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# Ying-ying's story

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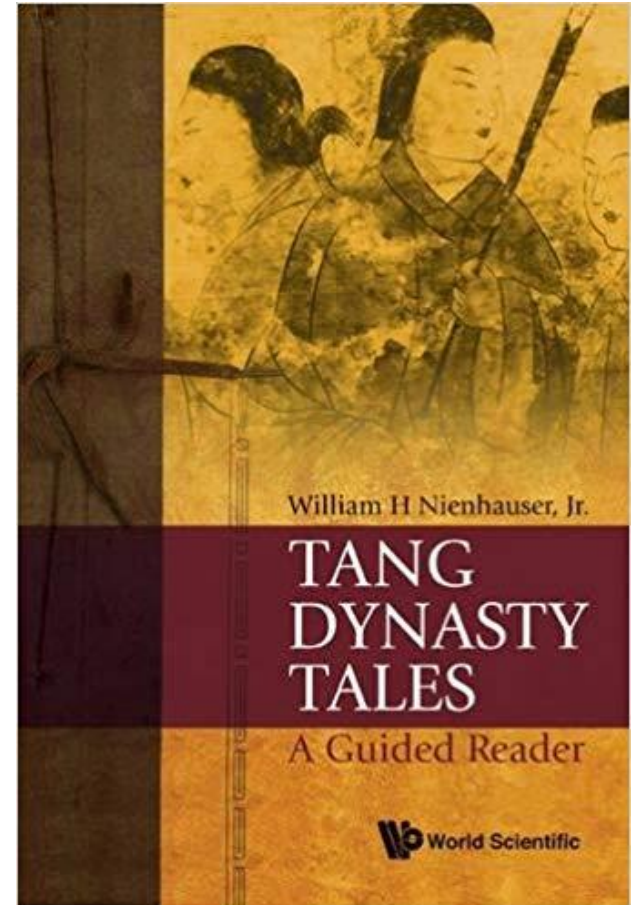
# Yuan Zhen Biography - (Tanea)

- Born 779 in Luoyang
- Died 831 at age 52 in Wuchang
- Influential of *guwen* “ancient-style prose”
  - Styles of early classical chinese writers
- Entered state service through examination system, became a member of a literary circle
  - Group called for a revival of moral themes and ancient style literature
  - Famous for his *xinyuefu*, or “new music bureau” and short fiction



# Description of Tang Tales - (Tanea)

- *Chuanqi* - "transmitting accounts of remarkable things"
- Tale that consisted of human love stories and heroism
- Served serious moral and social purposes
- "Ying-ying's Story" set a new standard for the genre of tales



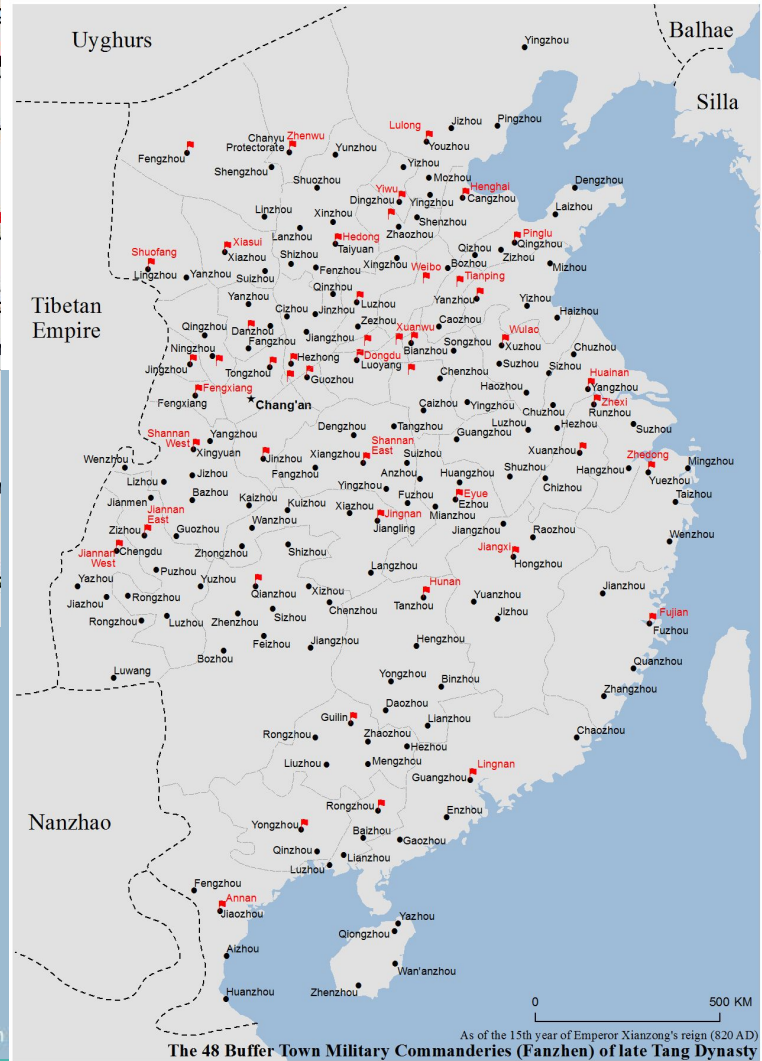
# Map of Puzhou and Chan'an

## The Tang's Ruling Area Map

Land under the rule of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD)



- Land under the rule of the Tang Dynasty
- Capital (modern-day name)
- Major city (modern-day name)
- China's modern-day border

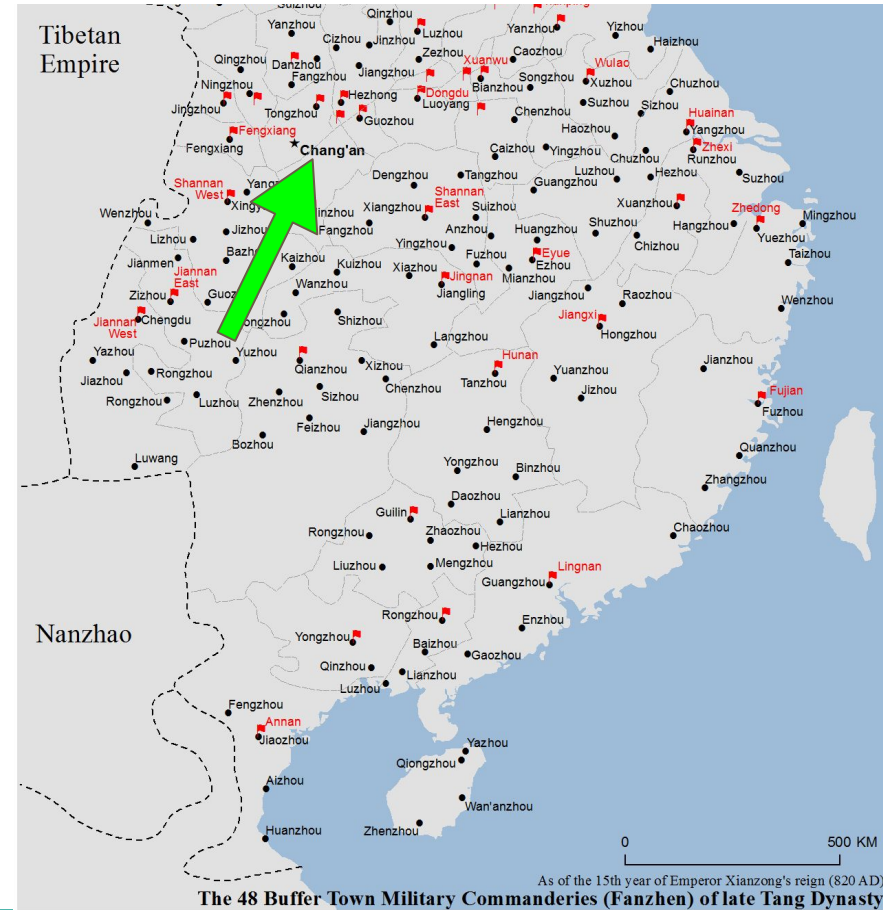


# Overview of Characters

- **Zhang Sheng:** had handsome appearance, who held steadfastly to his personal principles and never been intimate with woman
- **Madam Cui:** widowed woman who had a daughter and a son, is a rather distant cousin from Zhang mother's side.
- **Cui Ying-ying:** Madam Cui's daughter, beautiful and artistically talent, who Zhang in love as the first time met
- **Huan-lang:** Madam Cui's son, a gentle and handsome boy, older Ying-ying ten years old
- **Hun Zhen:** the Military Governor and passed away in Pu-zhou that year
- **Ding Wen-ya:** the court officer left in charge the position of Hun Zhen
- **Hong-niang:** a maidservant of Ying-ying, gave advice and helped Zhang pursue Ying-ying

# How people came to be at the Temple of Universal Salvation

- Madam Cui was on her way to Chang'an and Pu-zhou was one of the stop in her journey.
- And Zhang just came to Pu-zhou only for visit and Temple of Universal Salvation where he took up lodgings in Pu-zhou.





# Plot of the Story

During the time Zhang visited Pu-zhou, he stayed at the temple, which was the same place that a widow, Mrs. Cui, stayed. After finding out that he was related to Mrs. Cui, Zhang also caught news of some soldiers of Ding Wen-ya that were threatening the monastery and making it an unsafe place to stay. Zhang had earlier developed friendly relations with the circle around the commandant of Pu-zhou, and he asked for guards to protect Mrs. Cui. As a result, there was no harm happen with her family. Mrs. Cui was so happy and relieved, she invited him over for dinner. She introduced her son - Huan-lang and her daughter - Ying-ying to Zhang, and as soon as Zhang set eyes on her he fell in love. Ying-ying wasn't for the love at first, she was very hesitant. Hong-niang understood Ying-ying really well, so she told Zhang something should say and something shouldn't, and she had advised him to compose poems to better express his love for Ying-ying. Finally Ying-ying felt in love with Zhang, as much as Ying-ying wanted it to work out. Later, Zhang had to leave for the capital to participate in the competitive literary exams in twice, and Ying-ying also felt that Zhang was abandoning her. She blamed him for attending to education and job seeking rather than staying with her. When he arrived Chang'an, he wrote the letter tell all the true feeling of him, but she responded him a letter implied that Zhang was only interested in his own future and didn't think about her much. After reading this letter, Zhang felt Ying-ying was hindered the way he go, so he decided to broke up with her. A year later, Ying-ying married another, and Zhang took wife.

# Confucian Morality and Typical Marriage Betrothal Customs (Sharen)

- Main themes of Confucianism: loyalty, virtue, filial piety and human relationships. These ethics are achieved through obedience, study and ritual
- Human nature can be improved through self cultivation of key virtues (ren, yi, and li)
  - **ren** = humaneness/humanity; care and concern that allow community to function and what people should show towards one another
  - **yi** = righteous behavior, ethics and etiquettes that shape conduct
  - **li** = religious, political, and common ceremonies that allow community to function without conflict/be civilized
  - **junzi** = superior person, scholar, sage = perfection of human potential by cultivating self and being perfect example of loyalty and piety
- Purpose of marriage is the **cultivation of virtue**
  - Marriage is the beginning of ethics and wedding ceremony is the essence of proper etiquette → has influence on social stability (political implications as well)
  - Only people w/ formal wedding ceremonies are recognized by society
  - Bringing together of two clans, rather than two people
- Three Subordinations: Ying-ying defied these to pursue love
  - An ideal wife was expected to be subordinate to her father before her marriage, subordinate to her husband after marriage, and subordinate to her son after he took over the household succeeding his father
- **Four Virtues of Confucianism:**
  - Wifely Virtue (婦德): Serving parents in law and husband with fidelity
  - Wifely Work (婦功): Bringing up children with love and attending to household chores with industriousness/thrift
  - Wifely Speech (婦言): Being polite and soft in speech/never saying more than necessary
  - Wifely Manner/Appearance (婦容): Keeping good deference and demeanor



# Confucian Morality and Typical Marriage Betrothal Customs (continued)

## Rules to marriage: 6 Rites

- “Giving choice” to woman and her family to accept proposal
- Inquire about woman’s name and birthday to ensure they did not have same surname or have any blood relatives in common
- “Giving the lucky result” of divination; performed to ensure that marriage was a balanced match
- “Giving gifts to the woman’s family
- Inquiry of date of the wedding (consult Lunar calendar and select lucky day)
- Groom receives gift of the bride from her parents

## Typical marriage betrothal customs: Pg. 542

- “The other day ... I could scarcely control myself ... I walk without knowing where I am going and eat without thinking of whether I am full or not. I’m afraid I won’t last another day ...” (542)
- **Sending of betrothal tokens/gifts**
  - Presenting and accepting gifts was essential to the betrothal ceremony; one was not married legally without some token transfer of objects from the groom’s family to the bride’s family
  - Validated marriage





- **Employ matchmaker to ask for hand in marriage**
  - Ensure that husband and wife were compatible with each other (but also worked in the families' best interests)
  - Belief that union needed to be confirmed by "fate/heaven"
- **Formal inquiries about names**
  - When husband and wife are of the same surname, their children do not do well and multiply."

# Ying-ying's Action/Behavior from the time she met Zhang and Defense of her choices (Charles)

- Ying-ying's reaction to Zhang on the 15th was an extension of their very first meeting at the feast when she was embarrassed and unprepared to introduce herself to Zhang in the moment.
- She was being defensive against Zhang because she was wary of being tricked or manipulated by someone with as much power as him.
- Her appearance in Zhang's quarters a few nights later and her emotion shows that she was thinking about this reaction.



## Ying-ying's Action/Behavior from the time she met Zhang and Defense of her choices (continued)

- Ying-ying's growing attachment to Zhang made it difficult for her to accept that he was leaving for Chang-an. This intensified the second time he left with her playing the harp, which she knew Zhang wanted to hear and would likely hear for the last time.
- With Pu-zhou being "in a far place", Ying-ying could not bear the emotions from Zhang leaving permanently and needed someone to relieve her of them, as her longing of Zhang took a toll on her. Zhang did not plan on returning to Pu-zhou until he happened to pass through over a year later, so she did not have much reason to wait for him.

# Zhang's Action/Behavior from the time he met Ying-ying and Defense of his choices (Mai)

- Zhang had fallen passionately in love with her, and from this time he wished to tell her of his feelings, but he could find no way.
- Hong-niang, a maidservant, helped him to get to Ying-ying by delivering his poems to her. Unfortunately, Ying-ying got mad at Zhang which made Zhang lost all hopes.
- He composed a poem named "Meeting the Holy One" as a present to Ying-ying before he left to Chang-an to take the civil service examination. He told her his love and wanted to meet her but she refused him.
- He failed the first time so later on he had to go to Chang-an again, the night before he left, he said nothing but his feeling to her.



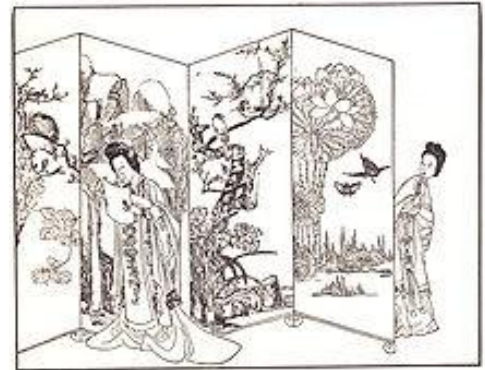
## Zhang's Action/Behavior from the time he met Ying-ying and Defense of his choices (continued)

- Ying-ying responded Zhang with a letter that implied that Zhang had been untrue to her, was interested only in his own future as an official. Zhang did not react to this letter by feeling guilty. Instead, he decided that the relationship was bad for him, and also Ying-ying
- His official duties took him near to Ying-ying's new home, he attempted to visit her. She refused to see him, but she sent him a poem that indicated that she was thoroughly miserable, and that this sorrow state of affairs was all Zhang's fault. He responded with a poem of his own, saying that the past and all the decisions each had made were all beyond recall and that she should direct her energies toward making a good relationship with her husband.



# Criticism of Ying-ying's Action/Behavior (Michael)

- ★ Under the influence of the Confucian code of ethics, the first appearance of Ying-ying is a girl who is so strict that not even elders could suggest anything improper to her.
- ★ Ying-ying is portrayed as telling Zhang what to do with his life and making decisions for him.
- ★ She is portrayed as a jealous type, because she doesn't like it when Zhang leaves to go on his literacy exams.
- ★ YingYing is very bold with her choices, one example is when Zhang reached the capital and wrote to Ying-ying, She responded saying how unfaithful/ untruthful he has been to her and they eventually ended the relationship.





## Criticism of Ying-ying's Action/Behavior (Cont.)

- ★ The treatment of Ying-ying is no different than other fictional women who find themselves being worshipped by men as goddesses, and who eventually become a challenge for the man.
- ★ A woman like Ying-ying is said to afflict men by arousing them, she makes them tend toward sinful behavior, and she is disruptive. referred to in China as a yao (witch) or huli (fox), or as having Bao Si's power to qingguo qingcheng (overthrow countries and states).
  - As a result many men began writing essays about Ying-ying trying to ascertain whether or not there really was such a person and trying to rationalize Zhang's behaviour in the story.
- ★ Wang Zhi was the earliest to try to establish the fictional Ying-ying as a real person. Using evidence which revealed the personal attitudes in the story.

## Criticism of Zhang's Actions/Behavior (Mohammed)

- Zhang encounters Hong-niang, who is Ying-ying's servant. Zhang tells Hong-niang of his love for Ying-ying.
- Hong-niang convinces Zhang to write Ying-ying a poem which he agrees to.
- Zhang goes to Ying-ying to deliver the poem and lies to Hong-niang saying that Ying-ying's letter invited him.
- Ying-ying feels uneasy because of this and also because Zhang sent her a poem by the hand of her servant.

Zhang could have been more genuine about meeting Ying-ying.

## Criticism of Zhang's Actions/Behavior (cont.)

- Zhang fails his examinations and has to remain in the capital.
- Zhang writes Ying-ying a letter explaining his situation and shows it to his friends (tarnishes her reputation).
- His friends tell him that his love for Ying-ying is extraordinary, but Zhang decides to end the relationship.

Zhang could have done better on his examinations knowing that he will have to stay which jeopardize his relationship if he fails.

# Questions for the Class:

- 1) What is this story about? (*love, morality, power, politics, family, other*)
- 2) Do you believe that the only reason Ying-ying wrote her “frivolous and coy verses” was to scold Zhang in person? If not, what other reason(s) did she have?
- 3) Is Ying-ying’s story to be understood solely as the dichotomy between ritual and passion, the public path and private life?
- 4) Did Ying-ying show signs of early feminism? How?
- 5) Who do you think is seduced by whom? (*Ying-ying seduced Zhang, Zhang seduced Ying-ying, both, neither*)
- 6) Are you sympathetic to Ying-ying, Zhang, or neither? Why?
- 7) How does the conclusion of the story make you feel? Would you consider it a “happy ending”?

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