TEXTUALIZING DREAMS IN A LATE MING DREAM ENCYCLOPEDIA

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Abstract

My dissertation centers on the meaning of dreams as interpreted by literati in the late Ming (1368-1644), viewed through the lens of the 1636 encyclopedia *Forest of Dreams*. This thirty-four-juan tome is the largest extant Chinese dream encyclopedia and includes nearly 5,000 dream interpretations, twenty-five nightmare exorcism and incantation methods, and a series of explanatory charts and graphs that depict the formation of dreams within the body. *Forest of Dreams* not only presented information on dreams, but also offered public access to a toolkit of esoteric knowledge employed by anonymous savants, or dream interpreters. Through a text-centric study of *Forest of Dreams*, I convey the ways in which dreams were transformed from private acts into public knowledge.

First, by analyzing the contents and overarching organizational structure of *Forest of Dreams*, I offer insights into the assumptions its compilers held about dreams and about textual organization. Next, I analyze the motivations of the compilers and readers of *Forest of Dreams* and briefly address the question of audience and readership. Based on a reading of the encyclopedic section on dream exorcism, *Forest of Dreams* can also be simultaneously read as a scholarly endeavor to classify, systematize, and medicalize. I rethink the parameters of the term “medicalize,” pushing the category beyond the somatic to include the psychological, therapeutic, religious, and social. Finally, I illuminate the method of glyphomancy (the dissection of Chinese characters as used in dream interpretation), focusing on the shared, public knowledge of characters and the relationship between this shared knowledge and dream interpretation.

Throughout the dissertation, I make a distinction between dreams per se and written, recorded, or textualized dreams. I maintain that the experienced dream is inherently inaccessible and intangible, albeit with residual emotional after-effects upon waking. Because written dreams were consciously produced and constructed, they reveal what their recorders believed about dreams. These textualized dreams transcended the individual, becoming shared, social dreams. Reading through layers of dreams also uncovers the existence of dream interpretation.
practitioners and the interesting overlaps between highbrow and lowbrow knowledge in early modern China.
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Chapter 1: Writing Dreams, Translating Dreams

In the twentieth century, we began to de-mystify dreams, focusing on the measurable neurobiological impact of dreaming, especially on memory processing and consolidation. Scientific studies attest to the role of REM sleep (when dreaming occurs) in memory processing and consolidation, particularly in emotionally charged memories.\(^1\) Behavioral studies of sleep and learning in both animals and humans attest to the neurobiological and neurophysiological basis of sleep-dependent memory processing.

As early as two hundred years ago, David Hartley suggested that dreaming affects the strength of associative memory.\(^2\) Associative memory appears similar to the Chinese correspondences system in which ideas of nature, the state, the body, and all phenomena and things in the universe acted as metonyms for one another.\(^3\) However, while associations are often unexpected, variable, and personal in nature, a system arranges knowledge from individual to universal, from ephemeral to permanent, and from private to public. With the Chinese correspondences system, the associations were established, universalized, and therefore authoritative. Everything had a place in the system and there was a right and proper relationship between one thing and the next.

This dissertation addresses the systematization of dream knowledge in the late Ming, viewed through the lens of the 1636 encyclopedia, *An Explication of the Profundities in the

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\(^2\) David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty and His Expectations* (London: Johnson, 1791).

\(^3\) For more on the correspondences system in early Chinese philosophy, see Nathan Sivin, “State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries BC,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55, no. 1 (1995): 5-37. Sivin wrote that in early China, ideas of nature, the state, and the body were interdependent and interconnected, with each phenomenon or thing acting as a metonym for another. This so-called system of correspondences was laid out in the fourth century BCE in “The Great Plan” (*Hong fan* 洪範), a book in the *Classic of Ancient Documents* (*Shang shu* 尚書). “The Great Plan” set out a broad array of numerical categories, including what Sivin terms the five processes (*wu xing* 五 行). Each type of omen, each heavenly or earthly event or natural phenomenon was segregated and interpreted with the sole purpose of guiding the ruler. Disorder in the heavens paralleled disorder in the state and in the body; by the same token, order in the heavens reflected order in the state and in the body. For more on “The Great Plan,” see Michael Nylan, *The Shifting Center: The Original "Great Plan" and Later Readings* (St. Augustin: Nettetal, 1992).
Forest of Dreams (Meng lin xuan jie 夢林玄解; hereafter Forest of Dreams). This thirty-four-juan tome is the largest extant late Ming dream encyclopedia and includes nearly 5,000 dream interpretations, twenty-five nightmare exorcism methods and talismans, and a series of charts and graphs depicting dream formation.4 By looking at how the dreams within Forest of Dreams were written down, organized, categorized, explicated, translated, and interpreted, we in the twenty-first century can access the ways in which dreams were used by literati in this period of Chinese history. By literati, I refer to classically educated men who may or may not have sat or planned to sit for the official examinations, as well as land-holding gentry. From the pages of the encyclopedia, it is clear that so-called literati compilers were interested in the methods, practices, and practitioners of dream interpretation. The compilers of Forest of Dreams sought meaning in their lives through an examination of their dreams and the dreams of others.

In the chapters that follow, I highlight the ways in which late Ming literati compilers defined and bounded dreams in Forest of Dreams. I seek to answer three questions. What were dreams in the late Ming? How did late Ming literati use dreams and to what end? How were dreams universalized and rendered public?

Defining “Dreams” in the Late Ming

First, what were dreams? I translate “meng 夢” into English as “dream,” which the Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines as a “series of thoughts, images, and sensations occurring in the mind during sleep; a state of mind in which someone is not fully aware of their surroundings; a cherished hope or ideal; a fantasy; a wonderful or perfect person or thing.”5

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4 The Chinese term juan is often translated into English as “volume,” which is misleading, as there were multiple juan in one physically separate bound “book” of Forest of Dreams. Juan is an ambiguous unit of book division. Rather than translate this divisional term, I retain the pinyin transliteration. Late Ming books were commonly divided into a certain number of juan (冊), a term which connotes “roll” and derives from the time when the roll was the standard form for books. In general, printed books in this time period consisted of a number of separately-bound juans (冊), but books had their own internal divisions that either did or did not correspond with the physical divisions. Forest of Dreams is divided into thirty-four juan, which were physically bound in such a way as to keep subject divisions in the same physical unit. That is, a juan would include an entire section on dreams dealing with the Sun and Moon. If the contents of a particular subject matter were lengthy, a juan might include the first part of that subject matter (i.e., Sun and Moon, Part 1), but it was always clearly marked as such. Thus, a juan in Forest of Dreams did not cut off in the middle of a sentence.

However, the Oxford definition of “dream” oversimplifies and does not wholly reflect the late Ming understanding of dreams, in which the heart and other organs, rather than the brain alone, were also construed as the origins of dream activity. The Kangxi Dictionary (Kangxi zidian 康熙字典), first published in 1716, defines the word meng 夢 (dream) as follows: “The things and forms seen while sleeping.”

But, what exactly was a meng in the context of Forest of Dreams? There are four general prefaces to Forest of Dreams, all translated in my appendices. Based on my reading of these prefaces, as well as an analysis of the contents of the encyclopedia, meng refers to a broad range of non-waking phenomena, taking place during sleep. In his preface to the encyclopedia, primary compiler He Dongru 何棟如 (1572-1637) demonstrated that there is no straightforward definition of dreams. He wanted the reader to recognize that the term meng was not simple, but complicated. He wrote that dreams are both illusory and real, claiming that there was a fundamental and meaningful ambiguity between that which could be defined as “illusory” and that which could be defined as “real.” Although He conceded that what occurs in dreams is not the same as what occurs in the ordinary, experiential world, ultimately, He believed that a dream could and should be understood as potentially both illusory and real. There were dreams that reflect the waking world and dreams that do not. Aside from He’s brief, logical analysis of dreams at the beginning of his preface to Forest of Dreams, there was no other attempt to define the term in the remainder of the encyclopedia, nor in the remaining prefaces.

In Forest of Dreams, the frequent conjunction of the term meng with zhan (占; alternately translated into English as “to divine,” “to prognosticate,” or more generally as “to interpret”),

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6 對寐中所見事形也。Kangxi Dictionary (Kangxi zidian 康熙字典), 1890, s.v. “Meng 夢.”
7 Thus we understand that [dreams are] not not-illusory and not not-true; [dreams are] not not-true and not illusory, not not-illusory and not true. 是而知非非幻，非非真。非非真而不幻，非非幻而不真。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, in Xuxiu siku quan shu 續修四庫全書 子部 shu shu lei 術數類, Vol. 1063 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2002), 602. All citations are for the photographic reprint of the late Ming edition [1636] of Forest of Dreams housed in the Shanghai Lexicographical Library reprinted in Shanghai in 2002. The late Ming original published edition is punctuated. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. For a complete translation of He Dongru’s preface, please refer to the Appendix. I discuss the four general prefaces to Forest of Dreams in more detail in Chapter 3.
indicates a strong connection between the two. Primary compiler He Dongru’s preface to *Forest of Dreams* cites a claim in “The Treatise of Literature” chapter *The Han History* that “there are many interpretation techniques; that of dream interpretation is the most important.” In this dissertation, I translate the term *zhan* 䜷 loosely as “interpret,” and then, based on the context in which the word is used, seek to understand the connotations of the accompanying interpretations. In the encyclopedia, there often was an element of prognostication, of fortune-telling with implications for the future, but the basic act was still one of general interpretation. That is, I see “prognostication” as simply one type of interpretation. The dream is the private act that allows for the possibility of interpretation, which is both public and shared. *Zhan* 䜷, then, is not simply a personal interpretation, but becomes generalizable in its published and public context.

One purpose of *Forest of Dreams* was to reveal techniques and methods of dream interpretation. Thus, the concept of *meng* by itself in this particular printed context, although similar to the modern English connotations implied by the term “dream,” also implies interpretation and divination. The term *meng* included the meaning of “dream” as a series of thoughts or images occurring during sleep; additionally, it often implied a sense of the future, distant or near, real or imagined. Dream interpretations were not limited to the future. Some of the dream interpretations in *Forest of Dreams* also clarified the past or events unfolding in the here and now.

**Using Dreams in the Late Ming**

In the context of *Forest of Dreams*, dreams were a means not only to understand past, present, and future events, but also to understand the body and the way the body met the mind. The body was not conceived of as separate from its emotions. Dreams, then, promised to illuminate hidden connections between emotions and the body, revealing latent illness or potential *qi* blockage, both physical and spiritual.

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8 習占非一，而夢為大。 He Dongru, *Forest of Dreams*, 605.
My reading of *Forest of Dreams* reveals that the literati compilers wrote in terms of dreams to provide answers to purportedly unanswerable questions. They used dreams to reveal the future through interpretations. Dreams were described as auspicious or inauspicious and were used to offer instructions or injunctions to change present waking behavior. Additionally, dreams were medicalized and described as though dreams revealed something about the dreamer’s present or past state of mental, emotional, or physical health. Through dreams, unexpressed wishes and blocked emotions were rendered visible. In the Ming dynasty, many examination candidates paid visits to Wenchang temples (*Wenchang she* 文昌社) en route to take provincial or metropolitan examinations in larger cities.⁹ At these temples, candidates recorded dreams of both future successes and failures, and there are records of examination candidates having purportedly prophetic dreams, which purportedly later came true.¹⁰

As my study will show, dreams were important to literati in understanding or interpreting waking life, the past, and the future. The dream-related practices and dream narratives included in *Forest of Dreams* reflect the intimate connections between what might be termed waking reality and dreaming reality, invoking an ideal beyond daily mundanities while operating in the here-and-now, among the people who used and wrote about dreams. Dreams mattered to the people dreaming and recording their dreams; dreams mattered for understanding possible futures, for present and past events and experiences, and for health. Anonymous soothsayers used dreams as a popular interpretation tool, just as elites used dreams as a self-diagnostic gauge for general health and well-being.

*Forest of Dreams* shows that late Ming literati cared deeply about dreams. To its compilers, dreams offered ways of justifying career and life choices, a means to understand the present and predict the future, and a barometer of health. Dreams were credited as an integral and often determining factor in the quotidian and life choices made by the literati. In other words,

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dreams were tied up as part of a belief system; dreams were inextricably linked to fate and inevitability, about health, about reflecting a certain anxious state of mind or a certain as yet uncovered truth. An examination might be failed and the promise of a glorious official career lost. An illness might worsen, leading to death. Life was uncertain and dreams were a means to address this uncertainty and alleviate the associated worry. The literati used dreams to reveal what was to come in waking life.

Forest of Dreams reveals the compilers’ belief in the high degree of commensurability or correspondence between dreaming and waking knowledge. Waking and non-waking states were porous and connected. How did literati connect these states? Dreams were described as reflecting future waking realities; dream symbols relied on previously acquired conscious knowledge to unlock their meanings. For the literati compilers, it seems, life was but a dream and dreaming was an essential part of life. For example, the anti-nightmare talismans printed in Forest of Dreams intended for ingestion, wearing, or display during the day offered protection for sleeping and dreaming at night. Daily actions were thus construed as affecting dreams. Conversely, improved sleep or dreams reflected a concomitant improvement in non-dreamed life.

The very act of encyclopedic compilation was healing, or in modern parlance, therapeutic. Writing about dreams was an important part of how the literati compilers of Forest of Dreams fashioned themselves and rationalized their lives. The compilers domesticated dreams, creating a visible world of meaning surrounding invisible desires and fears. These late Ming compilers attempted to define the theoretical world of dreaming and the empirical validity of dream interpretation.

Rendering Dreams Public in the Late Ming

How were dreams rendered public? Dream lore was brought into the open and made public through the publication of this dream encyclopedia. Forest of Dreams represents technical literature, explicated and explained so that any literate reader might comprehend dreams and escape the ill effects of nightmares. The contents were essentially recorded translations of
dreamed content into written form, publicly available and accessible. Here, my focus is on the written transposition of dreams into published text.

I argue that *Forest of Dreams* presented not only systematic and organized information on dreams in a searchable format, but also a toolkit of heretofore-secret knowledge employed by omniscient, anonymous savants, or dream interpreters. As the title page to the work claimed, in part *Forest of Dreams* included an ancient, secret work on dreams; imparting this limited, secret knowledge to others via its publication demonstrated the power of the compilers. The literati compilers were essentially in partnership with the anonymous, omniscient stranger, who was always subliminally part of the text. *Forest of Dreams* bridges the highbrow with the lowbrow, the educated literati compilers with the soothsayers in possession of dream lore. Its doctrines and techniques extend the literatis’ domain beyond the realm of highbrow knowledge to the secret lore purportedly guarded for centuries by fringe savants.

Although I confine my analysis to a particular time period, I do not confine myself to a particular class or strata of Chinese society. Through this study, I hope to show that there was interest in dreams at all levels of late Ming society, including official classes, who were primarily interested in the methods and practitioners of dream interpretation. Interest in dreams was not a primarily elite or so-called popular phenomenon.

**Previous Scholarship on Forest of Dreams and Dreams**

To date, there are two non-Chinese language monographs dealing with *Forest of Dreams*. Michael Lackner studied the phenomenon of categorized dream interpretation in late Ming dream books (*meng shu 夢書*), in particular *Forest of Dreams*. Lackner analyzed *Forest of Dreams* for the existence of theoretic interpretive patterns, writing that each instance of dream interpretation was backed up by historical precedence and theoretical explanations. Lackner maintained that the division of dream interpretation examples into categories (*lei 類*) reflected a belief on the part of the compilers in causality. Lackner concluded that the final interpretation of

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a given dream was based less on an analysis of dream symbols (for example, the sun, the stars, or
birds), and more on the choice of interpretive pattern based on the categories contained within
the encyclopedia. That is, dreams could be interpreted on the basis of dream symbols, but also on
the basis of the time at which the dream occurred.12

Liu Wenying 刘文英 and Cao Tianyu 曹田玉 both co-authored and separately
introduced dreams in Chinese history in several Chinese language monographs. Although their
focus was not on Forest of Dreams or the late Ming dream encyclopedia as a genre per se, both
Liu and Cao offered introductory remarks about the compilers and contents of a variety of dream
books. In these works, Liu and Cao set forth a general history of Chinese views on dreams,
dream interpretation, and dream manuals, stressing the import of dreams in religious activities.13
Dreams were an integral part of early Chinese philosophy, religion, and medicine. Emperors,
kings, and rulers divined their political and individual futures through dreams.

A claim has been made that by the late Ming and early Qing, “the dynamic multiplicity of
dream beliefs and practice reached a peak of cultural creativity, inaugurating ... a ‘golden age’ of
Chinese dreaming, which can be seen in three interrelated areas: popular dream books,
incubation practices, and artistic creativity.”14 But it is difficult to justify calling the late Ming as
a golden age for Chinese dreaming because a dearth of extant sources from earlier time periods
precludes the possibility of comparison. That said, dreams were certainly a much-discussed topic

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12 There is a dissertation on Forest of Dreams, written by Dimtri Drettas. Dimitri Drettas, Le rêve mis en ordre. Les
traités onirologiques des Ming, à l’épreuve des traditions divinatoire, médicale et religieuse du rêve en Chine.
(Ph.D. Diss., École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2007). I wrote to Dimitri Drettas in July 2010 and asked if he would
be willing to share a copy of the dissertation. He responded that he was in the process of revising his dissertation
into a book and preferred not to share his dissertation. Dimitri Drettas also wrote a chapter in an edited volume on
dream-related texts originally found in Dunhuang and currently housed in the National Library in France and the
British Library. See Dimitri Drettas and Jean-Pierre Drege, “Oniromancie,” in Divination et société dans la Chine
13 See Liu Wenying 刘文英, Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo: Zhongguo gudai zongjiao zhexue he kexue de yige
cemian 夢的迷信与夢的探索：中国古代宗教哲学和科学的一个侧面 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue
chubanshe, 1989). See also Liu Wenying 刘文英 and Cao Tianyu 曹田玉, Meng yu Zhongguo wenhua 梦与中国文
化 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2003).
Press, 2008), 68.
during the Ming. The number of published dream-related fictional accounts and plays rose dramatically when compared with other time periods.\(^{15}\) The commercial and private publishing boom that began in the mid-Ming disseminated a broader range of affordable books, including a number of dream-related works.\(^{16}\) Writing about dreams in hopes of attaining self-understanding was neither unexpected nor unusual.\(^{17}\) Although there was a peak in dream-related publications during this time period, it was part of an ongoing interest in dreams that continued into the Qing (1644-1911). *Forest of Dreams* fits into this strong contemporary interest in the late Ming of recording and interpreting dreams.

Although there are some similarities to the late Ming context, Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic theories are inadequate to understanding late Ming dreams. Freud based his psychoanalytic theories on “the verbal statements of a few hundred middle-class Viennese neurotics.”\(^{18}\) For Freud, dreams were disguised fulfillments of repressed wishes, keys to unlocking the underground recesses of the dreamer’s buried and previously unacknowledged past. Freud collected and analyzed the dreams of a select group of Viennese in one-on-one consultation sessions. In the case of *Forest of Dreams*, the compilers also collected reports of dreams of the imperial family (emperors and their mothers) and elite members of society, such as examination candidates. However, the collected dreams in *Forest of Dreams* were written records and not recorded directly by the compilers from oral sources. Although some dreams in

\(^{15}\) See Zhuang Yifu, ed. 莊一拂, *Gudian xiqu cunmu huikao* 古典戲曲存目彙考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982). See also Liao Tengye 廖藤葉, *Zhongguo meng xi yanjiu* 中國夢戲研究 (Taipei: Xueshe chubanshe, 2000).

\(^{16}\) For a general discussion on dreams in Chinese history, see Xiong Daolin 熊道麟, *Xian qin meng wenhua tanwei* 先秦夢文化探微 (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 2004); Li Hanbin 李漢濱, *Taiping guangji de meng yanjiu* 〈太平廣記〉的夢研究 (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 2004); Liu Wenying 刘文英, *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* 梦的迷信与梦的探索 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1993).


Forest of Dreams might be categorized as wish fulfillment dreams (for example: dreams of ascending the throne or recovering from illness), others were used to frame ambitions, provide insights into the future, or offer concrete answers to life decisions. Jung is also not highly relevant to my purposes since I am not attempting to distill an overarching dream theory from the pages of Forest of Dreams or searching for proof for the existence of a shared collective unconscious, from which dream symbols may or may not originate.19

Although I address the issue of translation in my work and provide translations of the prefaces in the appendices, I do not translate Forest of Dreams in its entirety. Richard Strassberg provided a beautiful translation of another late Ming dream encyclopedia (one quoted in Forest of Dreams), which serves as an English introduction to the language, contents, and style common to this genre. In addition to translating Chen Shiyuan’s dream encyclopedia, Strassberg also surveyed the history of Chinese dream lore, proceeding through Shang period oracle bones and dream interpretation manuals dating from the Warring States period, to Han rhapsodies (fu 赋), Six Dynasties tales of the strange (zhiguai 誌怪), Buddhist and Daoist theorists and finally ending with thinkers from the Song and early Ming. Strassberg maintained that for Chen, dreams were real, important, and worthy of investigation; and that for Chen, dream interpretation was not a mechanical process, but depended on the insight of the interpreter.20

Like Strassberg, I am interested in recovering one system of knowledge or world-view about dreams in the late Ming. The late Ming literati used dreams to structure the world and themselves in that world. Recapturing this world-view of dreams necessitates first deciphering and then re-contextualizing the dream interpretation techniques, anti-nightmare talismans, prefaces, and organizational structure of Forest of Dreams. To this end, I center my work on

aspects of written records: Chinese characters as manipulated in dream interpretation, inscribed anti-nightmare talismans, the compilers’ self-justificatory prefaces, and the organizational structure of the entire work. Throughout the dissertation, I make a distinction between dreams and written or recorded dreams. I maintain that dreamed dreams are inherently inaccessible and intangible, albeit with residual emotional after-effects upon waking. Because recorded dreams are consciously produced, constructed, and translated, they reveal how their recorders used dreams to make sense of cultural and social realities.

Despite being outsiders of both time and place, we can nonetheless gain access to late Ming literati use of dreams by reading their dream records. The encyclopedia’s written dreams transcended the individual, becoming shared, publicly accessible dreams. This implies an assumption similar (but not identical) to C.G. Jung’s claims that archetypal symbols are accessible to a broad, dreaming public. To Jung, certain dreams transcended the individual and tapped into the collective unconscious, a part of the unconscious mind derived from ancestral, shared knowledge common to all. In Forest of Dreams, the public written sharing of dream examples offered a repository from which common knowledge about dreams could be drawn, but it was consciously, rather than unconsciously done.

I build upon the idea that dreams were written about as if they affected people’s lives. I do this in part by showing that it was because of the stated need to fathom dreams and the meaning of dreams that Forest of Dreams was compiled. The literati compilers of Forest of Dreams ascribed a motivating and important influence in their lives to dreams. Indeed, the compilers asserted that they had finally figured out how dreams fit into their lives and wished to share this knowledge with others who might also be capable of understanding. The compilers used dreams not only to justify their compiling, printing and publishing endeavor, but also apparently for major life decisions. Dreams thus expressed a certain form of knowledge, which was accessed, interpreted, manipulated, conventionalized and expressed in writing.

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Judith Zeitlin analyzed the five hundred collected stories in Pu Songling’s (1640-1715) *Tales of the Strange (Liao zhai zhi yi 聊齋誌異)*, linking the stories to burgeoning popular and literati interest in dreams during the late Ming and Qing. Indeed, Zeitlin maintained that works on dreams (including prognostication manuals, dream encyclopedias, treatises on dreams, and fiction) “were…valued as a legitimate source of human knowledge during the Ming and well into the Qing.” In one chapter, Zeitlin focused on the tales that blurred illusion and reality. The dreams in these collected stories detailed strange and (often) erotic episodes that ended with real results or effects on either the dreamer or the world in which the dreamer lived.

The specific topic of dreams offered literati authors poetic license to focus on internal, personal matters, as well as inter-personal affairs. I look at public relationships built through writing about dreams. Whereas other scholars have examined dreams by studying personal *bijì* or at the use of dreams in literature, I turn to a published dream encyclopedia. The literati compilers used *Forest of Dreams* both to transcend the individual and to extend dreams into the public realm, organizing dreams into public knowledge. Encyclopedias offer a window into the times, an understanding of how things were ordered and organized. This encyclopedia provides a glimpse at the rationalization of the meaning of dreams.

**Textualization of Dreams**

My dissertation explores different aspects of the textualization of dreams in the late Ming. I take the term textual broadly to include all written forms, from woodblock print characters to graphs to illustrations of anti-nightmare talismans. I address what happens when the personal, ephemeral, and inherently inaccessible is transposed into a public written form, given narrative structure, and categorized in an encyclopedia. It is in the act of translation or mediation that dreams surpass the individual and become generalizable, with a shared applicability. In particular, I highlight the dichotomies between: 1) private and public; 2) dreamer and compiler; and 3) text and toolkit.

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I distinguish between dreams and dreams in textual form. Dreams are inherently personal and ephemeral. How do the two relate? Many are dreamed and then forgotten upon awakening. Some are retold later, perhaps to family members, friends, strangers, or fortune-tellers. This retelling is often preceded by a mental rehearsal or an attempt to remember the dream. Other dreams are recorded in written form by hand—sometimes right upon awakening and other times after a period of time has elapsed. A written version of a dream results from the consciously recalled translation of a dreamed dream. Other written versions are invented, imagined, or corrected, perhaps even constructed ad hoc to prove a particular interpretation correct or to eliminate any disagreements. Once a dream is either retold or written, it moves beyond the level of individual into a public realm, where the toolkit operates.

Dreams, including those dreams recorded and ordered within the pages of this encyclopedia, were and are invented, exchanged, composed, and recorded by people. Texts as they exist now are not free of the context in which they were first created. Each version of a dream, whether oral or written, is not independent or detachable from the context in which it was first dreamed or produced in writing, but arose under certain social, political, and cultural conditions. The dream records in Forest of Dreams were at the end of a chain of translated transmissions initially rooted in informal discourse, rendered invisible by the layers of text. These layers begin with the most accessible, the text of Forest of Dreams itself, and follows through to the extant written sources from which the dream records were culled and eventually to the un-recoverable dreams themselves. The compilers of Forest of Dreams collected and transmitted narrative dream records already circulating in textual form.

Translating Dreams

Through a text-centric study of Forest of Dreams, I convey the ways in which dreams were translated through writing from private acts to public knowledge. Forest of Dreams partially comprises previously published encyclopedias and recorded dreams. The compilers of Forest of Dreams chose which sources to include, then edited and organized the contents. The work thus represents a layering of multiple textual translations, taken from historical works and
organized thematically. First, there is the implicit translation from a dreamed dream to an external written form of the dream. That is, a historical figure, perhaps an emperor-to-be or a hopeful examination candidate, invented either ad hoc by the encyclopedic compilers of *Forest of Dreams* or a “real” historical figure had a dream. Upon awakening, this historical dreamer remembered the dream and related it orally to others who remembered, revised and recorded it. Or, perhaps the dreamer recorded the dream in writing. Later, that dream was chosen for inclusion in the publication of a particular printed work, either a dynastic history or a work on dreams. At this point, the dream underwent another translation as it was further revised, expanded, or truncated and subsequently carved into woodblocks and printed. In the Ming, later editors or compilers further revised or edited these written dreams for inclusion in *Forest of Dreams*.

At each level of translation, editors imbued the dreams with cultural meaning or uncovered hidden cultural meaning within the dream. Reading through these layers in *Forest of Dreams* reveals a late Ming dream interpreters’ toolkit and simultaneously illuminates the assumed shared knowledge about dream interpretation, nightmare exorcism, and, more generally, the conventional meaning behind dreams.

**Visual Culture**

My approach treats the visual representations of dreams as a translation of dreamed visual experiences into written form. Previous scholarship on visual culture of the Ming has focused on the relationship between image and society, taking the physical or material object (whether pictorial, sculptural or architectural) as the starting point for understanding historicized visuality related to dreams “visual” factors.\(^{23}\) There is the visual nature of dreaming itself. Most

\(^{23}\) For example, Patricia Berger examined the Buddhist influences on the Qing view of rulership, underscoring the importance of image manipulation in court rhetoric directed at Buddhist allies in inner Asia. The sources Berger considered are the Buddhist painting, sculpture, and interior decorative objects Qing court artists produced for the empire. These artists employed a wide range of visual styles (Chinese, Tibetan, Nepalese, and Baroque), highlighting the ways in which both overt and covert meaning were placed into the works that were intended as vehicles of imperial support rather than works of art in and of themselves. See Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003). Craig Clunas explored some of the ways in which things were regarded in China at the end of the Ming dynasty, focusing in particular on objects
dreams constitute images or pictures. Then, there is the visual aspect of the act of textually transcribing a dream. With this type of visuality, a dreamer might remember certain images in a dream and string these images together in narrative form.

My dealings with the visual differ from those centering on actual images or concrete, physical objects. I focus not on the visual aspects of dreams, either as they are being dreamed or as they are recalled aloud later as scenes or images, but on the textualization of visual dreams into Chinese characters. Glyphomancy (the dissection of Chinese characters as used in interpretation) implies a textually specific and manipulable type of visuality. Here, I define “visual” as a fluid category, one that is only loosely bound by rules of the written language. In the context of the dream records in the encyclopedia, visuality refers to a learned ability to imagine an object in the mind’s eye, rather than an innate ability to perceive with the eyes. At least in the case of glyphomancy, this refers to the ability of a person to take pictorial elements comprising a Chinese character and mentally manipulate said elements.

**Dream Narratives in *Forest of Dreams***

By dream narrative, I refer to any written act that relates the events of a dream arranged or re-arranged in temporal sequence. I define the records contained within this encyclopedia as narratives, as having at least one main character (a dreamer) or often several (a dreamer and a dream interpreter), and an outcome to the dream. Person X had a dream, Person Y interpreted the dream, and the interpretation came true, at some point in the future.

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Lothar Ledderose explained how Chinese artists used complex systems of mass production to assemble artistic objects from standardized parts or modules. Ledderose wrote of the Chinese idea that the universe comprises ten thousand categories of objects. In explaining lacquerware and porcelain, Ledderose maintained that Chinese artists, unlike their Western counterparts, did not seek to reproduce individual objects, but rather hoped to emulate nature’s ability to produce limitless numbers of objects bound together categorically. Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 2000).
For example, in one dream narrative contained within *Forest of Dreams*, there was a man named Rectifier Zhang who dreamed he was a pregnant woman.\(^ {24} \) According to the explanation in Chen Shiyuan’s *Guidelines to Dreams and Dream Interpretation*, Rectifier Zhang was ill at the time of the dream and worried that his dream was inauspicious. The dream interpreter, Ye Guangyuan, reassured Zhang that he would recover on the day *renchen* 壬辰. Ye Guangyuan went on to explain that the Chinese characters *renchen* 壬辰, with the added radical for woman (*nü* 女) means “pregnant” (*renshen* 妊娠). Ye asserted this was an auspicious blessing, because of the promise of a child. The entry continues, claiming that Zhang indeed recovered from his illness on a *renchen* 壬辰 day.\(^ {25} \)

The sequential structure reflects editorial narration, the ordering and re-ordering of imprecise dream recollections with scattered and inconsistent pieces of what were originally verbal recollections, and various visual, auditory, and kinesthetic images. The compilers structured, organized, integrated, and apprehended a specific set of events through the act of written recording and narration. Thus, the compilers of *Forest of Dreams*, as well as the previous compilers and authors of the texts upon which they relied, reshaped or edited the records to fit their agendas. I stress that these dream narratives were not invented anew in a social vacuum, but rather re-contextualized and re-translated and put into renewed circulation with the publication of *Forest of Dreams*.

What is useful and interesting about these dream narratives is not whether they were true or false or even whether they were invented ad hoc. A study of this encyclopedia, its compilers, its readers, and its contents demonstrates what certain groups of people in this time period (and not merely the individuals who compiled the encyclopedia) understood to be the case about

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\(^ {24} \) 張司直夢為懷孕婦人。He Dongru, vol. 1064, 329.

\(^ {25} \) 張司直疾病夢懷孕，甚惑之，葉光遠曰：此去遇壬辰日當愈。懷孕妊娠也。有大福在也。壬辰日果愈。Quoted in Chen Shiyuan’s *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Interpretation* (Meng zhan yi zhi 夢占逸旨) *Xiexiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 *zibu* 子部 *shushulei* 術數類 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 439. All citations for Chen Shiyuan’s work are for the photographic reprint published in 1683. The original text is unpunctuated. Unless otherwise noted, all the punctuation notations and translations are my own.
dreams, or, at least what they wanted others to know about dreams. Historical records are clearer on the compilers of *Forest of Dreams* than on its audience or readers.

That said, as narrative studies scholars have argued, the role of the audience is crucial to the compiling process; although less visible in historical sources, audience participation is no less real and no less generative of texts.\textsuperscript{26} The role of reader, imagined, reconstructed, or otherwise is important in understanding the social function of a given text and its reception. The historical life of any given published work involves the active participation of its audience. Indeed, “in the triangle of author, work, and public the last is no passive part, no chain of mere reactions, but rather itself an energy formative of history.”\textsuperscript{27}

But what about the historical dreamers, the ones whose supposed dreams were collected, translated, and included as part of the encyclopedic compilation? And what about the historical dream interpreters, the ones who supposedly interpreted the dreams of the aforementioned historical actors? Here, I allow the fictional elements to become part of the historical analysis.\textsuperscript{28} The text of *Forest of Dreams* included fictional aspects. Whether or not the dreamers did or did not really exist, whether or not their dreams were related as wholly as remembered, whether or not the dream interpreters did or did not really exist, whether or not their interpretations subsequently came true or not—none of that matters for the purposes of understanding the content and purported function of *Forest of Dreams*. The fact that these dream narratives were included in the encyclopedia indicates that many people agreed upon both the form and content, fictional or otherwise. An analysis of these dream narratives allows us in the twenty-first century to address the question of why dreams were perceived and written about in this way.

\textsuperscript{26} For example, see Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, “Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories,” *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 213-136.


\textsuperscript{28} In her study of sixteenth-century French pardon letters, Natalie Zemon Davis points out that although her sources do not necessarily provide an objective truth of events, they do allow for a glimpse into the ways in which commoners told stories and which aspects of stories were considered important for inclusion. Davis’ analysis allowed for an interweaving of fiction and fact, as she considered the influence of legal and professional officers on the pardon letters, as well as the reflection of cultural values in the letters. See Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon-Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).
What was the function of *Forest of Dreams*? I argue that, although we can only access the historical records of the compilers, the work nonetheless had a public or social function, extending beyond the small circle of its literati compilers. This text was an essential vehicle for the construction of dreams. I examine the social and cultural processes by which dreams were constructed and transmitted in textual form, the ideological purposes served by the textualization of dreams, as well as the ways in which dreams were received, responded to, and reworked. The making and subsequent circulation of dream texts such as *Forest of Dreams* was a key way in which dreams were created and sustained.

**Why Publish *Forest of Dreams*?**

Why would literati publish previously composed writings on dreams in an encyclopedia? Here, I first consider the implications of the published, printed format in relation to print culture and then focus on the specific genre of the encyclopedia. Publications on dreams of all genres were printed during the late imperial period, from the Song through the Ming. The ubiquity and variety of published writing on dreams highlights the richness and importance of dreams in general as well as during this particular time period. A study on the textual nature of dreams offers an understanding of late Ming social anxieties and a culturally influenced visual imagination.29

*Forest of Dreams* was a privately printed encyclopedia. Although it must have existed in manuscript form at one point, the compilers decided to print and publish this work on dreams. Here, I briefly address some of the reasons why works on dreams may have been printed and published rather than simply circulated as a written manuscript. The late Ming witnessed significant changes in both printing and publication. An increase in the quantity of, price range of, and audience for printed materials occurred during the late sixteenth century. Innovations in printing technology (color printing, the improvement of woodblock prints, the use of copper movable type, and the production of woodcut facsimiles of earlier editions) as well as the spread

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29 For example, see Larissa Heinrich, *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body Between China and the West* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2008).
of markets expanded the potential distribution of printed books. Publishing centers emerged in
the Yangzi valley and in Fujian. These publishers produced a wide variety of books (such as
cheap editions of the Confucian classics, novels, poetry, as well as works on dreams) for an
increasingly wide audience extending well beyond the scholarly literati elite, including
examination failures.

Certainly printed output varied greatly in both content and topic. Neither economic
change nor innovations in printing technology adequately explain why a market emerged for
works on certain subjects but not others, however. Obviously, the impact of both printing and
publishing was determined and shaped by the motivations of the people involved (producers and
consumer alike). Less obviously, printed works themselves represented new forms of cultural
capital; possession of books demonstrated social status and some families even established
personal publishing companies and printed volumes glorifying clan members or close friends.
Commercial publishing made books one of the many new commodities money could buy. In
order to compete for consumers, published works had to appeal to readers. Thus, profit-seeking
publishing companies and, to a lesser extent, authors, both packaged and provided books that
catered to the new reading public; publishers, authors, and readers alike shaped the content of
books. In short, content, genre, and motivating factors mattered, as did the time period.

The increase in publication of reference and daily-use encyclopedias grew out of a certain
intellectual approach to knowledge. Since Song times, the scholarly approach to natural studies
and practical knowledge popularized first by Zhu Xi is reflected in the creation of encyclopedias,
compendia, and collectanea. These types of works aimed to reunify classical knowledge toward

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30 Ōki Yasushi 大木康 documented a significant increase in printed titles per year beginning in the Jiajing 嘉靖 and
Longqing 隆慶 reigns through to the end of the Ming dynasty. Ōki researched booklists and catalogs; he
demonstrated the ways in which advances in print technology and an increase in publishing houses accompanied an
increased volume in publishing, including fiction and practical works. See Ōki Yasushi, Minmatsu kōnan ni okeru
shuppan bunka no kenkyū 明末江南における出版文化の研究 (Hiroshima Daigaku bungakubu kiyō dai gojū toku
shō gō 廣島大學文學部紀念第50巻特輯號 1991), 139-142. See also Ōki Yasushi, Minmatsu Kōnan no shuppan
bunka 明末江南の出版文化 (Tokyō Kenbun Shuppan, 2004).
31 Zhu Xi was an influential Song dynasty Confucian scholar whose philosophical interpretations of the classics
were canonized and taught in China and Japan. For more on Ming dynasty compendia and encyclopedias, see
a moral purpose. To this end, compilers textualized knowledge, of things, events, and phenomena, bounding the inchoate with the written word. Topics difficult to define or explain were defined and explained through writing. During the Ming, the production of compendia spread widely across both physical and social space, no longer limited to an audience of examination candidates. Existing frameworks of written knowledge were expanded to include publications on such topics as agriculture, medicine, legal issues, managing public or political affairs, dream interpretation, and astrology.

Jiangnan literati, all of whom had connections to the Yangzi river delta region, compiled *Forest of Dreams*. Primary compiler He Dongru 何棟如 hailed from Jiangning 江寧 (present-day Nanjing). Although secondary compiler Chen Shiyuan 陳士元 was originally from Huguang province, he attended the National University in Nanjing. The other listed compiler, Zhang Fengyi 張鳳翼 hailed from Changzhou 長洲 (present-day Suzhou 蘇州). These three men will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter of my dissertation.

Here, I argue that the literati compilers of *Forest of Dreams* formed connections through printing and publishing this work. As other scholars have pointed out, the rise of the money economy in the late Ming changed societal connections. Publishing and reading linked like-minded fellow readers to a shared, imagined world peopled with both fictional and historical characters.\(^\text{32}\)

The printing and publication of *Forest of Dreams* was a private venture, overseen by one primary compiler, He Dongru, but is impossible to prove He Dongru was the primary compiler; credit is also given to Chen Shiyuan. Regardless, based on the date *Forest of Dreams* was printed, it is likely that the final textual intervention was He’s.

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\(^{32}\) Dorothy Ko offered insights into the ways in which specific literary genres flourished during the late imperial period, focusing on networks formed by literate women in the Jiangnan region. Reading novels offered women role models and connection to fellow readers. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).
In the work, the compilers promoted themselves and their editorial efforts as tied to a lineage of famous dream interpreters. The participants in this dream encyclopedia project used dreams as a metaphor to understand themselves as individuals. Related to this may have been one feature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Chinese society: the ideas of the prominence of the heart and of the sagely qualities of everyman, propagated by Wang Yangming and his followers who focused on elevating the status of the individual and of ordinary people. This may have been a factor in compelling people to look inward and express this internalization of agency in writing.

As mentioned earlier, although writing on dreams or dream theory was certainly not a new phenomenon, publication on dreams as well as on a myriad of other topics peaked during the late imperial period. The late Ming witnessed the rise of personal testimonials and autobiographical impulses in forms such as diaries (riji 日記), scattered writings (biji 筆記),

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33 Peter Bol also focused on the relationship between social context and printed subject matter. In two of his articles, Bol noted shifts from national to local focus first in the Song and again in the late Ming. Localist orientation by elite families translated into high value for those who aspired to greater, even national, importance. Bol wrote that by the late 11th and early 12th centuries, the inability of bureaucratic families to maintain their national status through progeny in government positions induced them to seek power by strengthening local ties. Promoting the building and funding of county and prefectoral schools also encouraged elite families to identify more strongly with local, rather than national, interests. Bol saw this shift as giving rise to the increased publication of local gazetteers. These local gazetteers gave places diversity and history that lasted beyond the rise and fall of dynasties. As the country was perceived as a collection of localities, local interests superseded and simultaneously intertwined with interests in gentry circles. See Peter Bol, “The ‘Localist Turn’ and ‘Local Identity’ in Later Imperial China,” Late Imperial China 24, No. 2 (2003): 1-50. See also Peter Bol, “The Rise of Local History: History Geography, and Culture in Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 61, No. 1 (June 2001): 37-76.


35 For more on dreams in earlier time periods, see Liu Wenying 刘文英 (1989, 1993, 2003), Xiong Daolin 熊道麟 (2004), and Lee Han-Bin 李漢濱 (2004). These scholars give no explanation for the late imperial peak in fascination with dreams. In his works on dreams, Liu Wenying provided an overview of dream interpretation methods as well as a discussion of extant dream books dating from the oracle bones, though the work centered on dreams in the Song and later. Liu’s works read as introductions to dream-related themes in Chinese history. Lee Han-Bin’s 2004 monograph focused on the place of dreams in the Extensive Records of the Taiping Era (Taiping Guangji 太平廣記), writing on its Buddhist and Daoist influences, as well as detailing the categorization of dream types contained within the encyclopedia. For dreams in the Ming, see Lynn Struve, “Dreaming and Self-search during the Ming Collapse: The Xue Xiemeng Biji 薛譜孟筆記, 1642-1646” Toung Pao 93 (2007): 159-192. Struve wrote on a scholar-official whose dream journal indicated his increasing disillusionment with Daoism and conversion to Buddhism during the fall of the Ming.
family histories (jiapu 家譜), and autobiographies (zizhuan 自傳). The general acceptance of emotional experience and the emphasis on the individual as part of Wang Yangming 王陽明 philosophy encouraged late Ming scholars to look within themselves for answers. As Willard Peterson wrote in his work on Fang Yizhi, “in Ming thought the emphasis is depicted as having been on enlightenment, on thinking, on the transcendent, on introspection… the dominant fashion was for men to look within their minds to discover guides to action.”

During the Ming, the number of dream-related fictional accounts and plays rose dramatically. Dreams exemplify this broader cultural turn. Indeed, a study of dreams can fill out our picture of intellectual history in the Ming. I argue that in *Forest of Dreams*, the focus was not simply on using dreams to attain self-understanding, but rather to fit dreams into a larger social context, one that was not just about individual experience. I explore the ways in which dreams were generalized from the particular.

**Dreams and Healing**

In my work, I rethink the medicalization of dreams, exploring the connections between dreams and healing, broadly defined to what might include physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental health. These latter terms are twenty-first century approximations of concepts that overlapped and blended together in the late Ming. Delving further into dreams promises to illuminate the ways in which late imperial medical discourse dealt with dreams.

*Forest of Dreams* contains what modern scholars might term Buddhist and Daoist influences. Certainly, historiographical literature often explores the relationship between dreams and religion. *Forest of Dreams* is not an explicitly religious text, but the work contains anti-nightmare incantations and talismanic images used in what have been identified by modern

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37 A subset of scholarship on Japanese Buddhism includes forays into dreams and their relationship to religious visions. In one such work, George Tanabe, Jr. focuses on the extant dream diary of Myoe Shonin (1173-1232). Tanabe places dreams and visions at the center of Buddhist monk Myoe Shonin’s relationship to Kegon Buddhism. For Myoe, Buddhist doctrine served as explications for dreams. George Tanabe, Jr., *Myoe, the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
scholars as contemporary Daoist sources. Additionally, the preface to the section on anti-nightmare talismans in *Forest of Dreams* evokes what might be categorized as Buddhist language. Scholars have warned against portraying Daoism and Buddhism as single, reified religions with specific, unchanging traditions. The tendency to bifurcate these and other religions into categories of “popular religion” and implied “other” obfuscates historicized practices and beliefs. There is also an assumption that these religions were somehow unchanging and universal, with literati (another fraught category) or educated elite rejecting so-called “popular” or “superstitious” practices and beliefs.\(^{38}\)

In “Dreaming and Self-search during the Ming Collapse: The *Xue Xiemeng Biji*, 1642-1646,” Lynn Struve explored the recorded dreams of Xue Cai (1598-1665), a literatus-turned-Buddhist monk. Xue Cai’s dreams reflected the psychological effects of the socio-political turmoil wrought by the Ming collapse. For Xue Cai, writing about dreams offered a means to understand and even justify his retreat into religion. As Struve wrote, “Xue’s [dream] journal draws our attention to…the spiritual needs of Ming *jinshen*, among whom alienation from governmental affairs and feelings of despair, failure, worthlessness, and self-blame were very common as their dynasty came to an end.”\(^{39}\)

Angela Leung’s study on leprosy in China highlights the role Buddhist and Daoist religion played in ascribing meaning to the disease and in offering hope or solace to sufferers. In early medieval religious texts, leprosy was portrayed as curable through religious faith or ritual cures. At the same time, the disease was also construed as originating through moral causes. The concept of disease transmission was not purely medical, but was closely linked to ideas of retribution and social norm violation.

For many major medieval physicians, immoral behavior and its subsequent and inevitable retribution were described as the major cause of illness. Notably, moral transgressions were

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perceived not to be an individual problem alone; the negative consequences of wrongdoing were also transmissible to relatives, affiliates, and even people living in the same area. This notion of collective responsibility and shared, inescapable fate was expressed in early Daoist classics. Leung emphasized that the religious aspects of disease contraction and treatment “lurked in the popular mentality and emerged in individual and collective social practices throughout the imperial period.” The moral strength and fiber of diseased individuals was tested through the disease itself. Healing was documented as being achieved through a demonstration of faith or piety.

In Buddhism, chants or incantations were incorporated seamlessly into medical practice and texts as therapeutic regimes. The recitation of sutras or prayers both healed and allowed repentance. Often, dreams during a bout of illness revealed both the cause of the illness and its potential cure. For Daoists as well, participation in religious and ascetic practices was healing. Talismans and rituals aimed at stopping disease were both religious and medical in nature, underscoring the porous boundary between the literate medical scholar and the itinerant ritual healer. Healing and redemption were also possible through Confucian acts of virtue, such as acts demonstrating extreme loyalty within the social order (examples include acts of loyalty of wife to husband or of servant to master).

It is important to consider the moralizing aspect of dreams in the late imperial period. If illness was potentially retribution for unrepented former wrongdoing, so, too, were bad dreams or nightmares. In *Forest of Dreams*, many negative dreams or nightmares were presented as warnings to wrongdoers, harbingers of future illness. I should stress that not all dreams were negative or certain indications of illness; rather, the notion of the religious issue of retribution was fundamentally and inextricably linked to illness. Alleviation of anxiety over the future, present, and past lay at the heart of *Forest of Dreams*.

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The literati compilers of *Forest of Dreams* categorized and organized what I term dream “case studies,” offering readers the opportunity to construct a safe haven from nightmares, a textual world constructed of auspicious dreams. Here, the dream “case studies” (both the recorded dream examples as well as the personal dreams of compilers included in the prefaces) in *Forest of Dreams* echo the case studies so prevalent in published late Ming medical literature.\(^{41}\)

Although case studies were included in Chinese medical writings of earlier time periods, the late Ming witnessed a flourishing of the genre, and a concomitant rise in publications focusing on the specific and the individual. Contemporary scholars who research the history of Chinese medicine have noted the apparent rise in numbers of individually authored and published medical case studies (*yì'ān* 醫案) from the sixteenth century.\(^{42}\) Additionally, the publication of case studies and accompanying treatment etiology to benefit public knowledge was a Ming innovation.

Generally speaking, medical case studies during the Ming “emphasized the individuality of each illness event” rather than focusing solely on theoretical models. In case studies, the individual, the specific illness, and the treatment reigned, indicating a shift in interpretations of illness.\(^{43}\) Collected medical cases highlighted physicians’ successes. Most collections included cases in which the physician recommended an unorthodox or less commonly used treatment, which proved efficacious and thus demonstrated the superiority of the proffered treatment method (or, perhaps more to the point, demonstrated the superiority of the physician in question). In this sense, medical case collections were equivalent to advertisements. In theory, both

\(^{41}\) See Fabien Simonis, “Mad Acts, Mad Speech, and Mad People in Late Imperial Chinese Law and Medicine” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2010).


\(^{43}\) Christopher Cullen, 294.
previous (and potential patients) were reminded of the impressive skills of a particular physician by case statement compilations.

The text of *Forest of Dreams* empowered the compilers and potential readers, giving them the language and tools necessary to take fate into their own hands, to hold evil influences at bay and even to destroy nightmare-causing forces within and without. Dreams were also conceived of as potential indicators of health, and medical texts dating back to the *Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor* often provided diagnoses as well as cures based on dream analysis. For example, *Forest of Dreams* contributor Zhang Fengyi’s 張鳴翼 (1527-1613) dream purportedly led him to retire from the hopes of an official life to a “healthier” life of writing operas in his hometown. Zhang fell ill after an unsuccessful attempt to pass the examination in 1565 (altogether, he failed four times). In 1567, Zhang apparently dreamed Lu Dongbin 呂洞賓 took his pulse and gave him a white pill, which helped him recover from his lengthy illness.44

Michel Strickmann has also explored the relationship between dreams and healing and considered the relationship between sexual demons, dreams and dream-related disorders in fourth through seventh century medical texts. Dreams often provided diagnoses (and even cures) for physical and emotional ailments, particularly demonic dream-possession. Strickmann noted that treatment of dream-related disorders was the provenance of Daoist healers, rather than literati physicians per se. During the Jin and Yuan dynasties, there apparently existed an uneasy rivalry between medical physicians and exorcist shamans or healers.45 The topic of erotic demon dreams has been explored by other scholars as well. Chen Hsiu-fen focused on female emotions and the medicalization of dream disorders in late imperial Chinese casebooks and medical literature, which linked female madness and disease to sexual frustration.46

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44 Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in late Imperial China*, 328. For more on Zhang Fengyi and his 1585 dream encyclopedia *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation* (Meng zhan lei kao 夢占類考), please see chapter 3.
Beginning in the Song, the government sponsored editions of medical treatises and formularies, as well as medical activities. The Song court fostered medical education in the capital and local cities. Additionally, the Imperial Medical Service (Tai yi ju 太醫局) founded public pharmacies to dispense treatments during epidemics. Perhaps partly inspired by the court’s promotion of medical education and treatment, partly faced with limited career options, or prompted by personal experience (the death of close family members or friends from illness), many literati turned to the medical profession. The trends begun in the Song continued through the Ming.

By the Ming and Qing dynasties, there was no mention of shamans or exorcists in medical literature; instead, medical writers contrasted their own approach with that taken by other physicians. Simonis attributed this shift in part to changing medical discourse. Late imperial physicians offered not only medical explanations for symptoms previously attributed to possession, but also efficacious treatment regimens to be used in lieu of calling upon the services of shamans or Daoist healers. Based on my reading of late imperial medical literature, it seems that physicians either 1) denied the existence of ghosts and spirits; 2) medicalized ghosts by re-appropriating properties under the name qi; 3) believed in ghost or spirit possession, but assumed related ailments were treatable with some form of medical intervention; or 4) believed in karma and fate and that ghosts or spirits could and did purposely harm humans. These views were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Also, it is important to note that presumably Ming and Qing physicians would not necessarily write of patients being cured by non-physician means. As Simonis wrote, the Ming dynasty “was not a period of strong epistemological breaks in medicine, but one in which physicians re-orchestrated earlier approaches to form new doctrinal and therapeutic emphases.” Still, the Ming witnessed the rise of Huizhou as a center of medical publication and theorizing and the concomitant rise in intertextuality of the medical tradition.

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47 Simonis, 59-62.
48 Simonis, 136.
49 Grant.
Overview of Chapters 2 through 5

Chapters 2 to 5 approach tacit, written knowledge about dreams at four different layers or levels. In chapter 2, begin at the outer level of the source itself, *Forest of Dreams*. I analyze the contents and overarching organizational structure of *Forest of Dreams*, offering insights into the assumptions the compilers held about dreams generally and about textual organization specifically. The organizational structure follows that of a correspondences system, in which each dream symbol acts as a metonym for an object or phenomenon in the universe. This organizational structure of the encyclopedia reveals a philosophy on dreams and dream interpretation that is both definite and indefinite, finite and infinite. Although at first glance this seems contradictory, such a philosophy offers certainty about dreams while leaving room to accommodate uncertainty in interpretations.

In Chapter 3, I read *Forest of Dreams* as an intimate portrayal of the individuals involved in categorizing and organizing the dreams. The content and tone of the compilers’ prefaces to this encyclopedia reveal their rationale for publishing on dreams, particularly when read in combination with biographical information. I use the compilers to focus in on a specific time and place, as well as to underscore the import of individual perceptions on the interpretation of dreams and the ways in which individuals imbued their dreams and the dreams of others with meaning. The compilers justified personal and career setbacks through the publication of their dreams as well as the collected dreams of others. In this chapter I emphasize the symbiosis between the compilers and the dreamers. The compilers ascribed meaning to the recorded dreams of others, arranging, ordering and categorizing these dreams. I also address the issue of audience and readership. Who might have read *Forest of Dreams*? And how did these readers approach *Forest of Dreams*?

In Chapter 4, I turn to the treatment of nightmares and inauspicious dreams in *Forest of Dreams*. I analyze the images of talismans contained within “Exorcising Dreams” (*meng rang* 夢禳) in the twenty-eighth juan of *Forest of Dreams*. Along with the talismanic images, in this section of *Forest of Dreams*, compilers also presented techniques and incantations aimed either
generally at ensuring a good night’s sleep, or specifically at preventing nightmare recurrence as well as ameliorating the deleterious effects of nightmares on the health of the dreamer. The very act of inscribing the talismans was efficacious. Many talismans were to be publicly displayed in the family compound, either hung on the walls or worn about the nightmare sufferer’s body. This indicates the involvement of a larger community as a part of the process of the written sharing of dreams, nightmares or otherwise. Indeed, it seems that public sharing was assumed to help bring about healing, at least in a general sense. This chapter emphasizes the goal not just of having good and auspicious dreams, but also of sleeping well.

In the fifth chapter, I illuminate the method of glyphomancy. Although this technique is never explicitly explained or introduced in the text, its near ubiquity in the dream examples in the encyclopedia underscores its import as a dream interpretation tool. As I uncover in my reading of the text, dream interpreters translated dream content into visual form and subsequently manipulated these forms to arrive at hidden or uncovered meanings. Tacit knowledge of character components taken from dream symbols helped to render dreams more tangible and more easily understood. Glyphomancy is one example of implicit or tacit dream interpretation knowledge.

In the end, it seems that Forest of Dreams was a tool, which was to be manipulated and imbued with meaning. Dreams were interpretable, but the meaning was left to the interpreter to decide.
Chapter 2: The Order of Dreams

This chapter focuses on the organizational pattern and textual characteristics of *Forest of Dreams*, revealing the intended function of the text for a literati audience. My reading of the contents and structure offers insights into the assumptions about dreams and about textual organization. The organizational structure reveals a philosophy of dreams and dream interpretation that is both definite and indefinite. Although this seems contradictory at first glance, such a philosophy simultaneously offers certainty about dreams while leaving room to accommodate uncertainty in interpretation. It also suggests a patterning of dreams for a classically literate audience.

The work was intended to be comprehensive. Indeed, the sheer breadth and volume of information contained within *Forest of Dreams* reveals this ambition of all-inclusiveness. There are thirty-four *juan*, and the first section alone includes nearly 5,000 dream examples. Additionally, the work was problem- and solution-oriented. Thus, this was not simply a repository of dream-related lore; rather, I argue that the work was an interpreter’s toolkit. *Forest of Dreams* collected and presented the symbolic keys to unpacking and interpreting dreams. As I discuss later in the chapter, these pieces of assembled interpretive knowledge were largely positive in nature. In a society of both political and individual uncertainty, the role of the *Forest of Dreams* was perhaps one of alleviating worry or anxiety and providing a measure of hope for a rosier future, or a measure of hope for coming to terms with a less-than-rosy past, as knowledge on dreams could also be used flexibly. Dreamers and would-be dream interpreters alike could find justification within the pages of the work for positive or auspicious dream interpretations. Presumably, readers could apply the toolkit themselves.

*Forest of Dreams* as an Encyclopedia

*Forest of Dreams* incorporated a broad spectrum of texts, genres, and literary modes drawn from multiple sources. The compilers adapted, appropriated, and incorporated materials on dreams. Below, I briefly explore the genre of *Forest of Dreams*. *Forest of Dreams* belies the
apparent simplicity of many textual categories; as such, it seems likely there was an audience for each of the categories.

*Forest of Dreams* can be read as a scholarly endeavor to categorize. It can also be considered a medical handbook (as I discuss in Chapter Four), a collection of tales of the strange (based upon a reading the dream examples collected within the pages of the encyclopedia as short narratives), and a moralistic treatise (based on my reading of the prefaces). For example, in the preface to the section entitled “Dream Origins,” He Dongru wrote: “I propose the work be called a Buddhist scripture.”

I refer to *Forest of Dreams* as an encyclopedia because of its classification system and because it has a table of contents for each of the sections contained within its pages. As an encyclopedia, the primary function was one of organizing and presenting information about dreams for a classically literate audience.

As mentioned above, the work was also practical in nature. Readers and dreamers with problems or questions about dreams could find pertinent information in the encyclopedia and use the toolkit to help solve these questions. For one, the work offered nearly 5,000 dream interpretation examples from which readers could glean the methods to correct dream interpretation. In addition to cataloging dream examples from the Dynastic histories and other works, *Forest of Dreams* also provided practical solutions for self-healing in another section of the encyclopedia.

Thus, this particular encyclopedia not only offered compilers and readers one means to comprehend dreams, but also the methods necessary to escape nightmares. In a broad sense, this work might be considered a medical case study collection or self-help encyclopedia.

I should state here that Chinese titles do not automatically identify a given work as being an encyclopedia or compendia, as opposed to another genre. Rather, it is the existence of an explicit and recognizable classification system that determines whether or not a work might be categorized as either an encyclopedia or compendia. Encyclopedias and compendia were not

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50 倩自釋典。He Dongru, vol. 1064, 364.
51 I deal with this issue in more detail in Chapter 4, which focuses on the nightmare exorcist incantations and talismans presented in the encyclopedia.
usually repositories of new information or knowledge; most collected previously written or even previously published works. That said, such works could be commentative and add so-called “new” pieces of information or things that had been excluded in earlier publications or manuscripts.

Here, I would like to offer some further explanation for my choice of the term “encyclopedia” as opposed to “compendia,” which is also used for works of similar length and organizational structure, but which lack a searchable index or table of contents. I categorize *Forest of Dreams* as an encyclopedia because it has a table of contents. I define “leishu (encyclopedia)” as an edited work for reference purposes that collected information based on a particular classification scheme and contained a table of contents. This feature contributed to the user-friendliness of encyclopedias. Classically literate readers could potentially find relevant information quickly and easily.

In contrast, “compendia” or “collectanea” (*congshu* 叢書) refer to collections of separate works or groups of writings that were topically organized, but included no separate index or classification scheme. Thus, although information was available, it was perhaps not as easily sifted through as in encyclopedias. Often, entire encyclopedias were contained within compendia. Here, I should note that I categorize *Forest of Dreams* as an encyclopedia despite its containing previously published and subsequently revised dream works, because of its organizational scheme and presence of multiple tables of contents.

For many late imperial authors, editors, and compilers, encyclopedias provided one means to order the world, to make sense out of chaos, and to organize knowledge and information. I argue in Chapter 3 that one of the reasons the compilers published this work was to provide an

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52 There were, of course, exceptions. A famous example is Shen Gua’s 沈括 (1031-1095) *Brush Talks from a Dream Brook* (*Meng xi bi tan* 夢溪筆談). This work represented Shen’s personal accumulation of knowledge and thoughts on a range of subjects, some technical. See Zuo Ya, “Capricious Destiny: Shen Gua (1031–1085) and His Age” (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2011).

order for dreams, and by extension, provide order for their lives and the disordered lives of would-be readers.

The publication and printing of what we call encyclopedias has a long history in China. Although translated term (“encyclopedia”) is the same, the nature of the works changed during different time periods. The increase in publication of reference and daily-use encyclopedias in the Ming grew in part out of a certain intellectual approach to knowledge. As Benjamin Elman writes in his article, “Collecting and Classifying: Ming Dynasty Compendia and Encyclopedias (Leishu),” the scholarly approach to natural studies and practical knowledge popularized first by Zhu Xi is reflected in the creation of encyclopedias, compendia, and collectanea beginning in the Song and continuing throughout the late imperial period. These types of works aimed to reunify classical knowledge toward a moral purpose.

During the Ming, the production of compendia spread widely across both physical and social space, no longer limited to an audience of examination candidates. These encyclopedias and compendia were certainly not the first of their type in China; these publications often drew upon earlier book collections, used by literati in preparation for civil examinations or for culling together source materials necessary to fulfill official duties. Existing frameworks of knowledge were expanded to include publications on such far-flung topics as agriculture, medicine, dream interpretation, and astrology.

In general, in the late Ming, a growing emphasis was placed upon ancient classical learning as the cornerstone of literati scholarship. Late Ming reference encyclopedias and compendia transmitted a specific epistemological approach for categorizing things, events, and phenomena. Literati maintained that the content of the classical tradition of the golden age of Chinese history could be revived through research and analysis. This hard-gained knowledge was then printed in encyclopedias. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, information on things, events, affairs, and even anomalies was all displayed textually.\(^5\) \textit{Forest of Dreams}, with its emphasis on the

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textual and visual representation of knowledge on dreams, was no different from its counterparts. In *Forest of Dreams* as in other encyclopedias, the textualization of knowledge (or the textual representation of information) visually demonstrated its significance.

**Contents of Forest of Dreams**

A thorough description of the encyclopedia’s contents reveals its function as well as the function of other contemporary works on dreams. The contents as well as the manner or order in which the contents were presented illuminate the assumptions the compilers held about the way in which such a work should be organized. Thus, the organizational principles of *Forest of Dreams* are not merely interesting at a descriptive level, but also at an analytical level. Although it is nearly impossible to determine the actual readership of *Forest of Dreams*, based on both the physical and textual characteristics of the encyclopedia, it is relatively safe to assume the work was intended for the library collections of well-educated literati.

In the table below, I delineate the contents of *Forest of Dreams*, based on the photographic reprint of the 1636 copy housed in the Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House Library (*Shanghai cishu chubanshe tushuguan*上海辭書出版社圖書館). For a complete translation of the title page, the four general prefaces, the entirety of the main table of contents, and the publication history, please refer to the Appendices.

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According to its “Reader’s Guide,” *Forest of Dreams* was partly based on a Song text entitled *The Mysterious Strategies for Fulfilling Dreams* (*Yuan meng mi ce* 圓夢秘 策), which is not extant separately from *Forest of Dreams*. This latter work apparently represented the continued editing of an original work on dreams authored by Ge Hong (葛洪) (284-364) during
the Jin dynasty (265-240). Ge Hong was a well-known Daoist, who wrote [Book of the] Master who Embraces Simplicity (Bao pu zi 抱朴子), which includes talismans and techniques for immortality elixirs. Due to his upright qualities and compassion for the poor and sick, Ge Hong was bestowed with the title “Daoist Heavenly Master” (Tian shi zhi 天師之職) and honored as a deity.

Ge Hong’s was not the only name used to give authority and credibility to Forest of Dreams. Another work purportedly contained within Forest of Dreams is Shao Yong’s (1011-1077) A Work on Explication of the Profundities of Dreams (Meng shu xuan jie 夢書玄解), which is not extant. Shao Yong (1011–1077) was a Song Dynasty philosopher, cosmologist, poet and historian. The Classic of Changes (Yijing 易經) was central to Shao’s philosophy.

A third work purportedly contained within Forest of Dreams is Yong Yijian’s (ca. Tang Dynasty) A Compilation of Dream Exorcisms (Meng rang jie bian 夢禳解編), also not extant separately from Forest of Dreams.

Three extant works predating Forest of Dreams were also named and included in some form in Forest of Dreams. The first is Chen Shiyuan’s (1516-1595) Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination (Meng zhan yi zhi 夢占逸旨). According to his preface to this work, Chen Shiyuan’s Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination (Meng zhan yi zhi 夢占逸旨, in twenty-six juan 卷) was first published in 1562. The work was later included as one of ten titles in A Separate Anthology of Returning Clouds (Guiyun bieji 歸雲別集), published in 1583. A truncated version of Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination, which included the main

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55 This work originates in the Jingyou reign of the Song dynasty. Its name is The Mysterious Strategies for Fulfilling Dreams and it is the continued editing of Ge Hong’s work of the Jin dynasty. He Dongru, vol. 1063, 607.

56 For more on Ge Hong, see Robert Ford Campany, To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong’s Traditions of Divine Transcendants (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

57 As Anne Birdwhistell wrote, what set Shao Yong apart from other Southern Song scholars was his reliance on the knowledge of symbols of reality, based on his understanding of the Classic of Changes. To Shao, numbers were one way of representing the abstract order of the universe, relying upon a system of associational or correlative thinking. For more on Shao Yong’s place in the Song philosophical tradition and his epistemological approach to metaphilosophical issues, see Anne D. Birdwhistell, Transition to Neo-Confucianism: Shao Yung on Knowledge and Symbols of Reality (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989).
text without quotations from the annotated sources, is contained within the “Dream Origins” section of *Forest of Dreams*. The complete *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination* was included in an 1850 collectanea and again in a 1939 anthology. The earliest extant edition of this work was printed during the Wanli reign (1573-1619), and is housed in the rare book collection of the Academia Sinica’s Fu Sinian 傅斯年 library.\(^{58}\) The title is also listed separately from *Forest of Dreams* in the *Four Treasuries Imperial Library Catalog* (*Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目).

*Forest of Dreams* also contains the preface to Zhang Fengyi’s 張鳯翼 (1527-1613) *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretations* (*Meng zhan lei kao* 夢占類考). According to Zhang’s preface to this work, *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretations* was first published in 1585.\(^{59}\) Finally, the appendix to *Forest of Dreams* includes excerpts from *An Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi*, initially compiled by Gu Dingchen (1453-1540) and completed by others.\(^{60}\) The earliest extant published edition of *An Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi* dates from 1607.

The physical characteristics of *Forest of Dreams* indicate that it was aimed at a highbrow audience. *Forest of Dreams* is 22.8 centimeters long and 14 centimeters wide and each page in the body (excluding the prefaces and table of contents) has 10 lines with 24 characters per line. Because of its size, *Forest of Dreams* was most likely meant for personal library purchase rather than for daily use by itinerant interpreters. Thus, this was not a traveling work intended for quick dream consultations, but perhaps portions or sections were loaned to friends for perusal.

Each page of the encyclopedia, carrying printed text on one side only, was folded with the text on the outside, and placed on top of the previous page. The assembled pages were then sewn

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\(^{58}\) Chen Shiyuan 陳士元, *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Interpretation* (*Meng zhan yi zhi* 夢占逸旨), yuan kan ben 原刊本, 4 ce 册, Ming Jiajing jian 明嘉靖間 [1562].


\(^{60}\) Gu Dingchen 顧鼎臣 and Gu Zuxun 顧詮訓, comp. *Ming zhuangyuan tu kao* 明狀元圖考 [*An Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi*]. 1607 edition.
together, with the stitches passing through the blank margins next to the loose edges, so that the sewn edges formed the spine and the fold formed the edges of the pages.

The quality of ink and paper used indicate that *Forest of Dreams* was not a cheaply printed manual. On the half-pages containing the general prefaces, there were five lines of text containing spaces for eleven characters. See Figure 1 for a partial image of the first page of the first preface, attributed to He Dongru.

![Figure 1: Partial image of the first page of the first preface to *Forest of Dreams*](image)

On the half-pages contained in the remainder of the encyclopedia, there were ten vertical lines per half page. Each of the ten lines contained spaces for twenty-two characters (although this space was not always utilized). See Figure 2 for an image taken from the first *juan* of the encyclopedia.
The quality of the carving, ink, and paper all separate the work from smaller dream manuals of the same time period. The fifteen extant library and archive copies of Forest of Dreams known to me are all contained in at least two large carrying cases.

In my analysis of the contents, I will begin with the title page, extant in three of the fifteen copies (one at the Shanghai Library, one at the Sonkeikaku Archives, and one at the National Archives in Japan). For reference, I include a copy of an image of the title page, a full transcription, and translation of the title page in Appendix 1. The title page of Forest of Dreams claimed that the work was based upon a recovered dream classic found by primary compiler He Dongru. This supposed original dream classic was attributed to Daoist master Ge Hong as The
Secret Book of the Sagely Master Ge Hong. The introductory blurb gives a glowing advertisement for Forest of Dreams:

As for dream interpretation books, the illustrated classics were burned during the Qin. [Dream interpretation] skills and techniques were dismissed by Han Ru scholars, so that the few fragments that remained transmitted false truths. But this [book here], Mr. He Jiongqing (Noble Brightness) [He Dongru] took from his family library collection. The secret book of Jin Dynasty sage Ge Hong, [He Dongru] carefully consulted and edited and combined into a complete book. If a worthy person has a dream, it must have an interpretation. If there is an interpretation, there must be proof [of said interpretation]. This is truly the early sages’ mystery of fate and a golden reflector for those capable of understanding. This is truly a work that the informed few will cherish.

Forest of Dreams was published in Nanjing by Weng Shaolong (翁少龍). The listed price the entire encyclopedia is three taels of silver. Based on listed early Chongzhen reign prices of foodstuffs, the cost of Forest of Dreams was the equivalent of thirty liters of white rice. Although the encyclopedia’s total cost was likely prohibitive for lower-class workers, there did exist a culture of book and manuscript lending and circulation. It was also likely that the encyclopedia could be purchased in sections, effectively lowering the price. There are fifteen complete copies of Forest of Dreams housed in libraries and archives, which indicate the work was perhaps usually purchased in full; however, it is possible there were portions elsewhere which have either been since destroyed or misplaced.

As primary compiler He Dongru claimed in his preface, Forest of Dreams was based upon an original work (yuan ben 原本) by Daoist master Ge Hong. Because primary compiler

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61 每部奇聖翁秘本。There are two extant title pages of Forest of Dreams. One is housed in the Shanghai Library in the PRC and the other is housed at the Sonkeikaku Archives in Tokyo. My translation is based upon the copy in the Sonkeikaku Archives, which is the more legible of the two extant title pages.

62 少書一書，圖經既昔于秦，術業復廢于漢儒，致真詫罕睹，殘本訛傳。茲者，何況誌先生出家藏，購葛仙翁秘本，嚴加摹訂，彙集成書。俾賢者有一夢，必有一占，有一占，必有一驗，誠先聖之玄機，高明之金鑑也。具眼珍之。Forest of Dreams, Title page.

63 每部千銀三百兩 Forest of Dreams, Title page. For information on late imperial Chinese prices, see Kishimoto Mio Shindai Chūgoku no bukka to keizai hendō 清代中國の物価と経済変動 (Tokyo: Kenbun Shuppan, 1997).

64 For these figures, see Guo Ziyin, “Ming dai shuji chuban yanjiu 明代書籍出版研究 [Research on Ming Book Publishing],” (Ph.D. diss, Chenggong University, 2002), 103.
He Dongru attributed partial authorial credit to Ge Hong, *Forest of Dreams* was later dismissed as a forgery by Qing scholars, which reflects the deprecatory attitude toward Song scholarship during the Qing. Issues of authorial attribution or misattribution aside, I argue that He Dongru used Ge Hong’s name to lend both authority and credibility to the work. According to the table of contents, Shao Yong first edited (zuan ji 纂輯) what was titled *Forest of Dreams* in the Ming. Chen Shiyuan completed additional editing (zeng shan 增删). He Dongru’s preface dates this compilation to 1636. Attributions to earlier works simply provided a historical precedent.

**Structural Divisions in *Forest of Dreams***

*Forest of Dreams* comprises four sections of unequal length. The first section is called “Dream Interpretation” (Meng zhan 夢占), the second is “Dream Exorcism” (Meng rang 夢禳), the third is “Dream Origins” (Meng yuan 夢原), and the fourth is “Outward Manifestation of Dreams” (Meng zheng 夢徵). The section entitled “Dream Interpretations” contains twenty-six *juan*; the following section, “Dream Exorcism,” is two *juan*. “Dream Origins” is one *juan* and “Outward Manifestations of Dreams” consists of five *juan*. The entire encyclopedia contains four general prefaces as well as separate introductory prefaces for “Dream Exorcism,” “Dream Origins,” and “Outward Manifestation of Dreams.”

The first general preface is attributed to He Dongru, and was supposedly written in 1636. Sun Shi purportedly wrote the second general preface in 1036 for Shao Yong’s aforementioned *A Work on Explication of the Profundities of Dreams*. The third general preface dates from Zhang Fengyi’s 1585 preface to *Classified Studies on Dream Interpretation*. Chen Shiyuan is credited with writing the fourth and final general preface for *Forest of Dreams* in 1564.

In the following portion of the chapter, I describe and analyze the sections in the order in which they appeared in the encyclopedia, with a focus on the first section. Based upon the organizational schema, the four sections of the encyclopedia present two interacting sides of a dream interpretation philosophy. On the one hand, dreams are presented as definite, with specific rules for interpretations. On the other hand, dreams are also presented as indefinite, and open to flexible interpretations. The duality of the dream philosophy evinced in *Forest of Dreams* is
reflected in the organization and classification of dreams in the four sections of the encyclopedia, as well as in He Dongru’s general preface.

The information within the first and fourth sections (“Dream Interpretation” and “Outward Manifestation of Dreams”) is organized according to a correspondence system, with dream interpretations or dream examples presented in specific categories, arranged from large- to small-scale items or phenomena. Here, dreams are organized and classified in a definite manner; a specific dream symbol is given and is followed by its corresponding interpretation. The second and third sections (“Dream Exorcism” and “Dream Origins”) present dreams and their interpretations as indefinite, and open to interpretation. Below, I discuss “Dream Interpretation” and “The Outward Manifestation of Dreams” together and then move to consider “Dream Exorcism” and “Dream Origins.”

**Dream Interpretation 夢占 and Outward Manifestation of Dreams 夢徵**

In the first and longest section of the encyclopedia as well as in the fourth and final section, the editors and compilers of *Forest of Dreams* sought to organize dreams according to one understanding of the cosmological world order. The overarching organizational scheme of the first section of the encyclopedia roughly follows a correspondence system, linking celestial, earthly, state, and bodily phenomena together. These systems reflect and resonate with one another.

In using this type of organizational system, the literati compilers consciously strove to apply multiple levels of meaning to each and every item and phenomena contained within the encyclopedia. Each item represents an interpretation, a future probability. This format lists dream symbols along with their corresponding interpretations. The layout and style of the first section of the encyclopedia are typical of dream interpretation manuals.65 The physical layout of the first

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65 One example is *The Treasured Way to Dreams* (夢珍門 Meng zhen men) in Yu Xiangdou (余象斗 fl. 1596), pub. *San tai wan yong zhen zong* 三台萬用正宗, eds. Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, Sakade Yoshihiro 坂出祥伸, and Ogawa Yūichi 小川陽一, *Chūgoku nichiyō ruishō shūsei* 中国日用類書集成, vol. 3 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2000).
section of *Forest of Dreams* reveals the predictive aspirations of the text. The myriad things and phenomenon in the universe were grouped, listed, and interpreted, which is significant because the compilers assumed that these things and phenomena could be organized and interpreted. Dreams involving these things and phenomena were interpretable.

Now, I will turn to the dream symbol categories contained in this first section of the encyclopedia. “Dream Interpretation” arranges dream symbols from large- to small-scale categories, moving from celestial phenomena all the way down to curios. Compilers organized the universe of dream symbols from without to within. Each category represented one essential part of the universe.

The first section of the encyclopedia recreated the universe in textual form—from the creation of heaven and earth to the propagation of people and animals; from the affairs of people to the equipment and equipages they used; from the clothing people wore to the food they consumed. The order of the categories indicates the way in which all the phenomena and things within the universe were arranged. I delineate the categories in Appendix 6.

Each category received approximately equal coverage. Thus, no one category of dreams was more or less important than any other category. That said, the total number of entries per *juan* varied. The fourth *juan*, on “Persons and Things,” contains the most entries at 371. The *juan* with the least number of entries (87) is the tenth, “State Affairs.” The explanations for each of the entries in “State Affairs” are actually about three times as long as those for the explications in the entries for other *juan*, however. Thus, the number of pages per *juan* is roughly the same.

The breadth of the encyclopedia is apparent from counting the number of entries. It is also clear that of the types of interpretations, more weight is placed on the positive or auspicious dreams. A total of 4,796 separate entries on dream symbols are listed in “Dream Interpretation.” Corresponding interpretations are listed under each symbol. The interpretations differentiated the auspicious dreams from the inauspicious ones.

In *Forest of Dreams*, there are a total of seventeen different categories of dream interpretations: 1) supremely auspicious (*tai ji* 太吉); 2) originally auspicious (*yuan ji* 元吉); 3)
extremely auspicious (da ji 大吉); 4) sagely auspicious (shang ren ji 上人吉); 5) highly auspicious (shang ji 上吉); 6) beneficially auspicious (li ji 利吉); 7) purely auspicious (zhen ji 貞吉); 8) auspicious (ji 吉); 9) greatly beneficial (da li 大利); 10) purely beneficial (zhen li 貞利); 11) beneficial (li 利); 12) purely auspicious and not inauspicious (zhen ji fou xiong 貞吉凶); 13) not inauspicious (fou xiong 否凶); 14) not beneficial (bu li 不利); 15) inauspicious (xiong 凶); 16) extremely inauspicious (da xiong 大凶); and 17) no interpretation (in these instances, a blank space was left directly following the symbols). Of these, it is notable that only four of the seventeen interpretations were used to designate negative or inauspicious dreams. The first twelve listed above were all descriptors for positive or auspicious (or at least neutral) dreams.

The breakdown of numbers of each of the listed dream interpretations further reveals the flexible bent of the encyclopedia. Of the 4,796 total entries in the first section of the encyclopedia, 1,776 had no listed interpretation and were not given a general classification of as “auspicious” or “inauspicious.” That said, the explanations of these unclassified dreams offered lengthy explanations. For example, in the third juan (“Geography”), one entry read as follows:

**Sleeping on top of the ground:** The interpretation says: “This dream is an omen of peace, tranquility, happiness, and joy. If a man dreams this, he will attain a wife. If a woman dreams this, she will become pregnant. If a scholar dreams this, he will promptly attain a rank. If a common person dreams this, he will attain happiness. If a sick person dreams this, he must be protected [against illness].”

There are only two entries interpreted as being “supremely auspicious”; one interpreted as “originally auspicious”; 556 interpreted as “extremely auspicious”; one entry apiece as “sagely,” “highly,” and “beneficially auspicious”; 113 “purely auspicious” entries; 1,449 “auspicious” entries, two “greatly beneficial” entries; one “purely beneficial” entry; three “beneficial” entries; 313 “purely auspicious and not inauspicious” entries; 24 “not inauspicious”

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entries; nine “not beneficial” entries; 498 “inauspicious” entries; and 46 “extremely inauspicious” entries. At first glance, the numbers seem to indicate a greater amount of negative dream symbols; however, this is not the case. Indeed, the opposite is true. Below, I present a tabular representation of the dream interpretations and the number of instances each interpretation occurs in the first section of the encyclopedia.67

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supremely auspicious (tai ji 太吉)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originally auspicious (yuan ji 元吉)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely auspicious (da ji 大吉)</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagely auspicious (shang ren ji 上人吉)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly auspicious (shang ji 上吉)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficially auspicious (li ji 利吉)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purely auspicious (zhen ji 貞吉)</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auspicious (ji 吉)</td>
<td>1,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatly beneficial (da li 大利)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purely beneficial (zhen li 貞利)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial (li 利)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purely auspicious and not inauspicious (zhen ji fou xiong 貞吉否凶)</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not inauspicious (fou xiong 否凶)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not beneficial (bu li 不利)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inauspicious (xiong 凶)</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67 I totaled the positive (or auspicious) dream interpretations in this section of the encyclopedia. To arrive at this positive (or auspicious) tally, I excluded the following interpretations from the total: 1) not inauspicious (fou xiong 否凶); 2) not beneficial (bu li 不利); 3) inauspicious (xiong 凶); 4) extremely inauspicious (da xiong 大凶); and 5) no interpretation. The total of positive dream interpretations in the encyclopedia is 2,443. The total number of negative dream interpretations is 553. For this tally, I added the entry numbers for three types of interpretations: 1) not beneficial (bu li 不利); 2) inauspicious (xiong 凶); and 3) extremely inauspicious (da xiong 大凶).
Based on these numbers, it is apparent that *Forest of Dreams* offered a positive spin on dream interpretations. Although there were a number of dreams without an interpretation given, only 553 of the dream symbols divined in the encyclopedia’s first section were given a negative explanation. Thus, the entries given in this dream encyclopedia read as largely positive or at least neutral and open to positive interpretation.

In this section of the encyclopedia, brief explanations or explications followed each dream symbol. For example, the very first entry in the first section of “Dream Interpretation” read as follows: **Heaven and earth unite** (*tian di xiang he* 天地相合): extremely auspicious (*da ji* 大吉). The given interpretation is then briefly explicated in six lines of text. The first part of the explication reads: “When heaven and earth come together, the hexagram ‘tai’ results. For those who dream this, rulers and ministers will get along and both of their parents will be peaceful.” The explications do not include specific examples; famous dreamers and their recorded dreams are included in a later section of the encyclopedia. The dream symbols and corresponding interpretations in this first section are generalizable.

The final three *juan* in this section include visually represented dream interpretation aids and methods in the form of either charts or graphs. The information contained in these three *juan* offered readers a graphical explanation for the bodily experience of dreaming. The twenty-fourth *juan* contains twenty graphical explications and visual depictions of dreams attributed to “Long Willow Graphs” (*chang liu tu* 長柳圖), which may be divided into two types. The first type depicts the relationship between auspicious and inauspicious dreams and the five organs (*wu zang* 五臟) and includes such paired graphs as “An Auspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of Dreams by the Five Spirits” (*Wu shen fu meng ji tu shuo* 五神傳夢吉圖說) along with its counterpart “An Inauspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of
Dreams by the Five Spirits” (*Wu shen fu meng xiong tu shuo* 五神傳夢凶圖說). The second type of graph depicts the influence of both yin and yang *qi* on dream formation and includes such graphs as “A Graphical Explanation of the Emission of Dreams at the Peak of Yang Qi” (陽氣盛極發夢圖說) along with its counterpart “A Graphical Explanation of the Emission of Dreams at the Peak of Yin Qi” (陰氣盛極發夢圖說). This *juan* also includes charts listing the items and phenomena associated with each of the five organs.

The twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth *juan* present “Gan De’s Seasonal Charts of Fortune and Misfortune” (*Gande shiling ganzhi xiuju tu* 甘德時令干支休咎圖). Each of these symbols had a different implication during a particular time of year. In the twenty-fifth *juan*, the columns represent dreams experienced during each of the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter), the solstices and equinoxes, and particular days. The rows represent specific symbols, which are divided into groups of four and presented in the following order: 1) the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars; 2) wind, thunder, rain, and snow; 3) clouds, fog, frost, and dew; 4) earth, mountains, water, and roads; 5) rice fields, walled gardens, bridges, and walled cities; 6) spring, summer, autumn, and winter; 7) leaders, parents, teachers, and siblings; and finally 8) spouses, sons and grandsons, family dependents, and neighbors. See Figure 3 for an image of the first page of the twenty-fifth *juan*.

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68 Gan De was a Chinese astronomer and astrologer who flourished during the Warring States period (480-221 BCE). Along with two other astronomers, Gan De is credited with authoring *Astronomical Star Observations* (*Tianwen xingzhan* 天文星占) and recorded the motion of Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus in their orbits. Fragments of this work were recorded in sixth-century star manuals. The work was associated with divination, portent analyses, and official predictions. See Peng Yoke Ho, *Li, Qi, and Shu: an Introduction to Science and Civilization in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1985).
In the twenty-sixth *juan*, just as in the twenty-fifth, the columns represent dreams experienced during each of the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter), the solstices and equinoxes, and particular days. The rows represent specific symbols, which are divided into groups of four and presented in the following order: 1) headgear, upper garments, lower garments, and footwear; 2) buildings, rooms, platforms, and pavilions; 3) columns, beams, doors, and walls; 4) stairs, courtyards, wells, and windows; 5) wood, leaves, flowers, and fruits; 6) boats, carts, paintings, and brushes; 7) knives, ink stones, mirrors, and hairpins; 8) ploughs, sericulture tools, bows, and arrows; 9) the head, teeth, hands, and feet; 10) horses, cows, dogs,
and pigs; 11) unicorns, tigers, lions, and elephants; 12) phoenixes, mythical birds, cranes, and geese; 13) dragons, snakes, fishes, and turtles; and finally 14) grains, meat, tea, and wine.

Much like the first section, the fourth and final section of the encyclopedia, “Outward Manifestations of Dreams,” also organizes dreams from large- to small-scale categories (from heavenly phenomena such as the sun, moon, and stars to writing implements and body parts). The categories in the first and fourth sections are similar; however, this final section is shorter, and does not contain all of the categories or entries in the first.

The fourth section presents dream examples from the Dynastic Histories and other historical works. The time period when the dreams occurred is listed after each entry (for example: the Eastern Han, Western Han, and Zhou dynasties). These dream examples were used to divine the future and are grouped under the following categories: “Manifestations of the Heavens” (tian xiang 天象), “Geographical Formations” (dili 地理), “Persons and Things” (renwu 人物), “External Appearances” (xingmao 行貌), “State Affairs” (zhengshi 政事), “Odds and Ends” (shiwu 什物), “Dwellings and Buildings” (dongyu 棟宇), “Clothing and Accessories” (guan shang 冠裳), “Food and Drink” (yinshi 食), “Things that Propagate” (fanhui 番奨), “Things that Fly and Run” (feizou 飛走), “Precious Baubles” (zhen wan 珍玩), “Literature and Documents” (wenhan 文), and finally “Names of Things” (mingshu 名). These above are listed as “categories” (lei 類) in the encyclopedia, not “parts” (bu 部) as in the first section. Generally, the order of categories in this section is the same as in the first section of the encyclopedia, gathering together examples of each dream type of phenomenon or thing in the universe.

The fourth section offered examples from which dreamers and would-be dream interpreters could extrapolate the tools necessary to interpret dreams. According to primary compiler He Dongru’s preface to “Outward Manifestation of Dreams,” this section presents dreams on a wide range of topics in order to prove that dreams can be reliably used to interpret

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69 I discuss one of these dream interpretation tools in more detail in Chapter 5.
the future. These dream examples were compiled and represented the results of interpretation methods of ancient dream diviners. Section four of the encyclopedia “shows people what to do without doing it for them.” The examples in it are presented under a specific dream symbol; instead of an interpretation, however, the time period when the dream took place is listed. In the thirtieth juan, one dream example reads as follows: “The Sun Enters the Chest, Western Han: The Empress entered the palace. She dreamed of the sun entering her chest. Afterwards, she gave birth to the Emperor.”

Dream Exorcism 夢禳 and Dream Origins 夢原

The structural organization of the second and third sections of the encyclopedia does not follow a correspondences system. In both of the two juan in section two, “Dream Exorcism,” the information is arranged cyclically, rather than topically. In interpreting a dream, timing (the seasons, the month of the year, and the day of the month) all matter more than either the content of the dream or any particular dream symbol. Thus, the potential negative repercussions of certain types of nightmares about certain types of things or phenomena are actually outweighed by the timing of the nightmare. By the same logic, the potential positive repercussions of certain types of dreams about certain types of things or phenomena are also outweighed by the timing of the dream. A purported nightmare may turn out to be auspicious, if it occurred during a certain season or day of the week, which offered flexibility to dreamers to re-interpret an otherwise inauspicious dream as auspicious.

The two-juan section two, “Dream Exorcism,” lists and briefly introduces various dream interpretation methods, including one method using hexagram analyses based on The Book of Changes (Yi jing 易經) and another based upon timing. These methods are organized according to the five phases. The examples begin with those grouped under the category of “metal” (jin 金) and then proceed to “wood” (mu 木), which is followed by “water” (shui 水), “earth” (tu 土), and finally “fire” (huo 火). The second juan presents twenty-five talismans and corresponding

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70 黨引而不發者機也。He Dongru, vol. 1064, 340.
71 日入懷，西漢，王皇后入宮。夢日入懷。後生武帝。。。He Dongru, vol. 1064, 344.
incantations to be used both against specific types of nightmares as well as nightmares occurring on certain days or times of the year.\textsuperscript{72}

According to He Dongru’s preface, both the third and fourth sections of the encyclopedia are edited versions of Zhang Fengyi’s 張鳳翼 (1527-1613) dream encyclopedia, \textit{Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation (Meng zhan lei kao 夢占類考)}, published in 1585.\textsuperscript{73} The third section of the encyclopedia, “Dream Origins,” offers explanations for the origin of dreams (\textit{fa meng de you yuantou 發夢的有源頭}). As He Dongru wrote in the preface to this section, the study of the formation or origin of dreams has been examined throughout history; not to include this information would mean the encyclopedia was incomplete.\textsuperscript{74} The section on “Dream Origins” in \textit{Forest of Dreams} was meant to supplement information Zhang Fengyi had not included in his previously published dream encyclopedia, \textit{Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation}. He Dongru went so far as to claim that the only work on dreams this encyclopedia did not surpass was the \textit{Long Willow Classic}.\textsuperscript{75} “Dream Origins” was intended to “make all people under the heavens believe in the interpretation [of dreams] and to give [all people] a way to eliminate inauspicious [dreams] and to enlighten [all people] as to the origins [of dreams].”\textsuperscript{76}

“Dream Origins” includes passages on dreams from thirty-three different sources, which are arranged chronologically. The sources describe the major types of dreams, offer dream interpretations, or provide explanations for where in the body and how dreams occur. This type of textual organization is indefinite as dreams are not definitively defined or categorized. Instead, relevant and sometimes contradictory information on dreams is listed chronologically. The

\textsuperscript{72} I discuss the medical aspects of this section of the encyclopedia in more detail in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{73} 據凌虛長子，所輯夢占類考，而推廣之兩分之一。曰：夢原遠跡來也。[This section of \textit{Forest of Dreams} is based upon the work of Zhang Fengyi who compiled \textit{Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation} and expands upon half of it. I say: “[In this section], we trace the origin of dreams back to its source.” He Dongru, vol. 1064, 314.

\textsuperscript{74} 夢之所形，歷有成跡，然則不適所跡來，不稽之已往，猶未成其書之全耳，。。。 He Dongru, vol. 1064, 314.

\textsuperscript{75} 可以補寓內載籍所未條，惟長柳燁經之全，當不過是矣。This supplements that which I did not append in my work. Only the \textit{Long Willow Classic} surpasses this work in terms of thoroughness. He Dongru, vol. 1064, 314.

\textsuperscript{76} 使天下信其占，而又有以除其不祥，悟其原。。。 He Dongru, vol. 1064, 314.
sources are neither explicated nor commented upon. A dreamer or dream interpreter could take from this section information that corroborated a particular interpretation.


**Conclusion**

As seen from the discussion above, *Forest of Dreams* is an encyclopedia that reflects two sides of a dialectical philosophy on dreams. Its organizational structure and contents reveal these two contradictory and sometimes opposing sides. Dreams (and their corresponding interpretations) were knowable and unknowable, positive and negative, auspicious and inauspicious. The encyclopedia includes a wide range of solutions for all potential dream interpretation-related queries. The first and fourth sections classify and quantify dreams, neatly arranging them and their interpretations in the same order as the entire universe. The second and third sections problematize the neat boundaries delineated in the first and fourth sections, indicating that dreams and their interpretations were not so neatly contained according to topic or
content. The organizational structure reveals a philosophy on dreams and dream interpretation that is both definite and indefinite. Although at first glance this seems contradictory, such a philosophy simultaneously offers certainty about dreams while leaving room to accommodate uncertainty into interpretations. Both dreamers and dream interpreters could flexibly interpret dreams based on the information in the encyclopedia.
Chapter 3: The Ideology of Dreams

This chapter investigates the construction of dreams and dream practice in late imperial China, viewed through the lens of the four men credited with compiling and editing *Forest of Dreams*: He Dongru 何棟如 (1572-1637; jinshi 進士, 1598); Sun Shi 孫奭 (962-1033); Chen Shiyuan 陳士元 (1516-1595, jinshi 1544); and Zhang Fengyi 張鳳翼 (1527-1613; juren 舉人, 1564).\(^{77}\) I consider these four compilers in the order in which their prefaces to the encyclopedia as a whole appear in the encyclopedia, following the order sequentially as a reader might have, moving from the first page of the first *juan* and then on to the second, then third, and so on, until the end. In so doing, I attempt to recreate the experience a reader might have or might have had.

What motivated these men to collect, classify, and present information on dreams in written form? What were the socio-political conditions that combined to inspire the publication of this encyclopedia? Although the compilers of *Forest of Dreams* were trained in Confucian classics and outwardly invested in participating in orthodox trajectories (studying and sitting for the civil service exams, and, for some, serving in official capacity), they also displayed strong interest in non-Confucian learning, as evidenced by the publication of dream interpretation techniques. Such a range of interests indicates the high degree of mediation between Confucian and non-Confucian learning during this time period.

Given the socio-political chaos of the late Ming, it is unsurprising that these compilers expressed nostalgia for an earlier, purportedly more stable time and turned away from Confucianism in favor of dream lore practiced by fringe savants. The situation in the late Ming is analogous to the situation described by Robert Backus in his study on Confucian orthodoxy in Tokugawa Japan.\(^ {78}\) The dream lore in *Forest of Dreams* harked back to an earlier time. In the

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\(^{77}\) For dates and biographical information on He Dongru, Chen Shiyuan, and Zhang Fengyi, see: L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). Find information on He Dongru under “Ho Tung-ju,” vol. 1, 521-522; find Chen Shiyuan under “Ch’en Shih-yuan,” vol. 1, 178-179; Zhang Fengyi is listed as “Chang Feng-I,” vol. 1, 63-64. For dates and biographical information on Sun Shi, see: Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976), 145.

case of *Forest of Dreams*, it seems that the compilers saw therapeutic benefits to the analysis and interpretation of dreams, both at an individual and social level. At the same time, the compilers eschewed the orthodox Confucian trajectory, choosing (or in some cases, being forced to) to live a life outside the official system. In the prefaces and forewords to *Forest of Dreams*, the compilers justify these choices using dreams as the means for explanation.

This chapter is intended as a case study of dreams, centered on the individuals who are credited with editing or compiling this dream encyclopedia. I hope to underscore the importance of their individual experiences in shaping the ways in which dreams were recorded and understood in the late Ming. *Forest of Dreams* can be read simultaneously as a scholarly encyclopedic work and as a portrayal of the individuals involved in categorizing and organizing the dreams contained within. The content and tone of the prefaces to this encyclopedia reveal the compilers’ stated rationale for publishing on dreams, particularly when read in combination with biographical information as well as social, cultural, and political history of the late Ming. I use He Dongru, Sun Shi, Chen Shiyuan and Zhang Fengyi to focus in on a specific place and time, the Jiangnan region in the late Ming, as well as to underscore the importance of individual perceptions on the interpretation of dreams and the ways in which individuals imbued their dreams and the dreams of others with meaning.

Below, I provide a brief introduction to the Qing assessment of *Forest of Dreams* in the *Four Treasuries Imperial Library Catalog* (*Siku quanshu zongmu*). Then, I turn to the editors and compilers and their prefaces or forewords to the work as a whole, in the order in which they appear in the encyclopedic compilation: He Dongru, Sun Shi, Chen Shiyuan, and Zhang Fengyi. Although this chapter highlights the views on dreams of only four literati, these case histories are valuable in providing access to late Ming dream practice. Dreams in particular offered the means of predicting the future and explaining the past. The contemporary expectation that dreams might lead to self-understanding might perhaps be traced in part to several converging phenomena.
I argue that He Dongru and his fellow encyclopedic compilers collected and classified dreams in part to understand their own personal and career setbacks. As evidence will show, participation in this literary project on dreams offered He the opportunity to find meaning of events in his life; moreover, it simultaneously allowed He the chance to justify both himself and his dreams to a larger audience. Sun Shi’s preface was included to provide historical precedence for works on dreams. Chen Shiyuan’s foreword to *Forest of Dreams* firmly established this dream encyclopedia as an authoritative version; in it, Chen comments that his earlier dream encyclopedia merely provided the basics to dreams. Chen saw this later publication as a culmination of dream theory and dream knowledge. The final compiler, Zhang Fengyi, much like He Dongru, saw dreams as a means to understanding himself and his own personal history.

In the Qing, *Forest of Dreams* in its entirety is not known to have been reprinted in full, although several of its component works were reprinted. For example, Chen Shiyuan’s *Guidelines on Dreams and Dream Divination* (which was included in the “Dream Origins” section of *Forest of Dreams*) was reprinted in 1833 in *Returning to the Clouds Miscellany* (*Guiyun bie ji* 歸雲別集), which also included five works on the classics. In 1850, *Guidelines to Dreams and Dream Divination* was reprinted in *Artistic Oceans and Pearl Dust* (*Yi hai zhu chen* 藝海珠塵). At eight juan, *Guidelines to Dreams and Dream Interpretations* was considerably shorter than *Forest of Dreams*, which may explain why it was reprinted. *An Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi* was also reprinted, minus the woodblock illustrations, during the Qing.

The editors of the *Four Treasuries Imperial Library* gave a perfunctory introduction to the organizational structure and content analysis of *Forest of Dreams*, as well as the names of its editors. That said, the full text of Forest of Dreams was not included in the publication. The editors of the *Four Treasuries Imperial Library* wrote:

*Forest of Dreams*, thirty-four juan,...was written by Chen Shiyuan and compiled by He Dongru. [Chen] Shiyuan had written *Images from the Classic of Changes, Expounded and Explained*. He Dongru had written *The Four Methods of Governance of the Ming Progenitors*. Both are recorded [in the Four Treasuries Library].
[Chen] Shiyuan first wrote An Explication of the Profundities in Dreams. [He] Dongru, because he wanted to expand upon [the aforementioned] work, divided Chen’s work into a 26-juan long section entitled “Dream Interpretation,” a two-juan long section entitled “Dream Exorcism,” a one-juan long section entitled “Dream Origins,” and a five-juan long section entitled “Outward Manifestations of Dreams.”

There is a guide at the beginning [of Forest of Dreams] claiming that [Forest of Dreams] was based upon a text entitled The Secret Methods to Making Dreams Whole, attributed to Ge Hong that was extant during the time of Song dynasty Jingyou reign [1034-1037]. Also, Shao Yong was the editor. This claim cannot be verified. There is also a preface by Sun Shi. The language is vulgar and obscures the words of the skilled masters. [Chen] Shiyuan and the others could not quite figure it out. 79

The Four Treasuries editors dismissed He Dongru’s claim that this work was partially based on an original work by Ge Hong as implausible. The Qing editors categorized dream interpretation as a miscellaneous technique. 80

He Dongru

In this section, I discuss He Dongru 何棣如 (1572-1637), who took credit for compiling Forest of Dreams, and his stated rationale for undertaking this project on dreams. First, I provide some biographical information and then turn to He Dongru’s preface to Forest of Dreams.

He Dongru 81 hailed from Jiangning 江寧 (Nanjing). He was a third-generation palace graduate (jinshi 進士); his grandfather He Rujian 何汝健 passed the palace examinations in 1553 and his father, He Zhanzhi 何湛之, in 1589. After obtaining his own jinshi degree in 1598, He Dongru was first appointed as prefectural judge of Xiangyang 襄陽 in Huguang 湖廣 province. According to his biographical entry in the Jiangning gazetteer, He Dongru’s family background was noble and respected; moreover, He bravely focused on solving all matters, no

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79 夢林元解三十四卷 ... 明陳士元撰，何棣如重輯。士元有易象鈔解釋。棣如有明祖四大法。皆已著錄。士元初作夢書元解，棣如因而廣之，分夢占二十六卷，夢夢二卷，夢原一卷，夢徵五卷。前有凡例，稱是書在宋景祐聞名環境解秘為晉葛洪原本，而宋邵雍輯之者。其言無可證據，又有孫爽序一篇。辭氣纖俗蓋術家依托之文。士元等不及辯也。 Si ku quan shu zong mu (Four Treasuries Imperial Library Catalog), shushu lei cun mu er 學術類存目二, zi bu ershiyi 子部二十一 juan 111, 53.
80 今統名曰雜技術。。。 [Dream interpretations] are grouped together and called “Miscellaneous Techniques.” Ibid.
81 He Dongru had two cognomen (zi 字): Chongfu 充符 (Sign of Completeness) and Ziji 子極 (Man of Extremes). His style-name 號 was Tianyu 天玉 (Heavenly Jade). Note that Chongfu is contained in a chapter title in the Zhuangzi: “Sign of Complete Virtue” (De chongfu 德充符).
matter how difficult. However, reports of He Dongru’s official career were anything but smooth.

As related in the 1668 Jiangning gazetteer, while serving in Huguang, He apparently clashed with one of the Wanli emperor’s eunuchs, Chen Feng 陳奉. A one-sided account of He Dongru’s conflict with Chen Feng reflects the biases of the time. The source portrays Chen Feng as over-zealous or even ruthless. During Chen Feng’s two-year tenure as mining manager in Huguang, when local officials refused to cooperate or comply with his schemes, Chen Feng had them arrested and thrown into prison. Chen Feng called upon soldiers to open up Qingshan (an area under He Dongru’s jurisdiction) for coal mining. When He Dongru heard about this matter, he was furious and called upon the military assistance of the government and subordinate officials to capture the henchmen under Chen Feng. Additionally, He Dongru sent a communication to the Wanli emperor asking why a high-ranking eunuch could use military force and henchmen. Chen Feng’s men were unable to find coal in the area and demanded recompense from the villagers and officials, causing a clamorous dispute. However, the ministers in the capital spread the rumor that He Dongru and the officials in the area were the cause of the problem; moreover, the rumors claimed that He Dongru planned to kill Chen Feng. Purportedly because of this, He Dongru was imprisoned for four years.

While in prison, He began collaborating with fellow prisoner Feng Yingjing 冯应京 (1555-1606) on a treatise aimed at counteracting what he perceived to be a rapidly worsening political situation. Feng Yingjing had become a jinshi degree-holder in 1592 and had been appointed assistant surveillance commissioner of Huguang in 1600. Feng was imprisoned along

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82 吕世贵介, 英气专决, 言天下事无难为者。Qi Xinliang 昊心郎 and Chen Kiyu 陈开虞, eds., “On Famous Persons, Part 3” (Renwu zhuan san 人物傳三) Jiangning Fuzhi 江寧府志 (1668 edition), 51. Note: I have translated guijie 贵介 as “noble.” Guijie 贵介 is a general term which implies noble, respected, and elevated personage. See Hanyu Da cidian 漢語大辞典, s.v. “guijie” 贵介.
83 For more on the activities of eunuch Chen Feng, see Henry Shih-shan Tsai, The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996).
84 本文以知兵名。中官陈奉撤黄山礮，其或以敛略發ilate，繪圖疏聞，事得寢。後據至襄，撤府佐猶屬吏。顧如謂：‘理官係天子吏，中貴人安得執？’ 收其爪牙，投諸江。礮復開戰城，宜城，礮無所得。其黨掠民官，郡閲爭挺起，纂如復收爪牙之尤者，擬劫庫興斬，具揭閥部上聞。時京師詔傳楚官民擊礮，上怒，遣緘駕逮充楚臣，首纂如，下詔獄四年。… Qi Xinliang and Chen Kiyu, 51.
with He Dongru (and others) during Chen Feng’s tenure as mining manager. Feng was jailed for four years beginning in 1601 during his reign as assistant surveillance commissioner for his resistance to eunuch tax demands in Huguang. Feng had previously authored an encyclopedia entitled the *Compendium of Practical Statecraft in the August Ming Dynasty* (*Huang Ming jingshi shiyong bian* 皇明經世實用編), which was published in 1604.\(^85\) He Dongru and Feng Yingjing’s joint treatise, *The August Ancestral Emperor’s Four Major Methods [of Governance]* (*Huangzu si dafa* 皇祖四大法), was first published in 1614, and advocated a return to the policies of the first Ming emperor.

After serving his prison term, He Dongru returned to his hometown, where he remained for seventeen years (he was prohibited from serving in the bureaucracy during this time). Following the death of the Wanli emperor in 1620, He Dongru was called back into service in the Department of War in Nanjing and asked to lead military expeditions beyond the Great Wall. He next served as vice minister of the Court of Imperial Stud in Beijing, but he was relieved of his duties and imprisoned again, as part of the ongoing court struggles of the time period. Shortly thereafter, He was dispatched to Chuyang 潛 阳. In the beginning of the Chongzhen reign, He’s official status was restored and he was permitted to return to Nanjing. Shortly thereafter, he passed away at the age of sixty-five.\(^86\)

He Dongru’s career difficulties were not atypical of the time. The late 1500s and 1600s witnessed a series of well-documented political and bureaucratic crises. The relationship between the Wanli emperor (r. 1573-1620) and his officials became increasingly antagonistic. The dispatch of eunuch tax collectors and mining intendants to the provinces in 1596 alienated the

\(^{85}\) Benjamin Elman wrote about Feng’s connection with Matteo Ricci and the Jesuits. Feng purportedly planned to be baptized, although his premature death precluded such an occurrence. In the preface to the *Compendium of Practical Statecraft in the August Ming Dynasty*, Feng included a discussion of the spirituality of the first Ming emperor, framed in Christian theological language, albeit using recognizably Chinese terms. See Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 53-57.

\(^{86}\) … 狸中，日從幕見馮公，受《易》，讀《兵》，未嘗以患難忘經世。會星變，赦歸。光廟初，起南兵部職方主事，以韜略自負，慨然請纓，思立功塞外，加大僕卿，行邊贊畫會。失貴人意，復違繫詔獄，拷備至無可坐，乃坐募船募費四百金，戍濁陽。崇禎初昭雪，脱戊籍，歸南，大司馬范公景文將擬推，會疾卒，嘆惜以為未盡其才云。… Qi Xinliang and Chen Kaiyu, 51.
local bureaucrats and the situation only worsened when in 1599 the emperor extended the authority of the eunuchs who then began to interfere with local civil governance. In effect, the mining tax was a form of extortion; the state threatened to mine the land beneath houses and tombs, relenting only after payments were made. He Dongru was not the only local official who spoke out against the eunuchs. The then-governor of Huai’an arrested eunuchs in his jurisdiction and had them put to death.\(^{87}\) The founding of the Donglin academy in 1604 exacerbated existing factionalism at court. Donglin members were generally noted for their strict adherence to Confucianism, defined by proper ethical behavior. Initially, members were young officials in low-ranking positions. Confrontation between Donglin members and non-members came to a head over personnel evaluations. In the closed-door sessions in 1604, 207 capital officials and 73 Nanjing officials were either dismissed from service or demoted; most of those affected were Donglin partisans. Anti-Donglin factional groups formed their own cliques and maintained political alliances; later personnel evaluations reflected partisanal conflicts.

Purportedly frustrated by the factionalism, from about 1600 onward, the Wanli emperor ignored day-to-day operations of the court, refused to read memorials, and left high offices unfilled when they were vacated. Applications for retirement or leaves of absence were also largely disregarded. Only those divisions of the bureaucracy either engaged in tax collection or in initiatives aimed at soliciting new revenue received imperial attention. A side consequence of the attrition of the bureaucracy was that there was a huge pool of literati-officials without employment. With little chance of achieving merit or reputation in official channels, many turned to writing or lives of circumscribed leisure.\(^{88}\)

In 1620, when the new emperor was installed, the mining and commercial taxes were abolished and the eunuch tax commissioners were recalled from the provinces. The emperor refilled official positions in the understaffed ministries and offices; however, the changes were


\(^{88}\) See discussion in Ray Huang, 540-554.
short-lived, as the emperor died very suddenly and unexpectedly (some claimed foul play) after ruling only one month. The ensuing political battle over the succession of the next emperor was vicious. The Tianqi emperor (r. 1621-1627) was reportedly physically weak, unintelligent, and mentally ill-equipped to handle affairs of the state. Rather than deal with bureaucratic administrative issues himself, he left decisions to the discretion of trusted imperial household eunuchs and servants, in particular Wei Zhongxian (1568-1627) and a former nursemaid, Madame Ke (d. 1627). Together, Wei Zhongxian and Madame Ke organized a palace purge in 1621, in which a Donglin sympathizer was murdered and those close to him were removed from positions of authority.  

Throughout the next decade, bitter political battles were waged within and without the bureaucracy, with different groups dominating at different times. Also during the 1620s, Manchu forces and tribes in southwestern China threatened the security of the Ming state. Donglin-affiliated officials who failed to defend the borders were dismissed or, in one case, executed. Early in 1623, palace eunuchs were dispatched to investigate the northeastern frontier, despite opposition by Donglin partisans. Conflict between the eunuch faction and others came to a head in 1624 when Wei Zhongxian was effectively granted judicial and punitive powers as the head of the Eastern Depot, a position answerable only to the throne. Over the next year or so, Wei Zhongxian filled official positions with his supporters and threatened or inflicted violence on those who opposed him, often ordering his opponents tortured or beaten to death. Blacklists of Donglin supporters were published and circulated throughout the provinces. As long as Wei Zhongxian was in power, officials willing to flatter him were well treated.

After the Tianqi emperor passed away at the age of twenty-one, the throne passed to his oldest surviving brother, whose reign title was Chongzhen. Wei Zhongxian was ordered to leave the capital, and ultimately committed suicide. Those who had been persecuted during Wei

90 See discussion in William Atwell, 608-610.
Zhongxian’s reign of power were given special privileges and other Donglin supporters who had been dismissed were reinstated as officials. During this time period, the economy stagnated and declined, due in part to a decline in silver bullion import, natural disasters (fires, earthquakes, and floods), and internal rebellions.

He Dongru’s Preface to *Forest of Dreams*

As we can see, He lived during a time of political upheaval and uncertainty. His official career was beset with difficulties out of his control not once, but several times. “Control” may lie at the center of both He’s life and his preface to *Forest of Dreams*. In the face of career setbacks, perhaps He Dongru turned to dreams to help assuage his sense of malaise and despair over not only his problems, but also the ruined lives and careers of fellow officials. Cataloguing, ordering and arranging dreams offered He the chance to catalogue, order, and arrange the written representation of his life. In the case of He Dongru, the preface on dreams served as a meditational act. Through this encyclopedia on dreams, He shaped his self-identity, and offered a contribution to his country at a time when he was forced out of office.

In his 1,354 character-long preface, He Dongru first queried the nature of dreams, writing that dreams were simultaneously indefinable and definable, knowable and unknowable.91 He logically analyzed dreams, establishing that there was no fixed definition of a dream. To He, although dreams were not real or true in the same way that events or people or things in the experiential world were real or true, some dreams nonetheless revealed moments of verifiable truth, of events or people or things that were real or true.

After establishing the impossibility of defining dreams, He moved on to discuss the history of dreaming and dream interpretation methods. He Dongru wrote that people had dreamed since the beginning of time and that since the beginning of time, people had not been able to refrain from the practice of divining dreams. He Dongru explained that at the time of the

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91 Please refer to Appendix 2 for a complete translation of He Dongru’s preface.
ancient sage kings, there were already charts made to organize this type of knowledge, such as the apocryphal *Long-Willow Illustrated Classic* (*Chang liu tu jing 長柳圖經*). 92

He next briefly outlined a history of dream philosophy, writing that dream classification and categorization began in the Xia dynasty and expanded over time. As in the *Classic of Change*, where the one becomes the three (which eventually multiplies into the myriad things), the three types of dreams gave rise to six types of dreams and the six types of dreams further transformed into the myriad dreams. He pointed out that although it was impossible to exactly match correspondences between dreams and waking reality, it was possible to differentiate between auspicious and inauspicious dreams. He maintained that it was upon this knowledge (the possibility of differentiating between auspicious and inauspicious dreams) that the office of dream diviner was founded. Dreams were primarily used as a means for divining the future; naturally, the correct interpretation of dreams was important to the early court.

For the Chinese emperors and their officials, too, their dreams represented justification for harmonious rule. Maintaining the mandate of heaven required mastery of all heavenly events, including dreams. Unpredicted or inauspicious dreams indicated the emperor’s lack of virtue and failure as a ruler. Thus, a dream interpreter was of utmost political importance as auspicious dreams helped maintain harmonious ties between the rulers on earth and the heavens while asserting imperial control.

Up to and including the Wei and Jin, He wrote, each successive dynasty employed an official dream diviner. He Dongru claimed that the peak of dream interpretation was in the Wei and Jin periods. However, these ancient methods were gradually lost, and skilled explanations were mistakenly combined with unreliable ones. By the Song and Yuan, the dream interpretation methods were largely discarded or corrupted. He disparaged famous *Ru* 儒 scholars who

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92 The “Treatise on Arts and Literature” in the *Han History* (*Hanshu yiwen zhi 漢書·藝文志*) lists *The Yellow Emperor’s Long-Willow Method of Dream Interpretation* (*Huangdi changliu zhan meng 黃帝長柳占夢*) in eleven *juan* and *Gan De’s Long-Willow Method of Dream Interpretation* (*Gande changliu zhan meng 甘德長柳占夢*) in twenty *juan*. Neither work is currently extant. No evidence exists to support their existence during the late Ming.
scornfully spoke of numerical correspondence techniques and instead favored using the principle of *li* 理 to explain dreams.

At this point in the preface, He Dongru alluded to his own fall from grace, writing that after he left prison and returned home, he whiled away the hours reading through the many books in his family library. It was there that he chanced upon a book of dreams. After perusing about half of it, He asserted that the work he discovered in his family library was originally written by Ge Hong during the Jin dynasty, edited further by Shao Yong and woven together by Chen Shiyuan. However, He pointed out that the original work only contained eight *juan*, all of which focused on dream interpretation. Additionally, he found the interpretations to be incomplete. Because of this, He Dongru consulted available reference sources on dreams and included the information in *Forest of Dreams*. Through the publication of *Forest of Dreams*, He Dongru wrote that he hoped to promote and restore the dream corpus. Thus, this work is not simply a restoration of a dream classic, but an improvement on earlier works on dreams, a culmination of dream lore and knowledge.

Here, He Dongru’s preface reaches an autobiographical climax. It is apparent from the following passage that He used the preface to his work on dreams to comprehend the vicissitudes of his life and career, in particular his clash with eunuch Chen Feng in Huguang, imprisonment, and subsequent removal from official service. He wrote, “Now, this work is brought forth by me! Truly, [*Forest of Dreams*] represents a pivotal point in awakening from a dream. It’s just as though all the world and I have been sharing a dream together, like Lu Sheng.”

The allusion to Lu Sheng is one worth exploring for parallels between the lives of He Dongru and Lu Sheng. Moreover, it provides information regarding He’s justification for publishing this dream encyclopedia. The story of Lu Sheng was adapted into a drama by playwright Tang Xianzu (1550-1616) entitled *The Handan Dream (Handan Meng ji 邯鄲夢記)*, setting the tale in the Ming and providing scathing social commentary on the civil service.

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93 今此書一出，真大地夢覺闢頭，願與天下共作盧生一枕… He Dongru, vol. 1063, 606.
examination system and officialdom in general. He Dongru’s allusion to Lu Sheng suggests that He was familiar with the play and the story.

First, I will briefly summarize the story of Lu Sheng (盧生) to which He Dongru alludes. According to the story “Pillow Records” (Zhen zhong ji 枕中記), during the Tang dynasty (719, to be precise), there once was a Daoist master. While traveling, he encountered a shabbily dressed man named Lu Sheng. The two sat outside a small shop together and began to converse. Lu Sheng complained that although he had always wanted to become a scholar and official, he was only able to make a living through hunting. Suddenly, Lu Sheng became sleepy. The Daoist master pulled a pillow out of his pocket and handed it to Lu Sheng, saying that if he used the pillow all his dreams would come true. “Sleep until the millet porridge is ready.”

Lu Sheng fell into the world of dreams… He returned to his home, married a beautiful woman, and came into many riches. The following year, he passed the palace examination and became an official, moving up the ranks until he was eventually receiving direct orders from the emperor. At this time, the Xuanzong emperor sought to expel barbarians from within the empire; he chose Lu Sheng to lead the troops. After the campaign, Lu Sheng returned to his official duties; however, although he was upright and honest, people began spreading rumors that he was secretly plotting against the emperor. Lu Sheng was apprehended and thrown into prison. He wept to his wife, saying “I have a home in Shandong with some land which is plenty to support me and my family. Why did I insist on following the official path in life?” He then attempted to kill himself, but his wife prevented him. The other officials who had been accused of the same crime were all sentenced to death. Only Lu Sheng was pardoned.

Many years later, the emperor realized that Lu Sheng was innocent and allowed him to return to his official post, honoring him with new titles. Lu Sheng lived out the rest of his days

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94 Tang Xianzu was a native of Linchuan, Jiangxi. He retired from a civil service career in 1598 to focus on writing. His major plays are collectively known to us as “the Four Dreams” because of the important role of dreams in each of the plays. See Sophie Volpp, “Texts, Tutors, and Fathers: Pedagogy and Pedants in Tang Xianzu’s Mudan ting,” in David Der-wei Wang and Shang Wei, ed., *Dynastic Crisis and Cultural Innovation from the Late Ming to the Late Qing and Beyond* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005): 25-63.
serving the emperor, along with his sons and grandsons. Lu Sheng eventually fell ill and, despite the best medical interventions, ultimately passed away.

Suddenly, Lu Sheng sat up with a start. He was sitting next to the Daoist master, still waiting for the millet porridge to boil. Lu Sheng turned to the Daoist master and said, “So this was just a dream?” The Daoist master replied, “This is what life is.” Lu Sheng was initially disappointed, but then turned to the Daoist master and thanked him, saying, “This is a [life] of favors and humiliations. Being insignificant or renowned is all a matter of luck. I now understand the principles of disappointments; I also understand the feelings of life and of death. Master, you have eliminated all of my [previous] wishes. I dare not refuse this lesson.” He kowtowed twice and departed. In other words, for Lu Sheng (and by extension He Dongru), dreams represented an alternate reality or the possibility of a second life. Awakening from the first dream was analogous to attaining enlightenment. Life without understanding was a dreamed life.

He Dongru went on to write, “Do not misunderstand what I am saying about dreams.” Here, He implied that because of his encyclopedia of dreams, it was now possible to understand dreams. Without understanding dreams, it was just as if one was still asleep and dreaming, just like Lu Sheng before he awakened from his dream.

He’s allusion to Lu Sheng is a significant one because it underscores He’s understanding of life—as a dream, but enlightened once one realizes life is but a dream. In dreaming and in waking, He felt that dual lives were lived simultaneously. He’s life—as a scholar and as an official—was a shared dream, one shared with others who had not yet awakened. Awakening from this dream and, more importantly, correctly interpreting his past life as a dream allowed He a second, undreamed, and enlightened life. Thus, the preface is more about He’s self-assessment

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96 他謂向瘥人前說夢也。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 606.
of his life than about dreams per se. For He, life only existed after awakening from a dreamed existence of ups and downs.

He continued: “Who dares to return to esotericism? Who dares to return to secrets? I still have things to say about dreams. In a person’s life, there are two things of importance: repaying the benevolence of one’s ruler and one’s father. The web of debt repayment is infinite. Only at the right moment can those who are ministers and sons break open the great dream. Upon awakening, realizing that one’s life has not fallen into deep confusion and that sleeping is like falling into a chasm—only this truly awakens and enlightens people.” 97 In other words, He viewed his publication of this work on dreams as a partial repayment of the debt he owed to the emperor (or at least this is what he wanted his readers to believe). By exposing the truth about dreams and the truth about his life, He believed (or hoped) that he was awakening and enlightening the people of his generation.

He further argued that good ministers and sons were able to clearly understand auspicious images in dreams, but that traitorous ministers and sons refused to predict calamities they knew were inevitable. According to He Dongru, only truly good ministers and sons would be willing to sacrifice themselves in order to repay their debt to their rulers and fathers. As he wrote, in order to show reverence or respect for the empire, sometimes it would be necessary to strangle oneself or to allow one’s heart to be torn from one’s breast. He Dongru stressed that “one must, as a minister or son, be completely willing and with an honest heart to dedicate all one’s life and energy to expelling nightmarish demons and evil spirits in order to bring about clarity and auspiciousness.” 98 As it turns out, this is exactly the role He Dongru saw himself playing with the publication of this encyclopedic collection on dreams:

It is just as I am today. Although I am at home [i.e., not an official; literally: in the fields], the world is chaotic, and the enemies have not yet been eliminated. It is with fervent enthusiasm that I, from

97 其何敢復秘，其何敢復秘，抑舍猶有夢說焉。 身生兩大，惟是君父恩深，報酬罔極，為人臣者，只此開頭打破大夢， 覺得此身不堪渙浴 餒坑斷中，斯乃天地間真正大覺悟人也。 He Dongru, vol. 1063, 606.
98 要在臣子，一心實實，肯致身竭力，將弊魔魂魔，盡獻清吉矣。 He Dongru, vol. 1063, 606.
morning until night, train myself in the hopes that I can strangle the evil traitorous influences with just a little of my energy. Looking back on my ‘benevolent’ capture, I know now that it was just a dream from which I had not yet awakened. Is this true or is this an illusion? Why not arise and let Ge Hong divine it? –On an auspicious day in 1636, penned by the “Gentleman of Integrity Hidden in Darkness and Unnoticed by Others,” He Dongru, written in the Hall of Coming Praise.

In the final part of his preface, it is clear that He Dongru wished to portray himself as an upright official, one who was concerned with the state of both external and internal affairs. The metaphor of dreams offered He Dongru one means to explain and express his self-worth. The connotations of He Dongru’s self-chosen nickname (“Gentleman of Integrity Hidden in Darkness and Unnoticed by Others”) are also quite revealing.

He Dongru’s preface to *Forest of Dreams* draws our attention to the relations between the political and the psychological—particularly to the need of a late Ming literatus to work through experiences of alienation from governmental affairs and feelings of failure or self-blame. Dreams provided He Dongru and his fellow literati compilers one means to re-assess and re-order their lives. Undertaking such a large publishing project also likely provided a sense of purpose and, more practically, perhaps an income.

Sun Shi

**Sun Shi** 孫奭 (962-1033) hailed from Boping 博平 (located in modern-day Shandong province). 他 in his youth, Sun Shi studied with Confucian scholar Wang Che 王徹 who lived nearby. After Sun Shi passed the civil examination system, the emperor brought him to the capital and entrusted him with a position as lecturer in the Guozijian 國子監.

Early in his reign, the Zhenzong emperor signed a treaty with the invading Khitans, promising them annual payments. In part to divert public attention from the treaty and in part to

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99 如余今日，此身雖在敟訶，而天下多故，虜寇未殲，報君熱血，自是蚤夜摩厲，冀得長繚，盡織賊奴之頸，少効區區，亟視恩逮獲生時，依夫 一夢未醒也。 為真為幻，安起稚川而占之， 崇禎丙子一之日， 殺旦，東吳閬居士， 何穆如書於 來譽堂。 He Dongru, vol. 1063, 606-607.
100 Sun Shi’s cognomen was Zonggu 宗古 (Ancient Ancestor) and his alternate name was Xuangong 宣公 (Duke of Proclamations). See Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976): 977.
consolidate rule, the emperor claimed he had been given Heavenly Texts (*Tian shu* 天書), legitimating his rule and connecting his family with Daoist deities. Moreover, he reported that he had dreamed of his ancestor, Zhao Xuanlang, who had been sent down by the Jade Emperor to safeguard the empire and to award him the title of Sage Ancestor (*Tianzun* 天尊). The Emperor then commissioned the construction of a costly palace, as well as statues of himself and his purported ancestor as Daoist deities, which were displayed in temples.\(^{101}\) Next, the emperor required costly imperial sacrifices to be carried out at Mount Tai with the support of Grand Councilor Wang Qinruo (王欽若).\(^{102}\) Sun Shi apparently criticized these actions, particularly railing against the so-called *Heavenly Texts*, quoting the *Analects*, “Heaven not only does not speak, but is unable to write!”\(^{103}\) Sun Shi pressed the emperor to refrain from making the expensive sacrifices, but found no support.\(^{104}\) Later, under the Renzong emperor, Sun Shi became a Hanlin academician. Sun Shi detailed the reasons for the rise and fall of the dynasties and the wisdom of earlier rulers. In his position as a Longtu Academic, he influenced the young, new emperor.

Sun Shi’s Preface to *The Secret Methods of Fulfilling Dreams*

A preface attributed to Sun Shi, purportedly written to his work on dreams entitled *The Secret Methods of Fulfilling Dreams* (*Yuan meng mi ce* 圓夢祕策), was included in the prefaces to *Forest of Dreams*. Neither this work nor Sun Shi’s preface exist outside *Forest of Dreams*. Sun Shi’s preface was likely penned by a late Ming compiler and included in the Ming work in part because it legitimated the project on dreams, offering evidence of historical precedence for

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\(^{101}\) See Angela Falco Howard, Song Li, Hong Wu, and Hong Yang, *Chinese Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006): 363.


\(^{104}\) See Herbert Franke, ed., 977.
dream works dating from the Song dynasty. In that sense, the use of Sun Shi’s name was similar to the use of Ge Hong’s name.

Sun Shi stressed the importance of seeking out interpretations for dreams. In his 1,438 character-long preface, Sun Shi first likened all of human existence to a chaotic great dream, stating that it is impossible to differentiate between night and day, spirits and non-spirits, sleeping and waking. Indeed, Sun Shi maintained that birth simply marked the beginning of a new dream. He observed that parents assumed that they understood the wants and needs of their infants simply on the basis of facial expression. That is to say, judging from an infant’s countenance, parents assess whether or not a child is happy or sad. However, Sun Shi believed infants were too young to truly understand happiness or sadness and must be dreaming instead. Sun Shi wrote that parents’ projecting emotions onto infants was equivalent to interpreting dreams. By projecting explanations onto an infant, a parent became better able to care for the child. By extension, it seems then that projecting explanations onto dreams was similarly useful. Explicating dreams helped fulfill dreams.

Sun continued that this was why the ancient sages authored interpretation classics and established offices of interpretation. Those who interpreted dreams in early times were just like those fathers and mothers who explained their infants’ expressions. For Sun, this was the way to climb on the road toward awakening. Much as He Dongru did in his preface, Sun Shi wrote that the interpretation of dreams represented a path toward enlightenment. Sun also gave a brief history of the importance of dream interpretation. According to him, various schools of thought had been established on dream interpretation, but each successive generation grew farther from the arts and wisdom contained in the canonical works of the early sages.

In order to remedy the situation, after his retirement from officialdom, Sun Shi read about medicine, herbal remedies, star and milfoil divination, and wind patterns; however, he wrote that

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105 For a complete translation of Sun Shi’s preface, please refer to Appendix 3.
he could not find any extant works on the art of fulfilling dreams, nor could he find skilled dream interpreters. At this point, Sun Shi delved into a lengthy dream narrative:

In the Jiaxu year of the mid-autumn moon festival when I had already retired [from official life], several old friends and I convened together to chat and discuss matters of the heart. We paused to lift our glasses in a toast to the full moon and asked the night to share drinks with us. After becoming drunk, I draped myself over a bed and fell asleep. I was then completely entranced in a world of my own. I saw a mighty warrior who presented stupid me with a single pill, which he then forced me to swallow. I immediately became aware of a sharp stabbing pain in my chest. After about a month or so, my illness reached a point of great danger. In the midst of the perplexing dark, the same mighty warrior suddenly entered through the door, brandishing a sword with which he pierced my chest. Sounds, fire and light burst forth and scattered. I was drenched with life-giving rain, which startled me. I awoke and only then realized it was a dream.106

Sun commented that his experience was in opposition to what normally happens when people fall ill. Generally, pills are swallowed in an attempt to save life, while being stabbed in the chest leads to death. Sun’s dream gave such strange and contradictory messages that he set out in search of works of interpretation. Two years later, he had a chance encounter with a Daoist master. The story is worth relating in full:

Two years later in the second month of spring, I had a chance encounter with a [dream interpretation] classic on the road to Lanxi [located in Zhejiang]. I encountered a Daoist who was carrying a large bag and telling fortunes by drawing on the ground. He was selling exorcisms and glyphomantic interpretations and said he had already received rare transmissions. Therefore, I quickly bowed before him and humbly asked, “Daoist master definitely understands many strange phenomena. Can Master also explicate the technique of fulfilling dreams? Is there really such a technique?”

The Daoist master was quite surprised and replied: “These methods have long been abandoned. Why are you, old one, asking about this particular matter? Could it be that you too are interested in this? Why don’t we go somewhere else [to speak]?” Stupid me

106 崁甲戊仲秋之望於山居中，召二三老友，促席論心，停杯問月，夜分酩焉。入醉披榻就寢，恍惚見戎服力士，授愚一丸，迫而吞之，遂覺胸膈刺痛。旬月之間幾至危革。迷極中，忽前力士倉遽入戶持刃刺胸鏹。然有聲，火光迸散，淋汗如雨而崩，適一夢也。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 612.
understood his meaning. Therefore, I invited the Daoist master to return to my boat with me. There, I asked about the details.

The Daoist master said: “From the age of twenty, I left home and wandered through the clouds and water for about twenty years. I happened upon an elderly gentleman who looked very young but did not eat and who had a pale face and of great form. [He] was residing in the cave dwellings in Mount Lu. This elderly gentleman engaged in ascetic practices and avoided eating grains. I secretly respected him. Thereafter, I proceeded to complete the rites required to become his disciple and followed him for three years.

Suddenly, the elderly gentleman said, “You’re too common and cannot be my companion. I’m going to leave you, but I feel sorry for all your days of hard work. I have nothing else to give you, but three methods from secret books (*mi shu san ce*) that have long been missing in the world. If you respect and honor them, you can become famous. Don’t give them to the wrong people or you will be punished.

“That which is disclosed in this book is the following: one method is the use of glyphomancy to divine auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. Another method is the use of written talismans to heal rapidly the hardships and bitterness of people. And the final method is the secret to fulfilling dreams. I’ve done some comparison and research, but I do not yet understand the gist of [the final policy]. When thinking about the myriad changes in dreams, it is difficult to infer the whys and wherefores. Sometimes the explanations do not come together, so how can I name it and be unwilling to put it out into the world?

“Today, you asked me about this specifically. It is clear that you’re aren’t a common person; moreover, I have found the person to whom I can show this work. The original master would have had no other wish but for people who propagate this work, transmit and promote it and to avoid going against his intentions. Therefore I will give you this work in eight *juan*.” With that, he bowed respectfully to me, gave me the work, took his leave and departed.

Sun Shi wrote that he consulted and tested the refined policies contained within the work, returning to the metaphor of the red-faced infant, explaining that the shapes taken by dreams were all the same as the dreams of infants. Sun then elucidated the conditions of the historical...
production of dreams: “for the past hundreds and thousands of years, all people have lived a
great dream. A great awakening will begin from this great dream.”

Although the eight juan Sun received from the Daoist master did not represent the
complete corpus of the ancient sages, Sun maintained that it built upon the truth of what was
received. In the end, Sun concluded that he was obligated to publish the work so that later
scholars would be able to communicate in greater detail and with greater understanding.

Chen Shiyuan

Chen Shiyuan is credited in the table of contents and in the first page of the first juan
with undertaking editing (zeng shan 增删) of Forest of Dreams. Chen Shiyuan 陳士元 (1516-
1595) hailed from Yingcheng 應城, De’an 德安 prefecture, then part of Huguang 湖廣 (modern-
day Hubei province). The oldest of seven sons, he followed in his father’s footsteps to study as
a National University student in Nanjing where he specialized in the Book of Changes (Yijing 易
經). Chen Shiyuan attained a juren 舉人 degree in 1537 and then went on to become a jinshi 進士
in 1544 at the age of twenty-eight. The following year, in 1545, Chen Shiyuan went to
Luanzhou 濮州 (in modern-day Hebei province) to assume his official post as magistrate.

While in Luanzhou, Chen Shiyuan helped compile the area’s first local gazetteer, the
Luanzhou zhi 濮州志. Despite being described as “an able and conscientious administrator,”
Chen retired from the post after three years in 1547 and never again resumed official life.
No definitive explanation is given for his withdrawal from government office; however, Chen’s
biographical entry in the Dictionary of Ming Biography hints that this decision was based at least
partly on an inauspicious event during his tenure as magistrate in Luanzhou. Prior to Chen’s
birth, Chen’s father dreamed of Mencius arriving at the family home. After Chen Shiyuan was
born, his father gave him the cognomen Meng qing 孟卿 in honor of this dream. Years later,
when Chen was serving as magistrate in Luanzhou, during a ceremony in the temple of

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108 數千百年，群生大夢，始自此而得大覺也矣。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 615.
109 See Richard Strassberg. For Chen Shiyuan’s dates and biographical information, see Hu Mingsheng 胡鳴盛, ed.,
Chen Shiyuan xian sheng nian pu 陳士元先生年譜 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999).
110 See L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., 178.
Confucius, Mencius’s tablet fell on a sacrificial vessel and knocked it to the ground, which apparently prompted Chen to leave office. However, Richard Strassberg noted that some of Chen’s colleagues remarked that he had been unhappy in his official career, while others speculated that Chen resigned because his talents elicited envy. After retiring from official life, Chen visited the five sacred mountains before settling down at home to devote himself to writing. He wrote on a variety of topics including the classics, history, geography, language, and religion. Chen also edited the county gazetteers of Xiaogan in 1555 and De’an prefecture in 1579.

The 1889 De’an Prefecture Gazetteer sheds some light on Chen Shiyuan’s family. In the thirdjuan on geography (di l地理), Chen Shiyuan is mentioned in the section on tombstones (mu yu 墓域). One entry, which is entitled “Tombstone of Magistrate Chen Shiyuan of our Prefecture” (Zhou zhi zhou Chen Shiyuan mu 州知州陳士元墓), gives information on Chen’s tomb. According to the entry, the tombstone is located 20 li to the northwest of Yingcheng. In the thirteenth year of the Daoguang reign (1833), a group of men from the community re-carved the epitaph for Chen Shiyuan, listing his various cognomens, as well as the dates he attained his various degrees. A list of his written works was also included, and the author of the epitaph noted that Chen Shiyuan wrote on over fifteen subjects. Apparently, Chen Shiyuan’s sons and grandsons had fallen upon hard times, lost track of Chen’s earlier tombstone, and were deeply saddened by their failure to display filial piety.

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111 See Strassberg, 28.
112 The five sacred mountains: Tai shan 山 (located in present-day Shandong province), Hua shan 華山 (located in present-day Shaanxi province), Heng shan 衡山 (located in present-day Hunan province), Heng shan 恒山 (located in present-day Shanxi province), and Song shan 嵩山 (located in present-day Henan province).
114 See Liu Guoguang, Volume 1, 115.
Especially in light of the tombstone epitaph, it seems that Chen Shiyuan was not a man of particularly great consequence, although he was certainly known locally. That said, some of Chen’s works were collected and reprinted posthumously. In 1833, the same year the epitaph had been re-carved for Chen Shiyuan, another Yingcheng scholar, Wu Yumei 吳毓梅, reprinted Chen Shiyuan’s Gui yun bie ji 歸雲別集 [Returning to the Clouds Miscellany], a collection comprising ten titles.

Of the ten, one dealt with dream interpretation: Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination (Meng zhan yi zhi 夢占逸旨). Five were on the Classics: Categorized Reference on the Analects (Lunyu leikao 論語類考), Miscellaneous Records on Mencius (Mengzi za ji 孟子雜記), An Explication of Images in the Book of Changes (Yixiang gou jie 易象鈐解), Book of Changes: Assembled and Explained (Yixiang huijie 易象彙解), and Alternate Writings on the Five Classics (Wujing yi wen 五經異文). According to Wu Yumei’s introductory remarks, Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination was first printed in 1583, three hundred years earlier (although the preface dates the work to 1562). In 1850, Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination was reprinted in Artistic Oceans and Pearl Dust (Yi hai zhu chen 藝海珠塵), which is extant today.

The Annotated Bibliography of the Four Treasures Imperial Library listed ten of Chen’s works, five of which were copied in their entirety into the Imperial Library. Although Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination was not included in the Imperial Library, as mentioned previously, the editors of the annotated bibliography briefly discussed Chen’s writing on dreams.

It is worthwhile to consider Chen Shiyuan’s preface to Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination before turning to the preface attributed to him in Forest of Dreams. In his preface to Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination, dated in 1562 and first published in 1583, Chen related a dream—purportedly part of his impetus for publishing this work on dreams in the first place. He wrote:

In the mid-autumn festival in 1562, while sitting on a straw mat on my sun porch, I, Chen Shiyuan, watched the moon slowly
rise and delighted in the first falling of the cassia flowers. I was 
moved by the transformations of rising and swelling and I reflected 
on the changes from glory and decline. Therefore, I raised my wine 
cup and drank until I was tipsy. I yielded myself to my pillow and 
straw mat and fell asleep.

I dreamed of an old man who had white eyebrows and wore 
a garment. [This old man] dropped down into my courtyard. He 
gave me a book written in golden script that dazzled my eyes. It 
was in the style of ancient tadpole seal script. I wanted to read it 
aloud, but I found that I could not. I hid it inside my sleeve as if I 
were afraid to lose it or get rid of it.

My mind again had doubts, so I again asked the old man: 
“Isn’t my meeting you a dream?”

The old man laughed and said, “How is it that our meeting 
is not a dream? How is it that a dream is not real?” Suddenly, he 
began to speak in an admonishing tone and therefore, I awoke in 
fright.

In the morning, I arose and sighed, “What sort of omen is 
this?” All day long, I thought it over, but in the end, I did not find 
an interpretation. “Sigh! My nighttime encounter with this old 
man—was it real? My sighing in the morning—was it a dream?” I 
got to an interpreter to inquire about the omen of a wondrous 
classic from ancient peoples and which had fallen to earth.

At once, according to things I had seen and heard, I edited 
this work into inner and outer chapters. I narrated pleasing details 
and took the title as “Guidelines on.” I did not use common or 
obscure language. How can I escape being ridiculed for my 
drunken dream? I will escape from the world as a worthless 
gentleman. Maybe this [work] aids in chatting and laughter…

Altogether, Chen included thirty chapters in eight juan in *Guidelines for Dreams and 
Dream Divination*. Chapter titles were listed at the beginning of each juan; there was no separate 
index for the entire work. Chen organized the thirty chapters into inner and outer chapters:

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116 嘉靖壬戌之秋八月既望陳子坐蒲陽軒中睹月色之滿今秋華之始放。感盈虧之轉變 念榮瘁之潮環。於是 
舉酒命侶與發成酣。枕簟清階，然就寢眠寢之老叟披霞服，而降庭。授予一函 金文眩目，宛科斗之古 
篆，欲宜諸，而未能。藏襲 袈開，猶恐遺脫獲奇奇竒。心復生疑，乃再拜問叟曰：『子與君遇無乃夢 
乎？』叟笑曰：『何遇非夢？何夢非真？』忽起語聲子遂驚竒，晨興有歎『是何祥色。』研思終日莫得其 
解。『嗟夫！夜之與叟也，其真也？耶晨之歎歎也，其夢也？』耶將通於古人撫華經之極也。輒據見聞 
之末撰絃內外之篇，述述徵，題為逸旨，拂常隱語。豆道醉夢之譏，適世朽夫，聊增噱譏之助爾。Chen 
Shiyuan 陳士元, *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Interpretation* (Meng zhan yi zhi 夢占逸旨), in *Xuxiu siku 
quanshu* 祿修四庫全書 zibu 子部 shushulei 術數類, vol. 1064 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 421. 
This is a photographic reprint of the 1850 edition of *Artistic Oceans and Pearl Dust* (Yi hai zhu chen 艺海珠塵).
While Chen devoted most of the work to examples of dreams and their corresponding interpretations, he began the work by explaining the origins and mechanisms of dreaming. In the first chapter, “The True Master” (Zhen zai pian 真宰篇), Chen linked the quality of the hun and po to life and death, to fortune and misfortune. Also, Chen situated these two souls within specific parts of the body, pointing to the relationship between the physical body of the waking state and the dreaming state. Neither the earthly nor spiritual soul is privileged over the other; the one affected the other. As Chen wrote:

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<th>Juan</th>
<th>Inner</th>
<th>Outer</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The True Master (Zhen zai pian 真宰篇), The Long Willow [Method] (Chang liu pian 長柳篇), Day and Night (Zhou ye pian 畫夜篇), Myriad Interpretation Methods (Zhong zhan pian 種占篇), and The Ancestor of Emptiness (Zong kong pian 宗空篇)</td>
<td>Heavens (Tian zhe pian 天者篇), Sun and Moon (Ri yue pian 日月篇), and Thunder and Rain (Lei yu pian 雷雨篇).</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sages (Sheng ren pian 聖人篇), Six Types of Dreams (Liu meng pian 六夢篇), Ancient Interpretation Methods (Gu fa pian 古法篇), Auspicious Affairs (Ji shi pian 吉事篇), and Influences and Transformations (Gan bian pian 感變篇).</td>
<td>Mountains and Rivers (Shan chuan pian 山川篇), Appearances (Xing mao pian 形貌篇), and Food and Clothing (Shi yi pian 食衣篇).</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Tools and Things (Qi wu pian 器物篇), Property and Valuables (Cai huo pian 財貨篇), Brush and Ink (Bi mo pian 筆墨篇), and Written Characters (Zi hua pian 字畫篇).</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Official Examinations (Ke jia pian 科甲篇), Spirits and Anomalies (Shen guai pian 神怪篇), and Longevity and Fate (Shou ming pian 壽命篇).</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Phoenixes and Birds (Feng niao pian 鳳鳥篇), Animals (Shou qun pian 獸群篇) and Dragons and Snakes (Long she pian 龍蛇篇).</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Tortoises and Fish (Gui yu pian 龜魚篇), Grasses and Trees (Cao mu pian 草木篇), Rewards and Retribution (Shi bao pian 施報篇), and General Metaphors (Fan yu pian 泛喻篇).</td>
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…the heavens revolved and the earth settled. Humans and things were generated between the two [the heavens and earth] after they had settled into place… Humans hold harmony like heaven and earth. The qi and non-qi spirit interpenetrate one another and there is no separation between them… The qi of heaven is hun and the qi of earth is po… When the qi is pure, the po follows the hun. When the qi is impure, the hun follows the po… One whose hun is pure is virtuous. One whose po is impure is stupid. These are the thresholds of long life and death and of disaster and fortune… During the daytime when a person is awake, the hun is connected to the eyes. At night while sleeping, the po abides in the liver. The hun is tied to the eyes; therefore, [one is] able to see. The po abides in the liver; therefore [one is] able to dream. Dreams are the wanderings of the spirit, the mirror for knowing what is to come.

For Chen, encounters by the spirit gave rise to dreams, while encounters by the physical body gave rise to sensations. Ultimately it seems that Chen believed the physical and spiritual realms interacted with and responded to one another. Both dreams and sensations were mental or inner processes. Chen wrote of the connection between dreamed awareness and conscious awareness. Dreaming and waking states were not cut off from one another; Chen viewed dreams as an integral part of consciousness and vice versa. Waking experience was as real as dreaming experience. When something made contact with the body, it was perceived; when something made contact with the spirit, it was dreamed. The two processes were essentially the same: Chen considered dream experiences as complementary or correspondent to physical experiences, stressing ties between the two. Thus, although a dream occurred because of spirit contacts and physical experiences because of sensations, the underlying processes resulting in a dream or a physical event corresponded to one another. For Chen, a dream was real and its physical manifestations were also real:

The six types of dreams are what the spirit joins. The eight types of sensations are what the body encounters. The six dream types are:

117 。。。天旋地凝，兩間定位，而人物生矣。。。人體沖和，肖乎天地。精神融貫，無相離也。。。天氣為魂，地氣為魄。。。氣清者，魄從魂。氣濁者，魂從魄。。。魂為賢，魄為愚。此壽夭禍福之關也。。。人之晝興也，魂麗於目。夜寐也，魄宿於肝。魂麗於目，故能見焉。魄宿於肝，故能夢焉。夢者，神之游，知來之鏡也。。。 Chen Shiyuan, vol. 1064, 421.
proper dreams, nightmares, perceptive dreams, waking dreams, happy dreams, and fearful dreams. These six types are the (different) states of dreams. The *Rites of Zhou* commentary states that proper dreams have no [deleterious] effect, but are peaceful and natural dreams. Nightmares are frightening dreams. Sensate dreams are dreams about what one thinks about while awake. Waking dreams are dreams about what one says while awake. Happy dreams are dreams of happiness. Fearful dreams are dreams due to dread. The eight types of sensation are: “causal” sensation, “doing” sensation, “attaining” sensation, “losing” sensation, “sympathetic” sensation, “happy” sensation, “living” sensation, and “dying” sensation. These eight types are the differentiated evidence of sensation. *Liezi* states that there are eight types of sensation and six states of dreams. The body and spirit respond to one another…

In the remainder of his eight-juan dream work, Chen provided examples of dreams and their corresponding dream interpretations, demonstrating the ways in which emperors, nobles, literati, and others used dreams as specific forms of knowing. In the chapter entitled “Mountains and Rivers” (*Shan chuan pian* 山川篇) contained within the fourth section of *Guidelines for Dream and Dream Divination*, Chen culled dreams and interpretations from nearly fifty different written sources, quoting actual passages from a variety of sources which supported his ideas. For Chen, dreams expressed a certain form of knowledge, which could be accessed, interpreted, manipulated, and expressed in writing. As Chen stated in his introductory chapter, “Dreams are the wanderings of the spirit, the knowing reflections of what is to come…” The interpretation of dreams revealed real knowledge about future events in the life of the dreamer or in the life of someone intimately connected with the dreamer. Again, just as He Dongru and Sun Shi asserted in their prefaces to the dream encyclopedia *Forest of Dreams*, to Chen, dreams offered a means to foretell the future.

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118 六夢神所交，八覺形所接。六夢，一曰正夢，二曰噩夢，三曰覺夢，四曰寤夢，五曰喜夢，六曰懼夢。此六者，夢之候也。（《周禮》曰：正夢者，無所感動，平安自夢也。噩夢者，驚愕而夢也。覺夢者，覺時所思念之而夢也。寤夢者，覺時所憶之而夢也。喜夢者，喜悅而夢也。懼夢者，恐懼而夢也。）八覺：一曰故覺，二曰為覺，三曰得覺，四曰喪覺，五曰哀覺，六曰樂覺，七曰生覺，八曰死覺。此八者，覺之征也。（《列子》曰：覺有八征，夢有六候。）形神相感。。
Chen Shiyuan, vol. 1064, 427.

119 For example, Chen quotes certain passages from Wang Chong’s *Arguments Weighed* (*Lun heng* 論衡).

120 夢者，神之游，知來之鏡也。。Chen Shiyuan, vol. 1064, 421.
Chen Shiyuan’s Foreword

There is a 334 character-long foreword to *Forest of Dreams* attributed to Chen Shiyuan. The date given in Chen Shiyuan’s foreword to *Forest of Dreams* is 1564, which would have been two years after he wrote the preface to *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Interpretation*, assuming the dates are reliable and accurate. In Chen Shiyuan’s foreword to *Forest of Dreams*, which does not exist separately in other publications, Chen explained the major differences between *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Interpretation* and *Forest of Dreams*.

Chen wrote that he felt *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Interpretation* (the 1562 publication) was unclear and that nobody was familiar with the synthesis of the main points in his work. Chen related that in the spring of 1564, he purchased a bookworm-infested work entitled *The Secret Methods of Fulfilling Dreams* and noticed that the postscript recorded that the work had been compiled by Master Kangjie of the Song dynasty, who was none other than Shao Yong. Chen Shiyuan noted that because of these three characters (xian kang zhong 宣康中), the work was clearly extant during the Jin dynasty. Additionally, after consulting the historical records, Chen estimated the work’s age and origin and declared that it was definitely written by the Daoist immortal Ge Hong. The text was disordered, but Chen Shiyuan gathered together what remained, reconstructed it, and then revised and edited. From the leftover pieces of text, Chen Shiyuan was able to see the work as a whole. The newly pieced-together work was given the name “An Explication of Profundities or Explicating the Way into that which is Profound.”

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121 For a complete translation of Chen Shiyuan’s foreword to *Forest of Dreams*, please refer to Appendix 5.
122 當初有源流之語，又有咸康中三字。稽諸史傳，揆厥歲元，又屬役翁葛稚川所著無疑矣。
It truly has the original language that was passed down. Also, it has the three characters: Xiankang zhong [indicating that it was extant during the Jin dynasty]. After consulting the historical annals and records, I estimated its [the work’s] age and origin, and decided it was, without a doubt, authored by the Daoist immortal Ge Zhichuan [Ge Hong]. He Dongru, vol. 1063, 617. Note that Xian Kang 咸康 was the era name of the Emperor Cheng of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (335-342). This Emperor’s personal name was Sima Yan 司馬衍 and his courtesy name was Shigen 世根.
123 據肆應之珍涵，損一成之賦，見八卷中，哀其餘，而誕漫妄為訂削，一書中集其成，而遺略僅乃遍全。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 617.
124 命曰：玄解，亦曰：解之有入于玄者，敬與肆別。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 617.
Chen noted that it was the goodness or evilness of the heart that was originally used in divination; however, this principle was already lost. Auspiciousness and inauspiciousness were already fixed by fate; neither is possible to differentiate or divine. Alternately, Chen wondered whether if the heart were kind, evil might take shape in dreams. Chen maintained that this dream encyclopedia (Forest of Dreams) differed from the classics in that it collected together the sayings of the early sages. Ultimately, Chen believed the main point of Forest of Dreams was to change or enlighten people.

Zhang Fengyi

Zhang Fengyi 張鳳翼 (1527-1613, juren 舉人, 1564) hailed from Changzhou 長洲 (present-day Suzhou 蘇州).125 Zhang Fengyi and his two younger brothers, Xianyi 献翼 and Yanyi 燕翼, who were also well-known men of letters, were collectively known in Changzhou as “the three Zhangs.”126 After qualifying for the juren examination (in the same year as his younger brother Yanyi), Zhang attempted to pass the jinshi four times, but failed on each occasion. As we will see later in his preface to his own dream encyclopedia, Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation (Meng zhan lei kao 夢占類考, published in 1585), Zhang fell ill shortly after a failed attempt to pass the civil examinations in Beijing in 1565.127 Zhang purportedly received a cure for his illness in a dream. Thereafter, he gave up pursuing an official career and returned to his hometown where he earned renown as a calligrapher and playwright, specializing in tales of the strange (chuanqi 傳奇). Zhang not only wrote plays but acted in them: he and his son both played roles in Tale of the Pipa (Pipa ji 琵琶記).128 Zhang Fengyi is recognized as

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125 Zhang’s cognomen was Boqi 伯起 (Great One Arising), his sobriquet was Lingxu 凌虛 (Overpowering Emptiness), and his style names were Lingxu xiansheng 靈虛先生 (Master Overpowering Emptiness) and Lengran jushi 冷然居士 (Impassive Recluse).
127 See A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China, 328.
128 “常与仲郎演《琵琶记》，父为中郎，子赵氏，观者填门，奕然不屑意也。” Shi Chunyan 史春燕 Qianlun Zhang Fengyi xiqu de yishu fenmiao 「淺論張鳳翼戏曲的藝術風貌」(A Brief Study on the Artistic Features in Zhang Fengyi’s Plays) Xuzhou jiaoyu xueyuan bao 徐州教育学院学报 (Journal of Xuzhou Education College), vol. 21, no. 4 (December 2006), 17.
belonging to the late Ming Pianqi school (騷綺派); Pianqi school plays were largely based upon tales circulating orally.¹²⁹

Zhang wrote several plays on tales of the strange, including: Tale of Red Dust (Hong fu ji 紅拂記),¹³⁰ Tale of the Blessed Hair (Zhu fa ji 祝髮記),¹³¹ Tale of the Secret Charms (Qie fu ji 窮符記), Tale of the Flooded Garden (Guan yuan ji 灌園記),¹³² Tale of the Tiger Charm (Hu fu ji 虎符記),¹³³ and Tale of the Bolted Door (Yan yi ji 廠廂記). Together, these works were

¹²⁹ See Zhu Donggen 朱冬根, Lun Pianqi pai chuanqi zai wo guo xiqu shi shang de jiazhi he gongxian 论騷綺派传奇在我国戏曲史上的价值和贡献 (“On the Value and Contributions Made by the Pianqi School to the History of Chinese Traditional Opera”) Xiqu yishu 戏曲艺术 (Art of Chinese Traditional Opera), vol. 25, no. 4 (2004).

¹³⁰ This story is set in the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE). The imperial court was run by Yang Su (楊素) who consolidated and strengthened his power by forging alliances with assassins and ne’er-do-wells, one of whom was the female assassin Hong Fu (紅拂). Li Jing (李靖) arrived at the capital hoping to help save the country from certain ruin (under the despotic Yangdi 楊帝 Emperor), but was dismissed by Yang Su. Hong Fu decided that Li Jing looked trustworthy, so she fled the capital with him and married him. The two fled to Taiyuan to join forces with Li Shimin (李世民). On the road, they met Qiuran Ke (虬髯客) who accompanied them to find Li Shimin. Qiuran Ke read Li Shimin’s countenance and judged him a suitable ruler, so he gave all his worldly riches to Li Jing to support Li Shimin. Qiuran Ke left northern China and took advantage of the political chaos to establish his own kingdom. Ultimately, Li Jing was able to help Li Shimin take control of the empire.

¹³¹ This story is set during a chaotic period in the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589). Faced with starvation, a married woman named Ms. Zang (臧氏) decided to sell herself in order to provide grain to support her husband’s elderly mother. She was sold to a general named Kong Jingxing (孔景行) and resolutely maintains her chastity. Eventually, the general was killed in a battle and Ms. Zang was reunited with her husband. For more on the emphasis of morality in this play, see Shi Chunyan 史春燕, Cong Zhu fa ji kan Zhang Fengyi xiqu de daode guanhuai 从《祝发记》、《虎符记》看张凤翼戏曲的道德关怀 (“Morals in Zhang Fengyi’s Tale of the Blessed Hair and Tale of the Tiger Charm”), Xizhou gongcheng xueyuan bao 徐州工程学院报 (Journal of Xizhou Institute of Technology), Vol. 22, no. 9 (September 2007).

¹³² This story centers on a debauched ruler, King Qimin (ca. 323-284 BCE). Although his son asked a senior adviser to convince King Qimin to reform, the king not only did not listen, but killed the senior adviser. At the time, the Yan kingdom invaded the Qi kingdom. The Chu kingdom led armies to attack the Yan kingdom and save the Qi kingdom, but lost to the Yan. King Qimin was killed in the ensuing chaos. At this time when the Qi was in ruins, Prince Fazhang (法章) followed the advice of loyal subject Wang Zhao (王著), changed his name to Wang Li (王立) and worked as a servant in the flooded gardens of Grand Scribe Jiao. The grand scribe’s daughter took a fancy to Wang Li and with the help of a servant girl, the grand scribe’s daughter and Wang Li were married. Ultimately, Tian Dan 田單 overtook the Yan and the Qi kingdom was restored. Wang Li became the king and the grand scribe’s daughter became his consort.

¹³³ This story is based on “The Tale of Hua Yun” from the Ming Histories (明史: 花雲傳). At the end of the Yuan and the beginning of the Ming, Chen Youliang (陳友谅) attacked the walled city of Taiping. Zhu Yuanzhang’s General Hua Yun (花雲) prepared to fight to the death in order to keep the enemy from winning. The General’s wife, Ms. Gao (邵氏), flung herself into the water to drown, but was rescued by her brother. The general’s concubine Ms. Sun (孙氏) carried the general’s son Hua Wei (花偉) and fled for safety. Eventually, after enduring much hardship, the two made it to Nanjing. Ms. Sun was still clutching the tiger charm from the defeated soldiers of Huayun’s army. When she met Zhu Yuanzhang, he rewarded her. Years later, the general’s son Hua Wei defeated Chen Youliang in battle and saved his father Hua Yun. (Note: tiger charms 虎符 were divided in half. The left half of the charm was issued to a general and the other half was kept in the imperial court. These charms were used to control the actions of generals. Without the matched charms, in theory, new soldiers could not be called and commands could not be issued. A general could mobilize his troops and set out on a military expedition only if he...
called “The Six Episodes of Yangchun” (Yangchun liuji 陽春六集). Of these six, only the first five are extant. According to the Catalog of the Tales of the Strange of the Ming Dynasty, Zhang Fengyi wrote three other tales of the strange plays: Tale of Spreading Peace (Pingbo ji 平播記), Tale of the Rush-woven Garments (Luyiji 蘆衣記), and Tale of the Jade Swallow (Yu Yanji 玉燕記), none of which exist today. Most of Zhang’s plays were short (in under 30 episodes) and could be performed in a single day. According to Li Chunyan, most of the themes of Zhang Fengyi’s dramas revolved around families or states in decline. Tale of the Flooded Garden intimated imminent political peril; although Tale of the Blessed Hair focused on the celebration of longevity in a household, certain chaos loomed in the background. Notably, Zhang Fengyi was one of the first scholars to write a preface to the Outlaws of the Marshes (Shui hu zhuan 水滸傳). Zhang Fengyi also edited the Changzhou gazetteer (Changzhou xianzhi 長洲縣志), which was published in 1598. Zhang Fengyi was apparently friends with Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526-1590). For the Changzhou gazetteer, Wang wrote a 466 character-long introduction to Zhang’s gardens, which were apparently located in the northeast of the city. Thus, it seems that Zhang was a man of local renown. Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646), also of Changzhou, later revised two of Zhang’s dramas (Tale of Red Dust and Tale of the Flooded Garden). The most popular of Zhang’s plays was Tale of Red Dust, which Zhang based in part on a story that began circulating at least as early as the Tang dynasty (it was contained in Records of the Taiping Era 太平廣記 Taiping Guangji).

had possession of a tiger charm. These charms permitted entry and exit at border passes and in the inner chambers of the ruler. ) For more on the emphasis of morality in this play, see Shi Chunyan 史春燕, Cong Zhu fa ji kan Zhang Fengyi xiōu de daode guanhuai. 134 See Fu Xihua 傅惜華, Mingdai chuanqi quanmu 明代傳奇全目 (Catalog of the Tales of the Strange of the Ming Dynasty) (Beijing: Renmin daxue chubanshe, 1959). 135 Shi Chunyan 史春燕, Qianlun Zhang Fengyi xiōu de yishu fengmao 『錢論張鳳翼戏曲的艺术風貌』 (A Brief Study on the Artistic Features in Zhang Fengyi’s Plays), Xuzhou jiaoyu xueyuan bao 徐州教育学院学报 (Journal of Xuzhou Education College) Vol. 21, no. 4 (December 2006). 136 吳城之東北隅為友人張伯起園。Wang Shizhen 王世貞, Qiu zhi yuan ji 求志園記 “A Record of the Garden of Sought Aspirations” in Changzhou xianzhi 《長洲縣志》, ed. Zhang Fengyi 張鳳翼 Ming Wanli wuxu 明萬歷戊戌 (1598), published Chongzhen Yihai 刊崇禎乙亥 (1635).

Zhang Fengyi’s Preface to *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation*

Zhang Fengyi’s 666 character-long preface to his 12-juan work, *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation (Meng zhan lei kao *) published in 1585, was included in the prefaces to *Forest of Dreams*; therefore, it is worth exploring here.  

In it, Zhang first set up binaries, defining two types of dreams: “self-fulfilling” and “causal” dreams. Zhang explained self-fulfilling dreams as interactions between physical needs and spiritual manifestations. In other words, needs and desires were supposedly met in self-fulfilling dreams; or, to put it differently, needs and desires elicited dreams in which those needs and desires were fulfilled:

As for the explanations of dreams, there are two: self-fulfilling and causal. The so-called self-fulfilling [dreams] can be explained by interactions between the body and the spirit. For example, if you are thirsty, you will dream of drinking. If you are hungry, you will dream of eating. The so-called causal [dreams] can be explained by non-interactions between the body and the spirit. For example, when yin energy is strong, you will dream of water. When yang energy is strong, you will dream of fire.

However, Zhang wrote that these two types of dreams were too simplistic to explain the intricacies and complexities of all dreams. To illustrate his point, Zhang related two examples of historical dreams that could not be easily categorized as either self-fulfilling or causal: “Just like Shusun Bao who saw his son named Cow [in a dream] before Cow was even born and like the Cao ruler who saw Duke Sunjiang [in a dream before Duke Sunjiang was even born]—dreams such as these cannot be exhaustively explained as either self-fulfilling or causal.”

Although both allusions appear in the text of *Forest of Dreams*, neither is explained. One version of the story of Shusun Bao was related in the *Han History*. The passage that follows is my translation of the story from the Han History, which is not included in *Forest of Dreams*:

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138 For a complete translation of Zhang’s preface, please refer to Appendix 5.

139 夫為夢之說者，曰想曰因而已。所謂想者，以形神相接而言，若渴之夢飲， 饗之夢食是也。所謂因者，以形神不相接而言，若陰壯夢水，陽壯夢火是也。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 618.

140 然叔孫穆見牛之貌於牛未至之前，曹人得公孫彊之名於彊未生之日則不可盡歸之想，亦不可盡歸之因。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 618.
Shusun Bao, posthumously titled Shusun Mu, had a son [named] Cow. The Zuo zhuan says: there was once a man named Shusun Bao who, while escaping [from the state of Lu] to the state of Qi, passed the night in Gengzong and slept with a married woman there. After arriving in the state of Qi, Shusun Bao dreamed that the sky was pressing down on him and he was unable to save himself. He turned and saw somebody and called out, “Cow! Save me!” and was saved. Later, he returned to the state of Lu. The married woman from Gengzong found him and said, “Your son has grown up.” When Shusun Bao saw his son, he realized his son was the same person as in his dream. Shusun Bao recognized the young man as his son and doted upon him. Later, Shusun Bao fell ill and the son [Cow] had illicit relations with his father’s wives and concubines, saying, “My father is very ill and does not want to receive visitors.” Cow did not give his father any food, so Shusun Bao starved to death.141

Zhang’s second allusion to the dream of the Cao ruler is recorded in Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era (Taiping Yulan 太平御覽). The following passage is also not included in Forest of Dreams; I provide the translation below for context:

The Cao ruler dreamed that many gentlemen were fighting in the palace, saying there was a plot to overthrow the Cao. The Cao ruler’s uncle said that they must wait for Duke Sunjiang, that with his help one day the Cao kingdom would be saved. At the time, there was no person in the Cao kingdom by this name, so the Cao ruler warned his sons [about his dream], saying: “After I die, listen to Duke Sunjiang and follow his policies.” Later, the eldest son of the Cao ruler ascended the throne. He enjoyed hunting. A humble servant of the Cao ruler, Duke Sunjiang, also enjoyed hunting. [Duke Sunjiang] captured a wild white goose and presented it to the throne. He said that hunting in the lands was like taking care of governmental affairs, which greatly pleased the ruler who bestowed titles on him, favored him, and followed his policies as in the dream. The Duke told Cao Boyang about his policy to prevent the overthrow [of the Cao]. The Cao ruler followed this policy and they invaded the Song behind the back of the Jin. The Song overtook the Cao, and the Jin state offered no help.142

141 叔孫豹也，諡曰穆。牛謂豎牛，豹之子也。。。左傳曰，叔孫豹奔齊，宿於庚宗，遇婦人而私焉。至齊，夢天壓己。弗勝，顔而見人，號之曰「牛，助余」，乃勝之。及後還魯，庚宗之婦人獻以雉，曰：「余子長矣。」召而見之，則所謂也。遂使為豎，有寵。及穆子遇疾，豎牛欲亂其室，曰：「夫子疾病，不欲見人。」牛不進食，穆子遂餓而死。 Hou han shu 後漢書 (Han History), Lie zhuan 列傳 (Collected Biographies), juan 59, Zhang Heng lie zhuan 張衡列傳 (Collected Biography of Zhang Heng), no. 49.
142 曹人或夢眾君子立於社宮，而謀亡曹，叔孫張甥請待公孫絳，許之，旦而求之，曹無之，其子曰：我死而聞公孫絳為政，必去之。及曹伯陽即位，好田弋。曹鄙人公孫絳好弋，獲白鷹獻之，且言田弋之說，因訪政事。大悅之，有禽使為司城以聽政，夢者之子乃行。絳言霸說於曹伯。從之，乃適晉而乃適晉而奸
It seems that Shusun Bao’s youthful indiscretion later cost him his life at the hands of his own son. With the Cao ruler, although Duke Sunjiang’s advice initially appeared useful, it later led directly to a chain of events causing the Cao state to dissolve. Zhang’s point in referring to these dreams was to establish the limitations of simple binary categorizations of dreams. Neither Shusun Bao’s dream nor the Cao ruler’s dream fit neatly into the category of either self-fulfilling or causal.

Although not identical, Freud’s wish-fulfillment dreams are reminiscent of Zhang’s dream typology. According to Freud, the associations produced by the dreamer in psychoanalysis lead to the discovery of an underlying thought-structure. Freud’s so-called manifest dream is simply a distorted, abbreviated, and often-misunderstood translation of an unfulfilled wish or wish impulse. To Freud, this unstated and often unconscious wish or wish impulse provides the energy for the production of dreams. Dreams thus represent the satisfaction of an unfulfilled wish.143 Zhang Fengyi’s self-fulfilling dreams similarly presumed an unspoken wish or desire being fulfilled in a dream.

In the next part of his preface, Zhang Fengyi wrote that when dreams could not be explained according to either the categories self-fulfilling or causal, the two types often combined, activating the heart-mind. This was why early Ru scholars felt that following the heart-mind was not as good as following dreams.

Next, Zhang posed a rhetorical question, asking how it was that success or failure could be interpreted simply on the basis of a dream. He argued that the good or ill intent of a person’s actions could be first determined by understanding the heart-mind, which was the master (jun 君) of the four limbs, just as dreams were the master of the heart-mind. Zhang’s was a hierarchical method of defining dreams; here, dreams were more important than the heart-mind. Dreams

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provided the early signs of potential movement of the heart, which allowed people to see beforehand whether or not their physical movement in the world would be auspicious or not.

Zhang’s definition of dreams was thus functional: for Zhang, dreams allowed a person to see the potential of the heart, the potential of future movement, and what was auspicious or inauspicious. Dreams represented a pivotal moment, a point at which something was about to move into the realm of actual. Zhang wrote: “The heart arises from motivations; motivations are manifested in dreams. There are good and evil manifestations just as dreams are divided into [the categories] auspicious and inauspicious. Motivations touch off further motivations. When speaking of motivations, they are all first perceived.”144 As Zhang implied, dreams were indicators of what had not yet manifested, of potentials and probabilities.

According to Zhang, dreams were so important in early Chinese history because they were indicators of potentials and possibilities. By the Zhou, dreams were collected and interpreters had grasped dream divination methods. Indeed, Zhang pointed out that the Han History contained seven later expurgated sections on the interpretation of dreams. Although there were many interpretation methods, dream interpretation was most important. That is, the best interpretation method lay in dreams. However, Zhang complained that the ancient arts were lost and that extant dream works were of no use. He wrote: “I wanted to look up the answers [to my questions about dream interpretation], but instead my doubts grew even more. I wanted to confront my doubts, but my doubts grew even more. How can we rely on the fact that just because there is a yellow bear, we must return to performing the ancestral sacrificial rites of the Xia?”145 The yellow bear reference alludes to a dream recorded in the Song Commentary on the Thirteen Classics:

It is said that in the seventh year, the Marquis of Jin fell ill and dreamed that a yellow bear entered his sleeping chamber. At the time, Zichan was employed by the Jin. Han Xuanzi [one of the Jin leaders] asked Zichan: “Is it an evil spirit?” Zichan replied: “In

144 心發於機，機徵於夢。機有善惡，夢分吉凶。以機觸機，言皆先覺。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 619.
145 將以稽疑，而疑益生。將以剽惑，而惑滋甚。 又安能因黃熊而復夏祀。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 619.
ancient times, Yao executed Gun [who was the father of the Yu Emperor] at Yu Mountain. [After Gun passed away,] Gun’s spirit turned into a yellow bear and was swept into the Yu Abyss. Actually, the Xia worshipped it, and in the Three Dynasties, offerings were made to it. [The state of] Jin is now the head of the alliances, and perhaps has not yet made offerings to [the yellow bear].”

Thus, Zhang implied that if dream symbols were explained incorrectly or interpreted literally, it could potentially lead to unnecessary practices, such as making offerings to the yellow bear.

Zhang also related a personal anecdote in his preface. He had contracted a grave illness during the time he was attempting to pass the jinshi examinations (1565); however, as he wrote, “Physicians were no help, but I had a dream that cured me, [thanks] only to the secret skills of the wise ancients. Although I do not possess the right to inherit the true teachings [of the dream interpretive arts], it could be evidenced in the remnants of recorded works and could be both seen and tested.” In other words, Zhang Fengyi healed (and thus saved) himself by looking through the histories for dreams. Zhang wrote that he named his dream encyclopedia *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation* because he intentionally patterned his work after the categorization system set by Liu Xiang (c. 77-6 BCE), with its five phases system.

Zhang wrote that he consulted and re-combined historical records; he inferred and used examples from the past to prove and establish the truth of the present. Zhang established categories and extended possible interpretation methods so that they would be practical and have many uses. In other words, *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation* was a creation and in some ways, even an invention by Zhang Fengyi himself.

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146 云晉侯有疾，夢黃熊入於廬門，于時子產聘晉，韓宜子問子產；其何厲鬼。子產曰：昔堯殛鲧于羽山，其神化為黃熊，以入于羽濮。實為夏郊，三代祀之，晉為盟主，其或者未之祀也。See Kong Yingda 孔穎達, ed. *Song Commentary on the Thirteen Classics* 重刊宋本十三經注疏附校勘記, *Order of the King Number 5* 主制第五, *Commentary on the Classic of Rites* 附釋禮記注疏, *juan* 12, 243-2.

147 不佞囊歳大病，醫工斬手，以發夢而愈。乃惟先哲之秘術。雖乏真傳，而已驗之陳跡，可以考見。He Dongru, vol. 1063, 619-620.

148 Liu Xiang was a descendent of a younger brother of Liu Bang, the founder of the Han dynasty. Liu Xiang is known as a bibliographer, historian, and poet. Liu compiled the first catalogue of the Imperial Library and was the first editor of the *Shan hai jing* 山海經. See Fei Zhengang 費振剛, “Liu Xiang 劉向,” in *Zhongguo da baike quanshu* 中國大百科全書, *Zhongguo wenxue* 中國文學, vol. 1 (1992): 450.
Audience and Reader?

How might late Ming readers have read *Forest of Dreams*? Although it is difficult to reconstruct the reading experience of historical figures, it is possible to imagine how an imagined late Ming reader might have approached the text. As I have discussed earlier, the encyclopedia was a hodgepodge of multiple texts borrowed from other sources and was shaped by the different formats of its varied components. Intensive, cover-to-cover reading might have proven frustrating, given the truncated and unexplained dream narratives. That said, by including these dream fragments, *Forest of Dreams* might have appealed to readers who shared this world of reference. Readers familiar with the genre and with dream theory could easily maneuver through the work, searching in the table of contents for sections of interest. In that sense, the encyclopedia offered choices to readers. They could skim through the contents, pausing to read more closely when the topic interested them.  

An analysis of the marginalia in the extant copies of *Forest of Dreams* reveals different reading strategies. Highlighted marks, doodles, and stray marks of ink appear in different sections of the encyclopedia. No one section was more or less important to readers. The work was a miscellany of dreams, combining a variety of information in one space, essentially allowing readers to read many works on dreams at once.

Conclusion

Late Ming literati sought within their minds for guides to action. Dreams were part of this search. The literati compilers of *Forest of Dreams* certainly looked within, delving into their

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150 This certainly was not a *Ru*-only phenomenon. Buddhists and Daoists also recorded dreams and played with dream metaphors to understand life’s purpose and meaning. On the relationship between late Ming Buddhism and dreams, see Liao Chao-heng 廖肇亨, *Zhongbian, shichan, mengxi: Ming mo Qing chu fajiao wenhua lunshu de chengxian yu guanhuai* 《中邊．禪．夢戲：明末清初佛教文化論述的呈現與關懷》, (Taipei: Yunchen wen hua, 2008).
lives and their dreams. A close reading of the four general prefaces to the dream encyclopedia *Forest of Dreams* indicates the role dreams played in attaining self-understanding and interpretation overall. Although this study is by no means complete or conclusive, I believe that it opens up interesting questions regarding the ways in which dreams were represented, interpreted, and manipulated by literati. While it is impossible to recover a dreamed dream, it is perhaps possible to recover how the intended meaning behind a recorded dream was constructed and, thus, the remnants of a dreamed life.

Late Ming literati were not the only ones concerned with dreams. Although much separates late Ming China from nineteenth-century Europe, there are perhaps some interesting parallels to be drawn between the focus on dreams in both times and places. Carl Schorske maintained that turn-of-the-century Vienna was a crucible of psychology, social theory and artistic ferment. Modern art and thought were born out of the convergence of political chaos and intellectual cohesion. Schorske stressed the city itself as playing an important role in these developments, underscoring the cultural self-projection in the very architectural design and layout of Vienna, in particular, the Ringstrasse, the area of Vienna separated from the suburbs and devoted to political, educational and cultural functions. Schorske detailed several case studies, including Freud. According to Schorske, for Freud, dreams represented the disguised fulfillment of a repressed wish. The visible structure of Freud’s theory was his scientific treatise (*The Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1900); the invisible structure, which Schorske outlined in his chapter on Freud, is a personal narrative that takes the reader into “the underground recesses of [Freud’s] own buried self.”  

Freud’s intellectual originality and professional isolation (he had to wait seventeen years for a medical professorship; normal waiting period at the time was just seven years) fed upon one another. Freud wrote on dreams because of *where* and *when* he was. Perhaps then, too, so did He Dongru, Sun Shi, Chen Shiyuan and Zhang Fengyi.

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Chapter 4: Nightmares

This chapter deals with the anti-nightmare techniques contained within *Forest of Dreams*. I explore two inter-related themes: the popularization of specific medical knowledge and the medicalization of dreams and nightmares (*e meng* 惡夢), viewed through the lens of “Dream Exorcism” (*meng rang* 夢禳), which comprised the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth *juan* of *Forest of Dreams*. This particular section of the encyclopedia was purportedly based upon Yong Yijian’s 雍益堅 (ca. Tang Dynasty, 618-906) *Compiled Explications of Dream Exorcisms* (*Meng rang jie bian* 夢禳解編), a work no longer extant.

“Dream Exorcism” presented techniques, prayers, and images of talismans aimed either generally at ensuring a good night’s sleep, or specifically at preventing certain kinds of nightmares or at preventing the deleterious effects of nightmares on the health of the dreamer. With the aid of the instructions and methods contained in this section, the compilers assumed that encyclopedic readers could heal themselves. Readers could simply choose the appropriate talisman and its accompanying incantation in order to protect themselves against the ill effects of a poor night’s sleep, inauspicious dreams, and even nightmares.

The encyclopedia underscores both the apparent physical and moralistic impacts of dreams and nightmares. It instructs nightmare sufferers to look both inward and outward; inward to a corporeal realm populated with benevolent and innocuous spirits along with malevolent demons, and outward to a pantheon of spirits and gods who communicate with individuals through dreams. Individual’s dreams apparently connected these two realms. Nightmares were thus conceived as much a product of internal as external factors. Both the preface to this section of *Forest of Dreams* and the contents of the section reveal a moralistic overtone to nightmare treatment and prevention. Nightmare sufferers were conceived of as being at least partially responsible for bringing these nightly terrors upon themselves. *Forest of Dreams* offered compilers and readers not only means to comprehend dreams, but also means necessary to escape the deleterious effects of nightmares.
I turn to the twenty-eighth juan in “Dream Exorcism” and the general prescriptions and talismans it contains. Based on what was included in this section of the encyclopedia, it is evident that the compilers assumed the potential readers already possessed certain medical knowledge. My treatment highlights the popularization of specific information. The encyclopedia, too, could be read as much as a how-to medical text on dreams as a compilation of knowledge or general dream lore.

Dreams also purveyed messages from spirits, and thus offered the potential means to self-understanding or religious revelations.152 Many texts strongly indicated that even positive or auspicious dreams were not desirable, and that true sages and enlightened persons did not dream.153 Thus, the mental state of non-dreamers was perhaps deemed more settled or less disturbed. Certainly nightmares indicated either a physical or emotional imbalance or demon possession.154 Texts were devoted to explaining ways of attracting auspicious dreams and repelling negative ones. Spells used against nightmares date from as early as the third century BCE.155

Exorcising Dreams

The twenty-eighth juan in the section entitled “Dream Exorcism” (Meng rang 夢禳) in the Forest of Dreams offers advice and proscriptions for sleep-related troubles and disorders. “Dream Exorcism” (Meng rang 夢禳) comprises two juan, or five percent of the entire encyclopedic collection. A reading of the language in this juan provides insights into the distinctions made between types of dreams and the ways in which those types were viewed by the compilers.

For example, the use of the character rang (禳), which I have translated as “exorcism,” in the section title implies the aversion of future misfortune predicted in a nightmare by means of a

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152 See Liao Chao-heng 廖肇亨, 2008. See also Sakai Kimi 酒井紀美, Yumegatarī yume toki no chūsei 夢話り・夢解きの中世 (Tōkyō: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2001).
153 See Liu and Cao, Meng yu Zhongguo wenhua 梦与中国文化, 315.
specific action—such as prayers, general change in deportment, or incantations—which implies taking fate into one’s own hands.\textsuperscript{156} As is evident from the introductory preface to this section, dreams indicated potential individual moral corruption. It was apparently up to the individual in question to re-shape his or her moral fiber based on the messages from dreams. This juan differentiated dreams according to their ill effects on the dreamer; it reserved the term “nightmare” (\textit{e meng} 惡夢) for situations in which the physical health of the dreamer had deteriorated prior to the dream. Below, I explore this distinction, which reveals the ways in which compilers found hidden meanings in dreams and nightmares.

The juan contains incantations (\textit{zhou shuo} 咒說), talismans (\textit{fu shi} 符式) to be copied by readers, and related information and anecdotes (\textit{za shuo} 雜說). Although I have found outside sources for some of these techniques and cures, without a complete searchable image database for talismans, it is difficult to find matches for every passage, prayer, or incantation quoted in \textit{Forest of Dreams}.

Although not all dreams were equally nightmarish, the compilers nonetheless stressed that, subject matter notwithstanding, all nightmares were detrimental to individual health and well-being and needed to be exorcised. Next, I discuss the preface to this section of the encyclopedia. After that, I detail some of the ways in which nightmares were to be exorcised.

\textbf{Preface to “Dream Exorcism”}

According to the preface to this section of the encyclopedia, dreams indicated individual moral corruption:

\begin{quote}
All that people say and do during the day under the blue skies, is it really the case that they make few mistakes and transgressions?
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{156} Several examples of “rang 嶙” suggest that disaster may be averted by means of virtuous behavior or conduct. One example reads: The king said it would be possible to avert disaster by behaving virtuously. 王言能以德禦災. See Kong Yingda 孔穎達, ed. \textit{Song Commentary on the Thirteen Classics} (\textit{Chongkan song ben shisanjing zhushu fujiao kanji 唐開宋本十三經注疏附校勘記}), \textit{Fushi yin Shangshu zhushu} 附釋 音尚書, juan 8, Yixun 伊訓 No. 4, 113-2. A second example reads: If the ruler cultivates virtue in order to avert disaster, then perhaps it is possible to attain foodstuffs, though there are no foodstuffs. 若人君修德以禦之，則或當食而不食. See \textit{Tiao ri fa} 調日法, \textit{Luli qi ming tian li yi} 律呂七明天曆一, \textit{Di qishisi zhi di ershiqi} 第七十四志第二十七, in \textit{Song Histories} (\textit{Song shi} 宋史), 1686.
When they see a way of making a profit, don’t they perhaps secretly think of taking it? When they see [something] sexually provocative, don’t they perhaps secretly think of [having] wanton sex? When they see something possible to experience physically, don’t they perhaps secretly think of catching and touching [it]?

That which comes to the eyes is experienced, but not seen. That which comes to the ears is experienced, but not heard. That which comes to the mouth is experienced, but not spoken, but once [these things are] thought of, an unconsciousyearning arises, which quickly searches the depths of the heart for greedy and licentious circumstances, which swiftly number in the tens of thousands. How is this any different from a nightmare?

In this sense, exorcising certain types of dreams was perceived as an important step toward cultivating virtue. The language and concepts in the preface are reminiscent of Daoist inner alchemy treatises. Here, the preface stressed the importance of refining oneself until only pure yang remained:

It is possible to expel wind and lightning. It is possible to enslave gods and ghosts. It is possible to fall underwater without drowning. It is possible to catch on fire but not be burned. It is possible to move mountains and cross glaciers. It is possible to break and subdue demons. It is possible to arise from death and return to life, and to fulfill what is prayed for. Therefore, these magical talismans and methods of exorcism and other such techniques—which were handed down for hundreds and thousands of years—are still able to quell evil in people and are still able to cure those people who suffer from fevers and illnesses. All this is only possible because what the qi of pure yang absorbs is numinous, auspicious, and eternal.

All phenomena (disasters, pestilences, disease, and, by extension, all nightmares) could be exorcised. However, nightmares could only be truly exorcised by a change in personal deportment. In this sense, it seems that nightmares were perceived of as indicators of personal failings, of exhortations from the gods or spirits to improve or suffer the consequences:


158 可以騷風雪，可以役神鬼，可以入水不溺。入火不焦，可以移山越凌，可以折妖伏魔，可以起死回生，而轉禍為福。故其靈符咒咒為，流傳百千年之遠，而尚能鎮人之邪祟，治人生之疾疾者，則惟純陽之氣之所攝者，神而靈，貞而永也。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 281.
If, upon awakening from a dream, demons come, and [you] immediately speak to the demons of morality and justice and then pray against wrongdoings or transgressions, but [you] are actually not repentant, then how can simply taking herbal prescriptions and saying a few incantations to dispel demons help [you] toward the path to true auspiciousness and healthy rest?

Early Ru scholars said: “In order to exorcise the inauspicious, doesn’t one need to cultivate virtue?” As for rubbing together auspicious mulberry [wood] in order to cause bewilderment and confusion to retreat, Heaven will banish and end evil. The evil in your spirit and hun will escape. It is not enough to sweep away and clean. I, however, have examined myself critically and have cultivated virtue. This can be called the path to great virtue and knowledge…. Isn’t it the case that nothing is better than adopting an intent of self-reflection and cultivation? Those who are in the midst of using the talisman of Hei-yu to suppress and escape [dreams] say that it is easy to follow. However, they do not know if they have already reached the shore of awakening or not.\(^\text{159}\)

The preface continued, claiming that although people are inherently ignorant and therefore suffer from envy and fear, the Buddha proved that holiness and virtue both exceed and triumph over evil. The compilers conceded that nightmares were indeed a reality, but they maintained that heaven was able to exorcise nightmares from virtuous people. Exorcist methods relied on yang principles. The compilers asserted that this was the reason sages used the doctrine of yang virtue to encourage people to follow paths of goodness.

The twenty-eighth juan of Forest of Dreams provides readers with preventive measures and protection against the deleterious physical effects of inauspicious dreams and nightmares. Information ranges from general advice similar to that found in contemporary longevity treatises to specific talismanic prescriptions. First, the compilers present general incantations for sleeping and sleep-related taboos. Next, they show images of talismans used to suppress particular types of dreams (after having had the dream), organized according to the category of symbols

\(^{159}\) 若醒夢來妖，即告之道義，儆以罪禍，猶或不悛，而豈僅僅藥物咒敕，所能為之除，而還於休嘉吉祥之路哉。先儒云：禳辟不祥，莫要修德。彼夫枯祥粲，退熾感，天誡可弭，矧爾神魂凶兆，不足藹瀲，而吾以省躬修德，茅可為大賢上智者道，。。。 奈若取修省之意，噬厲之符鎮咒解之中，便為之者，便其說之易從，而不自知其已登覺岸。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 282. Note the Buddhist reference (deng jue an 登覺岸) in this passage. This is a metaphor for achieving enlightenment in Buddhism. The basic metaphor is of this shore (ci an 此岸), which represents the present state of samsaric suffering and the other shore (bi an 彼岸), which represents wisdom and liberation from suffering.
contained within the dream. After this section, is an incantation attributed to Laozi. After that, there are images of anti-nightmare talismans organized according to the time at which the nightmare occurred. Then come three talismans aimed at exterminating the nightmare-causing corpse-gods, which is followed by incantations attributed to specific deities. The compilers then present a method for making a tiger pillow. The final section contains several dream pillow anecdotes as well as information on a dream incubation temple located in Fujian province.

In my discussion below, I separate the techniques according to the means by which they were to be followed. For example, some techniques offered simple, life-style change suggestions to aid in the prevention of dreams and nightmares. One presented specific instructions for the construction of an anti-nightmare tiger-shaped wooden pillow. *Forest of Dreams* included talismans, to be visually produced and then publicly displayed, and others to be orally ingested. In this sense, the nightmare-expunging methods contained in the encyclopedia may be divided along a scale of external to internal, with some overlap between the methods. I consider the techniques from those that were applied externally to those that were intended to be internalized. First, I discuss sleeping and dreaming proscriptions in the context of late imperial longevity techniques.

**General Advice: Sleeping and Dreaming Proscriptions**

The general advice section in *juan* 28 is reminiscent of contemporary longevity texts. With its anti-nightmare preventive measures, the twenty-eight *juan* of *Forest of Dreams* strongly resembles the late Ming medical encyclopedias Engelhardt discussed in his work. Ute Engelhardt wrote on the publication of advice for everyday life, including daily routine and ways to avoid harmful excesses. In these late Ming texts, health was equated with purity and freedom from wrongdoing. Engelhardt pointed out the rise in longevity writings in the Ming in many

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160 Laozi, the alleged author of the *Daode jing* 道德經 and philosopher became a key Daoist deity. During the Han dynasty, Laozi was idealized as an immortal and was believed to personify cosmic harmonizing energies. Specific qigong practices and revelations were attributed to Laozi from the medieval periods to the present. See *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, s.v. “Laozi and Laojun.”

collections and compendia, such as Gao Lian’s 高濂 (1573-1620) Eight Treatises on the Principles of Life (Zunsheng bajian 遵生八箋), which treated different aspects of longevity practices, and Wang Ji’s 王畿 (1498-1582) Methods for Regulating the Breath (Tiaoxi fa 調息法), which focused on a single method of prolonging life.Englehardt noted that in the Ming there was an increased integration of longevity techniques into general medical literature and a greater emphasis was placed on prevention of disease, rather than its treatment. Englehardt listed several practical and preventive techniques included in Ming compendia: gymnastics (daoyin 導引), breathing exercises (tugu naxin 吐古啨新, literally: expel the old and take in the new), abstention from grains (quegu 卻穀 or bigu 辟穀), talisman water (fushui 符水), sexual practices (fangzhong 房中), clapping the teeth (kouchi 啁齒), and clenching the fists (wogu 握固). Engelhardt wrote that the connection between health effects and religious ideas is clear in the notion of clapping the teeth. One medical work required this as part of a daily hygiene regimen, claiming it prevented tooth decay. In the third and fourth centuries, clapping the teeth was apparently an effective way of calling the gods and spirits and also provided protection against inauspicious qi.

The section on dream exorcism in Forest of Dreams begins by delineating proper sleeping habits, stressing the importance of body position, the placement of the pillow, and more. Here, the compilers of Forest of Dreams connected the importance of a good night’s sleep with dream or nightmare avoidance. Following these proscriptions helped guarantee a sleeper a restful night, untroubled by bad dreams or nightmares. The first entry of the twenty-eighth juan, titled “An Incantation for Lying Down in the Bedroom” (Qinshi wo zhou shuo 寢室臥呪說), reads as follows:

As for a person’s bedroom, the place where you recline ought to be high, clear, and clean so that the earthly climes do not

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162 For more on late Ming literature about how to cultivate life, see Chen Hsiu-fen 陳秀芬, Yangsheng yu xiushen: wang ming wenren de shenti shuxie yu shesheng jishu 養生與修身：晝明文人的身體書寫與攝生技術 (Nourishing Life and Cultivating the Body: Writing the Literati’s Body and Techniques for Preserving Health in the Late Ming) (Taipei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 2009).
reach you and the ghosts’ breathing will not assault you. When the ghost qi invades [the bodies of] people, it is because in each instance, the bed is low. Yin qi confronts what is above, so that spirits and po are not in peace. The external and internal interfere with one another, and evil pestilences wander in. Eventually, there are many absurd desires. Therefore, it is vital that these taboos (ji 忌) be respected and followed so that it is possible to obtain a peaceful night’s sleep.

The Classic of the Forty-four Techniques says: “At night when you are about to sleep, just as you are closing your eyes, first use your hand to gently pat your heart. Close your eyes, knock your teeth together three times, and softly say the following incantation once. Softly incant: ‘Great spirit of the nine palaces, Lord Tai Yi, please protect this room. Hundred spirits, take your places! Hun and po come together, and let me live a long life without death. Block evil and reduce inauspiciousness.’

“If you pray as directed above, your heart will darken as you sleep. . . [Your] hun and po will protect you, your sleep will be pure and peaceful and you will not be invaded by evil dreams and will forever obtain auspiciousness.”

The compilers of Forest of Dreams next included a list of sleep-related admonitions and proscriptions (lin wo zhuji shuo 臨臥諸忌說).

All people’s pillows must be placed high and the body must lie at a slant. Do not lie on your back as a corpse does. Do not lie down for too long. While lying down, do not open your mouth, as that will desecrate the pure qi. Do not lie down when naked, as that will drain the three luminaries. Do not lie down when cold. Do not lie naked on the floor. Do not block the wind. Do not [sleep] in a place where wind can enter through cracks [in the walls]. Do not be licentious. When lying down, do not speak much. When lying down, do not laugh ridiculously. Do not eat hot foods and then lie down immediately afterwards. If you awaken overheated, do not rush to get a drink of water right away. Do not quickly lie down after bathing when you are not dry yet. Do not sit with your toes hanging down from high places.

Take care not to use your hand to block your heart and press your mouth as this will result in having nightmares, just like people visited by demons. Do not casually enter into the bedroom of one who has a nightmare. Do not quickly pull aside the bed-curtains and look at a person who has a nightmare or use fire to look at this

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163 人之寢室。卧處，須令高爽潔淨，則地氣不及，鬼吹不干。凡鬼氣侵人，每因臥榻低淫，陰氣逆上，以致魂魄少寧，外與內涉，邪厲遂行，遂多妄妄，故必遵忌行之乃獲寧寢矣。四十四方經云：夜臥，將欲合眼時，先以手撫心過，閉目薦三通，微咒一遍。微咒默念也：大靈九宮，大乙守房。百神多位，魂魄同同。長生不死，塞邪滅凶。如此祝之，冥心而睡，則魂魄守舍，臥靜清寧，邪夢不入，永獲貞吉也。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 302. The full title of the quoted source is: The Pure Trinity Great One’s Yellow Forty-four Techniques Classic (Shangqing taishang huangsu sishisi fangjing 上清太上黃素四十四方經); in the above passage, the truncated version of the title is given as Classic of the Forty-four Techniques.
person as it will scare their hun to the point of killing that person. Rather, you must shout from a distance and wait for the person to awaken slowly. If the person does not awake, in the dark, use your fingernail and press the person’s philtrum [an acupressure spot: the indentation just above the upper lip]. Or, use your mouth to squeeze your thumb and spit on the face of the person having the nightmare and shake that person’s body until their spirit returns.

Normally, when people are sleeping, it is not permissible to use a brush or ink to draw on their faces, even in jest. This causes the wandering hun to be unable to recognize its body and can even lead to not awakening and death. Therefore, it is important to be cautious. Some people snore while sleeping; do not use a lantern to look at them while they snore. This causes anxiety in the person who is sleeping.

Therefore, for all sleepers, each season has its suitable direction. In the spring, sleep with your head facing east. In the summer, sleep with your head facing south. In the autumn, sleep with your head facing west. Only in the eleventh month of the lunar year is it proper to sleep with your head facing north. In each of these positions, it is possible to welcome qi.

Therefore, to those for whom nightly journeys or even lying down causes fear or upset, gather up the light of the sun and the moon and allow it to enter your inner courtyard. Then, the myriad evil influences will dissipate. Do not casually tell your nighttime dreams to others in the morning. This is the gist of the taboos of heaven, earth, and people. Shouldn’t you be careful?

The proscriptions quoted above offer general advice about creating a healthy sleeping environment. In addition to the generalities about proper sleeping habits, the compilers also included some specifics, including instructions for making a tiger-shaped pillow (huzhen 虎枕), which purportedly prevented nightmares. Such pillows still exist today in both China and Taiwan. According to its description in Forest of Dreams, the tiger shape protected sleepers from evil.

The pillow was supposed to be constructed out of a thousand-year old cedar tree, carved into the

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164 凡人寝處，枕須令高，身須令側；勿尸卧，勿久卧，勿卧開口，以泄真氣，勿著裸體，以濁三光，勿冒寒而臥，勿裸臥地上；勿向風，勿使風澆損；勿近酒，勿多言；勿笑，勿食熱物而臥，勿睡醒苦而急飲水，勿沐浴未乾而遽寢寐；足勿跂狀懸高，手勿當心壓口，令人夢驚；如人有鬼魅，勿輕走近鬼者對處，勿遽揭帳帷看視，及急以火照之，恐驚其魂或致殺人，須遠遠呼喚，俟其漙漙。如不醒者，就暗中用指甲指其人中，或用口吹大拇指而唾其面，搖其體使魂復。凡人臥中，不可取筆墨點畫人面為戲，使遊魂不認其尸，亦有致不醒而死者，切宜慎息；又人熟睡之中，勿移燈燭照視，令人神魂失安。是故寢睡者，四時各有宜向：春臥東首，夏臥南首，秋臥西首，惟冬月可北首，乘位以迎氣也。是故，凡人夜行，及冥臥，心中有所恐怖者，或可省日月之光，入我明堂之中，則百邪自散；夜有所夢，旦勿以告人，此皆三才避忌之要，可不誨哉。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 302-303. The above passage echoes proscriptions in Gao Lian’s (1573-1620) work on prolonging life, which was first published between 1591 and 1620. See Gao Lian 高濂, Zhu sheng ba jian 《遵生八箋》 (Eight Essays on Cherishing Life) (Chengdu: Bashu shu she, 1992): 370-372.
shape of a tiger holding up its head and with its tail curled around its left thigh. The dimensions of the pillow were set at 24 centimeters high and 48 centimeters long. Pillow makers were to bore a hole in its center and place specific herbs inside and close up the headrest.\textsuperscript{165}

In order for the pillow to be effective in dispelling nightmares, timing of manufacture was key. The year, month, day and hour of the pillow production all needed to contain the tiger (\textit{yin} 寅) earthly branch.\textsuperscript{166} Specifically, choosing the wood was to occur on a \textit{jiayin} (甲寅) day. Twelve days later on a \textit{bingyin} (丙寅) day, the pillow was to be carved. Twelve days later on a \textit{wuyin} (戊寅) day, the herbs (cinnabar from Changzhou, realgar, amber, luminous stone, the forehead bone of a tiger, a dragon neck bone, pure gold and eaglewood) were to be divided into equal parts, inserted into a crimson-colored bag and placed in the center of the pillow. The pillow was to be sealed twelve days later on a \textit{gengyin} (庚寅) day. Finally, twelve days later on a \textit{renyin} (壬寅) day, the pillow was to be used for the first time. According to testimonials included in the encyclopedia, the tiger pillow helped attract positive dreams and dispel nightmares. The entries on the tiger pillow do not mention who was to do the actual pillow manufacture. It seems likely a

\textsuperscript{165}霍釗真人秘授虎枕法，能令神魂寧守，妖夢不見，延年益壽，昇仙傳道之要也，不可妄傳其法。取千年柏木，按候製成一枕。高八寸，長一尺六寸，刻成臥虎之形，昂頭藏尾，尾自左脛而轉，豎空其中，雷霆方寸，用納後藥，然後以麝香調生漆固固，聽用。Huozhang True Master secretly received the Tiger Pillow Method, which makes spirits and the \textit{hun} calm and protected, so demonic dreams are no longer seen, so that life is prolonged and nourished. This is the main method to rise to the level of the immortals and to be reborn in the Dao. You should not rashly pass along this method. Take wood from a thousand-year old cedar tree, and form it into a headrest, which is 8 \textit{cun} high and 1 \textit{chi} 6 \textit{cun} long, cut it into the shape of a tiger pillow, such that its head is raised and its tail is hidden. The tail should be curled around the left thigh. Bore a hole in its center and knock out an opening a square inch large in order to stuff the medicine inside. Then, mix lacquer with some musk scent. After the glue becomes firm, the object is ready to be used. He Dongru, \textit{Forest of Dreams}, vol. 1064, 312.

\textsuperscript{166}The Chinese sexagenary cycle is a system for recording hours, days, months, and years. Recorded usage dates as early as the Shang dynasty. Each set of terms in the sexagenary cycle comprises two Chinese characters, the first representing a term from the ten Heavenly Stems (天干 tiāngàn) and the second from the twelve Earthly Branches (地支 dizhi). Thus, the first term combines the first heavenly stem with the first earthly branch; the second term combines the second heavenly stem with the first earthly branch. The cycle continues, generating a total of sixty distinct terms. After sixty, the cycle repeats itself. The ten heavenly stems and twelve earthly branches (collectively known as \textit{ganzhi} 十支) are elements of a cyclic character numeral system and used in the calculation and division of time. The ten heavenly stems are: Jia (甲), Yi (乙), Bing (丙), Ding (丁), Wu (戊), Ji (己), Geng (庚), Xin (辛), Ren (壬), Gui (癸). The twelve earthly branches are: Zi (子), Chou (丑), Yin (寅), Mao (卯), Chen (辰), Si (巳), Wu (午), Wei (未), Shen (申), You (酉), Xu (戌), and Hai (亥). The heavenly stems were used for dates as early as the Shang Dynasty, and are now used with the twelve earthly branches in the sexagenary cycle. The heavenly stems are associated with the concepts of \textit{yin}, \textit{yang}, and the Five Phases. The earthly branches also identify the twelve months of the year, twelve zodiac animals (mnemonics for the system), directions, seasons, months, and the hour of the day in the form of double-hours.
pillow could be commissioned or purchased according to the specifications detailed in *Forest of Dreams*.\(^{167}\)

**Written Talismans and Oral Incantations (Fu zhou 符咒)**

In this section, I turn away from general advice on attaining a good night’s sleep to specific ways of avoiding inauspicious dreams and nightmares. Here, I focus on talismans aimed at counteracting these dreams. Before detailing the talismanic techniques presented in *Forest of Dreams*, I briefly introduce the history of talismans in China.

Scholars have noted that in ancient China, talismans were formed of two pieces, each held by one party of a given contract. Connecting the two pieces together served to identify the authority of the two parties, thus legitimating the contract.\(^ {168}\) Modeled after official imperial injunctions, talismans refer to mandates, orders, or injunctions issued under seal, designed to invoke the intervention of spirits or gods. Talismans were and are commonly used in conjunction with incantations and serve as a manifestation of cosmic energies, representations of a particular deity or deities, and edicts for the spirit world. Written in abstract or diagrammatic form in rectangular and simple composition (or so-called celestial writing *tian shu* 天書), talismans use stylized characters, figurative elements, geometrical patterns and symbolic signs, drawn in combination. Commonly used symbolic elements are small circles representing stars or constellations; curves representing water, fire, and the flow of energy; spirals and curls representing clouds and cosmic movement.

Talismans vary greatly in their composition and can represent all the forces in the universe as well as the words and symbols that grant power or control over said forces.

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\(^{167}\) Specific reasons for the choice of tiger time are not given in the encyclopedia. Perhaps it is because tiger (*yín*) represents wood according to five phases theory; since the pillow was to be made of wood, it might have been important to match the qualities of the pillow with the correct time (matching wood with wood). Nathan Sivin detailed the ways in which early alchemists depended upon numerological correlations, correspondences, and resonances in order to manipulate and control time. In their quest to attain elixirs of immortality, Daoist adepts carefully timed alchemical processes. See Nathan Sivin, “Chinese Alchemy and the Manipulation of Time,” *Isis, Vol. 67, No. 239* (1967): 516-526.

According to some scholars, talismans revealed the workings of the universe in a raw and undiluted state, showing adepts the interior structure, the true shape and quality of things. The timing of the application of talismans was important; incantations were to be activated at precise times in order to support, promote or change the flow of cosmic energies. In order to operate with effect, the talisman often denoted thunder, lightning, the sun and the moon. Stellar deities and the constellations were and are depicted by black spots or dots linked in clusters. Generally, the evil to be combated or destroyed was (and is) written at the end. Talismans belonged to a tradition of occult, symbolic art over 2,000 years old and represented the visual remnants of the belief in the spiritual powers of calligraphy and the written word.

The twenty-five images of talismans shown in *Forest of Dreams* were templates for action, and offered the possibility to effect cosmic or other transformative changes through the very act of inscription by the nightmare sufferer. The images of talismans in *Forest of Dreams* were presented in combination with accompanying text, which gave the reader instructions to make sense of the images. Each talismanic image was printed on a separate folio and was clear and copyable.

Without the text, the images provided little clue as to their purpose or latent power. The implied reader was one who had already suffered from chronic or debilitating bad dreams or nightmares and was literate enough to seek out self-help or treatment in an encyclopedia. These talismanic images are accompanied by the texts of incantations, which impart power to the talisman. The compilers explained that Laozi taught methods for avoiding nightmares (*bi emeng fa* 避惡夢法), and included them in the encyclopedia. In the explication of Laozi’s method, the compilers stressed the importance of beginning treatment the moment a person is aware of

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172 Here, Laozi’s method is not equivalent to the exorcism of nightmares. The term used (*bi* 避) implies avoidance, evasion, or escape. It appears together with such terms as “the world” (*shi* 世), “rain” (*yǔ* 雨), “summer heat” (*shu* 燥), and “difficulties” (*nan* 難).
having had a nightmare. The method required the nightmare sufferer to use the left hand to twist the philtrum fourteen times, gnash the teeth together fourteen times, and repeat an incantation aloud. The incantation consisted of a chain of commands, which ordered a protective army to guard specific meridian points and prevent evil spirits or influences from penetrating the body:

Great Emptiness, truly profound, refine the three hun for a long time. First hun, quickly protect the seven po! Second hun, quickly protect the clay pellet! Third hun, accept control by the heart! Quickly stir the Three Generals of Tai Su [to action]! Previously, I encountered inauspicious dreams because the seven po, wandered throughout the body, cooperating with the source of evil! Urgently call upon Tao Kang to save [my] life and tell the Imperial Lord and the Five Elders and the Nine True Ones to protect the gates to the body! Tell the Master of the Yellow Palace and the Purple Door lords to take up arms with hooks and bells to destroy evil spirits, and to restore inauspiciousness to auspiciousness, so that life and death do not come to the brink.173

After saying the incantation, the encyclopedia recommended that the person who had the bad dream or nightmare write the accompanying talisman, which would then suppress the evil causing the nightmare, blocking it outside the “three passes” (san guan 三關) meridian point, and helping the person attain auspiciousness.174

Just before writing the talisman, the nightmare sufferer was to click together his or her teeth, face east, focus internally and recite the provided incantations. The encyclopedia then offered a brief step-by-step instruction in talisman writing, first visually depicting the proper brush-holding technique. Next, it explained how to draw the three dots representing the three Pure Ones (san qing 三清):

For the right dot, twist [your] left thumb together with [your] ring finger, and quietly say “San Tai, come to grow me,” and gnash

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173 吳洞玄, 長練三魂, 第一魂, 遊守七魂, 第二魂, 遊守泥丸, 第三魂, 受心節度, 速飲太素三元君。向遇不祥之夢, 是七魄遊尸, 來協邪源。急召桃康獲命, 上告帝君, 五老九真, 各守體門, 黃鬱神師, 紫戶將君, 把鍊握鈴, 消滅惡精, 還囚成吉, 生死無緣。 He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 303.
174 再依法書符敕賦之, 必獲吉應, 而造為惡夢之氣, 悉閉於三關之下矣。符敕書訣, 列於左方。 After saying the incantation, according to the rules, write the talismans, which by decree will obliterate evil and attain auspiciousness. It will create the qi of bad dreams to be closed up outside the three passes. The talismans and rhymed formulae are listed to the left. He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 303.
[your] teeth together once. For the middle dot, twist [your] left thumb together with [your] middle finger, and quietly say “San Tai, come to nourish me,” and gnash [your] teeth together once. For the left dot, twist [your] left thumb together with [your] index finger and quietly say, “San Tai, come and give me life” and gnash the teeth together once. Write [these dots] from the left to right.175

Although the instructions do not specify, it would seem that the nightmare sufferer would draw the talisman with the right hand while using the left hand to move through the gestures. The encyclopedia suggested using a clean writing table, ink stone, paper, and brush, which implies the reader must have had access to such items. The text does not specify a size for the talismans; perhaps this was left to the discretion of the reader and paper availability. As I wrote in the introductory chapter, Forest of Dreams is 22.8 centimeters by 14 centimeters.

The next section of this juan includes the first set of pictures of talismans or templates from which the reader could choose. The reader needed simply to choose the talisman that best matched the content of the nightmare. The forms of the ten talismans are similar, with three black dots representing the three Pure Ones at the top; empty circles connected with single black lines representing a particular constellation (such as the Big Dipper beidou 北斗 or the Southern Dipper nandou 南斗); and stylized, blocky characters at the bottom which represent either the creation of a sacred, protected space or the names of the evil influences which the talisman promised to exorcise. This first set of talismans is grouped under the category “to suppress” (yan 質).176 These ten talismans specifically acted against the after-effects of inauspicious dreams (bu xiang zhi meng 不祥之夢) of a particular subject matter, as opposed to nightmares.

That is to say, each of these talismans purportedly suppressed a particular kind of inauspicious dream. Based on the content of the inauspicious dream, the reader was presumably expected to choose the most appropriate talismanic model.

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175 右點，用左手大指，捻無名指頭，默念『三台長我來』，叩齒一聲。中點，用左手大指，捻中指頭，默念『三台養我來』，叩齒一聲。左點，用左手大指，捻食指頭，默念『三台生我來』，叩齒一聲，書法自左而右。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 304.
176 This particular term derives from “suppress” or “dominate” (yansheng 質勝), a Daoist technique of gaining control over people or things. At the same time, the term carried connotations of submission or eliminating discomfort or pain. The goal of this technique of suppression was to benefit oneself and avoid or deflect disaster in the future. See Hanyu da cidian 漢語大詞典, s.v. “yansheng 質勝.”
Figure 4: The first set of talismanic images in *Forest of Dreams*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about the Sky, Sun, Wind, or Rain (厭天日風雨不祥之夢)</th>
<th>2) Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Mountains and Rivers, Bridges and Roads (厭山川橋路不祥之夢)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Talismanic Image 1" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Talismanic Image 2" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3)</strong> Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about People, Ghosts, and Immortals (厭人鬼仙不祥之夢)</td>
<td><strong>4)</strong> Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Clothing, Adornments, the Body and Outer Appearances (厭服飾身貌不祥之夢)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5)</strong> Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Rooms and Dwellings, Household Utensils, and Tools (厭屋宅器皿不祥之夢)</td>
<td><strong>6)</strong> Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Killing and Fighting, Punishments, and Jail (厭殺鬩刑獄不祥之夢)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Banquets and Music, Death and Burials (厭宴樂死喪不祥之夢)</td>
<td>8) Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Flowers and Fruits, Grains and Vegetables (厭花穀菜不祥之夢)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Giving Birth and Conceiving, Wealth and Money (厭產孕財帛不祥之夢)</td>
<td>10) Suppress Inauspicious Dreams about Floods and Fires, Robbers and Bandits (厭水火盜賊不祥之夢)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next set of twelve images of talismans shown below from the text relate specifically to nightmares (e meng 惡夢) and lists Laozi (the Supreme Lord)’s nightmare exorcism methods (taishang laojun rang emeng fuzhou shuo 太上老君禳惡夢符呪說). Their introduction stressed the time the nightmare occurred is stressed as key to healing, rather than the specific content of the nightmare:

If you have a nightmare at night, wake up early in the morning, and look in the contents of the text appended to the left, and according to the date and celestial bodies, write the talisman. When writing, cherish intentions in your heart, and you will see above your head the Great Master Laozi, Clay Pellet, True Immortal, wearing the far-drifting crown, and dark robes, sitting in murky light inside the dazzling curtains. Look down at your mouth and ears. Then, close again your qi and hold it firm. After a while, softly incant this seven times: “Brilliant and vast, the sun rises in the east. I command this talisman to break up and drive away nightmares and inauspicious dreams, as quickly as [imperial] statutes and orders do! HA!”

The text then explained that the nightmare sufferer should first say the incantation and then write the corresponding talisman. If these steps were followed, the nightmare sufferer’s heart’s red qi would grow as large as a chicken’s egg (xin you chiqi ru jiluan da 心有赤氣如雞卵大). The text then recommended raising the qi upwards until it permeated outwards. At this point, the reader was instructed to knock the teeth together and spit out the qi in one breath into the center of the talisman. Afterwards, the reader was instructed to drink water flowing in an eastward direction and spit to the east. This series of actions would dispel any inauspiciousness associated with the dream.

The nightmare-avoidance talismans in this section are divided according to the twelve earthly branches (shi’er dizhi 十二地支). The visual structure of this set of talismans is quite

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177 夜見惡夢，早起，於左列文內，按其日辰，書符一道。書時，存心，見頭頂，有太上老君泥丸真人戴遠遊冠，服玄袍，坐冥光帳中，下視口耳，再閉氣握固，良久，微咒七過。咒曰：赫赫揚揚，日出東方，吾敬此符，斷除惡夢不祥，急急如律令，攝。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 306. Note: the character she (捲) at the end of the incantation pushes energy and intent into the talisman.
similar to the talismans included in the previous portion of this *juan*, with three black dots representing the three Pure Ones at the top and stylized, rectangular characters at the bottom. However, the talismans divided according to the twelve earthly branches do not contain shorthand versions of constellations. Another difference between this set and the previous one is that this set of talismans gives brief, yet specific handling instructions based on the date of the nightmare.

**Figure 5: The second set of talismanic images in *Forest of Dreams***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Rat day (<em>zi ri</em> 子日)</th>
<th>2) Ox day (<em>chou ri</em> 丑日)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talisman must be written in black, pasted to the door, and also worn (<em>hei shu tie men you dai yi dao</em> 黑書貼門又戴一 道).</td>
<td>Talisman must be written in black and worn (<em>hei shu yi dao da izhi</em> 黑書一道戴之).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image of talismanic images]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3) Tiger day <em>yin ri</em> (寅日)</th>
<th>4) Rabbit day <em>mao ri</em> (卯日)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talisman must be written in black. Men are to wear it, while women are to paste it to their beds (<em>hei shu yi dao nan dai nü tie chuang</em> 黑書一道男戴女貼床).</td>
<td>Talisman must be written in red and pasted to the door (<em>dan shu yi dao tie men</em> 丹書一道貼門).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) <strong>Dragon day</strong> <em>(chen ri 辰日)</em></td>
<td>6) <strong>Snake day</strong> <em>(si ri 巳日)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talisman must be written in black and pasted to the inside of the door (<em>hei shu yi dao tie men nei</em> 黑書一道貼門內).</td>
<td>Talisman must be written in black and pasted to the wall (<em>hei shu yi dao tie bi</em> 黑書一道貼壁).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Dragon day talisman](image1)

![Snake day talisman](image2)
7) **Horse day (wu ri 午日)**
Talisman must be written in black and pasted on the southern wall of the housing complex (*hei shu yi dao tie nan bi* 黑書一道貼南壁).

8) **Sheep day (wei ri 未日)**
Talisman must be written in black and worn (*hei shu er dao dai zhi* 黑書二道戴之).
9) **Monkey day (shen ri 申日)**
Talisman must be written in red and pasted on the wall; for men, it is to be pasted on the left; for women, it is to be pasted on the right (*dan shu tiebì nan zuò nǚ you* 丹書貼壁男左女右).

10) **Rooster day (you ri 西日)**
Talisman must be written in black and worn (*hei shu yì dao dài zhī* 黑書一道戴之).

![Talisman images]

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According to the days (such as rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, and so on) mentioned with images, nightmare sufferers were instructed to write the talismans. For example, if a nightmare had occurred on a rat day, the nightmare sufferer was to write the rat day talisman according to its provided template. When writing out the talismans as instructed, nightmare sufferers were told to repeat the given incantation once and breathe life into the talisman.  

Interestingly, part of the process would have required at least a semi-public visual acknowledgment of nightmare suffering. Those talismans to be hung on the walls of the residence compound would have been visible to other family members and co-residents.

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11) **Dog day (xu ri 戌日)**  
Talisman must be written in black and pasted to the western wall (*hei shu yi dao tie xi bi* 黑書一道貼西壁).

12) **Pig day (hai ri 亥日)**  
Talisman must be written in red and placed in the stove (*dan shu yi dao an zao zhong* 丹書一道安灶中).

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179 He Dongru, *Forest of Dreams*, vol. 1064, 310.
Although it may not have been obvious that the talisman was specifically directed toward nightmares, it would have been clear that the talisman was directed at healing, which implies that nightmares were perhaps not private nor socially embarrassing. Rather, it may have been the case that sharing this information with family members helped prevent disaster. Potentially, the entire family might have suffered from the predicted ill-effects of an individual family member’s nightmare; therefore, family members had a collective, vested interest in the nightmares of individuals. In the general advice section of this *juan* we have a sense of the shared social space of dreams and nightmares; readers of the encyclopedia were exhorted to avoid startling somebody who was having a nightmare or who was snoring. Sleeping, and by extension dreaming were not a private affairs.

The third and final set of talismans in this *juan* consisted of three talismans designed to exterminate (*jue 绝*) the Three-Corpse Gods (*san shi 三尸*). The Three-Corpse Gods are located in three places in the body: the Upper of the Three-Corpse Gods resides in the Clay Pellet (*ni wan 泥丸*); the Middle of the Three-Corpse Gods resides in the Heart and Abdomen (*xin fu 心腹*); and the Lower of the Three-Corpse Gods resides in the Stomach and Feet (*wei zu 脾足*). On *gengshen* day (庚申), the Three-Corpse Gods are believed to ascend to Heaven to report on individual transgressions and good deeds.

According to the explanation preceding the three talismans in this section, illness was explained as caused by the Three-Corpse Gods and nine worms. Thus, when sick people dreamed of struggles and fighting at night, it was because the worms and the Three-Corpse Gods resided within the physical body. Here, the focus was not on inauspicious dreams or even on nightmares, but rather on the nightmares of those already suffering from physical illness. Based on the language used, it seems that, at least for the compilers, dreams lay on a spectrum, with inauspicious dreams viewed as relatively more innocuous than nightmares, which were in turn construed as being less problematic than illnesses caused by the Three-Corpse Gods.
In order to stop the Three-Corpse Gods, the encyclopedia recommended using the wood of a peach tree as the talismanic writing surface.\textsuperscript{180} After writing the talisman on the bark of the peach wood according to the instructions, nightmare sufferers were to bury the talisman under the doorsill. On a \textit{gengshen} day, the nightmare sufferer was to wear the talisman. \textit{Gengshen} day was no doubt chosen because this was the day that the Three-Corpse Gods ascended to Heaven to report on individual transgressions. On \textit{gengzi} (庚子) days, if the nightmare sufferer swallowed the talisman (it is likely that the talisman itself was ingested only symbolically), the Three-Corpse Gods would be eliminated.\textsuperscript{181} Also, nightmare sufferers were told to write the names of the Three-Corpse Gods on each sixth \textit{geng} day (庚) and the Three-Corpse Gods would cease their mischief on the dreamer’s health. Each talisman included in \textit{Forest of Dreams} promised to sever a particular one of the Three-Corpse Gods.

\textsuperscript{180} Peach wood supposedly keeps demons and evil spirits at bay. Because of its purported exorcist properties, peach wood was (and is) used in many Daoist rituals. (See the \textit{Daoist Canon}).

\textsuperscript{181} At least in contemporary Daoism, the talismans themselves are not actually swallowed. Sometimes the talisman is placed in a vessel filled with liquid. The power of the talisman transfers to the liquid, which is then consumed. Some talismans are burned and the ashes placed in water, which is then drunk. The methodology is not explicitly stated in \textit{Forest of Dreams}; however, it seems likely that the peach wood talismans were either placed in liquid, which was consumed or burned and consumed. Also, peach wood would not have been so easy to acquire, so it is likely that most people would have just used paper instead.
Figure 6: The third set of talismanic images in *Forest of Dreams*

The first talisman attacked the three worms in the Upper-Corpse God, whose name was given as Peng Ju 彭居.

The second talisman, pictured at left, attacked the three worms in the Middle-Corpse God, whose name was given as Peng Zhi 彭質.

The third talisman, pictured at left, attacked the three worms in the Lower-Corpse God, whose name was given as Peng Jiao 彭矫.
The instructions read as follows:

These talismans obliterate the nine worms. When it is the sixth geng day, imbibe these talismans. Use white paper and carefully write them and imbibe them on each geng day. Only on a gengshen day, should you write them. It doesn’t matter how many or how few times you write them. On a gengshen day, arise early and imbibe and stop. On the next gengwu day, also imbibe [the talisman] according to the first method and do so until the sixth geng day without losing a day. Then, all the worms will not be able to carry on hiding inside the five organs and your body will be free of disease.\(^{182}\)

Unlike the talismans in the previous two sections, the Three-Corpse Gods talismans were intended for consumption, to be physically taken into the body. In this way, they closely resemble herbal prescriptions contained in medical casebooks. These were anti-nightmare prescriptions that were first visually depicted and then physically imbibed. *Forest of Dreams* gives an accompanying incantation:

The sun rises in the east, brilliant and imposing. When one imbibes the heavenly talisman, the talisman defends the four directions. When the talisman enters the abdomen, the stomach is transformed, the intestines are cleansed, and the hundred diseases are eliminated and healed, the bones and body become healthy and strong, the thousand ghosts and tens of thousands ailments have no means of taking hold, because they know that the talisman is like a godly spirit, and came prepared with various ways of exorcising nightmares.\(^{183}\)

\(^{182}\) 此符消九蟲，常以六庚日服符。以白紙畫符服，每庚皆如之。惟庚申書之，不限多少。從庚申日早起，朝服止。次庚午日，又服一道，値六庚，勿失，蟲皆不貫五藏，人身無病也。 He Dongru, *Forest of Dreams*, vol. 1064, 311. Compare with a similar passage in the eighty-first juan of *Yunji qi qian* (Book of Seven Tallies of the Clouds): 此符消九蟲，常以六庚日，常以白紙畫符服之。每庚皆如之。惟庚申書之，不限多少。從庚申日早朝服一枝。次庚午日，吞一枝，値六庚，勿失，蟲皆不貫五藏，人身無病也。 Zhang Junfāng 張君房, *Yunji qi qian* 雲笈七箋 (Book of Seven Tallies of the Clouds), 122 vols., (Zhang Xuan Qing zhen guan 張萱清真館, Ming Wanli (between 1573 and 1620), juan 81. The three talismans for fighting the Three-Corpse Gods contained in *Forest of Dreams* are identical to the three talismans in the eighty-first juan of the Book of Seven Tallies of the Clouds. The publication of the Book of Seven Tallies of the Clouds predates the publication of *Forest of Dreams*; therefore, it seems likely that it was the source for these talismans and their accompanying incantations. For more on the Book of Seven Tallies of the Clouds and on the Three-Corpse Gods, see Kubo Noritada 窪本信也の研究. Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1980.

\(^{183}\) 日出東方，赫赫堂堂。某服神符，符衛四方。神符入腹，換胃憑腸。百病除愈，骨體康強。千鬼萬邪，無有敢當，知符為神，又備禳解惡夢諸法。 He Dongru, *Forest of Dreams*, vol. 1064, 311. Compare with a similar incantation in the eighty-first juan of *Yunji qi qian* 雲笈七箋 (Book of Seven Tallies of the Clouds): 日出東方，赫赫堂堂。某服神符，符衛四方。神符入腹，換胃憑腸，百病除愈，骨體康強，千鬼萬邪，無有敢
Next, the encyclopedia listed several incantations to be used in nightmare exorcisms. These incantations appealed to specific guardians or spirits. For example, one incantation asked the nightmare sufferer to repeat the name of the Guardian of the Night (Zhu ye shen 主夜神), Vasanta-vayanti (Poshan poyin di 婆珊婆寅帝), twice.  

Next, the encyclopedia included an explanation from Hong Mai’s 洪邁 (1123-1202) Tales of Yijian (夷堅志) containing a reference to Vasanta-vayanti:

Song said, “I used to fear dreams during the day. One day in a dream, a deity gave me a chant, which was only a few words long. I awoke and remembered the chant. Then, each time I was about to go to bed alone, I recited it over and over a hundred times until I felt my resolution returning to normal and I no longer felt frightened.”

I said, “Wasn’t that the deity Vasanta-vayanti?” Song was surprised and said, “How do you know about her?”

I said, “Not only do I know her name, but I also know where she is from! I first read [about her] in Assorted Records from Youyang, which says: [this deity is] in charge of the incantation of the Guardian of the Night. She can dispel nightmares as well. However, we have no idea why she is able to do so. Then I read in the “Flower Garland Sutra” that Sudhana and the daughter of the dragon king know goodness. She resided in Kapila City in the Magadha Kingdom on the Jambudvīpa Continent. She is the Guardian of the night spirit. Her name is Vasanta-vayanti.”

Vasanti-vayanti says, “I have attained the status of bodhisattva. I have broken through all the darkness and illness of all living creatures and escaped into light and brilliance. In the darkness of night, I bring stillness to people. When ghosts and spirits, robbers and bandits and all sorts of evil creatures wander about, clouds close together and fog grows. Evil winds and wild rains, the heavenly bodies become dark and conceal themselves and it is not possible to see living creatures. If you fall into the ocean, if you walk across the land into mountains, forests or wild grasslands, there are many dangers and uncertain places.

Perhaps when investing in grains, you become confused about boundaries. Perhaps you lose your way and become flustered and worried. At that time, I will come with all sorts of methods to save you from the ocean and from difficulties.

I will be a ferryman, a fish king, a horse king, a tortoise king or an elephant king, a merciful Buddha, or even an ocean god, because they know that the talisman is like a godly spirit” (知符為神), the two incantations are identical.

Vasanta-vayanti (Poshan poyin di 婆珊婆演底) is the name of the Guardian of the Night.
spirit, all to save the myriad living creatures by stopping the great winds and rains, to cease the wild waves, to lead you to the road, to show the way to the shore, to stop your fear and allow you hidden peace.

For all living things that face fears during the darkness of night, now take the bright light of the sun, moon and all the heavenly bodies, and even from rooms and houses and people, and allow escape from the fear of danger. For those afraid while traveling amongst the wild and dangerous paths in the forest, through the stems of wisteria and the darkness of the clouds, allow them to come out from the clouds and fog.”

As I have said before, if the power of the gods is such as this, it is not limited to avoiding nightmares. Each time I saw people so fearful of ghosts, I urged them to diligently recite this incantation. In many cases, it took effect.”

In addition to the entry on Vasanta-vayanti, the encyclopedia also included incantations for the Northern Emperor (Bei di 北帝) and “The Great Daoist True Lord’s Understanding and Expelling Nightmares: the Blue Child’s Incantation.” The nightmare sufferer was to repeat the incantation a specific number of times and to seal the promise of the incantation by gnashing the teeth (kou chi 吠齿). The encyclopedia did not specify which incantation to use with which talisman. It seems that it was up to the individual nightmare sufferer to choose the most appropriate incantation.

The talismans contained in the section of Forest of Dreams potentially released powerful, protective forces; however, the talismanic images themselves recorded within the pages of Forest of Dreams were merely templates. In order for the talisman to be effective, the nightmare sufferer needed to follow the written instructions given in the encyclopedia and actually write the talisman by hand. What was arguably most important was acknowledging (or naming) the source of the nightmare. Once the source of the problem was clear, it was possible to regain control of

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185 宋云：《日穀夢，夢人授一偈，織數字，覺而憶之。每獨處臨臥，輙誦百遍，覺心志自然，不復恐懼。予曰：非謂婆娑婆賢帝耶。宋驚曰：君何以知之。予言不惟知其名，且能究所出；予始讀西陽錄垣云：主夜神咒，可辟惡夢，而莫曉其故；後讀華嚴經云：善財龍女，參善知識，至閻浮提摩拏提國，迦毗羅城，見主夜神，名曰：婆娑婆賢。底神言我得菩薩，破一切眾生癡暗法光明解脫，我於夜暗人靜。鬼神盜賊諸毆眾生，所遊行時，密雲重霧。惡風暴雨，日月星辰，並皆昏蔽，不見諸眾生，若入於海，若行於陸，山林曠野，諸陰難處，或之貪糧，迷惑方隅，或忘道路，棄皇驚怖，我時即行種種方便而救濟之，為海，難者，求作船師，魚王馬王，龜王象王，阿梨羅王，及以海神，為彼眾生止大風雨，息大波浪，引其道路，示其幽磿，令彼怖畏，重得安隱，一切眾生，於夜暗中，遭恐怖者，現以日月，及諸星辰，種種光明，及諸屋室或為人眾，令其得脫恐怖之危，為行曠野俾林險道，藤羅所骨，雲霧所暗，而恐怖者，令得出離雲霧，以此言之，其神力如此，非止辟夢一事也。予每見人多疑懼怯魔，勤使誦持，多得神驗. He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 311.
the situation and alleviate physical and mental suffering. Correctly naming the problem allowed the nightmare sufferer to choose the correct talisman, which would then drive away whatever had caused the nightmare in the first place.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I considered some of the means by which inauspicious dreams nightmares were prevented or purged from the body in the late Ming. I also offered insights into the ways in which dreams and nightmares were defined by the encyclopedic compliers in question. A focus on the anti-dream and anti-nightmare techniques contained in *Forest of Dreams* reveals interesting overlaps between dreams, health and healing, and visual culture. Part of the challenge derived from studying this topic is that dreams are ephemeral and inherently personal. It is in the act of translation or mediation that dreams prove most illuminating to us in the twenty-first century. While it is impossible to recover a dreamed dream, it is possible to recover the intended meaning behind a recorded dream and, thus, the remnants of a dreamed life.
Chapter 5: Foretelling the Past

In this chapter, I explore the use of glyphomancy (the dissection of Chinese characters) in the interpretation of dreams. Based on specific dream examples in *Forest of Dreams*, I explicate the way in which glyphomancy as a technique functioned for the readers of the encyclopedia. These examples also illuminate the compilers’ assumptions regarding the practice of dream interpretation.

I also analyze the role of dream interpreter as presented in the examples in *Forest of Dreams*. Here, I differentiate between the interpretations made from dreams based upon symbology and interpretations made using glyphomancy. Symbolically, dreams were interpreted based entirely on the purported auspiciousness or inauspiciousness of particular natural phenomena, physical objects, or events. With glyphomancy, I deal not with deciphering the text of the dream examples themselves, but instead offer a way of analyzing the interpretations of the textualized dream narrative.

Glyphomantic practice is not explicitly explained or even introduced in the encyclopedia. Only two short sections in it deal specifically with character strokes and the use of glyphomancy in dream interpretation. Although the remainder of the encyclopedia does not specifically organize dreams under the glyphomancy heading, many of the dream examples cited use glyphomancy in their analyses. Of 1,274 total leaves of woodblock printed text in *Forest of Dreams*, only slightly more than five leaves explicitly discuss glyphomancy and although these pages offer some examples of glyphomantically-interpreted dreams, glyphomantic techniques are not discussed. This is because a discussion or explanation was deemed unnecessary or superfluous. There are five leaves devoted to glyphomancy in the twenty-second juan in “Dream Interpretation” section (meng zhan 夢占). There are seven lines of text devoted to characters under the heading “Category: the Writing of Characters” (zihua lei 字畫) the thirty-fourth juan. At first glance, this dearth of entries dealing with glyphomancy might seem to belie its importance in dream interpretation or at least call into question its importance to the compilers of *Forest of Dreams*; however, a careful reading of the encyclopedia reveals the opposite is true.
In actuality, a myriad of instances of glyphomancy used in dream interpretation are embedded throughout the encyclopedia, hidden in truncated form and seamlessly integrated into the sub-text of *Forest of Dreams*. The compilers apparently felt no need to explain these techniques or even to guide the reader through the dream interpretations that used glyphomancy, which implies a sense of shared background knowledge, both about dreams and about dream interpretation methods. There was no need for the compilers to delve into details because the reader presumably knew enough about Chinese characters to understand the techniques and examples. The compilers and the assumed readers of the encyclopedia shared a linguistic, educational, and cultural background.

I concentrate on what I term the “translatability” of dream content into visualizable and then textual form and the subsequent manipulation by interpreters of these forms. Here, I differentiate between a form that was not recorded in writing and one that was. Glyphomancy required the dream interpreter, dreamer, and later, the readers to first visualize a Chinese character based upon the described dream content. The textualized form of the Chinese character sometimes differed from the imagined or visualized form. In the process of dreaming, interpreting, recording, and publishing, individual dreams transformed into public, shared dream knowledge. The focus on the written word and assumptions about a shared knowledge of characters reveals the popularization of a certain degree of classical learning during the late Ming.

The next part of the chapter reads as my explication of the relationship between the text of *Forest of Dreams* and the practice of glyphomancy. Sifting through the layers of text to uncover glyphomancy allows a more nuanced understanding of *Forest of Dreams*. Additionally, unlocking the meaning of glyphomancy in this text also opens a window into the shared visual culture of late Ming literati and an audience of readers.

If the above part of the chapter reveals the supposed logic behind glyphomancy in this encyclopedia, the next part of the chapter reveals the creative logic of glyphomancy as evidenced by an analysis of the role of dream interpreter. The glyphomantically-interpreted dream
examples contained within *Forest of Dreams* seem to offer contradictory messages about dreams and, by extension, fate. Unpacking these contradictions unravels knots of meaning.

Dreams (and by extension, the future as predicted by dreams) could be understood through the flexible system of glyphomancy; however, the examples given in the encyclopedia imply that only the interpreters (as opposed to the dreamers) could accurately predict the future based on glyphomancy. In theory, any literati could use the principles of glyphomancy to interpret a dream, but the dream examples contained in the encyclopedia suggest that some interpreters could do it while dreamers could not. Thus, authority lay with the interpreters, not with dreamers, and not even with those who might have read or used the encyclopedia, implying that the dreamed fate of the many was accessible to a select few who possessed the right kind of knowledge to interpret dreams. With the inclusion of such material in *Forest of Dreams*, this previously “secret” ancient knowledge about dream interpretation was rendered public.

Below, I focus on the way in which glyphomancy functions in the text of *Forest of Dreams*, explicating one form used in interpretation practice. To this end, in the following section I decipher dream examples taken from the encyclopedia. In the second section, I turn to the Chinese characters themselves, providing the necessary background and context for understanding glyphomancy. I conclude this part of the chapter with an analysis of late Ming visual culture vis-à-vis glyphomancy.

**Deciphering a Dream**

How were dreams rendered into manipulable visual form and, in the process, imbued with both individual and cultural meaning by literati? In order to discuss the ways in which non-material phenomena (in this case, dreams) were rendered into material form, I unpack layers of one dream example from *Forest of Dreams*. I follow the textual layers until the glyphomantic interpretation is revealed.

The twenty-ninth juan of *Forest of Dreams*, “Dream Origins” (*Meng yuan* 夢原), contains excerpts on dream theory throughout Chinese history. This section also contains an expurgated version of Chen Shiyuan’s previously published dream encyclopedia, *Guidelines for
Dreams and Dream Divination (Meng zhan yi zhi 夢占逸旨), first published in 1562, comprising eight juan. Although the main text for all eight juan was included in Forest of Dreams, the quoted citations of the 1562 edition were excluded from Forest of Dreams. Whereas the 1562 publication was divided into eight juan and thirty chapters (pian 篇) and was printed from 94 woodblocks, the quoted version in Forest of Dreams was 26 leaves, which means 68 leaves’ worth of material was cut in Forest of Dreams. Here I should note that the size of the printed characters is roughly the same in both encyclopedias.

What are the implications of this textual truncation? What may have been originally intended as a simple space-saving measure yields interesting puzzles for a modern-day reader. Because of the truncated text, each dream example is an exercise for me as a historian in deciphering the equivalent of late Ming shorthand. The dream examples give little clue as to how or why a particular interpretation resulted. However, reading through the layers of Forest of Dreams back to the source dream encyclopedias reveals the dream interpretation methodology that served as a toolkit for those who may have used it as a reference work.

Without the explanatory commentary, the dream examples appearing in the version of Chen Shiyuan’s encyclopedia contained in Forest of Dreams are confusing and disordered to a modern reader. The dream narrative of each individual chapter is choppy and reads as a disconnected string of famous dreamers and dream snippets. For example, the chapter “Mountains and Rivers” (Shan chuan 山川) quoted in Forest of Dreams contains 44 dream examples in the space of twenty-four lines of print. Compare this to the same 44 dream examples in the space of 181 lines of print in Chen Shiyuan’s original edition of Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination.

The only difference lies in the exclusion of the dream explication from Forest of Dreams, either due to space constraints or because the information was deemed too obvious to include. Given the already formidable length of Forest of Dreams, it seems unlikely that primary consideration was given to space or printing costs. The compilers may have cared only about presenting the results, not the interpretative processes. Given the claims made in the prefaces
about the encyclopedia representing the recovery and expansion of an ancient dream interpretation book, it is likely that the compilers assumed that detailed information about the interpretation techniques was extraneous.

Thus, a reader (both a Ming reader and a modern-day reader) of *Forest of Dreams* is presented with the following nine-character line of text: “The Qi Shizu Emperor dreamed that he ascended the top of the Taiji palace stairs (齊世祖夢行太極殿階).”¹¹⁸⁶ In the entry, no further explanation or interpretation is given. This particular example is surrounded by a myriad of other seemingly unconnected and unrelated dream snippets. There is no visual marker on the page separating one dream from another. See Figure 7 for an image depicting this dream example from *Forest of Dreams*. The beginning of the relevant passage is marked with a circle.

A puzzled reader could turn to Chen Shiyuan’s encyclopedia, extant today. Perhaps the late Ming reader knew the above allusion to the Qi Shizu Emperor and the nine-character phrase sufficed to jog his memory. For the modern-day reader, however, further explanation required turning to Chen Shiyuan’s longer (and therefore more detailed) text. In Chen Shiyuan’s encyclopedia, each dream was followed by commentary in smaller size characters, which visually set off each dream example. The example from Chen’s encyclopedia included this explicative commentary:
The Qi Shizu Emperor dreamed that he ascended the top of the Taiji palace stairs. *The History of the Southern Qi* states: When the Great Ancestor (the First Emperor of the Qi) was in Nangyang, he dreamed that he wore mulberry clogs and climbed to the very top of the Taiji palace steps. A wise man said, “The fate of the one wearing the clog is determined by the wood. The character for mulberry comprises four ‘tens’ and two ‘dots.’” When he reached this age (forty-two years), the Great Ancestor attained the position of emperor.\(^{187}\)

See Figure 8 for an image of the page from Chen Shiyuan’s encyclopedia. The beginning of the passage quoted above is marked with a circle.

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\(^{187}\) 齊世祖夢行太極殿階。南齊書曰：世祖在襄陽，夢著桑屐行太極殿階之上。史記曰：屐者運應木也。桑字四十二點，世祖年過此即帝位。Chen Shiyuan, *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination*, vol. 1064, 438.
Although the context for the above dream about the mulberry clogs is now clearer, the interpretation still remains somewhat cryptic. The dream interpretation given in the unexpurgated version stated that because the character for mulberry comprised four “tens” and two “dots,” the dreamer would therefore become emperor at the age of forty-two. However, to interpret the character for mulberry (sang 桑) as printed in *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination* required knowledge of an alternate form of the character for mulberry, which is 桑. This version of the character is written in running script (xing shu 行書), which derived from clerical script (li shu 隸書) and was conventionally used by scholars who wrote by hand.

This alternate version of the character for mulberry indeed comprises four “tens” 十 with two disconnected dot-like strokes. The fourth “ten” is actually a further dissection of the radical for wood (mu 木). In order to count four “tens” in the character for mulberry, the disparate character element “wood” was taken apart, separating the fourth “ten” from the two dot-like strokes (which alone do not constitute a disparate or understandable character).¹⁸⁸ For late Ming literati, the jump from 桑 to 桑 was a small one, one that needed no explanation and no textual guidance. Indeed, presumably a literate late Ming reader would have known many alternate forms of characters. A small hint from the encyclopedia compiler was all that was necessary for the reader to visually imagine and then interpret a given dream based on glyphomantic techniques.

**Chinese Written Script and Glyphomancy**

The nature of the Chinese written script suits glyphomantic divination techniques.¹⁸⁹ By reading the glyphomantically-interpreted dreams in *Forest of Dreams*, we can extract certain

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¹⁸⁸ Compare the alternate character for mulberry 桑 with the form in which it typically appears: 桑. In this version of the character, three of the four “tens” are written as you 又. The wood radical remains unchanged in this character version.

¹⁸⁹ The Han dynasty marked the beginning of the systematic study of the Chinese script. In *Explicating Simple Graphs and Analyzing Complex Graphs* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字), Xu Shen 許慎 (58-147) presented a systematically elaborated theory and analysis of Chinese written script. Although this was not the first comprehensive Chinese character dictionary, it was nonetheless the first extant work to analyze the structure and the etymology of the characters. Additionally, it was the first work to organize characters according to shared visual components (radicals, *bushou* 部首). Xu based his analyses on small seal script (*xiaozhuan* 小篆), which was the oldest form of writing known at the time. All graphs were divided into two broad categories: simple, non-composite.
rules that were followed in glyphomantic divination. For example, characters could be split apart into constituent parts, strokes could be added to existing characters, and existing characters could be combined to create a new character. At the same time, however, glyphomancy relied on a sense of play or imagination, the ability or even desire, to bend rules, to create and recreate. Although glyphomantic principles were useful across dream examples, interpretations were specific to the interpreter and dreamer. Myriad possibilities existed for taking apart characters; therefore, there were no seemingly incorrect interpretations. Indeed, the visual nature of the Chinese written language rendered (and renders) it particularly compatible with character-related punning.

graphs (wen 文) and composite graphs (zi 字). Xu Shen roughly divided characters into six graphs (liu shu 六書): 1) simple indicatives (zhishi 指事); 2) pictographs (xiangxing 象形); 3) phono-semantic compound characters (xingsheng 形聲); 4) compound indicatives (huiyi 會意); 5) phonetic loan characters (jiajie 假借); and 6) derived characters (zhuanzhu 轉注). The first two categories in Xu Shen’s work comprised simple graphs that are non-phonetic. Simple indicatives are non-pictorial, abstract representations that generally do not refer to physical objects, but rather to relational or abstract concepts, such as the character which represents the meaning “up” or “above” (shang 上). Pictographs are visual representations of the objects themselves, such as the character for “moon” (yue 月). Phono-semantic compound characters form the largest category; these combine at least two disparate written elements, one of which gives a clue to the semantic category of the word while the remaining written elements provide clues to the pronunciation. The meaning of compound indicative characters is given by a combination of at least two graphic components. The final two types of characters rely on graphs that were first devised to write one character and then borrowed to represent another (often unrelated) concept. William Boltz maintained that these categories were as much prescriptive of how the development of the script should proceed as they were descriptive of the then-contemporary writing system. See William Boltz, The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1994), 146.

190 Linguist Jerry Norman wrote that most characters have a semantic indicator or “radical.” The radical suggests the general class or category to which any given character might be thought to belong. Such categories include animals, minerals, natural phenomena, and physical formations. For example, one such radical 日 (ri) means “sun” by itself. When this particular radical is placed in combination with other character components, the meaning of the resulting characters generally have something to do with the sun or with sun-like properties, such as brightness. Because phonetic components often also stand alone as individual characters, most characters can be broken down into at least two disparate and significant units. For example, the character 明 (ming) comprises both 日 and 月 (yue, moon) and is generally translated as “bright.” Thus, these two stand-alone characters may be combined to form a separate and new character. Many characters can be dissected into three, four, or even more constituent parts. 萍 (ping), which is generally translated as “duckweed,” comprises the following distinct elements: the grass radical (艹), the water radical (氵), and 平. Simpler characters may be augmented by the addition of strokes or new radicals to form more complex characters. For example, the addition of the character “one” 一 to the character “two” 二 results in the character “three” 三. See Jerry Norman, Chinese (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

191 For more on word puns and riddles in Taiwan and China, see Lindy Li Mark, “Orthography Riddles, Divination, and Word Magic: an Exploration in Folklore and Culture,” in Legend, Lore, and Religion in China, ed. Sarah Allan and Alvin P. Cohen (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, Inc., 1979). One visually based riddle Mark cited reads as follows: “Two ‘woods’ do not make a forest.” 微木不成林. Mark wrote: “The first structural device in this riddle is a homophony since both radicals have the phonetic value mu. The second devise is an allusion to a semantic contradiction between the meaning of the riddle base and another character made up of two mus, namely
Much like the trigrams and hexagrams in the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), characters in written charms actually were regarded as the objects and ideas they represented writ small. In other words, if, for example, the character representing ghost or demon (*gui* 鬼) appeared in a written charm, it not only represented “ghost” or “demon,” it also embodied demonic properties. For the purposes of the written charm, the character was as much of a ghost or demon as an actual ghost or demon and imparted these qualities to the charm. By extension, the written character 鬼 revealed something essential about the visual aspects of ghosts and demons. The entire topography of the cosmos could be held within characters. Characters acted as metonyms for all of the phenomena and objects of the universe; moreover, for literate Chinese, characters offered a way of comprehending the universe. Because dreams were but one phenomenon in the universe, it makes sense that one key to unlocking the meaning of dreams also lay in characters. A primarily visual event was re-articulated in written form.

In his study on late imperial glyphomantic manuals, Richard Smith described what he saw as six glyphomantic techniques: 1) adding strokes to a character; 2) reducing the strokes of a character; 3) extracting disparate components of a character; 4) dissecting an antonym of a given character; 5) devising a pun based on the pronunciation or visual components of a character; and 6) dissecting a homonym of a given character. As Smith wrote, “the logic of word analysis, like that of physiognomy and most other forms of Chinese divination, was inveterately associational, allowing, perhaps even compelling, diviners to link all relevant concepts, cosmological as well as personal, to the client.” Here, word analysis or glyphomancy allowed for correspondences or connections between a written word and an interpretation. Smith noted that glyphomancy rules existed more as guidelines, providing variables and suggestions for the ways in which future events might transpire. These rules acted as an interpretable map. Thus, the ability to determine

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林 *lin* ‘forest.’ The semantic contradiction functions as a cluing device by eliminating the more obvious of two alternatives.” The answer to the riddle is: *xiang* 相, which contains two *mu* radicals 木 and 目, each written differently, but having the same pronunciation. Lindy Li Mark, “Orthography Riddles,” 52.

the meaning of a dream based on glyphomancy lay less in the rules themselves than in the mind of the person interpreting or re-inventing said rules. However, it seems that people believed in the interpretive powers of dream interpreters, whether or not their predictions and the corresponding dreams were created and recorded ad hoc.

Ming literati could rely on glyphomancy to provide dream interpretations. Tacit knowledge of character components taken from dream symbols helped to distill and clarify dream knowledge, or translate ethereal dream content into a more tangible and easily interpreted form. Characters rendered dreams visible and less chaotic. Deconstructing or reconstructing characters offered one means to reconnect the dreamer to the dream state while simultaneously connecting the dream state to waking reality. The often random, unconnected, and typically non-narrative form of dreams could be rendered or translated into easily understood visual forms, or Chinese characters. The use of glyphomancy in dream interpretation provided compilers and educated dreamers alike the chance to understand, domesticate, or perhaps even control the waking manifestation of their dreams.

Glyphomantic techniques required both literacy and a strong visual imagination—the ability to connect an intangible object with its various written forms. The compilers of *Forest of Dreams* constructed textual meaning out of the deconstruction of Chinese characters. Compilers sought meaning behind the shared knowledge of character composition. Dream examples involving Chinese characters comprise the section entitled “Character Strokes” (zi hua 字畫) in the 22nd *juan* of *Forest of Dreams*. There is another, even shorter section also entitled “Character Strokes” (zi hua 字畫) in the thirty-fourth *juan*, with two examples of dreams about characters; both dreams purportedly dated from the Song dynasty.

For the compilers, dreams were inherently interpretable; more importantly, however, the meaning of dreams could be manipulated or shifted by the dream interpreters. In the dream examples or dream case studies throughout the encyclopedia, the compilers presented only the basic dream narrative along with the given interpretation. The path from dream to explanation
was deliberately left unmarked, uncharted, as with other forms of solutions. The compilers assumed readers would draw upon the bare guidelines to interpretation contained in the pages of the encyclopedia and then embellish and fill in the necessary details based on a shared textual world of written language and allusion. The Chinese written script acted as a tool that compilers and literate readers alike could wield to help them along the path to dream interpretation. The point of glyphomancy was less about an understanding of the elements of Chinese characters and more about justification or explanation of life or career events.

In the dream examples contained within *Forest of Dreams*, the interpreters are omniscient and infallible. In the instances related in the encyclopedia, the dreamers occasionally offer guesses at the future based on their dreams, but only the interpreters apparently know what the past, present, and future really meant. Again, these were likely ad hoc inventions. The interpreters were historicized as anonymous visionaries, who possessed the technical and paleographic tools necessary to see into the future.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the dream examples in the encyclopedia are truncated, so the different roles of dreamer and interpreter were not detailed. There was no set term used to describe a interpreter, successful or otherwise. Aside from their purported success rate, it seems the interpreters in *Forest of Dreams* were not necessarily described as members of a skilled or expert class. Some were described as “passers-by” (xing zhe 行者) while others were simply classified as “older men” (lao fu 老父). Here, we see an overlap between the so-called elite and popular realms. Here, the members of the lower-level strata of educated society were the ones who held the key to dream interpretation. The only common feature is that in all of the

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193 Wolfram Eberhard argued that astronomical calculations provided checks on the Han ruling state. Natural disasters and unusual celestial events were interpreted as either auspicious or inauspicious signs, legitimizing or delegitimizing a particular ruler. In at least some cases, Eberhard maintained that a ruler, a court faction, or a later historian invented an omen ad hoc to justify a particular political action, to explain an event, or to leverage support. Eberhard speculated that it seemed unlikely the elite in question actually believed in the predictive power of portents and concluded that the entire field of portents and calendrical studies might have been simply related to politics, not prognosticatory or “scientific” fields. Astronomers, astrologists, and meteorologists (Eberhard’s terms) were more motivated by politics than science per se; they were employed by the state as long as their work reflected political loyalty. See Wolfram Eberhard, “The Political Function of Astronomy and Astronomers in Han China,” in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. J.K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 33-70.
dream narratives in the encyclopedia, these interpreters accurately predicted futures, explained the present, and explicated the past, all based on the reported dreams.

In a sense, it almost seemed as though the interpreters knew the results in advance, effectively controlling the fates of the dreamers. In some instances, the dreamers’ interpretations of their own dreams were actually incorrect. But when interpreting someone else’s dream, each time the interpreter (whether a passer-by or a trained soothsayer) correctly divulged what would be the actual fate of the dreamer. Although the identity of the interpreter varied from example to example, the messages interpreted from dreams did not. Dreams offered keys to understanding the future, present, and past; however, this understanding was seemingly only available to those unconnected to the dream itself.

Controlling the Future through Glyphomancy

In all the glyphomantic examples quoted in Forest of Dreams, the interpreter was assumed to be omniscient about what had already transpired and what was yet to come. One example cited in secondary works on Chinese dreams illustrates the finality in interpretation and the amazing interpretive prowess of the dream interpreter. Apparently, a man approached Zhou Xuan (a famous dream interpreter of the Three Kingdoms period) on three separate occasions asking for an interpretation of the same dream of straw dogs. Each time, Zhou attached a radically different meaning to the presented dream. In fact, the man had never dreamed of straw dogs at all, but simply invented these dreams of straw dogs in order to trick Zhou Xuan into giving a false prediction. Curiously, however, each of Zhou’s interpretations proved true and the man was trapped by the fate Zhou predicted.

When later questioned by the man about the three divergent (but ultimately correct) interpretations for the three invented dreams, Zhou purportedly explained, “Straw dogs are sacrificial offerings to the gods. Hence, your first dream meant you would attain food and drink. When a sacrifice has been completed, the straw dogs are then crushed under a wheel. Therefore, your second dream prefigured your fall from a carriage and you broke your legs. When the straw dogs have been crushed, they are taken away and used as kindling. So, the final dream warned
Despite the arbitrariness of the three invented dreams, Zhou Xuan was described as correctly predicting the future each time (or he correctly interpreted the past), which implies that although there was flexibility in interpretations, there also existed a knowable (and thus inescapable) future, pre-determined by the interpreter.

Unsurprisingly, all of the glyphomantic examples in Forest of Dreams later proved true. The meaning of a given dream recorded within Forest of Dreams was decoded by the analysis of characters with known meanings and associations. In that sense, the compiled dreams were treated as a kind of cryptography in which particular dream symbols corresponded to specific characters. Dreams were interpreted according to visual associations, which acted as metonymic tropes. Interpreters read meaning into dreams by taking images from dreams and reading these images into a rule-based system of written characters.

Each interpretation seemed not to be simply about the dream or the dreamer, but rather about fate, about the dreamer’s relationship to the world. If life was a question, dreams provided clues, revealing secrets about the present and future through de-contextualized symbols. These individual symbols were first re-contextualized through glyphomancy and then re-contextualized even further when the compilers of Forest of Dreams organized and categorized dream examples.

Glyphomancy was not the only dream interpretation technique used in Forest of Dreams. In interpreting some dreams contained within the encyclopedia, a form of symbology or one-to-one correspondence was often entailed. With symbology, dreams involving a particular object, natural phenomenon, or animal, for example, always indicated a specific outcome—either imminent wealth or disaster or auspiciousness. In the first juan of Forest of Dreams, one such entry read:

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Dreaming of a blue sky—Auspicious. This dream is auspicious. Affairs have auspicious omens. If you have this dream, you will attain military honor or public office, your family affairs will succeed, your business will prosper, your parents will be in peace, your sons and grandsons will be virtuous, and you will be a virtuous man. If you dream that the sky is red, life will follow water and land, and blessings and happiness will always ensure prosperity. However, if the sky is black or white, this is not an auspicious omen.

The dream interpretation quoted above is rigid and clear. A sky of a certain color automatically corresponded to a certain type of interpretation. However, the encyclopedia makes no claims about the inevitability of a future based on this type of dream. The interpretation is given, but no examples or cases substantiate these claims. For dream symbology, then, the end of the narrative is left unfinished. The rules are laid out, but the results are unclear. That said, all of the above information would have presumably been useful to the late Ming reader, offering specific interpretations for a myriad of possible dream symbols.

With glyphomancy, however, the reverse was true. The interpretation of any given dream was fairly flexible and perhaps unclear, at least initially, to the dreamer. In the examples in the encyclopedia using glyphomancy, the final interpretation of each specific dream was presented. Much like the example of Zhou Xuan quoted earlier, the glyphomantic dreams were all famous (usually imperial family, officials, or examination candidates) individual case studies and each interpretation came true. In that sense, although the interpretations were flexible, the resulting futures were inescapable, the presents were fixed, and the pasts were established.

No glyphomantic rules per se were listed in the encyclopedia. In that sense, at least for glyphomancy, Forest of Dreams was not an instruction or teaching manual. Based on the examples given, literate readers presumably extrapolated the glyphomantic techniques and used similar principles to interpret their own dreams. The examples read much like short narrative dream stories, with a main character, a puzzling dream, an interpreter or interpretation. The examples always illustrated the rule-like inevitability of the proffered interpretation while simultaneously exhibiting the predictive, code-breaking power of the interpreter.

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195 吉天色 吉。此夢吉。事有祥之兆也。夢有功名，遂家業豐，父母寧，子孫賢，丈夫貴。如夢天色紅氣者，生行水土，福緣永昌。或黑白色，不為佳兆。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1063, 643.
The glyphomantic examples revealed an inherent tension between freedom and control. The techniques offered control to dreamers and readers alike—control of uncontrollable dreams and control of interpreting their future. Glyphomancy, with its seemingly arbitrary yet fixed rules, offered room for individual expression and interpretation. In theory, with glyphomancy, there was no correct or incorrect interpretation, at least in terms of results. However, as seen from the examples in *Forest of Dreams*, the predictions made by dream interpreters were infallible (and teleological).

As Wolfgang Bauer made clear in his ethnographic study of glyphomancy in fortune telling in Taiwan, Taipei-area practitioners followed the same set of culturally bound rules on how to dissect characters, but often arrived at divergent interpretations of the same character. Interestingly, Shao Yong (1011-1077), who is credited with authoring a section of *Forest of Dreams*, was also an important early glyphomancer. Shao Yong’s numerological reading of classical works such as the *Book of Changes* linked his name with glyphomancy.

The art of glyphomancy required mastery of different forms of Chinese script and an unusually wide reading to connect any given character with a variety of allusions. The section on glyphomancy in the *Complete Illustrated Compendium of Ancient and Contemporary Knowledge* (Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成), an imperially sponsored collection completed in 1725, contains two chapters on glyphomancy, giving instructions in the form of rhymes. This work quoted from two sources: the *Telling Fate through a Dissection of Characters* (Chai zi shu 拆字數) and the *Methods for Clarifying One’s Heart, New Edition* (Xin...
In addition to glyphomancy, the *Complete Illustrated Compendium of Ancient and Contemporary Knowledge* also discusses the relationship between handwriting and personality.

Unlike dream symbology, there were no set answers, just the tools useful in arriving at an individualized explanation or interpretation. Dream examples interpreted according to glyphomancy had been known beforehand. Although the glyphomantic tools were flexible and based loosely upon a sense of visual imagination and play, the future (whether good or bad) was inflexible and inescapable. This seems to indicate that there were real life repercussions for reported dreams.

Playing around with characters and manipulating character strokes was possible, but there were consequences to dreams interpreted by fortune-tellers using glyphomancy. Taken together, the glyphomantic examples in *Forest of Dreams* imply that any number of predictions was possible, but that the predictions that came true were those of the omniscient (and typically anonymous) interpreters. There was a tension between the ability to create or change the future and being trapped by the prophecy.

Each glyphomantic interpretation quoted in *Forest of Dreams* was not simply about the dream or the dreamer, but about the fate of the dreamer. Life was uncertain and glyphomancy offered the dreamer certainty through clarity—the chance to see a certain type of future, one that matched predictions. Also, it offered a dreamer the chance to change, to avoid an inauspicious future, to revise the present, and to re-evaluate the past. The interpretation of dreams through glyphomancy was a means to understanding the unknown—either about the past, the present, the future or oneself.

While the use of symbology in dream interpretation offered hints at a potential future (either negative or positive), such as imminent disaster or of wealth, the futures based upon the quoted glyphomantic examples were unpredictable by rule of symbology alone and often seemed to have little relation to the dreams upon which these futures were interpreted. That is to say, a dream that appeared to imply dire consequences for the dreamer might actually reveal a rosy
future (and vice versa), with the correct glyphomantic interpretation. In the encyclopedia, all of the interpretations were correct. That much, at least, was certain with hindsight.

For example, a dream quoted in the “Dream Origins” section of *Forest of Dreams* and contextualized in *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination* reads as follows:

The Song ruler dreamed that a river dried up. (*Jade Oceans* states that the Song ruler was ill. In the night, he dreamed that the river dried up. A worried expression showed on his face as he realized that the symbol of a ruler was a dragon. If the river had no water, then it meant the dragon had no water in which to live. At that time, a dream interpreter said, “If you take away water, the character for ‘river,’ [(he 河)] becomes the character for ‘able’ [(ke 有能力)]. This means that the ruler’s illness will definitely be cured,” The emperor was overjoyed and, indeed, he fully recovered.)

Again, as in the earlier cited example of the Qi Emperor’s dream of mulberry clogs, the commentary and relevant explanations for the above dream were eliminated in *Forest of Dreams*. The interpretation and further details are contained, however, within Chen Shiyuan’s encyclopedia. In this instance, the dreamer (the Song ruler) was purportedly ill at the time of this dream. According to the source, the Song ruler worried that he would not survive based on what he perceived as an inauspicious dream. Without water, how could the dragon (or ruler) survive? However, the dream interpreter played with the characters representing symbols taken from the dream and reassured the Song ruler by means of a glyphomantic sleight of hand, saying that if the water radical was removed from the character for “river,” then the resulting character indicated that the ruler’s disease was curable. In the end, the dream was an auspicious one after all, despite the Song ruler’s worries. The Song ruler escaped what he initially believed to be an inescapable and inauspicious fate.

197 宋主河中水涸。《玉海》曰：宋主有疾。夜夢河中水乾。憂形於色，以為人君龍象。今河無水是龍不獲水居矣。時有占夢者曰：河無水乃可字，主君之疾當痊可。帝欣然，疾果愈。The first line is quoted in He Dongru, *Forest of Dreams*, vol. 1064, 329. The commentary (in parentheses) is taken from Chen Shiyuan’s *Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination*, vol. 1064, 437.
The glyphomantic examples contained within *Forest of Dreams* underscore the predictability of fate as prescribed by the interpreter, and by extension, the mutability of fate as implied in the dream itself. At least according to the glyphomantic examples in the encyclopedia, control of dreams and the outcomes of dreams lay with the interpreter. Each quoted example begins with a specific person and a specific dream, which is followed by an (unquoted) interpretation based upon glyphomantic interpretation. All of these examples end with a confirmation of the verity of the interpretation. What actually transpired was predicted by the interpreter and by the dream.

In the 22nd *juan* of *Forest of Dreams*, 26 of the thirty total dream examples use glyphomancy as a means of interpretation. The majority of the dreams are between two and three lines long, so the text is spare at best and much of the details are intentionally left to the reader’s imagination. Three of these 26 quoted examples deal specifically with dreams related to the examination system. In these instances, the foretelling fulfilled the desire of the examination candidates to succeed.

The first such dream example reads as follows:

A provincial candidate traveled to the Temple of the Nine Immortals to pray for a dream. In the dream, a person said, “The completion of that which is not completed and the evenness of that which is not even. Only after you come to Clear Water Bridge will the meaning become clear.”

The provincial candidate did not come to the bridge for some time. Each time he thought of this dream, he did not know what it meant. One day, he came to a bridge. At the top the sign read: “Clear Water Bridge.” The provincial candidate was surprised. He crossed to the top of the bridge where he met an old man. The candidate told his dream to the old man and asked what the old man thought about it.

The man said, “This year, you will be successful. An incomplete “cheng 成” character is the character “wu 戊.” An incomplete “ping 平” character is the character “wu 午.” This year is wuwu 戊午.” Did this not indeed come to pass as evidenced? Indeed, this has already come true.\(^\text{198}\)

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\(^{198}\) 一儒生至九仙廟祈夢。夢中一人詰曰：“成不成成平不成平。清水橋邊乃見分明。”此生久不遇，每憶此夢，然卒不知所謂也。一日過一橋。上題曰：清水橋。生詰焉。頂之。有一老父至生乃述所夢以問之。父曰：生今年得矣。成不成成戊字也。平不成平午字也。今年戊午。將無徵乎，已而果然。*He Dongru,*
The above dream interpretation was based on the dissection of the characters in the strange sentence uttered in the dream, rather than on the meaning of the sentence. The dream interpreter informed the examination candidate that he would be successful in the examinations in the coming calendar year, according to the character combinations. Together, 戊 and 午 formed the name of the then-current calendar year.

In another quoted example from the same section in Forest of Dreams, another examination candidate dreamed he was presented with dog meat. The dream displeased him, so he asked a random passer-by for an interpretation of the dream. The dream interpreter stated simply that the combination of the characters for the amount of meat (pian 片) and for dog (quan 犬) formed the character zhuang (状). This indicated that the young man would place first in the upcoming examination, which in fact did come to pass.199

The third quoted examination dream in this section was one in which an official dreamed that a man with the surname Liu (劉) from Huoshanjun (火山軍 in modern Shanxi province) placed first in the imperial examinations. The following year, first place indeed went to a man named Liu Hui (劉輝).200 In this case, the first-place holder’s given name was comprised of elements from the place name in the dream.

Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 199. The practice of praying for a dream (qi meng 祈夢) was usually associated with particular temples, such as the Temple of the Nine Immortals. Praying for a dream in a particular temple has been documented as early as the Tang dynasty. Fujianese scholar Xu Ji 徐稷, who attained his jinshi degree in 802, wrote a poem referencing the dream-seekers heading to the Temple of the Nine Immortals. The poem, entitled “Traveling to Jiuli Lake” (You jiu li hu 游九鰲湖), reads: “It is said that cinnabar elixir was once made here; it remains a resting place of clouds and water. The mountain is empty after people depart. Guests awakening from dreams come to visit. Rainfall on the stream settles clouds of dust; the stone gate is obscured in mist. I sing a lofty song to the bright moon; shadows of pine trees fall sparsely.” 道是鰲丹地，依然雲水居。山空人去後，夢醒客來初。溪雨飛沙霧，石門隴霧虛。高歌對明月，松影落扶疏. Chen Menglei 陳夢雷, ed., “Jiuli hu bu 九鰲湖部 [Jiuli Lake Part],” “Shanchuan dian 山川典 [Mountains and Rivers Classic],” Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成 [Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings from the Earliest to Current Times], juan 302, 207 ce 册, Wu Yingdian 武英殿, Qing Yongzheng 清雍正 4 [1726], 22. The practice of seeking dreams in temples continues in both mainland China and Taiwan, with dream-seekers traveling to a designated dream-prayer temple, staying there overnight, and receiving dreamed instructions or advice while sleeping. Often, the temple provides interpretations for the dreams received overnight.

199 梁啟超, 前十日，夢人賜犬一隻。嘆不悅，以問行者。曰：此犬，狀字也。果為狀元。He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 199.
Glyphomantically conscripted twists of fate were occasionally neutral, offering predictions of neither an apparently inauspicious or auspicious nature. For example, in the same section of the encyclopedia, another dream example reads as follows:

A long time ago, an official dreamed many nights in a row of standing next to wood. A skilled interpreter said, “A person standing next to wood is the character meaning ‘to rest.’” Sure enough, after a while, the official retired from his post.  

As with all the other examples, the dreamer was not the one interpreting the dream. In the above example, the combination of the two character elements mu 木 (meaning “wood”) and person (ren 人) revealed the character xiu 休 meaning “to rest” or “to retire.”

Even an apparently neutral dream could have a negative interpretation and outcome. In the same section of Forest of Dreams, another dream example reads as follows: “A person dreamed of somebody speaking and a dog barking. A man on the street said, ‘A person speaking and a dog barking together form the character for prison.’ Sure enough, the person who had the dream was indeed thrown into prison.” In this particular instance, the character for prison (yu 獄) comprises three disparate elements: the language radical (yan 言), a radical meaning dog (quan 犬) and another radical also meaning dog (quan 犬).

Based on these examples, it appears that the ultimate authority figure—the one in control of dream interpretations, and perhaps more importantly, of the future—was the dream interpreter. The interpreters’ role in the encyclopedic examples (although brief) reveals an all-powerful, omniscience, indicating knowledge about dreams, the past, the present, and the future that was unattainable by the dreamers. Thus, although glyphomancy in theory offered control, in actuality, at least according to the encyclopedia, true control was attributed to the anonymous, expert dream interpreters.

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202 He Dongru, Forest of Dreams, vol. 1064, 201.
Conclusion

This chapter was a two-pronged analysis of one particular aspect of the dream encyclopedia *Forest of Dreams*. In the first part of the chapter, I read through textual layers of *Forest of Dreams* to uncover glyphomancy—a hidden, but important dream interpretation technique. In the second part of the chapter, I analyzed the role of the interpreter. Together, these two parts revealed the creative use of glyphomancy. Contemporary logic does not work in understanding glyphomancy as it was used in the late Ming context. The technique itself implies an inherent flexibility in interpretation. As I wrote, there were no set rules to glyphomancy; only an understanding of the visual attributes of Chinese written characters and their variants was required. However, my analysis of glyphomantic dream examples in *Forest of Dreams* suggests that only the interpreters were able to predict the future correctly, largely because their interpretations were invented later to match real events and were read back earlier in time.

In the end, the fate of the dreamer lay not in his ability to extrapolate glyphomantic techniques and apply them to his dream; rather, the fate of the dreamer lay with an omniscient stranger, a dream interpreter who understood the future of the dreamer, and perhaps, by extension, the dream itself, a fictional creation imagined later, removed in time and place but no less real. In a sense, late Ming literati compilers of *Forest of Dreams* invented these purported savants, men who possessed ancient dream knowledge and interpretive tricks. These dream interpreters controlled the fate of the dreamers based on the so-called “present” of dreams.
Chapter 6: Written Dreams, Translated Dreams

What were dreams in the late Ming? How did late Ming literati use dreams and to what end? How and why were dreams universalized and rendered public? Who wrote on dream interpretation and why? Who practiced dream interpretation? Why was the topic written on at all, for what audiences, and at such length and in this particular vein? And what sense can we in the twenty-first century make of this text that has reached us across the centuries? What did dreams “mean” in this time and place?

My dissertation addressed these questions through a close study of *Forest of Dreams*, an encyclopedia-like compendium of encyclopedias published in the early seventeenth century. Taken together, the chapters of the dissertation reveal the esoteric nature of *Forest of Dreams*, the authority of the dream as related to its written form, the overlap between what might be termed highbrow and lowbrow knowledge and audiences, and the communal yet disciplinary nature of dreams. *Forest of Dreams* was a toolkit of dream-related knowledge, aimed at organizing and categorizing dreams for practitioners and readers alike.

The encyclopedia presented, organized, and categorized arcane knowledge about dreams. The title page acknowledged that it was the partial retrieval of heretofore-secret knowledge on dreams and dream interpretation, crediting Daoist master Ge Hong as the author of portions of the text. I argued that primary compiler He Dongru used Ge Hong’s name to lend both authority and credibility to the work. Both He’s preface and the title page of the work describe the compilation process as one of careful “consulting” (*can ding* 条訂) of Ge Hong’s work. Portions of the work were lifted directly from two extant Ming dream encyclopedias: Chen Shiyuan’s *Guidelines to Dreams and Dream Divination* (first published in 1564) and Zhang Fengyi’s *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation* (first published in 1585). An appendix to *Forest of Dreams* also lifted text from *An Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi* (first published in 1607).

*Forest of Dreams* included nightmare incantations, exorcist techniques, how-to instructions for writing anti-nightmare talismans, detailed sleep-related proscriptions, thematically organized dream interpretation examples, and charts depicting seasonal changes in
dream interpretation. These were all arranged into four sections, each with a table of contents preceding the section in which they appeared. Because the information contained within was searchable, I maintain that *Forest of Dreams* was an encyclopedia of encyclopedias, rather than a compendium, which did not typically include a separate or searchable table of contents.

The encyclopedia represents the physical act of writing or translating dreams into textual form. Through the process of translating dreamed dreams into written form, dreams were textualized and given meaning. It is particular to writing and other graphic media (such as illustrations, graphs, or charts) that a given message is embodied in a physical and essentially eternal form. The written dream authoritatively bounded information about dreams into a limited field, accessible to readers in both the late Ming and beyond. In the preceding chapters, I explored written and translated dreams in a specific cultural and historical context, analyzing the relationship between the individual and public. The dream records discussed in this dissertation were chosen and thus shaped by individuals (the compilers), but were intended for public reception (by a large audience of classically literate or partially classically literate elites).

*Forest of Dreams* systematized and explicated dreams and nightmares. At the heart of the dissertation is not the experience of the dream, but the how and why of its representation in written and symbolic forms. Ascriptions of dreams were not just isolated acts, but lasting and written focal points for social discourse and textual interchange between savant-practitioners and dreamers. *Forest of Dreams* represents the codification or systematization of dreams, written into textual form in a certain historical time and place.

Reading through layers of dreams has allowed me to highlight the omniscient practitioners of dream interpretation and the interesting overlaps between what might be termed highbrow and lowbrow knowledge. The contents of *Forest of Dreams* indicate that both the compilers and the audience were not always mainstream Ming Confucians, though there were many of them, but also came out of a milieu of magicians, soothsayers, and educated fringe groups. The compilers played an important role in mediating between classically educated Confucian scholar-officials and lower-class practitioners of dream lore. The encyclopedia
blended a variety of types of knowledge on Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism with the primary aim of providing therapeutic nightmare and anxiety relief through written text, dream analyses, and concrete answers to life’s problems.

Biographical information about the compilers attests to the fact that these were men who were learned in more than one tradition. They studied for and attended the civil service examinations; some even held public office for a short period of time. However, at the same time, these men published on dreams and the mantic arts. Their interests were broad and extended to the esoteric. The compilers sought to render public the so-called ancient and secret art of dream interpretation, reaching out in print to a new stratum of partly educated and uneducated readers.

The specific topic of dreams allowed the compilers to explore the unseen, the unknown, and communicate with the other world. Through the publication of *Forest of Dreams*, the dark world of dreams was brought to light and rendered visible. The compilers displayed and demonstrated their mastery of esoteric skills, and by extension, their knowledge of the past, the present, and the future. The item-by-item searchable collection of dream interpretation examples showcased the compilers’ knowledge with narrative and descriptive specificity.

Finally, I argue that the encyclopedia not only served as a dream interpretation toolkit, but also disciplined readers, setting the parameters for what a dream was and delineating what could and should be done with dreams. Dreams were not construed as solely individual acts, but had social repercussions, and as such, needed to be dealt with appropriately. In the dream examples quoted in the encyclopedia, emperors worried over their physical health or the possibility of ascending the throne, and examination candidates worried over whether or not they would pass upcoming examinations. The anxieties first manifested in dreams were subsequently alleviated by dream interpreters, but only after the dream had been properly understood and shared publicly.

Even for individuals who arguably possessed little social or political power, dreams rendered public had consequences. In the nightmare exorcism section of the encyclopedia,
nightmares were rendered transparent to the individual first and then to others in the community. The encyclopedia medicalized dreams and exhorted nightmare sufferers therapeutically to follow the steps of exorcism the moment they were aware that they had had a nightmare. For the treatment of some nightmares, acknowledgment of the nightmare was part of the healing process. Anti-nightmare talismans were to be displayed in public places, pasted on compound walls or worn about one’s person. These dream treatments were all forms of social therapy, of first acknowledging a problem that manifested in dreams and then treating the problem based on information presented within the pages of the encyclopedia.

*Forest of Dreams* clearly laid out the guidelines both for understanding the problem of nightmares and for treating nightmares. If left untreated, nightmares reflected a very real threat to individual health, and, by extension, the health of those around the individual. The encyclopedia as a medical compendium provided readers the language and tools necessary to communicate (though not necessarily limited to verbal communication) their problems and symptoms, medical and otherwise. The symptoms and treatment were culturally determined and the encyclopedia provided the vocabulary to educate a broad audience of readers how to textualize dreams and nightmares in a meaningful way. Thus, the encyclopedia socialized and disciplined readers, training them how to view dreams and nightmares. This socialization and disciplining process likely continued into the Qing, with the republication of Chen Shiyuan’s dream encyclopedia (*Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination*) in 1833.

This study of *Forest of Dreams* has included both a detailed investigation of the individual dream compilers and a wide-angled study of the social environment out of which the individual dreams were collected and imbued with meaning. My study demonstrated that late Ming dreams were not ordered according to modern expectations of mental, physical, or emotional health, although there were overlapping trends, such as the alleviation of anxiety through sharing of dreams and nightmares, similar in some ways to modern psychological therapy. I recovered late Ming dream terminology, definitions, and world-view.
I argued that dreams were medicalized in Forest of Dreams. My definition of “medicalize” includes not just the somatic, but also psychological, therapeutic, and social realm. Dreams and nightmares in the late Ming affected not just the body or physical health of individual dreamers, but also what might be termed their mental and emotional states. Sharing dreams and nightmares with community members, whether verbally or visually, was an important part of the healing process.

Although not explicitly categorized as such, it is apparent from Forest of Dreams that dreams were simultaneously important in many arenas—individual, public, real, imagined, embodied, emotional, religious, medical, social, and political. In order to understand late imperial Chinese literati in any facet of their lives, we should consider their relationship to dreams. Dreams had an all-encompassing, ubiquitous presence in their lives. Forest of Dreams was a toolkit that could be used in interpretation, a medicalized therapy for nightmares, a textualized expression of an ideology about dreams, and by extension, about life.

Dream interpretation skills as presented in Forest of Dreams were written about as thought they were indispensible to understanding the past, present, and future and absolutely essential for treating nightmares. I maintain that although it is not irrelevant whether or not the dreams and their corresponding interpretations were invented ad hoc, what mattered in the end was the authoritative presentation of the interpretations as representing the uncontestable truth within a community of savant-practitioners.

This study underscored the centrality of dreams in the late Ming. It focused on the construction of this encyclopedia as well as the social context in which it was produced. In the future, I will also consider other sources from the same time period, such as the visual depiction of dreams in the 76 illustrated woodblock prints contained in Gu Dingchen’s An Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi (Ming zhuang yuan tu kao 明状元圖考). I will also consider the depiction of dreams and nightmares in A Summary of Dream Talk in Cloud Mountain (Yun shan meng yu zhai yao 雲山夢語摘要), published in 1636. I also plan to explore the continuities of dream and nightmare textualization into the Qing. To this end, I will examine the Qing editions
of Forest of Dreams, An Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi, and A Summary of Dream Talk in Cloud Mountain.
Appendix 1
Forest of Dreams, Title Page
(Sonkeikaku Archives, Tokyo, Japan)
As for dream interpretation books, the graphs and classics were burned during the Qin. [Dream interpretation] skills and techniques were dismissed by Han Ru scholars, so that the few remaining fragments transmitted false truths.

But this [book here], Mr. He Jionqing (Noble Brightness) [He Dongru] took from his family library collection. The secret book of Jin Dynasty sage Ge Hong, [He Dongru] carefully consulted and edited and combined into a complete book. If a worthy person has a dream, it must have an interpretation. If there is an interpretation, there must be proof [of said interpretation].

This is truly the early sages’ mystery of fate and a golden reflector for those capable of understanding. This is truly a work that the informed few will cherish.

Published by Weng Shaolong in Nancheng

Each part costs three taels of silver
Appendix 2
He Dongru’s Preface (夢林玄解敘)

Would you say that dreams are illusions? If yes, then how is it that a specific person, thing, affair, and circumstance is seen when sleeping and upon awakening and reflecting upon it [(the content of the dream)], that the shapes, forms, colors, and sounds [of the dream] can all, in detail, be referred to and interpreted?

Would you say that dreams are true? If yes, then how is it that the people, things, affairs, and circumstances are seen when sleeping, and upon awakening, searching into it [the content of the dream], that what is true [in the dream] and what is true empirically [not in the dream, but in real life] cannot be matched exactly in a one-to-one correspondence?

Would you say that dreams are not illusory? It’s not necessarily that it is a specific person [(that is in the dream)]; it’s not necessarily the case that it is a specific thing; it’s not necessarily the case that it is a specific affair; it’s often that the circumstances change chaotically and become twisted and tangled together, so that it is completely lacking reliability. It is suddenly being alive or being dead, or revolving with the heaven or earth or ships flying on steep cliffs or rats transforming into oxen or dragons or other such scenes. Dazed and confused, with a myriad starting points, when you awake and reflect [upon your dream], how could it necessarily be the case that you can match each thing [in the dream] to real life?

Would you say that dreams are not true? [If yes, then how is it that] when you dream of a person, you later see that very person? [If yes, then how is it that] when you
dream of a thing, you later attain that very thing? [If yes, then how is it that] things are just as if in a picture and the circumstances [of the dream] are just as if you are experiencing them in real life? It’s as if each symbol has a definite correspondence. You don’t have to wait for an explanation for that which is already clear.

It is just like when the Yellow Emperor dreamed that he visited the country of Huaxu [and his dream came true], or when the Shang ruler dreamed of the man carrying a cauldron [and his dream came true], or when Shusun realized when he saw [the person named] “Cow” that he would lose his life [and his dream came true], or when Zhao Xiong received prize money minus the part he had already used.

People, things, affairs, and circumstances that are true in dreams and while awake, are all of this kind.

So why can’t you refer and enumerate [dreams to real life] and then have the experiences? Thus we understand that [dreams are] not not-illusory and not not-true; [dreams are] not not-true and not illusory, not not-illusory and not true.

Once a person is born, s/he is not able to not sleep. Once a person sleeps, s/he is not able to be without dreaming. Once a person has a dream, s/he is unable to do without explaining the interpretation of the dream.

It is not just the case in the present, but it can be traced back to high antiquity. The ancient sagely kings made charts and graphs to arrange this knowledge. This has a very long history.
This is why the Yellow Emperor first authored the *Long-Willow Illustrated Classic*.

In the Xia, there was “Arriving [at the Understanding of] Dreams.” Shang people had “Irregular Dreams.” In the Zhou, these dream [interpretation methods] were collected and were called the “Three Dream [Methods of Dream Interpretation].”

“The Three Dreams” propounded such distinctions as: dreams, nightmares, nostalgic dreams, waking dreams, happy dreams, and frightful dreams, which are called the six dreams.

The six dreams transformed further into: straightforward dreams, image dreams, causal dreams, thinking dreams, essence dreams, sexual dreams, human dreams, interactive dreams, seasonal dreams, contrary dreams, reliable dreams, entrusted dreams, transferred dreams, illness dreams, and evil spirit dreams.

When speaking of dreams, there are many alterations, so it is not possible to exactly enumerate the numerical correspondences, but it is possible to differentiate between auspicious and inauspicious. Therefore, it is possible to set up the [two major categories of] auspicious and inauspicious.

The office of dream interpreter is founded upon this [principle].

The dream interpreter supervised [the methods] of the three dreams.
This is all recorded in the *Rites of Zhou*. After the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, each [dynasty] had the concept of an interpreter of dreams.

Up to and including the Wei and the Jin, a considerable number of prominent experts (dream interpreters) emerged. However, the ancient methods gradually fell into obscurity. People (dream interpreters) around this time provided nothing but laughable interpretations [of dreams]. Their explanations were artful and yet the match [of their dream interpretations and reality] was coincidental.

Some people were better able than others to guess the correct method of dream interpretation, but the [actual] art of interpreting dreams was discarded.

By the Song and Yuan, famous *Ru* scholars scorned speaking of these techniques of numerical correspondences. Each one took the principle [‘li’] to explain and explicate [these interpretation matters] and did not avoid corrupting them. As a result, [the technique of dream divination] merged [into the system of *li*] and the former was nearly discarded.

So, these dream interpretation specialists were at their peak in the Wei and Jin periods; however, their way also ended during the Wei and Jin.

Then, [at the time of] my generation, we had the complete books on the explanation of dreams carved (into woodblocks), and these works were attributed to the Duke of Zhou. Is it wise to attribute [these works] to the Duke of Zhou? No, it is ridiculous! If determining the interpretation of inauspiciousness and auspiciousness, then it is very clear that it can be proven.
I think that it is not the case that the attributions [to the Duke of Zhou] have no basis. It’s just that, in particular, one cannot find the source [of its interpretations].

In my family, four [family members] in three generations have been fortunate enough to attain the recognition of the country [become officials] and we have collected many books.

Since I have returned home, I have passed away the days reading the books collected in my home.

From the moth-eaten stockpile of miscellaneous and assorted writings, I by chance happened upon one book. When I examined it closely, I discovered it was a book on dreams.

After perusing a little over half of it, I said with surprise, “Our generation also has this book?! My predecessors obtained it and it was hidden away. And now, I have chanced upon it and have published it.

Can it be that the secret wish of the gods is to leak this work out by my hands?

We have the preface written by the Song scholar, Sun Shi.

The original work is eight *juan* with one *juan* of appended graphs inside obtained by the Daoist master Lan Xi. Additionally, palace graduate Chen “Cultivating Myself” [Chen Shiyuan]’s quotes are appended in this work.

Actually, this is the true book written by the venerable transcendent Ge Hong in the Jin dynasty, and edited by
Shao Yong in the Song dynasty, and purchased by Mr. Chen [Chen Shiyuan] and then woven together into this great work!

The original work contains only interpretations, which only comprise eight *juan*. As such, it is brief and not comprehensive.

I believe that since the burning of books by Qin Shihuang, there has never been as much scholarly knowledge as there is today, but this book was lacking!

This is truly regrettable, so I am bringing [this book about dreams] out [to show others].

Master Purple Water and I discussed [this work] and searched for supporting materials. I combined the Tang Dynasty’s [Mr.] Yong’s “An Explication of Exorcisms” with Zhang Fengyi’s “Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation” and recorded these two works together and gave it the name “An Explication of Profundities” preceded by “Forest of Dreams.”

The *juan* are divided into thirty-four categories, which are further sub-divided into roughly 150-some [categories].

The collection is separated into four sections: one is called “Dream Interpretation” and the next is called “Dream Exorcism.” One is called “Dream Origins” and the next is called “Outward Manifestation of Dreams.”

Without interpretation, there is no way to know auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. Without exorcism, there is no way to evade that which is inauspicious. Without origins, there is no way to seek out the original
basis. Without manifestations, there is no way to determine what to believe and follow.

It is I and Master Purple Water who compiled this work.

We want to propagate the important points that Duke Chen [Shiyuan] did not prepare [in his previously published work on dreams].

Oh! The first sagely discourses [on dreams] and the practices [of dream divination], which terminated in the Wei and Jin, are now revived today. It can also be called a labor of love.

It is said in Han History’s “Treatise on Arts and Literature:” “there are many interpretation techniques; that of dream interpretation is the most important.” Since the beginning of time, sage rulers, wise ministers, and gentlemen all have had dreams and each of them has a clear way of interpreting [dreams], so there are countless [methods of interpreting dreams].

So, how could it be the case that the Long-Willow Classic’s Great Diviner was the only one who mastered [the art of dream interpretation]?

The reason why these methods were not transmitted is largely that evil and despicable people were afraid of hearing bad omens, and stupid and delusional people had no way of truly understanding the mystical practices [of dream interpretation].

Those people who engaged in the interpretation of dreams were frightened of being punished because of their skills; additionally, it was not easy for common people to understand [their interpretation methods].
These [dream interpreters] hid their skills, so their crafts were lost.

Now, this work is brought forth by me! Truly, [Forest of Dreams] represents a pivotal point in awakening from a dream. It’s just as though the entire world and I have been sharing the dream of Lu Sheng. Do not regard me as a fatuous person who indulges in good dreams.

Who dares to return to esotericism? Who dares to return to secrets? I still have things to say about dreams.

In a person’s life, there are two things of importance: repaying the benevolence of one’s ruler and one’s father. The web of repayment is infinite. Only at the right moment can those who are ministers and sons break open the great dream. Upon awakening, realizing that one’s life has not fallen into deep confusion and that sleeping is like falling into a chasm—only someone like this is a truly enlightened being.

Good ministers and sons were able to clearly understand auspicious images in dreams, but traitorous ministers and sons refrained from interpreting inauspicious images.

In order to show reverence or respect for the empire, is it necessary to allow one’s heart to be torn from one’s breast [like Bi Gan], return home weeping, or to predict one’s father will break the balustrade [like Zhu Yun]? However, according to the heavens, reading auspiciousness as inauspicious or vice versa is definitely difficult to deduce.
One must, as a minister or son, be completely willing and, with an honest heart, dedicate one’s life and energy to expelling nightmarish demons and evil spirits in order to bring about clarity and auspiciousness.

It is just as I am today. Although I am at home [i.e., not an official; literally: in the fields], the world is chaotic, and the enemies have not yet been eliminated. It is with fervent enthusiasm that I, from morning until night, train myself in the hopes that I can join the army and strangle the traitors. Looking back on my “benevolent” capture, I know now that it was just a dream from which I had not yet awakened. Is this true or is this an illusion? Why not arise and let Ge Hong interpret it?

On an auspicious day in 1636, penned by the Gentleman of Integrity Hidden in Darkness and Unnoticed by Others, He Dongru, written in the Hall of Coming Praise
Appendix 3
Sun Shi’s Preface to *The Secret Plans for Fulfiling Dreams* (圓夢秘策敘)

混沌大夢也。 Primal chaos is a great dream.

此夢一破乾開坤而人生其間。 This dream, once broken, opens heaven and settles the earth and people are born from within.

蓋自天地生人而混沌之夢始大覺也矣。 Heaven and Earth give birth to people and the chaotic dream begins the great awakening.

恒惟精氣綱溫，男女化成，人在胎孕之中，何分晝夜，何辯嗤靈，何知寢寤，猶混沌焉。 It is established that only when the essential qi fills and pervades the universe do men and woman form and come into being. When people are in the midst of being formed as fetuses, how is it possible to separate night and day? How is it possible to differentiate ridiculousness from that which is effective? How is it possible to know whether one is sleeping? Is this not just like primal chaos?

十月墮地，如夢斯覺，而說者以謂人生大夢，正從滋起。何則？ After ten months, [humans] are born into the world, just like awakening from dreams. But those who are aware think that actually after being born they are starting to dream. How is this the case?

赤嬰之未孩，而在懷保也。 It is just like a red infant that is not yet a child and can only be held and protected.

泱旬彌月，適適自眠。口顧眉宇間，若有所喜而欲咲；若有所苦而欲啼。無苦無喜，而啼咲之景形於面頰，謂非夢触而然哉。 為父母者，誠慈愛護，睹其欲咲，知必有所自喜。睹其欲啼，知必有所自 When ten-day cycles and the full moon match, clearly one sleeps [all the time]. [Everything it experiences is reflected in its expressions] in the area in between the mouth, cheeks, and eyebrows. If [an infant] is pleased, then it wants to laugh. If [an infant] feels discomfort, then it wants to weep. If [an infant] has no discomfort and is not pleased, but the signs of weeping or laughter appear on its face and countenance, then isn’t this the
case that [the infant] is just dreaming? Fathers and mothers who are honest, kind, loving, and pure, observe those [infants] who want to laugh and know [that those infants] must be pleased. If [the parents] observe those [infants] who want to weep, [the parents] must know [that the infants] must be feeling discomfort. If [the parents observe those infants who] do not laugh and do not weep, but place explanations upon [the infant] as feeling pleased or feeling discomfort, [and use these explanations] to aid in making [the infant] at peace and remove obstacles, then can’t this be called the principle of divining dreams? [In other words, parents can help their infants feel better in the same way that you can use dream interpretations to help make yourself feel better.]

Of the conditions for inauspiciousness, I cannot speak. Of the opportunities for avoidance, I cannot easily tell. Misfortunes and blessings, longevity and premature death—one can only listen to the arrangements of the great creator and this game cannot be avoided. Is it the case that only small children laugh and weep? If you apply this principle to human affairs, [when] anybody dreams of inauspicious omens, they also try to avoid [these inauspicious omens]. How is it not the case that there is laughing and weeping in dreams?

It is not the case that if one sought with earnestness the causes of delight, happiness, difficulties, and bitterness, one would be assured with [answers] so that the situation of “not convenient” and “not able to obtain” would be avoided. Didn’t the ancient sagely ones worry about this very matter? They authored interpretation classics, established offices of interpretation, and made it a responsibility that all those under heaven who speak of dreams should be just like those red-faced infants who want to weep and want to laugh. Those who explain
dreams are just like fathers and mothers who seek out [their infants’] happiness and bitterness; they are not ensnared by inauspiciousness or distracted by auspiciousness. The way by which they all live is walking on the road of great awakening.

Supposing that people had no dreams, then the spirit and hun would not mingle; there is no possibility of foreseeing prognostications, nor is the secret of the heavens illuminated. [How is it possible that the] creator commands ghosts and spirits in both the daytime and at night, and call upon people to tell them of luck and misfortune face-to-face? It is definitely not the case.

This is why dreams are interpreted and why there is a governmental office of interpretation. This is not something that just appeared in recent generations. The Long-Willow Classic was made by the Yellow Emperor. The official position [of dream diviner] was established from the time of the Zhou. Dreams are recorded in numerous works throughout history, [in works such as] the Six Records and Hundred Families and the Chronicles of History and literature.

There is not just one school of interpretation. If examined case by case, [these different schools of interpretation] do not fall into the category of assisting or plotting to recklessly lead people astray.

It is regrettable that we have drifted far [from the tradition of dream interpretation] over generations, so that the classic works of the previous sages are lost, and that the transmission of this dignified profession [i.e. dream interpretation] is rare, and that seeking out an entire book on good techniques [of dream interpretation] is seldom heard of or seen?
Although I [Sun Shi] am ignorant, aside from proper training, I have also studied medicine, astronomy, yarrow divination, wind patterns, as well as officials’ works, such that after I retired, there was not one work I had not read. My only regret is that a classic on dream interpretation was lacking.

In my residence, nobody had seen the art of fulfilling dreams, so I waited.

In the Jiaxu year of the mid-autumn moon festival when I had already retired [from official life], several old friends and I convened together to chat and discuss matters of the heart. We paused to lift our glasses in a toast to the full moon and asked the night to share drinks with us. After becoming drunk, I draped myself over a bed and fell asleep. I was then completely entranced in a world of my own. I saw a mighty warrior who presented me with a single pill, which he then forced me to swallow. I immediately became aware of a sharp stabbing pain in my chest. After about a month or so, my illness reached a point of great danger. In the midst of the perplexing dark, the same mighty warrior suddenly entered through the door, brandishing a sword with which he pierced my chest. Sounds, fire and light burst forth and scattered. I was drenched with sweat, like life-giving rain, which startled me. I awoke and only then realized it was a dream.

After this, I was suddenly sick. Swallowing a pill ought to heal illness, but it in fact caused illness. Being pierced in the chest ought to cause death, but it in fact caused a return to life.
夢之幻示，占之徵機，略可信矣。

The indications of the illusions of dreams and the messages to manifest interpretations are generally believable.

緣愈益恨其經其術之不傳。

This is the reason I increasingly regretted that the classics and arts [of dream interpretation] had not been transmitted.

殞刻意購求間得一二小帙，非俚辭陋解，則皆膠柱刻舟之說，必非古先聖人之指，而莫慰於懷。

I purposely purchased a couple of small books, but [the books] were either unusually coarse and poorly written; or were just like [what is implied by] the sayings “glued strings” and “cutting the boat,” which was certainly not the point of the ancient sages, so they were nothing but a small comfort to me.

丙子春二月，偶經蘭溪道上，遇一羽衣負大籃，畫地肆，賣符拆字，大言曾受異傳。遂揖而進之告之曰道土固多奇，亦解圓夢乎。果有術否乎。羽衣愕應曰：法廢久矣。老者胡為獨訊及此，寧亦有心滋事也。請問何如。

Two years later in the second month of spring, by chance, on the road to Lanxi [located in Zhejiang], I encountered a Daoist who was carrying a large bag and telling fortunes by drawing on the ground. He was selling exorcisms and glyphomantic interpretations and said he had already received rare transmissions. Therefore, I quickly bowed before him and humbly asked, “Daoist master definitely understands many strange phenomena. Can Master also explicate the technique of fulfilling dreams? Is there really such a technique?” The Daoist master was quite surprised and replied: “These methods have long been abandoned. Why are you, old one, asking about this particular matter? Could it be that you too are interested in this? Why don’t we go somewhere else [to speak]?”

愚會其意。殞要與歸舟，究問所以。羽衣具言，某自弱冠棄家，雲水天下，垂二十年，獲遇一叟，蒼顏偉幹，僑居廬山石室中，

I [literally: stupid me] understood his meaning. Therefore, I invited the Daoist master to return to my boat with me. There, I asked about the details. The Daoist master said: “From the age of twenty, I left home and wandered through the clouds and water for about
twenty years. I happened upon an elderly gentleman who
looked very young but did not eat and who had a pale
face and of great form, and who was residing in the cave
dwellings in Mount Lu. This elderly gentleman engaged
in ascetic practices and avoided eating grains. I secretly
considered him odd. Thereafter, I proceeded to complete
the rites required to become his disciple and followed
him whole-heartedly for three years. Suddenly, the
elderly gentleman said, “You’re too common and cannot
be my companion. I’m going to leave you, but I feel
sorry for all your days of hard work. I have nothing else
give you, but three methods from secret books (*mi shu
san ce* 秘書三策) that have long been missing in the
world.

“If you respect and honor them, you can become famous.
Don’t give them to the wrong people or you will be
punished.” I opened the book that he gave me [and saw]:
one method is the use of glyphomancy to divine
auspiciousness and inauspiciousness; another method is
the use of written talismans to heal rapidly the hardships
and bitterness of people; and the final method is the
secret to fulfilling dreams. I’ve done some comparison
and research, but I do not yet understand the gist of [the
final policy]. When thinking about the myriad changes in
dreams, it is difficult to infer the whys and wherefores.
Sometimes the explanations do not come together, so
I do not dare to disseminate it in the world [given that I
do not properly understand it.]

“Today, you asked me about this specifically. It is clear
that you’re aren’t a common person; moreover, I have
found the person to whom I can show this work. The
original master would have had no other wish but for
people who propagate this work, transmit and promote it
and to avoid going against his intentions.
Therefore I will give you this work in eight *juan.*” With that, he bowed respectfully to me, gave me the work, took his leave and departed.

[I,] Mr. Shi, was unable to get him to stay. I could not refrain from being surprised and delighted. After some time, I read the work four times. After I finished the policies, I could not refrain from clapping my hands with great happiness and sighing, “Ah, isn’t this satisfying!”

I truly think that the policies are perfect. I tested, standardized, and then drew them up. Isn’t the shape of all dreams unlike the dreams of red infants who dream of weeping and dream of laughing sometimes difficult to understand? Isn’t the judgment of all interpretations unlike parents’ understanding of happiness and bitterness [of their infants] sometimes difficult to predict accurately?

[This work] is truly sufficient to clarify the early sages’ [dream interpretation methods] and can also supplement what has long been lacking in this world for several thousands of years.

For the past hundreds and thousands of years, all people have lived a great dream. A great awakening will begin from this [book].

How can it [(this book)] resemble the deceived, deluded, and strange types of sayings that perplex and mislead people?

Intent and meaning rise upward to heaven, causing dreams. [Heavens] entrusted it to me (the unwise) via the Daoist sage. Therefore, these hidden secrets cannot yet be known.
I believe that the human body inside the womb as a fetus is one kind of primal chaos. Once born, life and death are also both a kind of dream awakening.

People of former times who swallowed pills saw omens appearing auspicious, but that were actually inauspicious. [People of former times who] pierced the diaphragm were presented with the opportunity to suspect those things that were actually auspicious as inauspicious.

Today I have obtained this work. I have extended and touched upon the categories [within the work], clearly excavating its gist up to the point of making death and life, happiness and fear. I believe that although these eight juan are not the entire corpus of the ancient sages, it is also not a “glued string-boat cut” work. It comparatively builds upon the truth of what I received from the elderly gentleman.

[I] do not dare to keep it to myself, so [I] engrave and print [this work] in gold on paper and respectfully publicize [this work throughout] the four seas. [I] also wish that later gentlemen who are intersted in these affairs can learn from this work on the details of transformations and varations [in dream interpretations]. [As soon as one finishes this book] one should be able to understand at least half of the ideas of the Long-willow method and of the officials of the Zhou [who represent the profound tradition of dream interpretation].
The third year of Jingyou [1036], in the first ten-day period of the fourth month, the end of the preface to the *The Secret Plans for Rendering Dreams Whole* by the Honorable Elderly Gentleman, Sun Shi
Appendix 4
Chen Shiyuan’s Introduction to *Forest of Dreams* 夢林玄解小引

Since I became aware of dreams, I compiled [a work] entitled *Guidelines on Dreams and Dream Divination*. The work was carved [into woodblocks] and has already circulated throughout our land.

I lamented that there was still more work to be done, and knew that who knows when sorghum is fully cooked. It’s absurd to say that these words are only barely like awakening from a stupor.

Then, in the spring of 1564, I purchased a book entitled *The Secret Methods of Fulfilling Dreams*. At the end of the book, it was recorded: collected by Master Kangjie, otherwise known as Yaofu of the Song dynasty. Without any doubt, this is a work edited by Shao Yong. However, it is not yet known which person actually began [collecting] the work.

The book was infested with bookworms and the written preface(s) were illegible, but there were some interpretations at the end [of the work] and a number of words are missing at the end of the interpretations. There were also unusually ambitious sayings, which I trust is the original language. Moreover, it has the three characters: xian, kang, and zhong [thus indicating that it was extant during the Jin dynasty (265-420 A.D.)]. After consulting the historical annals and records, I estimated [the work’s] age and origin, and decided that it was, without a doubt authored by the Daoist immortal Ge Zhichuan [Ge Hong].
Therefore, I pulled together the corresponding threads, which were scattered, and heroically hurried to pull the sprouts [of meaning], assisting them along. I regret that the previous words left out so much and I realized the boundlessness of this principle.

I gathered the correspondences into a precious volume. Most of the meanings that were lost can be seen in the eight juan. I gathered together what remained. Then, I extended, enhanced, revised, and edited. I gathered it together into one book; from the leftovers, I could see it [the work] as a whole.

It was fated to be called *An Explication of the Profundities*. It was also called *Explicating the Way into that which is Profound*. I say with much mirth and happiness that dreams are already in the heart.

The distinction between respect and disrespect is the difference between good and evil of human heart. In those interpretations based on mysteries, the principle [of interpretation] was already lost. Auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are already fixed [by fate]. This principle is that it is not that you can interpret it. Or it can be said that if the heart is good, then evil will take shape in dreams. This principle is correct and yet an “incorrect” result occurs in the interpretation.

Although correspondences are predestined, some things are sometimes fortuitous. If it must be differentiated from the classics, then it is the sayings of people who are awakened. It measures up to the classics; moreover, it has the spirit of opening [the door] to the early philosophers. How could [they] trick me?
I have brought [the work] together in order to respectfully retune the public, and talked about this as the leftover guidelines for explicating the dynasty.

1564, on the winter solstice, Yingcheng, Wise One Nourishing Myself, also known as Chen Shiyuan
Appendix 5
Zhang Fengyi’s Preface to *Classified Studies on Dream Interpretation* (夢占類考序)

As for the explanations of dreams, there are two: self-fulfilling and causal. The so-called self-fulfilling [dreams] can be explained by interactions between the body and the spirit. For example, if you are thirsty, then you will dream of drinking. If you are hungry, then you will dream of eating.

The so-called causal [dreams] can be explained by non-interactions between the body and the spirit. For example, when yin is strong, you will dream of water. When yang is strong, you will dream of fire.

The Yellow Emperor’s dream of wandering in Huaxu can be used to examine self-fulfilling [dreams]. The transformations of a butterfly can be used to examine causal [dreams].

Just like Shusun Bao who saw his son named Cow [in a dream] before Cow was even born and like the Cao ruler who saw Duke Sunjiang [in a dream before Duke Sunjiang was even born]—dreams such as these cannot be exhaustively explained as either self-fulfilling or causal.

If there are self-fulfilling and causal [dreams], then how can [a dream] be self-fulfilling and not causal? If there are not causal or self-fulfilling dreams, then how can [a dream] be causal but not self-fulfilling? Causality and self-fulfillment play off one another and, when hooked together, become the activation of the heart. This is why the early Ru scholars felt that dreams follow nothing but humans’ hearts. Some think that dream interpretations can be used to test the depth of learning. How is it
limited to learning? Success and failure, sharpness and dullness, all of these can be predicted through dream interpretation. Why is this the case?

Whether or not the movement of the four limbs is good or bad can be known ahead of time because the heart is the master of the four limbs. Dreams are the same, allowing you to see the potential of the heart’s initiation of movement beforehand, and what is auspicious and inauspicious.

The heart emits [movement] from motivations; motivations are manifested in dreams. There are good and evil manifestations just as dreams are divided into auspicious and inauspicious. [Dreams] use motivations to touch off [further] motivations. When speaking of [motivations], they are all first perceived.

This is why, in the Xia, there was “Arriving [at the Understanding of] Dreams.” Shang people had “Irregular Dreams.” In the Zhou, these dream [interpretation methods] were collected and were called the “Three Dream [Methods of Dream Interpretation]” and promoted in an enlightening work, *The Rites of Zhou*, which has a long history, and *Trivial Matters* in eleven chapters, which discussed many states’ fortune telling [methods based on] dreams.

In the “Treatise on Arts and Literature” in the *Han History* and “Seven Brief [Principles],” dream divinations are listed first. [These works] say: “although it seems as though there are many different divinations, dream interpretation is truly the most important [of them].” That is, the best interpretation method lies in dreams.
迄至魏晉，代有名家，沿及宋元，無復留意，甚則藉肆托名周公。夫周公有書，不傳周禮，而別為一書，有是哉。

且夢有兆同而殊應者，亦有兆殊而應同者。

乃刻舟而求雷煥之劍，膠柱而鼓湘靈之瑟。是讀周宜於爻書，微管詭於緒論，立趙直於斷簡，坐宋壽於殘編。

將以稽疑，而疑益生。將以辨惑，而惑滋甚。

又安能因黃熊而復夏祀，緣青蠅而戴昌邑哉。

不佞衰歲大病，醫工敘手，以發夢而愈，乃惟先哲之秘術。雖乏真傳，而已驗之陳跡，可以考見。

Up to the Wei and Jin dynasties, there were [dream interpretation] specialists in each generation. By the Song and Yuan dynasties, there was nothing worthwhile to the point that some works wantonly claimed the name of the Duke of Zhou. If the Duke of Zhou had ever transmitted a book, the book is not the Rites of Zhou but something else, so how could this be the case [that there was a Duke of Zhou book in the Song and Yuan]?

Moreover, sometimes dreams have similar omens, but different correspondences; [dreams] also have different omens, but similar correspondences.

It is just like carving the side of a moving boat [to later] search for the sword of shining thunder [which was dropped overboard] or like gluing the strings on the magical zither. This is what can be read in Zhou Xuan’s lost book, what can be surmised from the threads of Guan Lu’s discourse, what can be established from the simple synopses of Zhao Zhi, and what can be ridden in the remaining chapters of Song Shao.

I wanted to look up the answers, but instead my doubts grew even more. I wanted to confront my doubts, but my doubts grew even more.

How can we rely on the fact that just because there is a yellow bear, we must return to performing the ancestral sacrificial rites of the Xia or that just because we see green-backed flies [i.e. flatterers], we should be reminded of the [tragedy of the] King of Chang Yi?

I once contracted a grave illness. Physicians were no help, but I had a dream that cured me, [thanks] only to the secret skills of the wise ancients. Although I do not possess the right to inherit the true teachings [of the
dream interpretive arts], it could be evidenced in the remnants of recorded works and could be both seen and tested.

So I traced the beginning of [these skills] in the six classics. I examined the various and myriad unofficial histories and consulted [the works of] all kinds of unofficial scholars. It did not matter whether it was in the distant past or recent, whether people were Chinese or foreign; from all those which look for manifestations and signs in dreams, there are none which I do not choose.

I named this text: *Classified Studies of Dream Interpretation*. Entries were organized category by category. Each [entry] has its own categorical designations, patterned after the tradition set forth by Liu Xiang with his broadly categorized five phases system.

I consulted mixed-up records and used those that were suitable, patterning the work after Wang Jing’s *The Great Fundamentals of Extensive Mysteries*. [Some examples] are still waiting to be tested or verified, but [citing rich examples] has the benefit of citing the past to verify the present. I also stretched and expanded the [dream interpretation theories]. I established categories and extended the possible methods so that there would be many uses.

[It is just like] Wei Jie who [supposedly] had an illness, but did not really have an illness. And like Suo Jin who [supposedly] did not have books, but actually did have knowledge. And [it is just like] not waiting to consult the dream records of Hua Yang, but nonetheless still being able to foretell the future based on the dream.
If a dream is purportedly inauspicious, but one nonetheless encounters auspiciousness, or, conversely, when a dream is purportedly auspicious, but one nonetheless encounters inauspiciousness instead, it is clear that the interpretation of fortune and misfortune is not often a simple matter of one-to-one [correspondence], which is also recorded by others.

万曆乙酉，春日，凌虚外史，张凤翼书

1585, a day in spring, unofficial history of traversing the void, written by Zhang Fengyi
Appendix 6
Forest of Dreams, Table of Contents

The following table of contents is transcribed and translated from the photographic reprint of the 1636 publication of Forest of Dreams housed in the Shanghai Lexicographical Library (A-1; C-1). For further information on this copy and others, please see Appendix 7.

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<td>Song Dynasty, “Kangjie” Shao Yong, Compiler</td>
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<td>明 養吾陳士元 增刪</td>
<td>Ming Dynasty, “Yangwu” Chen Shiyuan, additions and deletions</td>
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<tr>
<td>計書分四集。共三十四卷。</td>
<td>This book is divided into four parts. Altogether, there are 34 juan.</td>
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夢占

自首卷起。至二十六卷止。共計二十七卷。

夢禳

自二十七卷起。至二十八卷止。共計二卷。

夢原

止二十九卷。計一卷。

夢徵

自三十卷起。至三十四卷止。共計五卷。

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- Investigating the Phenomenon of the Third Hour of the Morning
- Differentiating Between Noble and Debased
- Distinguishing Between Perverse and Proper
- Generalizing About Auspiciousness and Inauspiciousness
- Respecting the Extremes of Indulgences
- Dream Transformations
- Dream Transmissions
- There are those dreams which cannot be interpreted; there are those interpretations which cannot be tested
- A dream without daytime or night must have auspiciousness and inauspiciousness
- Strange anomalies cannot be interpreted; finding the commonplace can be tested
- Transcendent Spirits Cannot be carelessly interpreted
- Bequeathing Soldered Gems and Jades
- The Endowed Path With Quotations

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The Stars

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Virtuous and Moralistic Persons
Filial Persons
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Juan 8: Dream Interpretation
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Observing the Jaw
Mouth and Teeth
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Beards and Whiskers
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Facial Hair
Hands and Feet
Muscles and Bones

Juan 9: Dream Interpretation

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Architecture, Part 1  Altogether 9 Categories

Halls and Palaces
Towers and Pavilions
Government Offices
Residences
Storehouses
Walled Gardens
Frontier Passes and Garrisons
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卷之十六  夢占

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Coverlets and Pillows
Cushions, Throws, and Rugs
Tents and Curtains
Belts
Bags and Handkerchiefs
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卷之二十四  番占

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長柳圖一  番話  五屬事物

Long Willow Graphs, Part 1  Graphical Explanations, Five Genera of Things and Events

長柳五神傳變二字  發夢圖說

A Graphical Explanation of the Long Willow [Method]'s Five Spirits Transmission and Transmutation of the Two Qi, Which Sets off Dreams

傳夢吉圖說

An Auspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of Dreams

傳夢凶圖說

An Inauspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of Dreams

環傳夢吉圖說

An Auspicious Graphical Explanation of the Encircling and Transmission of Dreams

環傳夢凶圖說

An Inauspicious Graphical Explanation of the Encircling and Transmission of Dreams

傳夢吉藏凶圖說

An Inauspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of Dreams and Auspicious Storage

傳夢凶藏吉圖說

An Auspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of Dreams and Inauspicious Storage

變傳夢吉圖說

An Auspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmutation and Transmission of Dreams

變傳夢凶圖說

An Inauspicious Graphical Explanation of the Transmutation and Transmission of Dreams

混傳迭化吉凶方圖說

A Graphical Explanation of the Mingled Transmission Transference Method of Auspiciousness and Inauspiciousness

混傳迭化吉凶圖說

A Graphical Explanation of the Mingled Transmission Transference Completion of Auspiciousness and Inauspiciousness

因夢配五行圖說

A Graphical Explanation of Causative Dreams with Appended Five Phases
A Graphical Explanation of Ascending Dreams with Appended Eight Trigrams

The Affairs with which Each of the Five Spirits are Affiliated

The Things with which Each of the Five Spirits are Affiliated

A Graphical Explanation of the Emission of Dreams at the Peak of Yang Qi

A Graphical Explanation of the Emission of Dreams at the Peak of Yin Qi

A Graphical Explanation of the Shifting of Dreams at the Nadir of Yang Qi

A Graphical Explanation of the Shifting of Dreams at the Nadir of Yin Qi

A Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of Dreams According to the Rise and Fall of the Two Qi

A Graphical Explanation of the Transmission of Dreams According to the Emptiness and Fullness of the Two Qi

A Graphical Explanation of Dreams According to the Simultaneous Prospering of the Two Qi

A Graphical Explanation of Dreams According to the Total Simultaneous Withering of the Two Qi

Juan 25: Dream Interpretation

Gan De’s Hourly Orders and Sexagenary Cycle, Good and Bad Fortune Graph1

Heavens, Sun, Moon, and Stars

Wind, Thunder, Rain, and Snow

Clouds, Heat, Fog, and Dew
地山水路  Earth, Mountains, Water, and Roads
田園橋城  Fields, Gardens, Bridges, and Towns
春夏秋冬  Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter
君臣父母  Ruler, Minister, Father, and Mother
師友兄弟  Teacher, Friend, Older Brother, and Younger Brother
夫妻子孫  Husband, Wife, Son, and Grandson
眷戚隣里  Dependents, Relatives, Neighbors, and Villagers

巻之二十六  夢占

甘德時令干支休咎圖二  Gan De’s Hourly Orders and Sexagenary Cycle, Good and Bad Fortune Graph 2

冠衣裳履  Headgear, Clothing, Skirts, and Footwear
樓屋臺亭  Towers, Dwellings, Lookouts, and Pavilions
梁柱門垣  Columns, Beams, Gates, and Walls
塼庭井窗  Stairs, Courtyards, Wells, and Windows
木葉花果  Trees, Leaves, Flowers, and Fruit
舟車書筆  Boats, Carts, Books, and Brushes
刀礪鏡釵  Knives, Inkstones, Mirrors, and Hairpins
紡織弓矢  Plows, Nets, Bows, and Arrows
頭齒手足  Head, Teeth, Hands, and Feet
馬牛犬豕  Horses, Cows, Dogs, and Pigs
麟虎獅象  Unicorns, Tigers, Lions, and Elephants
鳳鶴鶴雁  Male Phoenixes, Mythical Birds, Cranes, and Wild Geese
龍蛇魚鱉  Dragons, Snakes, Fishes, and Turtles
| 毓食肉食 | Consuming Grains and Meat |
| 茶蔬酒漿 | Tea, Vegetables, Wine, and Beverages |

| 卷之二十七 夢禳 | Juan 27: Dream Exorcism |
| 夢禳說一 | Dream Exorcism, Explanations 1 |
| 舍萌贈夢說 | An Explanation of the Bestowal of Dreams in the Thatched Hut |
| 感夢修省說 | An Explanation of Feeling Dreams and Perfected Self-Examination |
| 省夢須占易象說 | An Explanation of Dreams of Self-Examination Necessary for Divining the Images in the *Book of Changes* |
| 六十四卦爻象之辭 | Statement on the Divinatory Images of the 64 Hexagrams |
| 納甲法歌 | Song of the Najia Method |
| 六神起位賦 | A Bestowal as the Six Spirits Rise in their Places |
| 卜易總略 | General Outline of Divination According to the *Book of Changes* |
| 論六親 | Discourse on the Six Relatives |
| 論持世 | Discourse on Sustaining the World |
| 論六爻出現伏藏 | Discourse on the Hidden Treasures Appearing in the Six Line Changes |
| 論日辰 | Discourse on the Early Morning |
| 論爻神 | Discourse on the Divinating Spirits |
| 論德合刑沖剋墓空生敗死絕共二十段 | Discourse on the 20 Total Falsehoods of the Virtues of Combined Punishments, Overcoming Forces of Nature, Empty Graves, Failed Life, and Death |
| 吉神 | Auspicious Spirits |
An Explanation of the Incantation for Sleeping * Incantation
An Explanation of Sleep-Related Taboos
An Explanation of the Incantation for Avoiding Nightmares and the True Words * Incantation
Formulaic Pattern for Writing Talismans
Ten Steps for the Talismanic Methods of Suppressing Nightmares
An Explanation of the Incantation of the Supreme Venerable Lord’s Exorcism of Nightmares * Incantation
Twelve Methods for the Talismanic Methods of Suppressing Nightmares According to the Day [of the Week]
An Explanation of the Talisms for Avoiding Three-Corpse Gods’ Dreams * Three Corpse-Gods’ Names
Three Steps for Severing the Three-Corpse Gods with Talismans * Talismanic Incantations
An Explanation of the Incantation of the Guardian of the Night * Incantation
Appended Explanation of “Records of Yijian”
An Explanation of the Incantation of the Northern Emperor
An Explanation of the Incantation of the Great Daoist True Lord’s Understanding and Expelling
Nightmares: the Blue Child’s Rhyme *
Incantation

An Explanation of the Tiger Pillow, Calming the Spirits and Avoiding Dreams

An Explanation of Cinnabar-Controlling Nightmares

An Explanation of the Musk Deer Pillow, Avoiding Dreams

An Explanation of Cherishing Dream Grass

A Record of the Turtle Pillow

An Explanation of Praying for Dreams at the Temple of the Nine Immortals

卷之二十九 夢原

Juan 29: Dream Origins

Dream Exorcism, Explanations 1

Basic Questions

The Classic of the Divine Pivot

The Rites of Zhou

The Book of Songs

The Book of Zhou

Confucius

Zhuangzi

Liezi

Xunzi

Garden of Sayings

Huainanzi

Kong Yingda
史記 Records of the Grand Historian
漢書 The Book of the Han
衛藥 Wei Yao
論衡 On Balance
殷浩 Yan Hao
王叔和 Wang Shuhe
蕭方等 Xiao Fangdeng
六書精蘊 Six Books: Essential Collections
程子 Chengzi
朱子 Zhuzi
黃庭堅 Huang Tingjian
呂祖謙 Lu Zuqian
輔廣 Fu Guang
王晦叔 Wang Huishu
王潛夫 Wang Qianfu
秦再思 Qin Zaisi
倫道全 Complete Discourse on Ethics
皆夢軒說 Lofty Sayings on All Dreams
夢覺解 An Explication of Awakening from Dreams
夢占逸旨 Guidelines for Dreams and Dream Divination

Juan 30: Outward Manifestation of Dreams

天象類 Heavenly Correspondences
天類 Correspondences of the Heavens Category
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>日月</th>
<th>The Sun and the Moon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>星斗</td>
<td>The Stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>雲雨</td>
<td>Clouds and Rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>雪風</td>
<td>Snow and Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>雷電</td>
<td>Thunder and Lightning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虹鳥</td>
<td>Rainbows and Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>冰火</td>
<td>Ice and Fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>地理類</th>
<th>Geographical Features Category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>山水</td>
<td>Mountains and Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>河海</td>
<td>Rivers and Oceans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>江淵</td>
<td>Streams and Pools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>城省</td>
<td>Towns and Provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>關塞</td>
<td>Frontier Passes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>橋境</td>
<td>Bridges and Borders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>園地</td>
<td>Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>墻岸</td>
<td>Hedges and Shores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>坑墓</td>
<td>Holes and Gravestones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>卷之三十一 夢徵</th>
<th>Juan 31: Outward Manifestation of Dreams</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>人物類</td>
<td>Persons Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>帝王</td>
<td>Emperors and Kings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聖賢</td>
<td>Virtuous Sages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>將相</td>
<td>Generals and Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>仙佛</td>
<td>Immortals and Buddhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>神鬼</td>
<td>Spirits and Ghosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>釋道</td>
<td>Buddhists and Daoists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>彝倫</td>
<td>Proper Ethics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**卷之三十二** 夢徵

**Juan 32:** Outward Manifestation of Dreams

### Bodily Appearances Category

- **身體** | The Body
- **頭額** | Head and Forehead
- **眉髮** | Eyebrows and Hair
- **面目** | Face and Eyes
- **口鼻** | Mouth and Nose
- **齒舌** | Teeth and Tongue
- **鬚毛** | Beards and Facial Hair
- **手足** | Hands and Feet
- **背腹** | Back and Abdomen
- **腸胃** | Intestines and Stomach

### Governmental Affairs Category

- **科第** | Examination Ranks
- **官祿** | Official Salary
- **壽算** | Reckoning a Life Span
- **婚姻** | Marriage
- **喪葬** | Funerals and Burials
- **祭享** | Sacrifices for Enjoyment
- **恩讐** | Benefactors and Rivals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Intercourse</th>
<th>Requests and Entreaties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Juan 33:** Outward Manifestation of Dreams

### Miscellaneous Things Category
- Boats and Oars
- Wheeled Carts
- Military Weapons
- Banners and Flags
- Sacrificial Utensils
- Medicinal Utensils
- Seals and Tablets
- Household Utensils
- Hair Styling and Cosmetics
- Raingear

### Architecture Category
- Towers and Pavilions
- Houses
- Halls and Courtyards
- Doors and Beams
- Halls of Worship

### Clothing Category
- Fur Clothing
- Shirts and Armor
Destiny

Belts

Coverlets and Bedding

Shoes and Boots

Drinks and Food Category

Five Grains

Wine and Broth

Medicines

Things that Propagate Category

Trees and Shrubs

Grasses and Flowers

Melons and Fruits

Brush [Firewood]

Things that Fly and Run Category

The Four Guardian Animals

The Beasts

The Six Domesticated Animals

Insects

Precious Baubles Category

Gold and Silver

Pearls and Jade

Money

Literature and Letters Category
Books
The Classics
Poems and Songs
Character Strokes
Names and Numbers Category
Names and Surnames
Previously Established
APPENDIX: Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi
The End of the Table of Contents
Appendix 7
Publication History of *Forest of Dreams*

Here, I detail the publication history of *Forest of Dreams*, beginning with the earliest-known extant copy. For those copies of *Forest of Dreams* published during the same time period, I arrange the titles geographically in alphabetical order. One exception to this ordering is A-1, the 1636 copy of Forest of Dreams housed in the Shanghai Lexicographical Library. A photographic reprint of A-1 was published in 2002 as part of the *Continuation to the Complete Four Treasuries Library*; therefore, this edition is widely available in major universities, libraries, and archives. Because of its availability, I cite C-1 in my dissertation.

I have located fifteen extant 1636 copies of *Forest of Dreams* (one in the United States, three in Japan, three in Taiwan, and eight in the People’s Republic of China). In 2009 and 2010, I visited each of the copies and compared each page of each copy. I confirmed that the first page of the first juan was printed from the same woodblock. There is supposedly a sixteenth extant 1636 copy of *Forest of Dreams*, housed in the National Library in Beijing; however, I was not allowed to see it, so I do not include it in the list below.

The general contents of the fifteen are largely the same; however, the three copies housed in Japan have different sectional divisions than the other copies and are shorter in length (at a total of twenty-nine juan). Additionally, the three copies housed in Japan do not include the appendix of the *Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimis*, nor do they include the Gan De charts (juan 25 and 26 in A-1). Other differences between the fifteen copies exist primarily at the material level. Specific physical attributes such as highlighted sections, marginal doodles, and the quality of the paper reveal the varying ways in which particular copies of the encyclopedia were read, treated, stored, and restored.

Below, I first list the citation and then provide relevant information about the physical copy of the work (such as size, location, and numbers of pages). Differences from the A-1/ C-1 copy are marked with asterisks.
Shanghai, People’s Republic of China (PRC)

A-1: Shanghai Lexicographical Library (Shanghai cihai chubanshe tushuguan 上海辭海出版社圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

A-2: Shanghai Library (Shanghai tushuguan 上海圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

* A-2 includes a 1636 title page.

Beijing, PRC:

A-3: Peking University Rare Books Collection (Beijing Daxue cang guji shanben shu 北京大學藏古籍善本書)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

A-3: Peking University Rare Books Collection (Beijing Daxue cang guji shanben shu 北京大學藏古籍善本書)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

A-4: Peking University Rare Books Collection (Beijing Daxue cang guji shanben shu 北京大學藏古籍善本書)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the
Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子
[1636].

A-5: Beijing Normal University Rare Books Collection (Beijing shifan daxue tushuguan guji shanben shu 北京師範大學圖書館古籍善本書)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子
[1636].

A-6: National Library (Guojia tushuguan 國家圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子
[1636].

A-7: National Library (Guojia tushuguan 國家圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子
[1636].

A-8: Academy of Sciences Library (Zhongguo kexueuan tushuguan 中國科學院圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子
[1636].

206
Taipei, Taiwan:

A-9: National Central Library (Guojia tushuguan 國家圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

A-10: National Central Library (Guojia tushuguan 國家圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

A-11: National Palace Museum Library (Gugong bowuyuan tushuguan 故宮博物院圖書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

Tokyo, Japan

A-12: Sonkeikaku Archives (Sonkeikaku Bunkō 尊経閣文庫)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

*A-12 includes a 1636 title page.

A-13: Naikaku Collection (Naikaku Bunkō 内閣文庫), National Archives of Japan (Kokuritsu Kōbunshōkan 国立公文書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解 [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子
[1636].

*A-13* includes a 1636 title page.

**A-14:** Naikaku Bunkō (内閣文庫), National Archives of Japan (*Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan* 国立公文書館)

He Dongru 何棟如, comp. *Meng lin xuanjie* 夢林玄解 [*An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams*]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].

** Compared with *A-1*, the table of contents of *A-12, -13,* and *-14* contain two different sectional headings and the sections are ordered differently. In order of appearance, the sectional headings in *A-12, -13,* and *-14* are: 1) “Dream Origins” (*Meng yuan* 夢原) in two *juan*; 2) “Dream Theory” (*Meng lun* 夢論), in two *juan*; 3) “Dream Exorcism” (*Meng rang* 夢禳) in two *juan*, and 4) “Dream Interpretation” (*Meng zhan* 夢占) in twenty-three *juan*. *A-12, -13,* and *-14* do not contain the appendix of the *Illustrated Survey of Ming Optimi*. None of these three copies include “Gan De’s Hourly Orders and Sexagenary Cycle, Good and Bad Fortune Graphs, 1 and 2” (*Gan de shiling ganzhi xiujiu tu yi er* 甘德時令千支休咎圖一、 二), which comprise *juan* 25 and 26 of *A-1*. The ninth *juan* of *A-12, -13,* and *-14* does not include an entry for “Urine and Feces.”

**Cambridge, MA United States**

**A-15:** Harvard Yenching Library

Tomioka Tessai富岡鐵斆 (1837-1924), a painter and calligrapher from Kyoto, purchased this copy of the dream encyclopedia. The Harvard-Yenching library acquired *Forest of Dreams* in 1954.
He Dongru 何棟如, comp. *Meng lin xuanjie 夢林玄解* [An Explication of the Profundities in the Forest of Dreams]. Chongzhen bingzi 崇禎丙子 [1636].
Twentieth-Century Printing of *Forest of Dreams*

Below is a list of twentieth-century reprints of *Forest of Dreams* that are known to me.

**B-1**

Ge Hong, *Meng lin xuan jie: Zhongguo gudai jiemeng zhen pin* 梦林玄解：中国古代解梦珍品


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preface: A few explanatory points about <em>Forest of Dreams</em> 序：关于《梦林玄解》的几点说明</th>
<th>pp. 1-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manifestations of the Heavens 天象部</td>
<td>pp. 9-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Heavens 天空 [<strong>This section title does not appear in A-1</strong>]</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Sun and the Moon 日月</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Stars 星斗</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wind and Clouds 風雲</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thunder and Rain 雷雨</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mist and Lightning 霞電</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rainbows 虹霓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fog and Dew 霧露</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frost and Snow 霜雪</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ice and Hail 冰雹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smoke and Fire 炎火</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time and the Seasons 時令</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Geography 地理部</td>
<td>pp. 36-55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earth and Soil 地土</td>
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<td>Mountains and Water 山水</td>
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<td>Cliffs and Rocks 巖石</td>
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<td>Rivers and Streams 河江</td>
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<td>Lakes and Oceans 湖海</td>
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<td>Towns and Cities 城市</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridges and Roads 橋路</td>
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<td>Fields and Gardens 田園</td>
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### Tombs and Burial Sites 墳塚

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons 人物部</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emperors and Kings 帝王</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcendents and Buddhas 仙佛</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirits and Ghosts 神鬼</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proper Ethics 禮教</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commoners 民庶</td>
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<td>Artisanal Craftsmen 術技</td>
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<td>Foreigners 夷蠻</td>
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<td>Superior Performers 優伎</td>
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<td>Servants and Slaves 奴隸</td>
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<td>The Elderly and Young 老幼</td>
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<td>Men and Women 男女</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Appearances 形貌部</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Body 身體</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head and Forehead 頭顔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skull and Brain 頭髪</td>
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<td>Face and Eyes 面目</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ears and Nose 耳鼻</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eyebrows and Hair 眉髪</td>
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<td>Observing the Jaw 観頰</td>
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<td>Mouth and Teeth 口歯</td>
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<td>Lips and Tongue 唇舌</td>
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<td>Beards and Whiskers 鬚髯</td>
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<td>Throat and Neck 喉頦</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facial Hair 皮毛</td>
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<td>Hands and Feet 手足</td>
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<td>Muscles and Bones 筋骨</td>
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<td>Shoulders and Ribs 肩胸</td>
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<td>Abdomen and Back 腹背</td>
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<td>Heart and Chest 心胸</td>
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| **Fire and Burglary** 火盜  | **Benefactors and Rivals** 恩讐 |
| **Murder and Struggles** 殺鬪  | **Brawls and Verbal Abuse** 殄詈 |
| **Punishment and Imprisonment** 刑獄  | **Funerals and Burials** 喪葬 |
| **Prayers for Enjoyment** 祝享  | **Social Intercourse** 酉酢 |
| **Daily Life** 起居  | **Miscellaneous Things** 什物部 |

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| **Wheeled Carts** 車轎  | **Wheeled Carts** 車轎 |
| **Writing Ink** 文墨  | **Writing Ink** 文墨 |
| **Military Weapons** 武械  | **Military Weapons** 武械 |
| **Talismans and Tablets** 符箋  | **Talismans and Tablets** 符箋 |
| **Imperial Regalia** 卤簿  | **Imperial Regalia** 卤簿 |
| **Punishments and Penalties** 刑罰  | **Punishments and Penalties** 刑罰 |
| **Banners and Flags** 幡幢  | **Banners and Flags** 幡幢 |
| **Household Utensils** 家伙  | **Household Utensils** 家伙 |
| **Tea Utensils** 茶具  | **Tea Utensils** 茶具 |
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| **Luggage** 行李  | **Luggage** 行李 |
| **Raingear** 雨具  | **Raingear** 雨具 |

*pp. 128-153*
## Nets and Snares 網罟
Sericulture 蠶桑
Looms and Weaving 機杼
Work 工作
Hair Styling and Cosmetics 梳髮
Betrothals and Marriage 聘嫁
Funerary Rituals 喪禮
Sacrificial Utensils 乐器

### Architecture 棟宇部
- Halls and Palaces 殿宮
- Towers and Pavilions 臺閣
- Government Offices 宦署
- Residences 第宅
- Storehouses 庫廂
- Walled Gardens 苑囿
- Frontier Passes and Garrisons 關隘
- Prisons 囚囹
- Halls of Worship 神宇

### Clothing and Accessories 服飾部
- Caps, Crowns, and Headgear 冠冕
- Outer garments 衣褳
- Footwear 鴻履
- Coverlets and Pillows 被窻
- Cushions, Throws, and Rugs 袍幃
- Tents and Curtains 帳幃
- Belts 佩帶
- Bag and Handkerchiefs 襲帕
- Rings and Hairpins 鍔釘

### Drinks and Foods 飲食部
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- Alcohol and Beverages 酒漿
- Five Grains 五穀
- Fruits and Vegetables 蔬果
- Meats and Delicacies 餚饌
- Miscellaneous 雜物

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