



Stories to Caution the World: A Ming Dynasty Collection, Volume 2

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Stories to Caution the World is the first complete translation of Jingshi tongyan, the second of Feng Menglong's three collections of stories which were pivotal in the development of Chinese vernacular fiction. These tales, whose importance in the Chinese literary canon and in world literature is without question, have been compared to Boccaccio's *Decameron* and the stories of *A Thousand and One Nights*.

Peopled with scholars, emperors, ministers, generals, and a gallery of ordinary men and women in their everyday surroundings -- merchants and artisans, prostitutes and courtesans, matchmakers and fortune-tellers, monks and nuns, servants and maids, thieves and imposters -- the stories in this collection provide a vivid panorama of the bustling world of imperial China before the end of the Ming dynasty.

Feng Menglong collected popular stories from a variety of sources (some dating back centuries) and circulated them via the flourishing seventeenth-century publishing industry. He not only saved them from oblivion but elevated the status of vernacular literature and provided material for authors of the great late-Ming and Qing novels to draw upon. As in their translation of the first collection of Feng's trilogy, *Stories Old and New*, Shuhui and Yunqin Yang include all forty stories as well as Feng's interlinear and marginal comments and all of the verse woven throughout the stories.

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