

The Tapestry of Vignette Collections

A Study of the “Chu shuo” Chapters of *Hanfeizi: Their Composition and Function*

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Abstract

By engaging in close analysis of the “Chu shuo” vignette chapters in *Hanfeizi*, this thesis seeks to explore the possible process of composition, the potential role such vignette collections play in the *Hanfeizi* compilation, and how they relate to the social background of the late Warring States period. In chapter I, I examined the traditional assumption that the guideline texts are composed prior to compiling the vignettes and point to counter-evidence that suggests that the collections of vignettes were compiled independently of the guideline texts. In the succeeding chapters I further demonstrate the possibility of understanding the guidelines as superimposed upon existing collections, and reading them as a device for organizing and incorporating inherited textual materials. As I argue in chapter II, we can observe a difference between the materials incorporated in the inner and outer “Chu shuo” chapters, respectively, which seems to mirror a corresponding difference between the *Hanfeizi* chapters before and after the “Chu shuo” vignette collections. While the focus of the earlier chapters of *Hanfeizi* and the two inner “Chu shuo” chapters is very much on well-known legalist ideas, the outer “Chu shuo” and the later *Hanfeizi* chapters argue for these ideas in the context of a debate with proponents of competing teachings. Correspondingly we see in the outer “Chu shuo” chapters a greater heterogeneity in the materials that are incorporated. As I further argue in Chapter III, this is a more obvious case of what seems to be the function the “Chu shuo” chapters perform: to appropriate circulating contemporary textual traditions toward supporting the legalist agenda of *Hanfeizi* as a whole. Meanwhile, the unique textual structure of the “Chu shuo” chapters and its critical position in the entire compilation reflect a shifting attitude toward historical materials. As representation of the past, historical narratives are invalidated as either unreliable or irrelevant, while the value of these narratives is shifted towards their ability to represent an ahistorical understanding of human nature. Thus the structure of

the narrative and the timeless principles they are capable of illustrating become more important than their historical settings.

My analysis of the “Chu shuo” chapters shows how structural features on various levels of the text – first, individual vignettes and their interrelatedness, second, individual chapters of the compilation and, third, the compilation as a whole – can indicate meaningfulness behind an otherwise seemingly arbitrary compilation of vignette materials that ends up being included in the *Hanfeizi*: it can be better understood as a deliberate composition that has implications for how the compilation was supposed to function, for it sets an interpretive pattern guiding readers in the correct understanding of the text and potentially in using it in the political debates of the day.

Chapter I: “Chu shuo” as “Stored Illustrations”

In this chapter and the following, I will focus on the six well-known but nonetheless largely neglected “Chu shuo” chapters of the *Hanfeizi* compilation, chapters 30 to 35. Following a description of the basic structure shared by these six chapters, I will attempt to offer another angle for consider why alternative versions of vignettes are included in these collections. This question has engaged the attention of many scholars and plays an important role in the debate over the authorship of these chapters. Through this close study, I hope to demonstrate that the compilers of *Hanfeizi* likely worked with pre-existing vignette collection in some shape or form, and in fact, I would also like to demonstrate that the unique structures of these chapters reflect an effort toward organizing and preserving such existing textual materials and cultural traditions.

The Basic Structure of the “Chu shuo” chapters

What unites chapters 30 to 35 is their overarching textual structure, a rather unusual one among early Chinese literature. Two distinct types of text are present in each of these chapters: a set of maxims called *jing* 經, followed by a collection of vignettes, usually referred to as *shuo* 說.

The first type, *jing*, occupies the opening of each chapter, typically consisting of terse phrases stating a certain principle or maxim, followed by equally concise phrases naming a set of anecdotes or vignettes as illustrations for this maxim. The opening of each “*Chu shuo*” chapter lists three to seven such *jing* texts. As a label, *jing* could not be more pertinent. The *jing* texts function exactly according to the basic meaning of *jing*: they are literally the warp threads stringing together the subsequent vignettes and weaving them into the tapestry of a larger argument. I therefore translate *jing* as “guideline” to emphasize its function as the common thread guiding the arrangement and reading of the vignettes; this translation also alludes to the basic function most, albeit not necessarily all, of these *jing* texts perform; they are guidelines for how the ruler should govern his subjects.

Following the list of *jing* in each chapter is a collection of vignettes, mostly anecdotes but intermingled with a small number of short expositions. The guideline texts divide these vignettes into groups and allot them as illustrations to different guidelines. For instance, the first nine vignettes in chapter 30 are illustrations for guideline 1, and the next 12 (or 14, if the two vignettes offering alternative accounts to their preceding anecdotes are counted as independent vignettes) are illustrations for guideline 2, etc.

Unlike the *jing* section, the vignette section of the “*Chu shuo*” chapters is not clearly labeled. Most scholars of the Qing and later periods prefer call these sections *shuo* 說 [illustrations], which is what they are mostly labeled as in modern editions. The early editions, however, often offer no specific designation for the vignettes, although in some of these editions they are labeled as *zhuan* 傳 [traditions]. Scholars such as Gu Guangqi 顧廣圻 and Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 have opted for *shuo* in view of the title “*Chu shuo*,” as well as the *shuo zai* 說在 [it is

illustrated by] phrase that often appears in the *jing* sections, just as in the text quoted below.¹ I will also follow this convention and name the vignette section *shuo*, or “illustrations.”

Here is an example of a typical guideline text, the first of the seven listed in chapter 30:

觀聽不參則誠不聞，聽有門戶則臣壅塞。其說在侏儒之夢見竈，哀公之稱莫眾而迷。故齊人見河伯，與惠子之言亡其半也。其患在豎牛之餓叔孫，而江乙之說荊俗也。嗣公欲治不知，故使有敵。是以明主推積鐵之類，而察一市之患。²

Without seeking multiple sources to verify what is seen and heard, the truth cannot be gleaned. If one's hearing has certain passageways, then subordinates are liable to block them. This is illustrated by the story of the midget seeing a stove in his dream and Duke Ai interpreting the saying “without the multitude one is misled.” Thus the man of Qi revealed the River Elder, and Huizi talked about being “half lost.” The peril of this is illustrated by the story of Shuniu starving Shusun, and Jiang Yi discussing the folk-saying of Jing (Chu). Duke Si wanted to take charge of the situation but was not informed, thus creating enemies. Therefore an insightful ruler extends what the mass of iron characterizes to other things, and observes the peril of one market.

The underlined text is the maxim or teaching that is to be illustrated by the vignettes alluded in the text following the phrase *qi shuo* 其說在 [It is illustrated by]. As I try to reflect in the translation, the allusions to the vignettes are hardly understandable without prior knowledge of the actual vignettes themselves. It is also possible that the Warring States users of such a text would have understood it without any problem, since they might have been very familiar with these stories already. Nevertheless, it seems doubtful that any reader is supposed to be able to completely understand the *jing* text all by itself, since some of its references, such as “the peril of

¹ As Chen Qiyou points out, “‘illustrations’ (*Shuo*) was not present originally. The Ling edition (*Ling ben* 凌本) has ‘traditions’ (*zhuan* 傳), and what is below is the same. The Zhao edition (*Zhao ben* 趙本) has the two character ‘to the right are traditions’ (*you zhuan* 右傳) at the end of the chapter, and it is the same for the inner and the outer “Chu shuo” chapters.” Chen Qiyou then expresses his opinion that “what is following is not *zhuan* but *shuo*, as Gu Guangqi already stated” (Chen Qiyou 1958, 526)

² Wang Xianshen 1998, 211-212.

one market" (*yi shi zhi huan* 一市之患), seem too vague to function as unambiguous allusions to one particular story.

All six of the "Chu shuo" chapters follow the general structure that is introduced here, but there are some slight variations. Unlike the "Nan" chapters, which also contain a sizable number of anecdotal texts, the "Chu shuo" chapters are labeled not with numerals, but with spatial terms. The first two chapters are the upper (chapter 30) and lower (chapter 31) parts of the inner "Chu shuo," while the last four are the "upper left" (chapter 32), "lower left" (chapter 33), "upper right" (chapter 34), and "lower right" (chapter 35) parts of the outer "Chu shuo." While all of the "Chu shuo" chapters follow the *jing - shuo* structure, the two inner chapters (30 and 31) are introduced with one more layer of text that summarizes the teachings in all of their guideline texts. Thus at the beginning of chapter 30, we find the phrase

主之所用也七術，所察也六微。³

There are seven techniques that are to be employed by the ruler, and six intricacies that are to be examined.

This phrase refers to all of the guidelines in both of the two inner chapters. Following this phrase is the text that is cited in full below, the names of the "seven techniques" that will be expounded in chapter 30. At the beginning of chapter 31, we find a similar list of names for the "six intricacies." These names summarize the teachings of the guidelines with a tetrasyllabic catch-phrase, such as 眾端參觀 [compare and observe opinions of all].

七術：一曰、眾端參觀，二曰、必罰明威，三曰、信賞盡能，四曰、一聽責下，五曰、疑詔詭使，六曰、挾知而問，七曰、倒言反事。此七者，主之所用也。

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³ Wang Xianshen 1998, 211.

⁴ Wang Xianshen 1998, 211.

The seven techniques are called (1) Compare and observe opinions of all (2) Preordain punishment to manifest power (3) Guarantee reward to exploit talent (4) Listen individually and delegate accountability (5) Befuddling decrees and confounding appointments (6) Harbor information and question knowingly (7) Speak the opposite and do the contrary

The outer chapters, however, do not have this layer of text, although chapter 34, the upper right chapter, does have an introductory statement that ties together the three guidelines in this chapter: “There are three rules whereby the lord governs his subjects” 君所以治臣者有三. In the next chapter, I will further discuss the potential differences between the inner and the outer “Chu shuo” chapters.

Meaning of the Title

Lastly, it is revealing to revisit the titles of these chapters, for the characters *chu* 儲 and *shuo* 說 are both semantically complex and interesting. The anonymous “old commentary” (*jiu zhu* 舊注) explains the *chu* with *ju* 聚, or “accumulating,” while Ôta Hô 太田方 glosses it with *zhi* 儲, in the sense of putting something in reserve.⁵ In Western translations, *chu* seems to be understood as a place for storage, so that it is translated with nouns such as “repository” or “congeries.”⁶ But unlike *shuo lin* 說林, which can be translated as “forest of illustrations/persuasions,” the *shuo* in *chu shuo* is the second part of the compound, which requires that *chu* be understood as a stative verb. I therefore translate *chu* as “stored.”

This reading would place more emphasis on the *action* of storing the *shuo*, putting them in reserve so that they can be readily used, and I find it more appropriate for understanding

⁵ Chen Qiyu 1958, 516. Incidentally, *zhi* 儲 is also the gloss for *chu* in *Shuowen jiezi* (*Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 15.p.14a).

⁶ The former is the translation of Lundahl, the latter is the translation preferred by both D. C. Lau and W. K. Liao. Lundahl points out that “congeries” has the meaning of disorderly mass, at least in its Latin origin, and thus has unwanted connotations (see Lundahl 1992, 146).

these chapters. The two “Shuo lin” chapters are similarly collections of vignettes, but they display no obvious sense of organization. It does not seem to be a coincidence, then, that its title *lin* “forest” suggests a sizeable but organic conglomeration of things. The “Chu shuo” chapters, in contrast, exhibit a conscious concern with ordering, as we can see from the overall structuring of the texts. Using positional terms in the titles of the six chapters, given that it is a conventional practice, may nevertheless already suggest a sense of spatial order, like the partitions of a storehouse.⁷ The long list of cryptic references in the *jing* texts might not be very capable of conveying information by itself, but it does serve the function of organizing and even indexing the vignettes, keeping them in a certain order and making them more readily accessible. This action of imposing organization thus appears to be an important feature of these chapters, so that it is more fitting to understand *chu* in a verbal sense, as “stored” or perhaps “archived.” On the other hand, the word *chu* also has the connotation of abundance, of accumulating more than enough for future use.⁸ In the more detailed discussions of these chapters below, I will further comment on how these significations of *chu* relate to their content.

The other word of the title, *shuo* 說, is equally, if not more, complex in its semantic range. Since the words *shuo* > *lhot [to explain] and *shui* > *lhots [to persuade] are graphically identical, it is all the more difficult to have a unanimous reading of this character.⁹ Reeve, for instance, reads 說林 as *shui lin* [a forest of persuasions].¹⁰ Etymologically, both *shuo* and *shui* are part of the word family “to loosen, relax,” which also includes the other word that is often written with

⁷ As I have mentioned, the four “Nan” chapters are titled with numerals. Choosing spatial terms to sequence six chapters, on the other hand, is not something that can be done at random, and would require a bit of consideration, since one need to imagine a spatial configuration that is just right for six chapters. As I will argue in chapter II, the division between inner and outer chapters is actually very meaningful.

⁸ Kalgren relates this word to *zhu* < *ta 諸 [many, all], which is in turn related with *duo* < *tai 多 see Schuessler 2007, 626 and 220 - 221.

⁹ All the phonetic reconstruction in this thesis are taken from Schuessler 2007 and 2009.

¹⁰ Reeve 2003.

the same character 說 in texts of this period, *yue* > **iuat* [to be pleased, written in modern Chinese with 悅].¹¹ Thus it seems that *shuo* in the sense of explanation is very close to the modern Chinese word *jieshi* 解釋, or the modern English word “explicate.” This sense of the word *shuo* suggests that the vignettes are arranged as explanations or illustrations of the guideline text. I therefore translate the title “Chu shuo” as “stored illustrations.”

Since *Shiji* already mentions “Nei wai chu” 內外儲, these six chapters are among the chapters that are attested earliest. Yet because of their volume and complexity, their composition and authorship are subjected to much debate. One phenomenon that often troubles later scholars is that the *jing* inventories of the vignettes and the extant vignettes do not always match up, a phenomenon that is often interpreted as a sign of textual corruption, and has led many scholars to consider the *shuo* vignettes as later additions to the compilation.¹² Perhaps the *jing* and *shuo* / *zhuan* labeling already exerts influence on later scholars’ conception of the composition process. Traditionally, it is understood that the *jing* text of the “six classics” was edited by Confucius, written laconically or elliptically, perhaps for the sake of memorization. The *zhuan* (or *ji* 記, or *shuo*) texts, on the other hand, were added in by his disciples as elaborations and explanations of the *jing* text. The *jing* -*shuo* texts found in *Mozi* and *Hanfeizi* are also understood to be following this model.¹³ Perhaps the “*zhuan*” labeling of the vignettes in several of the early editions reflects such an understanding. By at latest the Tang dynasty, *zhuan* is understood to be an “interpretation” or a “companion” to *jing*, added in in order to insure that the meaning of *jing* is transmitted.¹⁴ Since this conception of the *jing* - *zhuan* (*shuo*) structure assigns different levels of importance to these texts, it is not surprising that scholars tend to

¹¹ Schuessler 2007: 476 – 477, 585 – 586.

¹² Lundahl, 147.

¹³ Tim W. Chan 1998, 315 -316.

¹⁴ See Chan 1998, 296 – 297, where he recaptures the definition of *zhuan* by Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661 – 721) and Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581-645).

consider the *zhuan* (*shuo*) as later, and less essential component of a text. For instance, Qiu Yuan 邱淵 even suggests that “Seven Techniques” and “Six Intricacies” had actually been the original titles of chapters 30 and 31, and “Chu shuo” is only mistaken to be the title, since “the core content (*hexin neirong* 核心內容) is the ‘seven techniques’ and not ‘stored illustrations.’”¹⁵

At the same time, we know very well that at least one text that is considered to be a *zhuan* text, the *Zuozhuan*, is composed independently of its *jing*, and its title probably just means “traditions.”¹⁶ I would argue similarly against the assumption that the “Chu shuo” collections were garnered specifically for the purpose of illustrating the *jing* texts, and moreover, the vignette collections are later compositions that are in some ways less integral to the composition of the *Hanfeizi* text. Indeed, textual analysis of the “Chu shuo” chapters can be vastly complicated. By focusing just on two pairs of Qin taboo words and their substitutes, *chu* 楚 – *jing* 荊 and *zheng* 正/政 – *duan* 端, Liu Dianjue (i.e., D.C. Lau) reveals that not only are the *jing* and *shuo* texts of the transmitted editions taken potentially from different sources, even the texts within the same *jing* or a close set of *shuo* passages could have been assembled from different base texts.¹⁷ In view of this complicated situation, the scope of this thesis would not seem to allow meaningful contribution to the debate concerning authorship and dating. But since various items of textual evidence, such as those uncovered by Liu, all point to a rather convoluted formation process, it seems more reasonable to consider the question of which comes first – the guidelines or the vignette collections – as a the chicken and egg problem. In

¹⁵ Qiu Yuan 邱淵 2009, 298.

¹⁶ The basic meaning of *zhuan* < *drons 傳 is “a record,” derived from the exopassive form of *chuan* < *dron 傳, literally means “what has been transmitted” (Schuessler 1997, 630). *Zuozhuan* became associated with its supposed *jing* text *Chunqiu* 春秋 only after a gradual process (Schaberg 2001, 323).

¹⁷ Liu Dianjue 劉殿爵 1988, 247. As the two most common Qin dynasty taboos, the word *chu* 楚 is substituted with *jing* 荊 because of the father of the first emperor, King Zhuangxiang of Qin (*Qin zhuangxiang wang* 秦庄襄王) Ying Chu 嬴楚, and *zheng* 正/政 with *duan* 端 because of the first emperor’s own name Ying Zheng 嬴政/正 (Wang Yanshen 王彥坤 1997, 63– 64, 645–647).

fact, in various parts of the “Chu shuo” chapters, the vignettes seem to have been collected according to methods independent of the *jing* text. I would like to begin this discussion by focusing on a more specific feature of the vignette collections: the presence of alternative versions following some of the vignettes.

Are the yi yue texts unique?

As Lundahl points out, the presence of alternative versions is the other feature of the vignette collections which, alongside mismatches between *jing* and *shuo* texts, leads scholars to suspect that the vignettes were collected in later times. These alternative versions are vignettes that are introduced with the phrase *yi yue* 一曰 [it is also said], ostensibly yet another account of the story or saying imparted in the previous vignette. As an example, here is a pair of such parallel stories from chapter 31, ordered under guideline 1:

燕人惑易，故浴狗矢。燕人其妻有私通於士，其夫早自外而來，士適出，夫曰：“何客也？”其妻曰：“無客。”問左右，左右言“無有，”如出一口。其妻曰：“公惑易也。”因浴之以狗矢。

一曰：燕人李季好遠出，其妻私有通於士，季突至，士在內中，妻患之。其室婦曰：“令公子裸而解髮，直出門，吾屬佯不見也。”於是公子從其計，疾走出門。季曰：“是何人也？”家室皆曰：“無有。”季曰：“吾見鬼乎？”婦人曰：“然。”“為之奈何？”曰：“取五牲之矢浴之。”季曰：“諾。”乃浴以矢。一曰浴以蘭湯。¹⁸

The man from Yan was easily bewitched, thus he was bathed in dog dung. The wife of a man from Yan was having an affair with a gent. Her husband returned home early, and the gent happened to be going out. The husband said, “Who is the guest?” His wife said, “There is no guest.” He asked the servants, and the servants said, “There was no one,” as if coming out of one mouth. His wife said, “You are easily bewitched.” Thus she bathed him in dog dung.

It is also said: A man from Yan named Li Ji was fond of traveling far, while his wife was having an affair with a gent. Ji suddenly arrived, but the gent was still in the inner chamber of the house. The wife was troubled, so her chambermaid said, “Tell the gentleman to strip bare his clothes and let down his hair, go straight out of

¹⁸ Wang Xianshen 1998, 245 -246.

the door. We will all act as if we don't see him." Thereupon the gent followed her strategy and hastily ran out of the door. Ji said, "Who was that?" People of the household all said, "There was no one." Ji said, "Was I seeing a ghost?" The woman said, "You were." "Then what should we do?" She said, "Get the dung of the Five Livestock and bathe in it." Ji said, "Alright." And then he actually bathed in dung. It is also said that he bathed in thoroughworts' brew.¹⁹

Most scholars seem to consider these alternative versions as later interpolations. Gu Guangqi, for instance, attribute them to the Han librarians, while Chen Qiyou would go down even further in history and accredit Lu Ji 陸機 (261 - 303) with the insertion of these versions.²⁰ Zheng Liangshu is the only scholar I know of who argues against attributing these *yi yue* versions to later editors. Zheng counts a total of 44 alternative versions, which take up a considerable portion of these six chapters. He points out that to consider them all as later additions would imply a very large amount of interpolation.²¹

I would like to propose another way of considering these *yi yue* texts by drawing attention to the fact that in many parts of the "Chu shuo" chapters there are vignettes that are very similar to each other and are placed in close to each other, even though they are not introduced by the phrase *yi yue*. One prominent incident of this is in the second half of chapter 30, among vignettes grouped under guidelines 5 - 7. Following is the text of guidelines 5 -7, which seem to outline techniques for information warfare between the ruler and the ministers:

數見久待而不任，姦則鹿散；使人問他則不鬻私。是以龐敬還公大夫，而戴謹詔視輜車；周主亡玉簪，商太宰論牛矢(屎)。詭使五

Summon someone numerous times without appointing him even after a long wait, then the conspirators will disperse from him like deer. Dispatch someone to ask about odds and ends, and he will not venture on his private interests. Therefore Pang

¹⁹ For a more humorous and colloquial translation of this story see Harbsmeier 1989, 299- 300.

²⁰ See Lundahl 1992, p.148 and Chen Qiyou 1958, 1166 - 1167.

²¹ Zheng 1990, 47 - 48.

Jing recalled inspector, and Dai Huan ordered someone to look for a covered carriage; the ruler of Zhou lost his jade bodkin; the Grand Minister of Shang discussed ox dung. Number Five: Confounding appointments.

挾智而問，則不智者至；深智一物，眾隱皆變(辨)。其說在昭侯之握一爪也。故必南門而三鄉得。周主索曲杖而群臣懼，卜皮事庶子，西門豹詳(佯)遺轄。挾智六

Harbor what one knows and ask about it, then what is not known will surface. Having deep knowledge about one thing, then what the others are hiding would all be discerned.²² This is illustrated by how Marquis Zhao concealed a fingernail in his hand. Thus by necessitating the investigation of the South Gate and information of three more counties was obtained. The ruler of Zhou searched for a crooked staff and the cohort of ministers were put in fear; Pu Pi employed a valet; Ximen Bao investigated the missing wheel-guard. Number Six: Harbor information.

倒言反事，以嘗所疑，則姦情得。故陽山謾樛豎，淖齒為秦使，齊人欲為亂，子之以白馬，子產離訟者，嗣公過關市。倒言七²³

Speak the opposite and do the contrary in order to test what is suspected, then the conspiracy will be known. Thus Yangshan libeled Jiu the little courtier; Zhuo Chi devised an envoy from Qin; The Man of Qi wanted to start rebellion; Zizhi employed a white horse; Zichan isolated the litigants; Duke Si went through the market checkpoint. Number Seven: Speak the Opposite.

As we can see, these three guidelines offer several very specific techniques for how to obtain information about opponents. Once we read the vignettes, it is clear that the two parties of this information struggle are always in a power relationship: they are superiors and subordinates. Guideline 5 (Befuddling decrees and confounding appointments) and guideline 6 (Harbor information and question knowingly) seem to be techniques specifically suitable for rulers or superiors. They are ways to test the subordinates' honesty, as well as to instill the feeling of

²² The character 變 can be also read as *bian* 辨 [to discern]. See 夫物至則目不得見，言薄則耳不得不聞；故物至則變，言至則論 (Shangjun shu, chapter 24)

²³ Wang Xianshen 1998, 215-217.

constant surveillance. Guideline 7 (Speak the opposite and do the contrary) is a way to tease out the opponents' true thoughts or feelings. In the vignettes, this technique is used both directions, by the superiors and the subordinates.

Even though these teachings are clearly delineated, when we take a look at the vignettes illustrating them, we will observe that their division is in fact rather artificial, for vignettes that tell similar stories or share similar language and formal features end up being listed under different guidelines. In order to demonstrate this, I have put the lists of allusions to vignettes in these three *jing* texts together, and behind the headline for each vignette I have tagged a number designating stories that are very similar to each other. Anecdotes under Category (1) all tell the story of a ruler losing something that the officials (*li* 吏) cannot manage to find, so that the ruler gets to show off his resourcefulness by finding it through people he sent out himself (令人求). In the anecdotes under category (2), the ruler obtains information concerning low-level administration through the messenger he had sent out, and in turn uses this information to make the local officials feel monitored. Category (3) includes stories of rulers purposely generating wrong information in order to observe their subordinates' reactions. Category (4) is similar to category (3), except that it is the subordinates who are feigning and staging in order to test their rulers. On the other hand, anecdotes that repeat words from the guidelines, and have therefore a close relationship to the guidelines, are marked with asterisk (*).

5. Thus Pang Jing recalled the inspector (*), and Dai Huan ordered someone to observe the covered carriage; the ruler of Zhou lost his jade bodkin (1) the Grand Minister of Shang discussed ox dung (2).

6. Marquis Zhao concealed a fingernail in his hand (3). Thus by necessitating the investigation of the South Gate and information of three more counties was obtained (2). The ruler of Zhou searched for a crooked staff and the cohort of ministers were put in fear (1); Pu Pi employed a valet; Ximen Bao investigated the missing wheel-guard (1).

7. Yangshan libeled Jiu the little courtier (4) ; Zhuo Chi devised an envoy from Qin (4) ; The Man of Qi wanted to start rebellion (4); Zizhi employed a white horse (3); Zichan isolated the litigants (*); Duke Si went through the market checkpoint (2).

These categorizations are only provisional and are by no means absolute. Nevertheless, this should demonstrate how similar stories are spread across different guideline groups.

Even though some of these plot categories can fittingly illustrate more than one of the guideline teachings, they are not relevant to the same degree to each of the guidelines. For instance, the story of the ruler finding his jade bodkin or crooked staff might be a good illustration for how to use withheld information to manipulate officials, but not so much for unpredictable appointments. On the other hand, guidelines 5 and 7 both include an anecdote that seems to bear closer relationship to the respective *jing* texts. The first anecdote under guideline 5, for instance, is the only story that depicts the scenario of summoning someone for no reason other than to create suspicion among the underlings. Similarly, only one of vignettes mentioned in guideline 7 literally mentions “speaking the opposite” *dao yan* 倒言. The story of Duke Si under this guideline, on the other hand, relates to “speaking the opposite” only rather tenuously.

衛嗣公使人為客過關市，關市苛難之，因事關市以金，關吏乃舍之。²⁴嗣公為關吏曰：“某時有客過而所，與汝金，而汝因遣之。”關市乃大恐，而以嗣公為明察。²⁵

Duke Si of Wei sent someone to go pass the market checkpoint of the market under the disguise of a foreigner. The checkpoint was giving him an especially difficult time, so that he bribed the guards of the checkpoint with gold. Then the checkpoint official let him go. Duke Si said to the checkpoint official, “There was a time when a foreigner passed by your place, gave you some gold, and you sent him

²⁴ There is textual problem with this phrase. Wang Xianshen’s version is 因事關市，以金與關吏，乃舍之 (Wang Xianshen 1998, 238 - 239). I follow Chen Qiyou’s emendation (Chen Qiyou 1958, 568 - 569).

²⁵ Wang Xianshen 1998, 238-239

away because of it.” This put the checkpoint in great consternation, and they thought that Duke Si must be perceptively discerning.

One could argue that the messenger in this story is “speaking the opposite and doing the contrary” by the order of Duke Si, since he would not normally bribe the officials. But as I will demonstrate below, this vignette bears much closer resemblance to vignettes under guideline 5 or 6 that follow plot line (2).

A close examination of vignettes at the end of guideline 5 and beginning of guideline 6 would further reveal the similarities among all these stories. Following are the last two vignettes of guideline 5:

(1) 周主亡玉簪，令吏求之，三日不能得也。周主令人求，而得之家人之屋間，周主曰：“吾知吏之不事事也。求簪三日不得之；吾令人求之，不移日而得之。”於是吏皆聳懼，以為君神明也。

The ruler of Zhou lost a jade bodkin. He ordered his officials to look for it, who could not find it even after three days. The ruler of Zhou then ordered some other men to look for it, who found it in a house of commoners. The ruler of Zhou says, “I have learned that officials do not busy themselves with their business. When it came to looking for a bodkin, they could not find it even after three days; when I ordered some other men to look for it, they found it even before the day had passed.” Thus the officials were all trembling in fear, thinking that their lord must be divinely perceptive.

(2) 商太宰使少庶子之市，顧反而問之曰：“何見於市？”對曰：“無見也。”太宰曰：“雖然，何見也？”對曰：“市南門之外甚眾牛車，僅可以行耳。”太宰因誡使者：“無敢告人吾所問於女。”因召市吏而謂之曰：“市門之外何多牛屎！”市吏甚怪太宰知之疾也，乃悚懼其所也。

The Grand Minister of Shang (Song) sent his valet to the market, and asked him upon his return, “Did you see anything at the market?” He answered, “Nothing noticeable.” The Grand Minister said, “Even if so, what did you see?” He answered, “Outside of the South Gate, there were a great number of ox-carts. One can barely

pass through." The Grand Minister thereby warned the messenger, "Do not dare to tell others what I asked you." He then summoned the official in charge of the market and castigated him by saying, "Why is there so much ox dung outside of the city gate?" The market official was deeply startled by how fast the Grand Minister had learned about this, so that he was terrified of the resources available to the Grand Minister.

Following them, I include the first three vignettes of guideline 6.

(3) 韓昭侯握爪而佯亡一爪，求之甚急。左右因割其爪而效之，昭侯以此察左右之誠不。

Marquis Zhao of Hann held his hand together and pretended that he was missing one fingernail and was urgently looking for it. His attendant then cut his own nail and presented it. Through this, Marquis Zhao detected whether his attendants were honest or not.

(2) 韓昭侯使騎於縣，使者報，昭侯問曰：“何見也？”對曰：“無所見也。”昭侯曰：“雖然，何見？”曰：“南門之外，有黃犢食苗道左者。”昭侯謂使者：“毋敢洩吾所問於女。”乃下令曰：“當苗時禁牛馬入人田中，固有令，而吏不以為事，牛馬甚多入人田中。亟舉其數上之；不得，將重其罪。”於是三鄉舉而上之。昭侯曰：“未盡也。”復往審之，乃得南門之外黃犢，吏以昭侯為明察，皆悚懼其所而不敢為非。²⁶

Marquis Zhao of Han sent a horseman to the countryside. The messenger reported back, and Marquis Zhao asked, "What did you see?" He replied, "I saw nothing." Marquis Zhao said, "Even if so, what did you see?" He said, "Outside of the South Gate, there were yellow calves grazing on the seedlings off of the left side of the road." Marquis Zhao said to the messenger, "Do not dare to divulge what I have asked you." He then sent out an order saying, "It is the growing season of the seedlings, and livestock are forbidden to enter the crop fields. Even though there is such an order, the officials have not made it their business, so that a great number of livestock have entered the fields. Quickly count the number of these livestock and report it. If these figures are not received, the punishment would be magnified." Upon this order, three counties counted and reported. Marquis Zhao said, "The

²⁶ In the *Qiandao* 乾道 edition, there is no paragraph separation between this and the previous vignette (Wang Xianshen 1998, 236).

number is not yet complete." The officials returned once again to inspection, and only then they found the yellow calves outside of the South Gate. The officials thought Marquis Zhao must be perceptively discerning. They were all terrified of the resources available to him, and no longer dared to commit any wrong.

(1)' 周主下令索曲杖，吏求之數日不能得。周主私使人求之，不移日而得之。乃謂吏曰：“吾知吏不事事也。曲杖甚易也，而吏不能得；我令人求之，不移日而得之。豈可謂忠哉！”吏乃皆悚懼其所，以君為神明。²⁷

The ruler of Zhou sent down an order to a search for a crooked staff. The officials looked for it for many days and could not find it. The ruler of Zhou then secretly sent some people to look for it, and they found it before the day had passed. He thus said to the officials. "I have learned that officials do not busy themselves with their business. The crooked staff was a very easy matter, but still, the officials could not find it. I ordered some other men to look for it, and they found it even before the day had passed. How can this be called devoted?" The officials were all put in unease by his resourcefulness, taking their lord as divinely perceptive. As I would like to suggest with my labeling of this these vignettes, four of these five can be grouped into two pairs, and coincidentally, they are arranged in a chiasmus pattern (1-2-2'-1').

Not only do the vignettes in each pair tell stories that follow the same structure and convey a near-identical moral, they are also extremely close textually, so that it would not be a stretch to call them textual parallels. In the following charts, parallel phrases are highlighted.

(1)

周主亡玉簪，令吏求之，
三日不能得也。
周主令人求，而得之家人之屋間，
周主曰：“吾知吏之不事事也，
求簪三日不得之；
吾令人求之，不移日而得之。”
於是吏皆聳懼，以為君神明也。

(1)'

周主下令索曲杖，吏求之
數日不能得。
周主私使人求之，不移日而得之。
乃謂吏曰：“吾知吏不事事也。
曲杖甚易也，而吏不能得；
我令人求之，不移日而得之。豈可謂忠
哉！”
吏乃皆悚懼其所，以君為神明。

²⁷ Wang Xianshen 1998, 235-237.

(2)

商太宰使少庶子之市，顧反而問之曰：“何見於市？”對曰：“無見也。”太宰曰：“雖然，何見也？”{對曰：“市南門之外甚眾牛車，僅可以行耳。”太宰因誡使者：“無敢告人吾所問於女。”

因召市吏而謂之曰：“市門之外何多牛屎？”}

市吏甚怪太宰知之疾也，乃悚懼其所也。

(2)'

韓昭侯使騎於縣，使者報，昭侯問曰：“何見也？”對曰：“無所見也。”昭侯曰：“雖然，何見？”{曰：“南門之外，有黃犢食苗道左者。”

昭侯謂使者：“毋敢泄吾所問於女”，

乃下令曰：“當苗時禁牛馬入人田中，固有令，而吏不以為事，牛馬甚多入人田中，亟舉其數上之；不得，將重其罪。”於是三鄉舉而上之。昭侯曰：“未盡也。”復往審之，乃得南門之外黃犢，}

吏以昭侯為明察，皆悚懼其所而不敢為非。

The two texts in Pair (1) are practically identical, except the missing items are jade bodkin in (1) and crooked stuff in (1)'. The vignettes of the second pair exhibit greater variations: The historical characters involved are different. Moreover, in the central portions that are bracketed, the messengers report different stories: the valet of the Grand Minister of Song thought of the pathway congested with ox-carts, while the messenger of Duke Zhao tells us of calves feasting on the crop.

If we compare these two pairs of vignettes to the alternative versions connected by *yi yue*, the degree of variation between vignettes in each pair of the former is not necessarily greater than the ones latter, which are explicitly labeled as parallel texts. Zheng Liangshu counts 44 groups of texts connected by *yi yue*, among which I found around 10 groups that features different historical figures between the alternative versions.²⁸ Some of the *yi yue* texts also tell

²⁸ Zheng 1990, 46 -47.

stories that contain considerably different details. For instance, in chapter 34 under guideline 2, we find these two vignettes linked together by *yi yue*

甘茂相秦惠王，惠王愛公孫衍，與之間有所言，曰：“寡人將相子。”甘茂之吏道穴聞之，以告甘茂。甘茂入見王曰：“王得賢相，臣敢再拜賀。”王曰：“寡人託國於子，安更得賢相？”對曰：“將相犀首。”王曰：“子安聞之？”對曰：“犀首告臣。”王怒犀首之泄，乃逐之。

一曰：犀首，天下之善將也，梁王之臣也。秦王欲得之與治天下，犀首曰：“衍其人臣也，不敢離主之國。”居期年，犀首抵罪於梁王，逃而入秦，秦王甚善之。樗里疾，秦之將也，恐犀首之代之將也，鑿穴於王之所常隱語者。俄而王果與犀首計曰：“吾欲攻韓，奚如？”犀首曰：“秋可矣。”王曰：“吾欲以國累子，子必勿泄也。”犀首反走再拜曰：“受命。”於是樗里疾已道穴聽之矣。見郎中皆曰：“兵秋起攻韓，犀首為將。”於是日也，郎中盡知之；於是月也，境內盡知之。王召樗里疾曰：“是何匈匈也，何道出？”樗里疾曰：“似犀首也。”王曰：“吾無與犀首言也，其犀首何哉？”樗里疾曰：“犀首也羈旅，新抵罪，其心孤，是言自嫁於眾。”王曰：“然。”使人召犀首，已逃諸侯矣。²⁹

Gan Mao was the Prime Minister for King Hui of Qin. King Hui was fond of Gongsun Yan, and told him in private that, “We will make you the Prime Minister.” Gan Mao’s official made hole on the wall and heard this, and told it to Gan Mao. Gan Mao entered the court to have an audience with the king, and he said, “Your Majesty has found a worthy Prime Minister. Your servant took the courage to come and express many congratulations.” The king said, “We have entrusted the state to you, how can we find yet another Prime Minister?” He answered, “Xishou (i.e. Gongsun Yan) is about to be made Prime Minister.” The king said, “How did you hear about this?” He answered, “Xishou told me.” The king was angry that Xishou was indiscrete, and thus expelled him.

It is also said: Xishou, one of the finest generals under heaven, was the subject of King of Liang (Wei). King of Qin wished to win him over, and with his assistance put all under heaven under his governance. Xishou said, “Since I, Yan, am a servant of men, I dare not leave the state of my master.” By the following year, Xishou was sentenced for an offence committed against the King of Liang, and in his escape he ran to Qin. The King of Qin treated him very well. Chuli Ji, the general of Qin, was afraid that Xishou would replace him as the general. He dug a hole in the wall of the room where the king often conducted secret discussions. After a short

²⁹ Wang Xianshen 1998, 319 – 321.

while, the king was indeed plotting with Xishou, and he said, "I want to attack Han. How does that sound?" Xishou said, "Autumn would be good." The king said, "I would like to entrust the state to you. You must not disclose this." (In accordance with ritual), Xishou retreated backward in small steps and performed obeisance to the king, and said, "I accept your order." At this point, Chuli Ji had already heard it all through the hole. Whenever he met a court gentleman, he always said, "The army will be raised in autumn to attack Han. Xishou will be the general." Within that day, all of the court gentlemen knew about it; within that month, all within the border knew about it. The king summoned Chuli Ji and said, "How is this rumor so raucous and rampant? From what path did it emerge?" Chuli Ji said, "It seems to be Xishou." The king says, "I have not said anything to Xishou. How can it be Xishou?" Chuli Ji said, "Xishou is a man taking refuge. Since he was newly caught for offence, he must feel isolated. So he must have said this in order to ingratiate himself with the people here." The king says, "I see." He sent somebody to summon Xishou. But he had already escaped to another state.

This pair is in some ways very similar to Pair (2) in chapter 30. In these two vignettes concerned with Gongsun Yan's 公孫衍 expulsion from Qin, we find two different Qin ministers playing defensive: in the first version it is Gan Mao 甘茂, while in the second version Chuli Ji 樗里疾. While the plots of the stories told in two vignettes closely resemble each other, they differ in one of the central details. In the first version, the information intercepted through eavesdropping tells of Gongsun Yan's future appointment, while in the second version, it is the plan to attack Han. Nevertheless, variant details in both groups have semantic connections. In Pair (2) of chapter 30, the two versions are both related to certain bovine transgressions outside of the southern gate. In this pair in chapter 34, the disclosed messages both involve a new position for Gongsun Yan.

Moreover, as I have already suggested earlier, not only do many of the vignettes under guidelines 5-7 of chapter 30 share the same narrative structure, they also contain textual

similarity. For instance, I have gathered a group below of vignettes that contain repeated phrases, which are underlined. Under guideline 5, we have

(1) 周主亡玉簪，令吏求之，三日不能得也。周主令人求而得之家人之屋間，周主曰：“吾之吏之不事事也。求簪，三日不得之，吾令人求之，不移日而得之。”於是吏皆聳懼，以為君神明也。

Under guideline 6,

(3) 韓昭侯握爪而佯亡一爪，求之甚急，左右因割其爪而效之，昭侯以此察左右之誠不。

(1) 西門豹為鄴令，佯亡其車轄，令吏求之不能得，使人求之而得之家人屋間。³⁰

Ximen Bao, the prefect of Ye, pretended that he has lost the wheel-guard. He sent officials to look for it, but they could not find it. He sent other people to look for it and they found it at a house of commoners.

And under Canon 7,

(3) 子之相燕，坐而佯言曰：“走出門者何白馬也？”左右皆言不見。有一人走追之，報曰：“有。”子之以此知左右之誠信不。³¹

Zizhi was the Prime Minister of Yan. While sitting, he feigningly said, “Is it a white horse walking out of the door?” His attendants all said they did not see it. One person ran out to chase it, and reported, “Yes.” Through this, Zizhi found out whether his attendants were honest and trustworthy or not.

This group is just one example of how some phrases are shared and repeated. We can also draw up several different clusters that would repeat other phrases. For instance, many vignettes end with a version of “thus the officials were all trembling in fear, thinking that their lord must be divinely perceptive”於是吏皆聳懼，以為君神明也.

³⁰ Wang Xianshen 1998, 237.

³¹ Wang Xianshen 1998, 238.

Lastly, in Illustration 7, we find a cluster of short vignettes that share the ending “by which means he learns” 以(...)知(...). Some of them are also close enough textually to be considered parallels:

陽山君相謂(韓),
聞王之疑己也,
乃偽謗樛豎以知之。

Lord Yangshan was the Grand Minister of Han.³² Since he heard that the king was suspicious of him, he pretended to criticize the little courtier Jiu, in order to learn what the king thinks.

淖齒
聞齊王之惡己也,
乃矯為秦使以知之。³³

Zhuo Chi, since he had heard that King of Qi detested him, sent some one pretending as envoy from Qin in order to find out

Perhaps we can characterize vignettes collected in Illustration 5 – 7 of chapter 30 as a collection of texts that share several similar plots as well as textual features. Such a phenomenon is not unique to these three illustrations in chapter 30. We find such clusters in many other parts of the “Chu shuo” chapters, where a group of vignettes sharing similar plot structure or elements is readily identifiable. Expanding this method of labeling vignettes that share plot/textual similarities, I made a chart containing basic information for all of the vignettes of the “Chu shuo” chapters (Appendix II). With the help of this chart, one can observe not only that vignettes in vicinity of each other tend to follow similar plotlines, but also that stories attributed to the same figure tend to be close to each other, and stories from the same geographical regions tend to occur in a string.

³² The 謂 character here is probably a mistake. Gu Guangqi emends it with Han 韓 based on his identification of Yangshan with the figure Lord Shanyang 山陽君 in *Zhanguo ce*, and Jiu shu 樛豎 with Jiu Liu 樛留 in *Hanfeizi* chapter 22 and 36, both of whom are associated with Han. I follow this emendation (Wang Xianshen 1998, 237-238).

³³ Wang Xianshen 1998, 237-238.

What seems to be unique about this cluster from chapter 30 is that it stretches across several groups of illustrations purportedly relating to different guidelines, which poses a challenge to the textual division plotted out by the guideline text. In contrast, the boundaries of clusters in other chapters mostly correspond to the boundaries outlined by the guidelines; these clusters do not usually extend beyond these boundaries plotted out by the guideline text, but several of them are often formed under the same guideline group. In any case, these clusters, whether as sub-units within a group of illustrations, or as units stretching across different groups of illustrations, can be considered as a textual unit that functions independently from the textual units delineated by the *jing* texts. What this could imply concerning the relationship between the *jing* and the *shuo* texts is a complicated question. It requires further consideration in order to touch upon the question of whether these similarities already existed in the source texts, or whether they were arranged/enhanced by the compiler in order to create a sense of cohesion. It seems, however, safe to say that one reason for placing these vignettes together is that they share such similarities.

Thus we can observe two different kinds of mechanisms involved in the formation of the “Chu shuo” texts. On the one hand, we can identify clusters formed by vignettes sharing similar plotlines and/or textual parallels; on the other hand, the clusters in the majority of cases are placed within the boundaries prescribed by the guideline texts, and the vignettes to different extents support and illustrate the teachings of the guideline texts. The form of these “Chu shuo” chapters we see now seem to be the result of the combination of these two processes: collecting stories/texts and illustrating principles.

Having recognized this, we can say that putting similar texts together appears to be one of the possible collection and organization principles within the “Chu shuo” vignette assemblages. Consequently, the *yi yue* texts do not appear so special anymore, as they might at

first sight. Instead of considering them as a much later editorial addition, I propose that at least some of them are simply the result of a collection practice that is very integral to the formation of the “Chu shuo” chapters. Just as many other vignettes in these chapters, they are collected and placed next to each other because of their similarity. Only that they resemble each other so closely that the compiler made the decision to label them parallel versions, with the marker *yi yue*. As I will illustrate with another “*yi yue*” set in chapter III, some texts seem to be purposefully linked together with *yi yue* because they need to be read together to convey a certain intended meaning.

Conclusion: The relationship between the guidelines and the illustrations

In this chapter, I have demonstrated what seems to be an integral force behind the compilation of the “Chu shuo” chapters, the accumulation of similar stories. Such an accretion process operates independently of the prescription of the guideline texts, so that in extreme cases, as we have observed from the vignettes under guidelines 5 – 7 of chapter 30, the clusters of resembling stories extend beyond the boundaries prescribed by the guidelines. Thinking back on the various connotations of the word *chu* in the title “Chu shuo,” it seems that the proliferation of similar stories that we see here is already implied in its basic meaning of “accumulating,” or even “stockpiling.” I argue that this characteristic of the “Chu shuo” chapters ought to be taken into consideration, when we consider the origin of the vignettes introduced by the phrase *yi yue*. It seems that at least they may well have been part of the original compilations just as these many other vignettes that also closely resemble each other, without being explicitly labeled as alternative versions.

Recognizing this phenomenon allows a more comprehensive approach to the study of these *Hanfeizi* chapters, whose formation process must have been very complex. It seems that many scholars have assumed a model of compilation, according to which the guideline texts are

composed first, and only then were the illustrations collected to match the guidelines. My observations, however, show that the actual formation process of the “Chu shuo” characters is that of molding existing vignette collections so that they can be classified under these guidelines that exhort legalist principles. Through this process, both the collections and the guideline texts probably underwent modifications made in order that they can fit together better.

There is no reason to assume that the guideline texts necessarily take precedence in shaping these chapters. Indeed, if we look at the seven guidelines of chapter 30 again, we notice that there is no compelling logic as to why these seven principles are put together and ordered in such a way. There are three central ideas around which these seven guidelines revolve: <1> Techniques for preventing deception and manipulation by powerful court ministers <2> rewards and punishments as important tools <3> methods for better monitoring and deterring subordinates. These three ideas are not presented in the clearest order, since the “rewards and punishments” idea (guidelines 2 and 3) comes in between two guidelines that both seem to be expounding idea <1> (guidelines 1 and 4). It is perceivable that these guidelines end up in the present orders because of the pre-existing order of the vignette collection.

Ultimately, I hope to have shown that the guideline texts are not merely canonic legalist principles needing to be illustrated with interesting stories. These guideline texts actively perform various functions toward “storing” these vignettes, which fit the use of *chu* in its title “Chu shuo.” As I have mentioned, these texts provide an indexing system that allow this vast collection of vignettes be more easily accessed. It also seems that the guideline texts contribute toward preserving the vignette collections: it is precisely because of the availability of such lists of allusions to the *shuo* sections that scholars thousands of years later can spot inconsistencies and surmise whether something is missing or interpolated. In the following chapters, I will further explore the functions the guideline texts perform. In particular, I would like to show

that these guideline texts embody the process of appropriating inherited cultural traditions toward the agenda specific to the *Hanfeizi* compilation, not only through assigning them into the orders of this legalist universe, but even through teaching the users of the vignette collections how to read them.

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