2 Chapters and Long Notes on Xiyang ji

2.1 Early Evaluations of Xiyang ji

The following works were reprinted multiple times by different publishers. Not all available editions are included in this bibliography.


Lu Xun classifies *Xiyang ji* as a “novel about gods and demons” (shenmo xiaoshuo 神魔小說) rather than a “historical novel” (jiangshi xiaoshuo 講史小說) and discusses the novel as part of chapter 18, “Ming dai shenmo xiaoshuo, xia” 明代神魔小說，下 on pages 191-194 in the 1927 edition. In evaluating *Xiyang ji*’s fight scenes, Lu Xun felt that the novel incorporated many of the elements in *Xiyou ji* and *Fengshen yanyi*, but did not reach their stylistic standard. This statement proved to be very influential on subsequent scholarly appraisal of the novel and may have laid the foundation for frequent comparisons to *Xiyou ji*. As with all entries in the book, the introduction and appraisal of the novel is followed by a lengthy quotation from the text itself; in this case from an episode dealing with the Five Rat Spirits (*Wu shu jing 五鼠精*) in chapter 19. This episode subsequently received a lot of scholarly attention, and is featured in a number of articles introduced in chapters 4 and 5 below.


This book is a collection of “old anecdotes” about Chinese novels. On pages 87-90 Lu Xun collects statements about Zheng He’s travels and *Xiyang ji* from Late Imperial literati. The novel is mentioned in *Chunzai tang suibi 春
In 1861, Chaxiang shi congchao 茶香室叢鈔 and Chaxiangshi xuchao 茶香室續鈔, all by Yu Yue 余樾 (1821–1906).

2.1.3 Sun Kaidi. Zhongguo tongsu xiaoshuo shumu. See 8.2.6.

This is a catalogue of Chinese popular literature.


Pages 1138-1139 give a brief summary of Xiyang ji. It is introduced alongside Fengshen yanyi as a novel that “came after Xiyou ji” (chuxian yu Xiyou ji zhihou 出現於西遊記之後).

Fig. 4  Xiyang ji, Chapter 95 (19.51b-52a, 2510f):
“The Five Rat Spirits Come Forward to Welcome [a Guest].”
2.2  *Xiyang ji* Discussed Within General Surveys of Chinese Literature

Because of the sheer number of works on the history and development of Chinese literature, this list can by no means be complete. I therefore tried to identify works that have been rather influential in their appraisal of *Xiyang ji*. Sadly, to this day, *Xiyang ji* is only included in the discussions of three Western language works on Chinese literature.

2.2.1 Kong Lingjing 孔另境. *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shiliao* 中国小说史料. Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957. [309 pp.]

This book uses a similar approach as Lu Xun’s *Xiaoshuo jiuwen chao* (above), collecting anecdotes about Chinese novels from Late Imperial literati. Again, the novel is found to be mentioned in *Chunzai tang suibi* 春在堂隨筆, *Chaxiang shi congchao* 茶香室叢鈔, and *Chaxiangshi xuchao* 茶香室續鈔, all by Yu Yue 余樾 (1821–1906).

2.2.2 Lin Chen 林辰. “Zhongguo xiaoshuo de hunlei xianxiang he fazhan de guiji” 中國小說的混類現象和發展的軌跡. *Chuban gongzuo* 出版工作 10 (1990), 74-80.

In this article, Lin Chen talks about the arbitrariness of Chinese novel categories. He takes his cue from *Xiyang ji*, which Lu Xun denominated as a “fantasy novel” (*shenmo xiaoshuo* 神魔小說) while his contemporary Sun Kaidi categorized it as a “history novel” (*jiangshi* 讲史).


Pages 311-313 of this study on fantasy novels give a brief overview of *Xiyang ji* in the context of “fantasy-history” (*shenguai shihua* 神怪史話). Lin Chen also points out similarities with *Xiyou ji*.

2.2.4 Liu Dajie 劉大杰. (1) *Zhongguo wenxue fada shi* 中國文學發達史. Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1968. [1099 pp.] (2) *Zhongguo wenxue fazhan shi*
This book discusses *Xiyang ji* as a Ming dynasty novel similar to *Xiyou ji*. Attention is given to *Xiyang ji*’s historical sources on pages 1057-1058 of the Shanghai edition.


Tina Lu briefly mentions *Xiyang ji* on page 102 of her discussion of Late Ming literature, as a novel that “combines the historical interest of the eunuch Zheng He’s fifteenth-century voyages with the excitement of a supernatural quest”.


In this book on the Chinese novel, Ou Itaï introduces *Xiyang ji* (Romanized as *Si-yang ki*) alongside *Xiyou ji* (Si-yeou-ki) and *Fengshen yanyi* (Fong-chentchouan) in his chapter on “Romans de magie” (pp. 27-48). Pages 42-48 deal exclusively with *Xiyang ji*, introducing the novel, the historical Zheng He, and the story of the Five Rats with a French translation of their dialogue with Pan Guan. (chapter 19)


Pages 116-118 give a brief overview of *Xiyang ji* editions, and the content of the novel. A complete list of chapter titles is given.

Xiyang ji is frequently mentioned in this discussion of whether Ouyang Jian was justified in renaming the genre of “shenmo” 神魔 novels to “shenguai” 神怪 novels.


Pages 24-26 of this book give basic information about Xiyang ji. The chapter provides further remarks on the novel’s satirical qualities and its frequent borrowing from other novels, especially from Xiyou ji.


In his introduction to the Late Imperial Chinese novel, Zimmer devotes a chapter to the Xiyang ji: “Der Seeweg nach Westen und die Mythologisierung der Ferne” (pp. 338-353). The chapter introduces Zheng He and his travels before turning to the novel, its obvious similarities to Xiyou ji and its ethno-geographical sources. A detailed summary of the storyline is aided by frequent quotes from the text in German translation. The chapter closes with a discussion of another novel involving overseas travels: Tu Shen’s 屠紳 Yinshí 蟻史 (1800).
2.3  *Xiyang ji* discussed in Articles on Late Imperial Chinese Novels

The articles in this section are general studies of Chinese literature that base their arguments on a variety of texts. *Xiyang ji* is always among those but often only used peripherally to support an argument based on another text (often *Xiyou ji* 西遊記).


This article discusses the use of fictional elements in Late Ming dynasty novels based on historical events, such as *Xiyang ji* and *Fengshen yanyi*. This “search for the strange” (*qiu qi* 求奇) has a profound alienating effect on the narrative of “fantasy” novels.

2.3.2 Liu Heyong 柳和勇. “Zhongguo Haiyang wenxue lishi fazhan jianlun” 中國海洋文學歷史發展簡論. *Zhejiang Haiyang xueyuan xuebao (Ren-wen kexue ban)* 浙江海洋學院學報 (人文科學版) 27.2 (2010), 1-7.

This article is a brief history of the “sea” (*Haiyang* 海洋) in Chinese literature from antiquity to the 20th century. *Xiyang ji* is examined in the section discussing the thriving nature of the genre during late imperial times (fourth section).


This article looks at the “treasure items” (*baowu* 寶物), magical items that can be used to subjugate demons or enemies, in Ming and Qing dynasty novels. Liu Weiying looks into the limitations of those items, and taboos against their usage. She discusses the principles of Yin-Yang 陰陽 and the Five Elements (*wuxing* 五行) that guide the function of the *baowu*. Among the examples are Huang Fengxian’s 黃鳳仙 treasure items in chapters 48 and 69 of *Xiyang ji*. 

This article is an expanded version of Liu Weiying’s article discussed above; it includes more elaborate quotes and a greater number of examples. The instances taken from *Xiyang ji* are the same.

2.3.5 Liu Xiaojun 劉曉軍. “Shikong, qingjie yu jiaose: lun Mingdai shenmo xiaoshuo de xushi moshi” 時空、情節與角色: 論明代神魔小說的敘事模式. *Qiushi xuekan* 求是學刊 37.6 (2010), 113-118.

Liu Xiaojun looks at the narrative features of Chinese “fantasy” novels (including *Xiyang ji*), mainly their historical context, and their setting on different plains. The author also compares the plot structures and character typologies in these novels to the patterns identified by the folklorist Vladimir Propp.

2.3.6 Ruan Yi 阮憶 and Mei Xinlin 梅新林. “‘Haiyang muti’ yu Zhongguo wenxue” “海洋母題” 與中國文學. *Zhejiang shifan daxue xuebao (She-hui kexue ban)* 浙江師範大學學報 (社會科學版) 1989.2, 62-68.

This article traces the “Ocean Motive” (*Haiyang muti* 海洋母題) in Chinese literature from antiquity to the 20th century. *Xiyang ji* is briefly discussed in the section on the Ming dynasty.


This article discusses the influence of “maritime culture” (*Haiyang wenhua* 海洋文化) on Chinese novels. *Xiyang ji* is mentioned.
2.4  **Xiyang ji in Articles on Representations of Zheng He’s Voyages**


Embedded in an overview of known facts, available sources and major trends in the reception of Zheng He’s voyages, part 3 of this article describes literary renditions and early legends surrounding these. *Xiyang ji* is among those mentioned. (p. 19.)


Part of this article on the development of representations of Zheng He and his voyages deals directly with *Xiyang ji*. The discussion summarizes the state of the research on the novel while pointing out similarities to *Xiyou ji* and drawing attention to remarkable episodes and themes.

2.4.3  Wan, Ming. “Zheng He’s Voyages to the Western Ocean: 3 Books, 1 Map, 1 Novel, 1 Play, and 7 Steles”. *Ming Studies* 51 (2005), 31-42.

Wan briefly describes historical sources for Zheng He’s voyages as well as *Xiyang ji* (pp. 35-37) and the *zaju*-play *Feng tianming Sanbao xia Xiyang* (pp. 37-38). The section on *Xiyang ji* includes the historical background of its creation, late Qing reception, early scholarship and the illustrations by Sanshan daoren 三山道人.
Fig. 5  *Xiyang ji*, Chapter 20 (4.54b-55a, 520f):
“Because of Misfortunes with the Wind, Li Hai Meets the Monkey Spirit.”