Tun-huang Popular Narratives (Cambridge Studies in Chinese History, Literature and Institutions)

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Tun-huang Popular Narratives presents authoritative translations of four vernacular Chinese stories, taken from fragmentary texts usually referred to as pien-wen or 'transformation texts'. Dating from the late T'ang (618-907) and Five Dynasties (907-959) periods, the texts were discovered early last century in a cave at Tun-huang, in Chinese Central Asia. However, written down in an early colloquial language by semi-literate individuals and posing formidable philological problems, the texts have not been studied critically before. Nevertheless they represent the only surviving primary evidence of a widespread and flourishing world of popular entertainment during these centuries. The tales deal with both religious (mostly Buddhist) and secular themes, and make exciting and vivid reading.

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