xun suspects that all the tales in You ming lu might have been drawn from other sources, not a creation by an author himself. His argument here is somewhat difficult to understand. As is widely known, collecting tales from previous books was long a feature of zhiguai compilation.30 Almost all the collections, including those mentioned by Lu Xun, are no exception. You

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29 Lu Xun, Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue, 54: “臨川王劉義慶為性簡素, 愛好文藝, 撰述甚多。有幽明錄三十卷, 見隋志史部襤遺類, 新唐志入小説。其書今雖不存, 而他書徵引甚多, 大抵如搜神、列異之類, 然似皆集錄前人撰作, 非自造也。”
Zhenjun Zhang

This page follows the convention. It should be noted here, however, that *You ming lu* includes many tales that are not found in other collections. That is the reason why this collection drew so much attention. As for whether the stories in the collection of *zhiguai* were created by the one who compiled the collection himself, this has long ceased to be a problem. Scholars in East and West generally agree that the stories in the collections such as *Soushen ji* (In Search of the Spirits) and *Lieyi zhuan* (Arrayed Marvels) were not written by their compilers. Thus Lu Xun's claim seems unreasonable. Until the 1980s, however, there were still critics who echoed Lu Xun's suspicion without offering further proof.31

Similar to those of most *zhiguai* collections, some of the stories in the *You ming lu* have been drawn from previous collections. Wang Guoliang, who had tried to trace the origins of the stories, found that there is a total of thirty such tales from twelve books (excluding five repetitions). Below is a table about the sources and the tales collected in the *You ming lu*, according to the results of Wang Guoliang's examination:32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Tale Number in <em>You ming lu</em></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Yiwen ji</em> (Records of Marvels)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lieyi zhuan</em></td>
<td>12, 44, 52, 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bowa zhi</em> (A Treaties on Curiosities)</td>
<td>43, 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Luolishi yilin</em> (Marvels Forest by Mr. Lu)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Soushen ji</em></td>
<td>35, 38, 41, 43, 44, 52, 87, 158, 160, 205, 251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zu Taizhi zhiguai</em> (Account of Anomalies by Zu Taizhi)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cao Pi zhiguai</em> (Account of Anomalies by Cao Pi)</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Guo Zi</em> (Master Guo)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Xu Soushen ji</em> (Sequel to In Search of Spirits)</td>
<td>45, 87, 108, 109, 127, 131, 160, 176, 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zhenyi ji</em> (Selected Anomaly Accounts)</td>
<td>91, 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ling gui zhi</em> (A Treatise on Spirits and Ghosts)</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kong shi zhiguai</em> (Mr. Kong's Records of Anomalies)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wang Guoliang’s list is, however, problematic. First, we do not know whether the *Xu Soushen ji* was compiled prior to *You ming lu* or not.33 Second, the actual number of tales from previous books should be more than what Wang Guoliang has counted. For example, there are thirteen tales taken from the *Soushen ji*, and fourteen tales appear also in *Soushen houji* – rather than eleven and nine tales, as Wang claims.34 In addition, tale 38 of the *You ming lu*, which was included by Wang in his count, is not found in *Soushen ji*.35

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32 The numbers listed here are the sequence number of tales in *Gaoxianweng soushen* edition of *You ming lu*.

33 The *Xu Soushen ji*, also called *Soushen houji* 探神後記, is traditionally attributed to Tao Qian 陶潜 (365–427), but the received version of this book is problematic, and it is hard to support this attribution. First, any texts before Huijiao’s 慧皎 (497–554) *Gaoxianweng zhuan* 高僧傳 fail to mention that Tao wrote a text by any of these titles; second, the extant text mentions events and reign titles that would have postdated Tao’s death. For instance, tales in Volumes 6 and 10 record events from the Yuanjia 元嘉 reign (424–453) of the Song 宋.

34 Those from *Soushen ji* include: tales 33, 41, 43, 44, 51, 52, 67, 87, 158, 160, 205, 251, and 252; those also appear in the *Soushen houji* include: tales 45, 63, 87, 107, 108, 109, 127,131, 149, 150, 160, 176, 190, 205, and 252.
Even though the *You ming lu* includes many tales from other collections, there is no evidence to verify that all the tales are from other books. Thus it is possible that Liu or his co-compilers authored some of the stories in the collection.

This poses a question about the resources used by the compilers of the *zhiguai*. It is generally believed that the stories found in *zhiguai* collections originate from two kinds of sources, namely written tradition and oral tradition. Compilers of *zhiguai* select some stories from previous collections, while writing down some that they had heard from their contemporaries. Since in either case the compilers may have shaped or augmented their sources, they may perhaps still be called “authors.” In this view, Campany’s argument may be applicable to some undeterminable portion of *You ming lu* narratives.

2 Transmission and Recompilation of the *You ming lu*

2.1 Transmission of the *You ming lu*

As mentioned above, the *You ming lu* is not mentioned in Liu Yiqing’s biography in the *Song shu*, yet it is listed in the “Zazhuan” 載傳 (Miscellaneous Biographies) category of the bibliographical treatise of *Sui shu*, in twenty *juan*, and in the bibliographical treatise of the *Jiu Tang shu* and *Xin Tang shu* in thirty *juan*. This collection was not included in later histories, suggesting that it was lost in the Song (960–1279) dynasty. Based on the fact that the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, which was compiled in the Northern Song (960–1127), included many stories from *You ming lu*, it is probable that this book was lost in the Southern Song period (1127–1279), perhaps when the royal house moved southward in 1127.

After the Song, there is no evidence that the *You ming lu* was ever seen as a whole and complete book. Fortunately, a large number of tales were preserved in quotations in some *lei shu* 靈樑 (encyclopaedias) such as *Taiping guangji* and *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽. Many compilers of *xiaoshuo* selected tales from the *You ming lu*. The ones still extant are:

(1) Selection of Tales in *Lei shuo* 靈樑 (Classified Tales)37

Compiled by Zeng Zao 曾慥 (1091–1155) of the Southern Song dynasty. The *Lei shuo* includes six tales from the *You ming lu*.

1) “Tian ci jiace” 天賜簡策 (Heaven Offering the Slips), Tale 36
2) “Tou feng” 頭風 (Headache)
3) “Zheng Xuan laonu” 鄭玄老奴 (Zheng Xuan’s Old Servant), Tale 98
4) “Chi yu guimei zheng guang” 恥與鬼魅爭光 (Ashamed to Vie with an Evil Spirit for Light)
5) “Ren yan gui kezeng” 人言鬼可憎 (People Say that Ghosts Are Heinous), Tale 66
6) “Guo Changsheng” 郭長生, Tale 68.

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36 Cf. fn. 16 and 18.
Two of these narratives, the second tale about “Yang Hu” 羊祜 and the fourth one about “Ji Kang” 嵇康 (223–262), are not found in other sources.

Selection of Tales in *Shuo Fu* 説郛 (City of Tales)\(^8\)

Compiled by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (fl. 1360–1368) during the Yuan-Ming transition and transmitted as a manuscript until 1927, when it was printed in Shanghai by Hanfen lou 涵芬樓. It includes four tales from the *You ming lu*.

1) “Ji Kang” 嵇康
2) “Ruan Deru” 阮德如, Tale 66
3) “Guo Changsheng” 郭長生, Tale 68
4) “Yuan An” 袁安, Tale 40.

The first three, including the one about Ji Kang, are from *Lei shuo*. The last one, which is a story about Yuan An 袁安 (d. 92), is from *juan* 137 of the *Taiping guangji*.

Selection of Tales in (Chongjiao) *Shuo Fu* 重校説郛 (The Re-collated City of Tales)\(^9\)

Compiled by Tao Ting 陶珽 (fl. 1610) and first printed 1646 by Wanwei shan tang 宛委山堂. It includes eleven tales from *You ming lu*. They are:

1) “Li zhi yu” 獭知雨 (A Wild Cat Knows the [Time of] Rain), Tale 33
2) “Hua nu” 化女 (Transformed into a Girl), Tale 166
3) “Jintai” 金臺 (Golden Terrace), Tale 2
4) “Chi zhi” 赤幟 (A Crimson Flag), Tale 136
5) “Dan ye” 赤野 (Red Wild Field), Tale 105
6) “Yu Hong nu” 庾宏奴 (Yu Hong’s Slave), Tale 165
7) “Yuan An” 袁安, Tale 40
8) “Chen Zhongju” 陳仲擧, Tale 41
9) “Jia Bi” 賈弼, Tale 140
10) “Wang Fengxian” 王奉先, Tale 237
11) “Yu bao” 魚報 (A Fish’s Revenge)

All of the eleven tales are collected from *Taiping guangji*, but the last tale, “Yu bao” 魚報, is mistakenly attributed to *You ming lu*. According to *Yiwen leiju* and *Taiping guangji*, this tale is from *Sanqin ji* 三秦記 (Record of the Three Qin).\(^{40}\)

Selection of Tales in *Wuchao Xiaoshuo Daguan* 五朝小説大觀 (Grand Spectacle of the Five Dynasty Stories)\(^{41}\)

This collection was first published in Shanghai by Sao ye shan fang 撈葉山房 in 1926. Its edition of *You ming lu* is just copied from Tao Ting’s (Chongjiao) *Shuo fu*.

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\(^{38}\) *Shuo fu* (in 100 *juan*; Shanghai: Shangwu, 1927), 3.6b (rpt. Taibei: Xinxing, 1963: 50a).


\(^{40}\) *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Compendium of Arts and Letters), ed. Ouyang Xun 欧陽詢 (557–641), (Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1965), 84.1438; *Taiping guangji* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961), 276.2174.

A Textual History of Liu Yiqing’s You ming lu

(5) Selection of Tales in *Jiu Xiaoshuo* (Old Fiction) 42

This was compiled by Wu Zengqi 吳曾祺 (b. 1852) and first published in 1914. It includes seventeen tales. Because all the tales are from *Taiping guangji* and other collectanea, and also included in the *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, they are not listed here.

2.2 The Recompilation of the *You ming lu*

Besides the above listed selective editions, there are a few recompiled editions of *You ming lu* that all attempt to provide a comprehensive version. They include:

1. Re-compilation in *Linlang mishi congshu* (Series Books of Secret Room Linlang)

Including 158 tales, it was compiled by Hu Ting 胡瑴 (1822–1861). This is the first attempt to recompile the entire *You ming lu*. Except two tales, the first one about Wang Daizhi 王逮之 and the ghost (page 6a) and the second one about “Ran shi” 燃石 (Burning Stone; 53a), 43 all these narratives are also included in Lu Xun’s edition of *You ming lu* (see below).

2. Re-compilation in *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* (Collected Lost Old Stories) 44

Lu Xun completed his recompilations of 36 lost works of pre-Tang literature in 1911, and already one year later his preface on *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* was published in the first (and only) issue of *Yueshe congkan* 越社叢刊, but it was not before his death, that the work itself was published, as part of the first edition of *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 in 1938. 45 It has been believed that this version was compiled on the basis of the above-mentioned *Linlang mishi congshu* edition of Hu Ting, 46 but he enlarged his edition of *You ming lu* by adding quotations from *Yiwen leiju*, *Taiping guangji*, *Taiping yulan*, *Shilei fu zhu*, and other encyclopaedias, collecting altogether a total of 265 tales. Apart from a small number of tales that remain open to question (this will be discussed below), most of the tales in the collection may be assumed to come from the original *You ming lu*.

This edition has been considered the best and most complete recompiled version of the *You ming lu*. 47 It is also the most popular version available all over the world. Most importantly, this edition greatly influenced later editions and related scholarship. For these reasons, the following part of this essay will be devoted to examining it with more care.

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42 Jiuxiaoshuo (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1957), Collection A2.155a-161a.
43 The source of the first tale is unknown, the second tale in Wu Shu’s 吳淑 (947–1002) annotations to his *Shilei fu* 事類賦 (*Rhapsody of Classified Matters*) (Taipei: Xinxing, 1969), 7.144, is cited from *Yi zhi* 異志 (*Records of the Strange*). This may explain why Lu Xun did not include them in his edition of *You ming lu*.
46 Wang Guoliang, “You ming lu chutan,” 171, note 3, says that it includes all of the 158 tales from the *Linlang mishi* version. However, the two tales already mentioned were rejected by Lu Xun.
This collection was compiled on the basis of the *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* edition, but it rearranges the order of the tales according to their content. All the tales are divided into six categories, and each tale is given a title. Nine tales are added and eleven appear in the appendix. The total number of tales amounts to 285. This is by far the most comprehensive version of the *You ming lu*. The detailed annotations are very useful. Unfortunately, this collection does not include textual notes. Moreover, the standard of selection, especially for the added tales, is also problematic, as will be seen below.

The Edition in *Han Wei Linchao Biji Xiaoshuo Daguan* (Han Wei and Six Dynasty Zhiguai Stories)\(^4^9\)

Based on *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* edition, the compilers, Wang Genlin 王根林 and others, have done some collation, but do not provide a record of their work. As a new edition it is still worth mentioning.\(^5^0\)

3 Problems of the *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* Edition and Their Influence on Later Editions and Related Scholarship

3.1 Problems of the *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* Edition

Scholars have given Lu Xun’s compilation of old stories high marks.\(^5^1\) While the *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* edition is fairly reliable compared with previous editions, problems and errors still remain.

Maeno Naoaki has emphasized that the versions of the collectanea that Lu Xun had used might have been inferior ones. He also points out in his study some problems regarding editions and punctuation.\(^5^2\) Actually, such errors are ubiquitous because Lu Xun did not have the opportunity to examine the Ming manuscript version of the *Taiping guangji*. The citation errors are many.\(^5^3\) However, in the most popular edition – that of Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社 – almost all of those errors have been corrected. There-

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49 Wang Genlin, *Han Wei Linchao biji xiaoshuo daguan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1999), 689–747.
50 In a private talk with the author of this article at Madison, Wisconsin, in the fall of 2003, Li Jianguo, a leading scholar of classical Chinese fiction in China, suggested also that this edition should be included in the history of recompilation of the *You ming lu*.
51 See Dai Wangshu 戴望舒, “Guxiaoshuo gouchen jiaoji zhi shidai he yixu” 古小說鉤沉校輯之時代和逸序 (The Time of *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*’s Collation and Compilation and a Lost Preface), in his *Xiaoshuo xiqu lunji* 小說戲曲論集 (Collected Critiques on Fiction and Drama) (Beijing: Zuojia, 1958), 27–38; Lin Chen 林辰, “Lu Xun Guxiaoshuo gouchen de jiju niandai ji suo shou ge shu zuozhe” 魯迅古小說鉤沉校輯年代及所收各書作者 (The Compilation Time of Lu Xun’s *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* and the Authors of Each Book Included), in *Wenxue yichan xuanji san ji* 文學遺產選集 (Selected Commentaries on Literary Heritage) 3.385–407.
53 Chen Guishi 陳桂市 has listed some of them in his unpublished MA paper. Chen listed those tales to which Lu Xun failed to give a source, but actually they can be found in extant collectanea such as *Taiping*.
fore, in this essay I will mainly discuss problems related to the question of selection. Below are the problems occurring in connection with Lu Xun’s Guxiaoshuo gouchen edition:

3.1.1 Mistakenly Included Tales

The Guxiaoshuo gouchen edition mistakenly includes several pieces that are not from You ming lu. For example, tale 257 about mole crickets does not specify a source. But entries in Taiping yulan and Taiping guangji say it comes from Zi Ran 子然 and Xu Yi jì 续異記 (Sequel to the Record of the Strange). So Wang Guoliang has suggested its elimination.\(^{54}\) Besides tale 257, it seems that tale 217, a story about how Jia Yong 賈雍 lost his head, is also spurious, because the same story cited in all the extant editions of Taiping guangji does not give its source.

3.1.2 Tales in Question

In addition, Lu Xun includes four tales (63, 64, 221, and 258) which are attributed to Shishuo xinyu in his edition of You ming lu. These tales need to be discussed in some detail.

In a note regarding tale 63, Lu Xun says:

The present edition of Shishuo does not include this tale, and when the collectanea of the Tang and Song quote from You ming lu, they sometimes also say that this is from Shishuo.

As for why Shishuo is used as a substitute for You ming lu, he does not give any explanation. The problem is that the tales attributed to Shishuo are numerous, not limited to these four. If what Lu Xun says is true, all the other tales might also be from You ming lu. This issue later became a topic of considerable debate, as will be seen below.

3.1.3 Excluded Tales

The Guxiaoshuo gouchen edition includes 265 tales. Excluded tales that are probably from You ming lu include the two tales found in Lei shuo, and the one about Ji Kang is also found in Shuo fu. This shows that Lu Xun consulted neither Lei shuo nor Shuo fu. In Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成 (Chrestomathy of Illustrations and Writings Ancient and Modern), there is another tale that seems to have been overlooked by Lu Xun.\(^{55}\) These three tales will be put here along with my translation:

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\(^{54}\) Taiping yulan (Sibu congkan edition; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960) 948.6a; Taiping guangji (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961) 473.3898. See Wang Guoliang, “You ming lu chutan,” 158. Wang has also suggested elimination of tale 32, a tale attributed to You ming lu in the Leilin zashuo 类林雜說 13, because he found that it is from Han Wudi bieguo dongming ji 漢武帝別國洞冥記 (A Record of the Han Emperor Wu’s Penetration into the Mysteries of Outlying Realms).

\(^{55}\) “Mu ke” 木客, in Gujin tushu jicheng (Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1934), ed. by Chen Menglei 陳孟雷 (b. 1651–1752) et al., 514.37a. Li Jianguo 李劍國 noticed this tale many years ago. See his Tang qian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi 唐前志怪小說史 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue, 1984), 357.
1) “Tou feng” 頭風 (Headache)

Yang Hu (221–278) suffered from headaches, and [someone] had him treated. Hu said, “On the third day after I was born, my head was facing the northern door. Feeling the wind blow against [my head], I worried about it very much. It was only that I could not speak. Since the origin of the illness is far away, it is impossible to be cured.”

2) “Chi yu guimei zheng guang” 恥與鬼魅爭光

(Ji Kang (223–262) was playing a zither under the lamp, when he saw a man who was more than ten feet tall, black faced, and wearing an unlined garment with a leather belt. Kang looked at him closely, and then blew out the light, saying, “I'm ashamed to vie with an evil spirit for light!”)

3) “Mu ke” 木客 (Wood Guests)

Mu ke are born in the mountainous areas of the south. Their heads, faces, and speech are not completely different from those of human beings, but their hands and feet are as sharp as hooks. They live among the precipices, and after death their corpses are also to be encoffined and carried to a grave. They are able to exchange goods with people without revealing their shapes. Now in the south there is ghost market, which is also similar to this.

3.2 Limitations of Recent Scholarship and the Edition of Zheng Wanqing

Not only because of Lu Xun’s invaluable contributions to the study of Chinese fiction, but also very much because of his elevated status in the first decade of the People’s Republic of China, still today most scholars follow his lines of argumentation without challenging them. Wang Guoliang was one of the few to point out at least some of the problems that Lu Xun left behind unsolved. For example, he tried to explain why the encyclopaedias sometimes say a tale is from Shihuo while it is actually from the You ming lu, by arguing that when the collectanea of the Tang and Song quote from Shihuo and the annotations by Liu Xiaobiao, these quotes could all be identified as coming from the Shihuo. It is even possible, he held, that a note by Liu Xiaobiao was by chance from You ming lu, and the compiler of the encyclopaedias still maintain that it was from Shihuo.

56 Lei shuo 11.189a.

57 Lei shuo 11.189b. This tale was also included in the Linggui zhi. See Taiping guangji 317.2509–2510.

58 Gujin tushu jicheng 514.37a.
Wang’s argument could, however, not answer all the questions concerning the problem of the origin of quotes, because, in my view, his solutions only concern one piece of the puzzle. Another piece might be that many tales have been attributed to the *Shishuo* as well as to the *You ming lu*. This unprecise treatment of quotes may be the reason why later scholars gained the impression that tales not found in the present version of *Shishuo* had to be assigned solely to the *You ming lu*. Some scholars assume that the original edition of *Shishuo* is not identical with the present version, and thus they do not consider the *Shishuo* editions after the Song to come close to the original. This explains why the present version does not include the tales attributed to *Shishuo* and, at the same time, raises the problem of the degree to which the tales of the *You ming lu* and those of the *Shishuo* overlap.

The considerable overlapping of the tales of the *You ming lu* and those of the *Shishuo* was pointed out early by Ye Dehui 葉德輝 (1864–1927). Some tales on spirits quoted in the collectanea of the Tang and Song where they are attributed to the *Shishuo* are elsewhere given as coming from the *You ming lu* and are not contained in the present version of the *Shishuo*. Therefore, Ye suspects that when the Prince of Linchuan compiled the *Shishuo* *xingyu*, it included quite a few tales on spirits that were later sorted out and collected in a separate book, the one we now know as the *You ming lu*. The reason that the collections are still attributed to *Shishuo* might be that they just kept to the original title of the book.

The problem could be even more complicated. Apart from the *You ming lu* and the *Shishuo*, there is another collection, recorded by the bibliographic treatise of the *Sui shu* under the title *Xiaoshuo*, by Liu Yiqing. In echoing Ye Dehui’s hypothesis, the modern scholar Fan Ziye argues that at the very beginning *Shishuo* and *You ming lu* both were assigned to *Xiaoshuo*. In support of his hypothesis he notes:

1) Wenfang sipu 文房四譜 (Notes of the Four Treasures of the Study), by Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (958–996), which includes a story about Cai Hong 蔡洪 (fl. Taiyang reign of Emperor Wu of Jin), says in a note that “this is from the *Xiaoshuo* of Mr. Liu” 出劉氏小説. In addition, Taiping guangji 嘉定類稿 includes a story about Du Yu 杜預 (222–284) becoming a snake, and the compilers note, “from the *Xiaoshuo* of Mr. Liu” 出劉氏小説.

2) [the second part of] the bibliographical treatise of the *Jiu Tang shu* says that Liu Yiqing wrote *Xiaoshuo*, in 10 juan. In addition, according to the bibliographical treatise in *Sui shu*, Yin Yun of the Liang also wrote a *Xiaoshuo*, in 10 juan. To distinguish between the two, some people started calling Liu’s book “the *Xiaoshuo* of Mr. Liu.”

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62 *Taiping guangji* 456.3728.
63 *Jiu Tang shu* 47.2036.
64 *Sui shu* 29.1011. See also *Jiu Tang shu* 47.2036.

OE 48 (2009)
Fan’s argument is fascinating, yet lacks compelling evidence. There are several problems. First, Ye Dehui’s idea is merely an unproven hypothesis; second, the contents of Xiaoshuo attributed to Liu Yiqing are unknown; third, the xiaoshuo in “the xiaoshuo of Mr. Liu” may also be a generic term instead of the real title of a book; fourth, as a support to Fan’s hypothesis, the remarks on Su Yijian and Taiping guangji are not very convincing because they are rather late. On the other hand, there is evidence supporting the contrary hypothesis. For instance, to tale 189 (Gouchen edition) about the governor of Xin’an 新安, which is quoted in Taiping yulan as being from Shishuo, there is a note appended to it which says, “the story in You ming lu is exactly the same.” This suggests that while the Shishuo still contains the story related to spirits, You ming lu had already existed independently. If the stories concerning spirits were separated and compiled as a separate book, as Ye Dehui supposes, why is it the case then that the same story could be found in both collections? It seems therefore risky to conclude that the two books were originally one.

As for the Xiaoshuo, it is difficult to gain a valid picture of the collection as a whole because only two tales from it have been found. The story about Du Yu becoming a snake included in Taiping guangji, which is attributed to the “Xiaoshuo of Mr. Liu” by the compiler of the encyclopaedia, is more similar to a tale from You ming lu, rather than one from Shishuo xinyu. This might be the reason why Zheng Wanqing included it as a tale from You ming lu in his collection. However, until we know for certain how the term “Xiaoshuo” mentioned in that title should be understood, it would be better, in my view, to leave the matter an open question.

It is interesting to view the way in which Zheng Wanqing deals with the tales that are attributed to Shishuo xinyu and yet cannot be found in the present version. Following Lu Xun’s example, he includes a few tales which are similar in content to the tales in You ming lu; at the same time, however, he places eleven other tales in the appendix. His additions in the text include:

1) “Du Yu” 杜預
2) “Fan hua luo” 飯化螺 (Food that Becomes Snails)
3) “Wei Faji” 威法濟
4) “Tiechui” 鐵錘 (Iron Hammer)
5) “Changshan baiyu” 常山白玉 (White Jade from Chang Mountain)

65 Zheng Wanqing, You ming lu 1.33. It is cited in Taiping yulan 388.3b as from Shishuo, and in Taiping guangji 456.3727 as from Mr. Liu’s Xiaoshuo.
66 Ibid., 2.49, cited in Taiping yulan 885.3b as from Shishuo.
67 Ibid., 3.95, cited in Taiping yulan 711.1b as from Shishuo.
68 Ibid., 6.190, cited in Taiping yulan 763.7a as from Shishuo.
69 Ibid., 6.190, cited in Taiping yulan 805.9a as from Shishuo.
If we compare these tales above with the tales that have been put in the appendix by Zheng, it seems that there is no difference between them. Below are the tales in the appendix:

6) “Dong wang ting” 東王亭
7) “Zheng Zichan” 鄭子產
8) “Xu Ganmu” 徐干木
9) “Longrou zuo” 龍肉鮓 (Dragon Meat)
10) “Dilu” 的顱
11) “Fangfeng gui” 防風鬼 (Ghost of Fangfeng)
12) “Chen Zhuang” 陳莊
13) “Cao Shuang” 曹爽
14) “Wang Ziqiao mu” 王子喬墓 (Wang Ziqiao’s Tomb)
15) “Zhang Heng Cai Yong” 張衡蔡邕
16) “Sun Hao” 孫皓

Almost all the stories in the appendix are typical supernatural stories. Obviously, it is inconsistent to include some of them in the collection of *You ming lu* while rejecting the others. It seems that we should leave the matter of these tales an open question as well. Therefore, I would simply list all of them up in the appendix.

In short, the relationship between the three collections remains unclear. Therefore, the problem of the tales attributed to *Shishuo* but not present in extant versions should be reserved for future consideration. Besides tale 257, I would suggest the elimination of tale 217, as well as the addition of “Ji Kang” and “Yang Hu” (from *Lei shuo*), and “Mu ke” (from *Gujin tushu jicheng*). Among those tales that are attributed to *Shishuo xinyu* yet are not contained in the present version, those texts (14–16 tales) that are similar in nature to *zhiguai* should be included in the appendix.

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70 Ibid., 6.196, cited in *Taiping yulan* 399.6b as from *Shishuo*.
71 Ibid., 6.196, cited in *Taiping yulan* 411.6b as from *Shishuo*.
72 Ibid., 6.197, cited in *Taiping yulan* 920.5b as from Liu Yiqing’s *Shishuo*.
73 Ibid., 6.197, cited in *Taiping yulan* 862.7b as from *Shishuo*.
74 Ibid., 6.198, cited in *Yiwen leiju* 93.1619 as from *Shishuo*.
75 Ibid., 6.198, cited in *Yiwen leiju* 44.782 as from *Shishuo*.
76 Ibid., 6.198, cited in *Taiping yulan* 981.1a as from *Shishuo*.
77 Ibid., 6.200, cited in *Bai Kong liutie* 3.23b as from *Shishuo*.
78 Ibid., 6.200, cited in *Taiping guangji* 229.1755 and *Shi ji* 13.354–355 as from *Shishuo*.
79 Ibid., 6.200, cited in *Xu Tanzhu* 續談助 (Congshu jicheng chubian edition), 4.81 as from *Shishuo*.
80 Ibid., 6.201, cited in *Bai Kong liutie* 3.23b (Siku quanshu edition) 3.23b as from *Shishuo*.