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Renditions is published twice a year, in May and November. Address all editorial and advertising correspondence to: Renditions, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong. Translation manuscripts should be accompanied by the original Chinese texts. Romanization should be in accordance with the pinyin system. Spelling and usage should be in accordance with the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. The contents of this magazine are copyrighted; no part of it may be reproduced without written permission from Renditions. Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 74-641755, ISSN 0377-3515.

Website: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/renditions e-mail: renditions@cuhk.edu.hk

Printed in Hong Kong.
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補江總白猿傳
A Supplement to Jiang Zong’s Biography of
A White Ape
By an anonymous author
Translated by Jue Chen

Translator’s Introduction

One of the three early Tang dynasty (618–907) masterpieces of chuanqi 傳奇,¹ ‘Supplement to Jiang Zong’s Biography of a White Ape’ 補江總白猿傳, was written by an anonymous author. It is regarded as one of the earliest examples of the roman à clef (yingshe 影射) in the history of Chinese fiction.²

Any roman à clef has two stories: the real version in history and the fictional version created by the author. The person being attacked

¹The other two are Gujing ji 古鏡記 (Record of an Ancient Mirror) attributed to Wang Du 王度 and Youxian ku 遊仙窟 (The Dwelling of Playful Goddesses) by Zhang Zhuo 張鯤 (657–730).

²Roman à clef is a kind of European fiction in which real persons are presented under fictitious names. Contemporary sinologists tend to define the Chinese yingshe fiction as a kind of ‘roman à clef’ because they share a similar mode of representation.

The roman à clef interpretation of Baiyuan zhuan began in the Song Dynasty (960–1279) by such bibliographers as Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (1102?–1187?) and Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (?–1261); see Chao’s Junzhai dushuzhi 郡齋讀書志 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1990) (rpt), p. 373 and Chen’s Zhizhai shulu jieti 直齋書錄解題 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1987) (rpt), p. 317, respectively. The Ming dynasty (1368–1644) critic Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551–1602) also promoted this reading; see his Shaoshi shanfang bicong 少室山房筆錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) (rpt), pp. 419–420.
in this story is no doubt Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641), a renowned early Tang calligrapher. Many analogies are carefully designed to link the family story of Ouyang Xun and the fictional story of the white ape.

Intentional anachronism is an important technique in this design. Historically, Lan Qin 阮欽, a Liang dynasty (502–557) general, was sent to the south leading an expedition to conquer the Man 蛮 and Li 倫 minorities, sometime between the years 528 and 536, i.e. between the end of the Datong reign 大通 (527–528) and the beginning of the Datong reign 大同 (535–545). But, in our story, his southern expedition took place around the year 545, at the end of the Datong 大同 reign. In history, Ouyang Wei 歐陽頠 (498–563), Ouyang Xun’s grandfather, participated in Lan Qin’s southern expedition as a subordinate officer; but in our story, he is replaced by his son Ouyang He 歐陽纥 (538–570), who is Ouyang Xun’s father. In the application of intentional anachronism, the names of historical figures are often changed, but still presented in a recognizable form, and geographical locations are displaced. For instance, Lan Qin’s name is given as Lin Qin 間名 in the story. Historically, Lan Qin defeated Chen Wenche 陳文徹, a famous Li minority general in Guangzhou; but in our story, not only is Chen Wenche’s name changed to Chen Che 陳徹, but he was also defeated in Guilin, hundreds of miles away from Guangzhou. Through these substitutions, the historical and the fictional are mixed up and a new roman à clef discourse is formed.

The basis of the story stems from fact: the physical appearance of Ouyang Xun resembled that of a monkey so much so that he became an object of ridicule among his contemporaries. According to Liu Su’s 劉縉 Sui Tang jiahua 隋唐嘉話, Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (?–659), Emperor

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3 Liu Su, a historian active in the Tianbao reign 天寶 (742–755) of the Tang dynasty, was the first to record this anecdote, see his Sui Tang jiahua (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957) (rpt), p. 14. Slightly different versions of the same story appeared frequently in anecdotal writings of various later authors, for instance, in Liu Su’s 劉縉 (active in the Yuanhe reign 元和, 806–820) Da Tang xinyu 大唐新語 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957) (rpt), p. 187; and in Wang Dang’s 王讬 (Song dynasty) Tang yulin 唐語林 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957) (rpt), p. 158.
Taizong's brother-in-law, teased Ouyang Xun with a poem insinuating that Ouyang looked like a monkey, to which Ouyang responded promptly with a sarcastic poem. In other official sources, such as Jiu Tangshu and Xin Tangshu, another event is recorded: in 636, Xu Jingzong was demoted to the post of a local official because he could not help laughing openly at Ouyang Xun's ugliness during Empress Wende's solemn interment ceremony. Taking Ouyang Xun's unusual appearance as a point of departure, the anonymous author created this story to suggest the source of his ugliness, perhaps as well as his unusual intelligence: he is the son of an extraordinary white ape.

We may note that the title of the story is also full of tricks. In traditional Chinese literature, the supplement is a convention. It suggests that there exists an original Biography of a White Ape written by Jiang Zong, a high official in the Liang, Chen, and Sui dynasties and a good friend of Ouyang He. But in fact there is no historical or bibliographical source to support the

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4 It is worth remembering that in 636 Ouyang Xun was an old man of seventy-nine, and probably had a wrinkled face which made him even more ape-like.

5 In addition to all these anecdotal sources, Ouyang Xun's ugliness is also clearly implied in official biographies in Jiu Tangshu and Xin Tangshu.

6 Supplement 補 is a conventional practice in Chinese narrative composition and especially important for historical and fictional writings. In the case of history, for instance, there are such titles as Bu Liangshu jiangyuzhi and Bu Tangshu Zhang Yichao zhuans 補梁書疆域志 and 補唐書張義潮傳. In the case of fiction, whenever a great work appears, supplements by various lesser hands will usually follow. For instance, after the sixteenth century novel Xiyou ji 西遊記, we have Xiyou bu 西遊補; and following the eighteenth century novel Honglou meng 紅樓夢, there was a series of supplements including the Honglou meng bu 紅樓夢補. As a literary term, supplement often suggests an inferiority to, or sometimes a parody of, the original masterpiece. Words such as xu 續, hou 後, or xin 新 (these three terms all mean a sequel to a major work) also indicate a similar practice.

7 Both Nanshi 南史 and Chenshu 陈書 include biographies of Jiang Zong. For a more detailed chronological record (nianpu 年譜), see Chen Liu's 陳留 Jiang Zong nianpu 江總年譜. This nianpu is documented in Xie Wei's 謝緯 Zhongguo lidai renwu nianpu kaolu 中國歷代人物年譜考錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), p. 93.
claim that Jiang Zong ever wrote such a piece. Therefore, this supplement becomes a supplement in search of a precedent, which is another joke the anonymous author has played on us.

The above are a few points the reader may wish to note while reading this Chinese roman à clef. This translation is based on the edition of *Tangren xiaoshuo* 唐人小說 edited by Wang Pijiang's 汪辟疆，who in turn based his work mainly on a Song dynasty version of the story, preserved in *Gushi wenfang xiaoshuo* 顧氏文房小說, an anthology published in the Ming dynasty.9

I would like to thank here Yu-kung Kao, Stephen Owen, and Denis Twitchett for their encouragement and guidance in my study of Tang dynasty *chuanqi*, Andrew Plaks for his advice on issues of Chinese narrative in general, and Paul Muldoon his comments on earlier versions of the translation.

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8 Neither Jiang Zong’s collected works nor other major bibliographical sources mention such a title. Students of *chuanqi* studies have never found any anecdotal writings of Jiang Zong’s contemporaries that may support the possible existence of this legendary *Baiyuan zhuang*. Since there is no documentation to support the claim that Jiang Zong ever wrote such a story, most people think that the so-called ‘Jiang Zong’s Baiyuan zhuang’ is merely an invention of the anonymous author which allows him to write his supplement.

9 See Wang Pijiang’s *Tangren xiaoshuo* (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957) (rpt), pp. 15–18.
Towards the end of the Datong reign of the Liang dynasty, Lin Qin, the General of Southern Pacification, was sent to the South on an expedition. He marched to the city of Guilin where he defeated Li Shigu and Chen Che.

Ouyang He, one of Lin Qin’s subordinate officers, occupied territory as far as Changle. He went deep into dangerous and difficult mountain areas and subdued all the rebellious tribes who lived in caves.

The wife of Ouyang He was fair-skinned, delicate and beautiful. “Why bring such a beautiful woman to accompany you through such a place, General?” asked a subordinate of Ouyang He. “There is a god in this region who makes a practice of stealing young women. Beauties especially are unlikely to escape his clutches. You must keep a close eye on your wife.”

Ouyang He became alarmed at this and feared that something terrible would happen. When evening fell, he ordered his soldiers to encircle his dwelling. He concealed his wife in an inner chamber, which was locked and barred, and commanded more than a dozen maids to guard her. The night was dark and a chill wind was blowing. By the fifth watch nothing had happened. The guards grew weary and dozed off. Suddenly they were awakened by the feeling that someone had entered the room, and they found that Ouyang He’s wife was no longer there. The door was stoutly barred as before, and they could not discover how she had been taken away.

Outside the chamber were steep mountains, and the darkness was so profound that even things near at hand were obscured. It was impossible to undertake a search. They waited until dawn broke, but by then there was no trace of Ouyang He’s wife. Ouyang He was completely distraught, and swore that he would not return home empty-handed.

Pleading illness, Ouyang He remained in the area and kept his army with him. Each day the men fanned out in all directions to look for Ouyang He’s wife, searching down into deep valleys and up onto perilous peaks. More than a month passed. Then one day they found a woman’s embroidered shoe in a bamboo thicket a hundred li away from the place where Ouyang He’s wife was abducted.\footnote{One \textit{li} equals approximately 0.3 mile.} The shoe had
been drenched by rain but there could be no doubt that it belonged to Ouyang He's wife.\textsuperscript{11} Though filled with grief, Ouyang He became more determined than ever to find his wife, be she alive or dead.

He selected thirty of his best men, equipped them with weapons and food, and led them on an expedition requiring them to camp on the cliffs and eat in the open. When more than ten days had passed and Ouyang He and his men had journeyed about two hundred li away from their campsite, they spied a magnificent mountain to the south, a mountain so richly verdant that it stood out from all the others. When they reached its foot, they found that it was surrounded by a deep brook.\textsuperscript{12} So, they made rafts to carry themselves across. On top of forbidding cliffs midst green bamboos, they glimpsed red silk gowns here and there and heard people talking and laughing. They pulled themselves up with vines and ropes, and saw that the top of the mountain was lined with magnificent trees and planted with rare kinds of beautiful flowers. The green lawn underfoot was as rich and soft as a carpet. It was fresh and quiet, a place apart, another world. To the east, dozens of women walked in and out through an entrance cut in the rock. They all wore magnificent, luminescent gowns and capes, and they were singing, playing, jesting, and laughing.

Catching sight of the search party, the women stared at them, motionless.\textsuperscript{13} As they approached, the women asked, “What has brought

\textsuperscript{11}In the Tang dynasty, it was generally believed that xingxing 猩猩, an animal very similar to the gibbon, loved wine and shoes (especially women’s shoes). People even used wine and shoes to lure and trap them. For a frequently cited example, see Li Zhao’s 李肇 Tang guoshi bu 唐國史補 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957) (rpt), p. 64.

\textsuperscript{12}The scenery described in this paragraph is a typical Chinese Taoist mountain utopia/immortal’s domain (xianjing 仙境) which, especially in the literature of the Tang dynasty, often possesses an erotic flavour. According to Taoist thought of the time, men could become immortals by practising a certain kind of yoga through sexual intercourse with a variety of women.

\textsuperscript{13}The original wording here is man shi chi li 慢視齊立, implying that these women were so surprised at the arrival of outsiders that both their eyes and feet were immobilized. After their initial surprise, the question “What has brought you here?” (heyn lai ci 何因來此) was asked. I suspect that such a description represents a typical topos of Tang dynasty fiction—an outsider or a group of outsiders arrives at a reclusive mountain area (usually by crossing a brook) and meets some women living there. A
you here?” Ouyang He told the women his entire story. The women exchanged glances with one another and sighed. “Your wife has been here for more than a month,” they said. “Now she is ill in bed. You may want to go and see her.”

Ouyang He, upon walking through the wooden gate of the stone entrance, found three huge caverns resembling the banquet halls of the human world. Along the four walls tapestried beds were lined up. Ouyang He’s wife lay on a stone bed that was underlaid with mats and cushions. In front of her were displayed many rare delicacies. As soon as she turned her head and saw Ouyang He approaching, she made a hasty gesture, signalling that she wanted him to leave at once.

“Some of us have been here for ten years,” the other women said to Ouyang He. “This is the home of a powerful, murderous god. Even a hundred well-armed soldiers will be unable to defeat him. Fortunately, he has not yet returned. It would be well for you to leave and avoid confronting him. But if you can manage to bring us two hu of fine wine, ten chow dogs, and several dozen jin of hemp, we will help you to kill this god. Return in ten days, and please come at the hour of noon, not before it.” Then they urged Ouyang He to leave immediately and he obeyed.

During the following ten days, Ouyang He sought out fine wine, hemp, and dogs as he had been bidden, and he brought them back to the women at the appointed time. “The god loves wine and always gets drunk,” said the women to Ouyang He, “and whenever he gets drunk he demonstrates his physical strength. He allows us to tie his hands and feet to the bed with colourful silk ropes and then he breaks them with a single bound. But once when we tripled the ropes, he was unable to break them. This time we will interweave silk with hemp to bind him. We are certain he will not succeed in breaking it.

similar situation can be found in the story of ‘Qinshi furen’ 秦時婦人 recorded in Dai Fu’s Guangyi ji 廣異記, in which a Buddhist monk crosses a brook, enters a deep mountain area and finds some beautiful women there. See Guangyi ji (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992) (rpt), p. 12. For information on Dai Fu, see Cheng Yizhong 程毅中, Tangdai xiaoshuo shihu 覆話小説史 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu, 1990).

14One hu equals approximately 22 gallons.
15One jin equals approximately 1.1 pounds.
Although his entire body is as hard as iron, he protects the area several inches below his navel, which must be vulnerable to weapons." The women now pointed to a cliff wall nearby. "Behind here is his food store," they said, "and you may hide there and wait quietly. Place the wine under the flowers and leave the dogs here and there in the forest. Once we have tied him with ropes, we will summon you." Ouyang He did as the women said, holding his breath and waiting for the god to make his appearance.

Between three and five o'clock in the afternoon, a strange object flew down from another peak and into the cave, like a flying bolt of white cloth. A moment later, a man emerged surrounded by the women. He was over six feet tall, and his face displayed a handsome beard. He was dressed entirely in white and carried a stick in his hand. At the sight of the dogs, he was taken aback, but threw himself on the creatures, tore them to pieces, consumed their flesh, and drained their blood till he was full. Joking and laughing, the women vied with one another in offering him wine in jade cups. After he had drunk several gallons of wine, the women helped him back to the cave. Soon the sounds of play and laughter could be heard from within.

After quite a while, the women came out of the cave to summon Ouyang He and his soldiers, who went in with their weapons drawn. There they saw a huge white ape with its four legs tied to the bed. When it saw the men, it tried with all its might to break its bounds but was unable to escape. Its eyes flashed like lightning. Then Ouyang He and his soldiers set upon the ape with their weapons so as to kill it, but its body was as hard as iron and as unyielding as rock. But when they stabbed its lower belly, the blade went in and blood spurted forth as if from a fountain. "It is heaven that kills me," sighed the ape, speaking to Ouyang He with great sorrow. "You are not capable. Now, your wife is pregnant. Please do not kill her son. One day, he will meet a sage emperor and will honour his family and ancestors." After uttering these words, the white ape died.

Searching the creature's hoard, Ouyang He found that the cave was full of precious items and rare delicacies displayed on teapoys and tables. It had possessed everything that was rated precious in the human world, including several containers of first-rate incense, a pair...
of fine swords, and thirty extraordinarily beautiful women. The oldest among them had been here for ten long years.

The women told Ouyang He that whenever one of them became old, she would be taken away to a place none of them knew. Engaging in the practice of bucai, the ape had enjoyed the women to benefit only himself and had no accomplices.\(^{16}\) Each morning, he washed, put on a white hat and a white gauze robe, regardless of the heat of summer and the cold of winter. White hair several inches long covered his body. When he was at home, he often read books made of wooden slips. The words inscribed on these books looked like Taoist talisman seal characters, and no one knew what they meant. When the ape finished his reading, he would put the book underneath the stone stairs. If the weather was fine, he would sometimes perform a sword-dance during the day, with the sword circling his body as fast as lightning and as round as a full moon.\(^{17}\)

The white ape loved fruits and nuts but he neither drank nor ate regularly. He was especially fond of dogs, and liked to chew on them and drink their blood. After the hour of twelve noon, he would suddenly disappear. Each afternoon, he would journey several thousand li but would return just as dusk was falling. This had been his regular schedule. He was able to get whatever he wanted instantly. Each night, never sleeping, he went to all the women’s beds to make love with each one of them. His discourse was wide and cultivated, although his appearance was that of an ape.

That autumn, when the leaves had begun to fall, he had suddenly said: “The mountain god has brought a suit against me and I am sentenced to death.\(^{18}\) I have already made an appeal for help to all the other spirits. Perhaps, I will be saved.” A month before Ouyang He’s arrival, when the moon was new, a fire broke out under the stone

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\(^{16}\) *Bucai* 捕采, also known as *caibu* 採補, is a type of Taoist sexual yoga. The practitioner makes love with various women to get the essence of life out of them and transfer it to himself in order to extend his own lifespan.

\(^{17}\) A pair of swords and the white ape are conventionally associated in pre-Tang legend and fiction. For instance, the Old Ape and Virgin story in *Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋.

\(^{18}\) The mountain god suing demons is a common topos in Tang dynasty fiction.
stairs and his wooden books were burned. “I am already a thousand years old,” he mourned, with a feeling of loss, “but I have no sons. Now that I will have a son, I am destined to die.” He gazed miserably at the women for a long time and said: “This mountain is very secluded. No human being has ever ventured here. When one looks upward, one never sees a woodcutter; when one looks downward, one sees many tigers, wolves, and other monstrous beasts. Yet someone will come. If it is not Heaven who has sent him, who else could it be?”

Ouyang He now took all the white ape’s precious jade and treasures, as well as the women, back into the world. Some of the women still remembered the location of their homes. A year later, the wife of Ouyang He gave birth to a son whose appearance very much resembled that of the ape. Sometime later, Ouyang He was executed by Emperor Wu of the Chen dynasty. Jiang Zong, an old friend of Ouyang He’s, had grown quite fond of Ouyang He’s son because of his extreme intelligence and therefore adopted him. In this way, Ouyang He’s son escaped the family disaster, and when he reached manhood, he excelled in literature and calligraphy, as had been predicted, and became famous in his time.

\[19\] Although his name is not mentioned here, this boy referred to was obviously Ouyang Xun, the son of Ouyang He, who was adopted by Jiang Zong.