



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR CHINESE STUDIES

ICS presents the "Re-Imagining China's Past and Present" Lecture Series

The Beauty of Being Aberrantly Different: A Peep into the World of *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語

Friday, February 9, 2018

4:00-5:30 pm

Mendenhall Lab 191

125 S Oval Mall

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Abstract: The 1130 "tales of the world" in the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (*A New Account of Tales of the World*) are organized in 36 chapters, each focuses on one category of human character or behavior. Judging from the great interest and intense relish with which the *Shishuo* compilers enjoy the full array of human traits—both the praise-worthy and the detestable—in the raw, one can hardly shake off the impression that they care more about descriptive presentation than about prescriptive value judgement. As the criteria for a tale to be included in the text is not the consideration of ethics and morality, merely being very good or very bad does not guarantee one a spot in the *Shishuo* taxonomy of human nature; one just has to be good or bad "in style." To live in the world of the *Shishuo*, a character has to be unusual, extraordinary, and, better yet, idiosyncratically different from the norm.

Bio: Xinda Lian received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and is currently professor of Chinese at Denison University. His research interests include Song dynasty poetry, Song dynasty literati culture, and the stylistic analysis of the *Zhuangzi* text. He is the author of *The Wild and Arrogant: Expression of Self in Xin Qiji's Song Lyrics* (Peter Lang, 1999), as well as a variety of book chapters and articles on Song dynasty literature and the study of the *Zhuangzi*.

Free and Open to the Public

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