

Ming Qing

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edited by
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Ming Qing Studies 2018

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MING QING STUDIES

MING QING STUDIES is an annual publication focused on late imperial China and the broader geo-cultural area of East Asia during the premodern and modern period. Its scope is to provide a forum for scholars from a variety of fields seeking to bridge the gap between 'oriental' and western knowledge. Articles may concern any discipline, including sociology, literature, psychology, anthropology, history, geography, linguistics, semiotics, political science, and philosophy. Contributions by young and post-graduated scholars are particularly welcome.

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EXAMPLES FOR THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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In Memoriam of Mario Sabattini (1944-2017)

Mario Sabattini has been a friend and a colleague in the last forty years. We have worked side by side in writing volumes and essays, we have taken part to conferences and academic meetings, and we have traveled together in missions across Italy and abroad.

I am conscious that any remembrance is a self-referential action, above all a reflexive deed that allows us to revisit our own past, and recollect fragments of our elapsed experiences as far as memory now presents them to us. Any remembrance in public is an indirect exhibition of one's self. Nevertheless, as one happens to be still here in this moment, it is also a pause of reflection, an act of empathy toward a friend by re-living some past shared moments. It is also a "rite" in the best Chinese style with all its deep meanings.

Mario Sabattini passed away on December 20, 2017. Emeritus Professor at the Department of Asian and North African Studies, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, he was born on July 6, 1944 in Rome. He studied at Sapienza University of Rome and was a student of Prof. Lionello Lanciotti. In 1970, he started to serve as lecturer of Chinese history, and later taught Chinese language and literature at Ca' Foscari, where he worked as Head of the Institute of Chinese Studies (1979-1991), Supervisor of Courses of Asian Languages and Literatures (1987-1990), Head of the Department of East Asian Studies (1992-1994), Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures (1996-1999) and Pro-Rector (1988-1992 and 2003-2004). Moreover, from 1979 to 1989 he served as Director of Courses of Eastern Languages and Cultures at the Institute for the Middle and Extreme Orient (IsMEO) in Rome. Sinological studies in Italy are very much indebted to him.

Prof. Sabattini researched mainly on Chinese history, aesthetics and arts. He has been also a translator of modern literature, from Yu Dafu to contemporary poets. He is primarily known as an international specialist in the works of Zhu Guangqian, with a special focus on his aesthetics and contribution in diffusing modern European thought and Crocianism in China. Indeed, Zhu Guangqian's works fueled Mario Sabattini's deep interest in aesthetics. Chinese scholars' appreciation of his studies has been reported in a Festschrift edited by Magda Abbiati & Federico Greselin (*Il Liuto e i Libri. Studi in Onore di Mario Sabattini*, Sinica Venetiana 1, Venezia: Ca'Foscari, 2014, pp. 20-22). Two volumes containing his essays on Zhu Guangqian, edited by Elisa Sabattini, are going to be published in English later this year and in 2019 by Brill in "Emotions and States of Mind in East Asia" (ESMA) series.

Prof. Sabattini was a founding member of the EACS (European Association for Chinese Studies), he served on the EACS board from 1975 to 1982, and attended to most of the meetings from its establishment to the 1990s. He was also a founding member of the AISC (Italian Association for Chinese Studies) and its Secretary General from 1988 to 1999.

Prof. Sabattini was particularly active in the cultural exchange with China. He researched at the Center of Chinese Studies of the National Library in Taiwan in 1990-1991, and was appointed Cultural Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in the People's Republic of China from 1999 to 2003. In addition, he was also a pioneer scholar in the field of Thai language teaching and studies in Italy, at Ca' Foscari University.

Together with the whole Editorial Board we warmly dedicate this volume to Mario Sabattini, and we hope this is another occasion for those who have directly and indirectly known him to recall his kind and amiable personality, and re-appreciate his sensibility.

Paolo Santangelo

PREFACE

This special issue, dedicated to Prof. Mario Sabattini, contains nine contributions: three of them focus on various aspects of the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, namely the “moral sense of dignity” (*chi* 恥), the *hua*-versus-barbarian identity, and the change of confidence in the moral order of the empire; the other six concern respectively Christian converts in late Ming, insurance and transport companies during the Qing, the construction projects by a monk-architect, Chinese travelogues in Europe, painting zither (*qin* 琴) music, and British cartoons on China and Japan.

CHEN Dandan 陈丹丹, Assistant Professor of History at Farmingdale State College, State University of New York, Department of History and Political Science, is author of “Rethinking ‘Shame’: Literati Consciousness in the Early Qing.” By presenting the nuanced differences of three influential thinkers—Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682), Li Yong 李顥 (1627-1705), and Zhang Lüxiang 張履祥 (1611-1674)—Chen Dandan illustrates their shared emphasis on the importance of *chi* for literati identity, self-cultivation, and cultural survival during the critical period of dynastic transition, and thereby offers material for understanding how these thinkers contributed to enriching the Confucian notion of *chi*.

DING Han 丁涵, researcher of the Department of Chinese at Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai Campus, in “Literature and Identity: The Motif of ‘Lament for the South’ during the Ming-Qing Transition”, reflects on how the discourse of *hua* 華 (lit. Chinese civilization, or orthodox Confucian tradition) and *yi* 夷 (non-Han Chinese cultures) shaped the formation of self-identity in poetry and poetic expositions (*fu* 賦) composed by Ming loyalists during the 1640-80s. The author argues that these writers borrowed the motif from the Southern Dynasty poet Yu Xin’s 庾信 (513-581) “*Fu* on the Lament for the South” (“*Ai Jiangnan fu*” 哀江南賦), but, as loyalist remnant subjects (*yimin* 遺民) of the fallen Ming, they expressed a different sensibility under the traumatic experience of the Manchu conquest of the Jiangnan area.

MEI Chun 梅春, visiting scholar at University of Pittsburgh, in “From a Bee-Eyed Villain to a Dim-Witted Buffoon: Wei Zhongxian and Literary Discourses on Evil in the Late Ming and Early Qing”, analyses two novels that offer different portrayals of the historical negative personage Wei Zhongxian 魏

忠賢 (1568-1627). Mei Chun argues that a shift in conceptions of evil occurred during the Ming-Qing transition, and discusses the two different portrayals as examples of how late Ming and early Qing writers explored questions about human nature and the origins of great evil. While the first portrayal derives from the author's confidence in the ethical power of fiction and in Heaven providing moral order to the world, the second novel points to a profound pessimism and deep suspicion about Heaven's ordering power after the Manchu conquest.

"Christian Literati of the Lower Echelon in Late Ming China: The Case of Xiong Shiqi", by **CHENG Yu-Yin** 程玉瑛, Professor of History and International Studies and Coordinator of Asian Studies minor at Marymount Manhattan College, New York, is a case study that explores the thoughts and actions of Christian literati of the lower echelon (i.e. *shengyuan* 生員, or *buyi* 布衣). The article maps the role they played in late Ming Christianity through the examination of the life of Xiong Shiqi 熊士旂 (dates unknown), his conversion and writings, as well as his evangelisation action.

Caroline BODOLEC, researcher at the Centre d'études sur la Chine Moderne et Contemporaine, Paris, is author of "Technology and Patronage of Construction Projects in Late Ming China: The Case of the Itinerant Monk-Architect Miaofeng Fudeng (1540-1613)." This essay, very useful for the history of architecture and construction in China, includes social backgrounds and the multifaceted role of Buddhism in the late Ming Dynasty. It focuses on the figure of Miaofeng Fudeng 妙峰福登, a Chan Buddhist monk who was able to find prestigious sponsors to support and finance his projects, and himself became manager of several bridge and building constructions in many places of Ming China.

"Merchants, Brigands and Escorts: An Anthropological Approach to the *Biaoju* 標局 Phenomenon in Northern China", by **Laurent CHIRCOP-REYES**, Ph.D. candidate in anthropology and sinology at Aix-Marseille Université, Institut de Recherches Asiatiques, discusses the roles of the companies providing escort and insurance services from the time they came to be established in the 17th century until their decline. They were responsible for the transport of goods (i.e. money, salt, silk and tea), but were also in charge of protecting traders who were victims of plunder organized by brigands during their journeys.

"The First Chinese Travelogues in Europe: The Responses of Zhang Deyi and Wang Tao to Western Social Life" by **Anna Maria CAVALLETTI**, researcher of the Centre de Recherche sur les Civilisations de l'Asie Orientale, Paris, is an analysis of two late-Qing travel diaries authored by Chinese literati

who visited Europe in the 19th century. Zhang Deyi 张德彝 (1847-1919) and Wang Tao 王韜 (1828-1897) are in some way “atypical” travellers in respect to their contemporaries who made the same journey for diplomatic missions: the interest in their travel writings lies in their direct gaze to the society, free from institutional obligations. The work shows the reactions of these two scholars toward Western lifestyle, with special regard to the realm of education, social interactions, commerce and entertainment.

HSIAO Li-ling 蕭麗玲, Associate professor of Chinese Language and Literature at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, has contributed with the article “Picturing Guqin Music: Min Qiji’s and Other’s Illustrations of ‘Yingying Listens to Qin’ for Xixiang Ji” which investigates how seven string zither (*guqin* 古琴) music was pictorialised in traditional China. In particular, it shows that *qin* music was pictured through rhetorical devices similar to those used in poetry, symbols and metaphors.

Amy MATTHEWSON, Ph.D. candidate of the History Department at School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, is author of “Cartooning Anxieties of Empire: The First Sino-Japanese War and Imperial Rivalries in *Punch*.” The popular British satirical magazine *Punch* depictions of events in the Far East offers a negative portrayal of China in the middle of her “humiliation period” and puts forward the notion that another Asian nation, Japan, was a formidable rival to Europeans. It is really impressing to read the lively representation of the national rivalries of the great powers of the end of the 19th century, that in the present time give the sense of a bee’s buzzing in an empty hive.

I express my grateful feelings to Maria Paola Culeddu and Tommaso Previato for their competence and commitment, without which this volume would not be published.

Paolo Santangelo

TECHNOLOGY AND PATRONAGE OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN LATE MING CHINA: THE CASE OF THE ITINERANT MONK-ARCHITECT MIAOFENG FUDENG (1540-1613)¹

CAROLINE BODOLEC

(Centre d'études sur la Chine moderne et contemporaine,
UMR 8173 Chine, Corée, Japon. CNRS, France)

This paper focuses on the figure of Miaofeng Fudeng 妙峰福登 (1540-1613), a Chan Buddhist monk. After a first period devoted to religious and spiritual activities (pilgrimages, pious actions, hermitage and so on), his life changed at the age of 42, when he received funds for building a Buddhist temple and a pagoda from several members of the imperial family, notably the Empress Dowager Li Shi 李氏 (*Cisheng Huang taihou*) 慈聖皇太后, mother of The Wanli Emperor (1572-1620). Afterwards, Miaofeng Fudeng was able to find prestigious sponsors to support and finance his projects. Furthermore, officials of the central and provincial government asked him personally to manage bridge constructions. He had the opportunity to lead building sites in many places in Ming China, as in the provinces of present Shanxi 山西, Shaanxi 陝西, Sichuan 四川, and Jiangsu 江苏. He died at the age of 73, renowned for his skill to construct Buddhist monasteries, bridges, pagodas and bronze pavilions.

The name of Miaofeng Fudeng has emerged from a research on the history of the vault structure in Chinese architecture and in particular on the monumental use of a form of buildings distinctive enough to earn a peculiar name: *wuliang dian* 無梁殿.² As the Chinese term expresses, such halls (*dian* 殿) were made without any (*wu* 無) wooden beams (*liang* 梁); instead they were built with

¹ This research originally fell within a program of the French Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR) entitled "Itinéraires individuels et circulation des savoirs scientifiques et techniques en Chine moderne (XVIe-XXe siècles)" (ICCM), and directed by Catherine Jami (CNRS) and Frédéric Obringer (CNRS). I sincerely thank the anonymous reviewers for their advices and help to improve this article. I owe them a lot.

² See Bodolec 2001, and 2005, esp. chap. 6 on Miaofeng Fudeng.

bricks, which have the main advantage of being resistant against fire.³ Another particularity of these buildings is the barrel-vault structure. These elements are noteworthy in the context of the usual wood frame construction for monumental buildings such as temple halls of that period. Only twelve beamless halls have been found in China, and three main periods of construction have been identified. Three halls were built during the Jiajing 嘉靖 reign (1522-1567) of the Ming Dynasty, six during the Wanli 萬曆 reign (1573-1620), and the last three during the Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736-1795) of the Qing Dynasty. Most of them still stand today and match with historical documents such as monastery gazetteers and travel literature. Although some have been restored and sometimes modified, it is possible to distinguish architectural styles and construction techniques which vary according to the periods.

The group built during the Wanli era presents certain similarities. And it is precisely in connection with those buildings that the name of Miaofeng Fudeng crops up regularly in the historical sources. The gazetteers praise his talent as a builder and even link his name to a particular architectural form of brick architecture, the beamless hall, which makes him a seminal figure in the history of Chinese architecture. Furthermore, a biography—written by his friend Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623)—one of the most eminent Buddhist monks of the Wanli period, accounts for many details of the episodes of his life, relating his achievements and peregrinations.⁴

³ Used to characterize a building within a Buddhist temple, this expression can be linked with its homophone *wuliang dian* 無量殿 “boundless or immeasurable building” which refers to the Buddha Amithaba. Millbank 2014, p. 17.

⁴ The biographical sources are listed in the bibliography of this article. But as far as I know, there are three similar versions of Miaofeng Fudeng’s biography: Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清, *Hanshan Dashi Mengyou Quanji* 憨山大師夢遊全集, 1657, *juan* 30, in *Xu Zangjing* 續藏經 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1983), *juan* 73, no. 1456, pp. 674-676; see also idem, *Hanshan Dashi Mengyou Quanji*, *juan* 10, *zhuan* 傳, pp. 11a-18b, 1660, after the Geng Jimao woodblock ed. 耿繼茂刻本, in *Siku Weishoushu Jikan Bianzuan* Weiyuanhui, comp., *Siku Weishoushu Jikan* III (25) (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2001), pp. 382-385; and idem, *Hanshan Laoren Mengyou Ji* 憨山老人夢遊集, *juan* 16, pp. 10a-17b, 1660, after the copy of Mao Baodeng 毛褒等, Changshu Library 常熟市圖書館, in *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu Bianzuan* Weiyuanhui, comp., *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu, Jibu, Biejilei* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. 1377, pp. 628-632. Another version attributed to the same author but longer and more detailed was published in 1860; see “Miaofeng Chanshi Zhuan” 妙峰禪師傳, *Baohua Shan Zhi* 寶華山志, 1860, *juan* 12, pp. 1a-14a, in *Zhongguo Fosishi zhi Huikan* (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), series 1, no. 41, pp. 475-501. A short version with only extracts from Hanshan Deqing’s text can be found in “Miaofeng Dashi Mu San Mingshan Dashi Xiang Bing Tongdian” 妙峰大師募三名山大士像並銅殿, *Qingliang Shan Zhi* 清涼山志, 1887, *juan* 6, p. 15a, and *juan* 3, pp. 29a-30b, in *Zhongguo Fosishi zhi Huikan* 中國佛寺史志匯刊 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), series 2, no. 29, pp. 151-154. I also found a version with comments by Liu Zhaoquo 劉肇國 (Ruan Xian 阮仙), “Miaofeng Chanshi Xiangzan” 妙峰禪師像贊, *Baohua Shan Zhi* 寶華山志, *juan* 13, pp. 2a-2b, in *Zhongguo Fosishi zhi*

This article aims to link these materials in order to clarify Miaofeng Fudeng's role as a Monk architect in Ming China.⁵ In the first part, I review the beamless halls, bridges, pagodas and bronze pavilion attributed to Miaofeng Fudeng in order to assess their specific features. As the question of the origin of his technical knowledge is my main concern, the second part is devoted to a larger history of Chinese brick-vault architecture and to the place of Buddhist monks in building activities. Here, I give a background for Miaofeng Fudeng's place in both the social and technological history of construction in China.⁶ In the last part, I try to show how his building activities can be seen in an empire-wide context favorable to the expansion of Buddhism. I investigate the way the benevolence toward religion manifested in the architecture and the restoration of temples with the support and patronage of the local gentry, along with high-ranking members of the administration and especially the Empress Dowager Cisheng herself.

1. The Path of a Monk-architect

1.1. Build to Order

The first building attributed to Miaofeng Fudeng is situated on Luya Mountain 蘆芽山 in Shanxi province. It is said that at the end of 1582 the Empress Dowager Cisheng, mother of the Emperor Wanli (1546-1615) ordered him to build the main temple of Luya Mountain, the Huayan monastery 華嚴寺 and to build a seven-story iron pagoda at the top of the mountain, the Wanfo pagoda 萬佛鐵塔.⁷ The association of bronze and brick constructions occurred at least three other times in Miaofeng Fudeng building sites.

Huikan 中國佛寺史志匯刊 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), series 1, no. 41, pp. 525-526. We can also mention a stele preserved in Wutai Mountain which relates several episodes of Miaofeng Fudeng's life and signed by Su Weilin 蘇惟霖. The text is published under the title "Yuci Zhenzheng fozi Miaofeng Zushi Xingshi Beiji" 禦賜真正佛子妙峰祖師行實碑記, in Zhao Lin'en 趙林恩, *Ming Qing Shanxi Beike Zhiliao Xuan* 明清山西碑刻資料選 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2005), pp. 339-341.

⁵ The religious dimensions are admirably treated in Zhang Dewei 2016, pp. 332-379.

⁶ Construction history differs from the history of architecture in its approach to the buildings. Researchers in construction history try to link the history of styles and forms with the history of construction materials, architectural techniques, and the artisans who worked on building sites. One can consult the website of Construction History Society founded in Cambridge (UK). The journal *Construction History* exists since 1985. The academic community meets regularly at international conferences since the first conference in Madrid in 2003. The next will be organized in Brussels in 2018, see <http://www.constructionhistory.co.uk/> [consulted 2018-03-23].

⁷ These buildings were destroyed during the battles that brought the Ming Dynasty to an end.

Some time later, Wang Chonggu 王崇古 (1515-1588)⁸ asked Miaofeng Fudeng to leave Luya Mountain and go to the Wangu monastery 萬固寺, a monastery in Puban 蒲坂 about 600 km away to the south.⁹ This high official, a native of Puzhou 蒲州, in that same area, asked him to restore two sites within the temple. There already existed a thirteen-story Tang Dynasty (618-907) pagoda¹⁰ and a building called *Dafo dian* 大佛殿 (Great Buddha hall). It is recorded that Miaofeng Fudeng stayed there for three years working on this restoration. An inscription on the pagoda dates it to 1586. The extant ruins of the building attributed to Miaofeng Fudeng show us what could be his first beamless hall.¹¹ The building was destroyed during the Tongzhi era (1862-1875) of the Qing Dynasty.

When the constructions at the Wangu monastery were completed, Miaofeng Fudeng was asked by the Minister of Justice himself, Li Shida 李世達 (1533-1599),¹² to supervise the repair of a bridge on the Wei 渭 River in the district of Sanyuan 三原 in Shaanxi province. This bridge apparently had thirteen arches.¹³ It seems that Miaofeng Fudeng spent two years on the building site and then decided to return to Luya Mountain.

On his way back, at a place called Ninghua 寧化 in the territory of Ningwu district 寧武, Miaofeng Fudeng spotted a vertical cliff. It was the perfect place to construct a cave temple decorated with carved figures of the ten thousand Buddhas and stories from the *Huayan Jing* 華嚴經 (Flower Garland Sutra). According to the *Ningwu Gazetteer*, an indication of the dates is given: it took three years to excavate and carve the temple, from 1591 to 1594.¹⁴

Between 1594 and 1599, Miaofeng Fudeng received a summons from the

See the *Gazetteer of Shanxi Province*, quoted by Glahn, "Fu Deng", in Goodrich & Fang (eds.) 1976, pp. 462-466; see esp. p. 463. In Kefu & Qianqing 1990, pp. 103-104, it is said that Miaofeng Fudeng asked the Empress Dowager for help with the project. Weidner 2001, p. 130, note 46.

⁸ Wang passed the *jinshi* 進士 examination, the highest level of official examinations, in 1542-1543. At the time he would have held the position of Minister of War (*Bingbu Shangshu* 兵部尚書). See Zhang Huizhi et al. 1999, p. 216; Goodrich & Fang (eds.) 1976, pp. 1369-1374; Glahn 1976, p. 463.

⁹ West of modern Yongji 永濟, Yuncheng 運城 district, near Shaanxi and Henan provinces.

¹⁰ The text says that the pagoda measured 300 *chi* 尺 (96 m). Under the Ming Dynasty, 1 *chi* equaled 0.32 m; see Liu Dunzhen 1997, p. 421.

¹¹ Chen Zhongguang et al. 1981, pp. 131, 201-202. The *Baohua Shan Gazetteer* records that the height of the pagoda was 13 *zhang* 丈 (equivalent to 43.16 m), see "Miaofeng Chanshi Zhuan", in *Baohua Shan Zhi*, *juan* 12, p. 8a.

¹² A native of Jingyang in Shaanxi province, Li passed the *jinshi* in 1556. Zhang Huizhi et al. 1999, pp. 961-962; Goodrich & Fang (eds.) 1976, p. 738.

¹³ "Miaofeng Chanshi Zhuan", *Baohua Shan Zhi*, *juan* 12, p. 8b.

¹⁴ Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, p. 675, lower part, lines 17-18. Shanxisheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo, comp., 2003.

Governor of the Northern Metropolitan province (Bei Zhili 北直隸),¹⁵ Wang Xiangqian 王象乾 (ca. 1544-1626),¹⁶ to supervise the construction of a bridge over the Yang River 洋河 in the Xuanhua district 宣化縣, in northern Shanxi province, near the Mongolian border. This was a strategic place where the river was unpredictable, dangerous and very wide. It was certainly because of his previous success with the Sanyuan Bridge on the Wei River that Wang asked Miaofeng Fudeng to take on this challenge.¹⁷ It is recorded that the bridge had twenty-three arches, but nothing remains of it today.¹⁸

1.2. Build to Fulfill a Vow

Hanshan Deqing's text indicates that Miaofeng Fudeng was by then focused on a vow he had made a few years before, to offer three statues and three bronze pavilions (*tongdian* 銅殿) to three sacred mountains: Mount Wutai 五臺山, Mount Emei 峨嵋山 and Mount Putuo 普陀山. In the spring of 1599,¹⁹ Miaofeng Fudeng went to visit Prince Shen 藩 (Zhu Liyao 朱理堯, d. u.), who lived at Lu'an 潞安 (modern-day Lucheng 潞城) in the south of Taiyuan 太原.²⁰ At that time, the Prince intended to offer a statue to a monastery in the Mount Emei. Miaofeng Fudeng presented to him the project of the bronze buildings, indicating that each of them would cost 10,000 *jin* 金. Prince Shen agreed to finance the one for Mount Emei and accompanied Miaofeng to Jingzhou 荊州 in Huguang 湖廣.²¹ With the assistance of Prince Shen's staff, the bronze elements were cast and sent to Sichuan province. Miaofeng himself went to Mount Emei.

At that time, Wang Xiangqian, Grand Coordinator (*Da Zhongcheng* 大中丞) of Sichuan province, was very pleased with the statue and the bronze pavilion, and decided to finance the work on the Yong'an monastery 永安寺. The beamless hall known as the Wannian monastery 萬年寺 was part of this project.²²

¹⁵ The term *zhili* 直隸 means "directly attached." The Northern Metropolitan Region included parts of the actual provinces of Hebei, Henan, Shandong and some districts of Beijing and Tianjin. Hucker 1958, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ A native of Xincheng 新城 in Shandong province, Wang Xiangqian received his *jinshi* in 1572. Zhang Huizhi et al. 1999, p. 217; *Mingshi*, *juan* 93; Glahn 1976, p. 464.

¹⁷ At least, this was mentioned in the *Baohua Shan Gazetteer*; "Miaofeng Chanshi Zhuan" *Baohua Shan Zhi*, *juan* 12, p. 9a.

¹⁸ Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, p. 675, lower part, lines 20-21.

¹⁹ Wanli *jihai* year, spring 萬曆己亥春. Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, p. 675, lower part, lines 22-23.

²⁰ District of Changzhi 長治.

²¹ At this time, Hunan and Hubei provinces were joined; the city is in modern Hubei province.

²² "Lidai Gaoseng [Ming] Dazhi Heshang: Miaofeng" 歷代高僧 [明] 大智和尚妙峰, *Emei Shan Tuzhi*, *juan* 5, p. 13b. Zhang Dewei 2016, p. 358.

Wang Xiangqiang also agreed to finance the statue for Mount Putuo, the sacred island off Ningbo 寧波, on the coast of Zhejiang province. Around 1603, Miaofeng returned to Jingzhou to oversee the casting of the statue and the pavilion. Everything was ready, and the bronze pieces were already on their way to the sacred island, when, at a place called Longmen 龍門,²³ Miaofeng Fudeng learned the bad news that the monks of Mount Putuo had refused the gifts. One reason for this refusal was the fear of so-called Japanese pirates were active along the coast.²⁴

Looking for a good place to erect the statue and the pavilion, at the end of 1603, Miaofeng Fudeng finally arrived at Mount Baohua 寶華山 in the actual Jiangsu province, thirty kilometers from Nanjing. As this setback put a serious strain on the budget, Miaofeng Fudeng presented a special request to the Empress Dowager. He immediately received the sum he requested so that he was able to build not only the bronze structures but also two little pavilions of bricks. It is reported that the buildings of the Huiju monastery 慧居寺, also known as the Longchang monastery 隆昌寺, were finished in 1605.²⁵

The money sent by the Empress Dowager was not only intended for Mount Baohua but also for Mount Wutai. In the spring of 1605,²⁶ Miaofeng Fudeng left for the Xiantong monastery in Mount Wutai. The Empress Dowager sent two eunuchs to help and to oversee the use of funds. One was Wang Zhong 王忠, from the Directorate of the Imperial Horses Stables (*yuma jian* 御馬監); the other was Chen Ru 陳儒 “eunuch from the imperial entourage” (*jinchí dajian* 近侍大監). Work began in June 1606 when several buildings, all made of brick, were constructed.²⁷ These include a vast beamless hall that is 28 meters wide, 16 meters deep and 20 meters high, surrounded by two smaller beamless halls and a bronze pavilion (Figs. 1 and 2).²⁸

By imperial decree, the monastery was renamed the Shengguang Yongming monastery 聖光永明寺. When the buildings were finished, Miaofeng Fudeng organized a great ceremony with ten eminent monks who recited the *Huayan Jing* (Flower Garland Sutra). The costs were covered by public funds and contributions from the local population.

²³ Also referred to as Jinling 金陵 in the *Emei Shan Gazetteer*; *Emei Shan Tuzhi*, *juan* 5, p. 13a.

²⁴ The biographies only mention the refusal of the Putuo shan monks: 普陀僧力拒之 [Putuo monks strongly rejected them], Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, p. 676, upper part, ligne 3-4. The hypothesis of the fear of pirates is proposed by Gu Yue 1997, p. 25. We have not yet found any mention of this incident in the *Putuo Shan Gazetteers*.

²⁵ “Wenshu Wuliang Dian” and “Puxian Wuliang Dian”, in *Baohua Shan Zhi*, *juan* 3, pp. 1b-2a. Prip-Møller 1937, pp. 254-297.

²⁶ Wanli *yisi* year, spring 萬曆乙巳春.

²⁷ Wanli *bingwu* year, summer, fifth month 萬曆丙午夏五月.

²⁸ Millbank 2014, p. 19.



Fig. 1. Xiantong Monastery, Mount Wutai, Shanxi, 1606 (©author)



Fig. 2. Lateral Building, Xiantong Monastery,
Mount Wutai Shan, Shanxi (©author)

1.3. Build to the End

Miaofeng Fudeng was then in charge of the restoration of bridges on the western road to Mount Wutai via Fuping 阜平 in the Northern Metropolitan province. He built rest houses for pilgrims, where they could benefit from tea and medicine distributed at the expense of the emperor.



Fig. 3. Yongzuo Monastery, Taiyuan, Shanxi, 1612 (©author)

Texts record that all the constructions were again made of brick.²⁹ In the same period, and probably linked with the road and bridge projects, the Empress Dowager ordered Miaofeng to restore the Ciyou Yuanming monastery 慈佑圓明寺 in Fuping 阜平. The monastery had halls of seven layers, one magnificent Amitābha statue, and several *qing* of land.³⁰ After that, he returned to Mount Wutai. But it seems that it was not possible for him to stay long in a place of meditation; the governor of Shanxi province asked him to supervise the

²⁹ Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, p. 676, upper part, line 15. See Glahn 1976, p. 465.

³⁰ Zhang Dewei 2016, p. 353.

restoration of a bridge on a road near Taiyuan. At the same time, the Prince of Jin 晉³¹ asked him to rebuild the Yongming monastery 永明寺 in the city of Taiyuan. Miaofeng Fudeng changed the name into Yongzuo monastery 永祚寺 and added a new pagoda to the one that already existed. The temple is still popularly called Shuangta monastery 雙塔寺 (Two Pagodas temple). He also built several new buildings including a large beamless hall on brick (Fig. 3).³²

When the buildings were completed, Miaofeng Fudeng received another request to repair a long bridge of 10 *li* to the south of Taiyuan.³³ The work had not been completed when Miaofeng fell ill, in the ninth month of 1612.³⁴ He returned to Mount Wutai and during his last weeks received numerous visits and prayers. Miaofeng Fudeng died on the nineteenth day of the twelfth month of the *renzi* 壬子 year during the fourth hour, which corresponds to 15 February 1613 at dawn.³⁵ He was seventy-three years old.

This description of Miaofeng Fudeng's activities from 1582 onwards bring to light two dimensions related to construction: one focused on the technical part of his work, and the second related with his identity as a monk. The first concerns the particularly important number of brick constructions in Miaofeng Fudeng's work and more specifically of brick masonry vault (bridges, beamless halls, pagodas). This dimension therefore prompts me to consider the place of these constructions in the Chinese architectural system of the time. Was this knowledge widespread among craftsmen and if it was, why are there so few beamless halls in Chinese architecture? I will then address other types of architecture that have the same characteristics as the beamless hall and that can enlighten us on the knowledge of Miaofeng Fudeng. The second dimension is more related to the involvement of Miaofeng Fudeng as a Chan Buddhism monk in secular construction activities. His biography gives us several examples of bridge projects commissioned by important officials. In this regard, Miaofeng Fudeng belongs to an ancient tradition of religious expertise in the field of masonry structure.

2. A Monk Involved in Vault Architecture

Essentially of wood elements, classical Chinese architecture shows only very few examples of use of brick masonry and stone as supporting structure. The two techniques that enable the building in earth and wood are roughly consoles

³¹ This was probably Zhu Qiugui 朱求桂, Prince of Jin 晉 (fl. 1611-1630), even though the records say that he officially became Prince of Jin only in 1613. His father died in 1610.

³² Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, p. 677, upper part, line 23. Weidner 2001, pp. 131-132.

³³ A *li* was then equivalent to approximately 576 metres.

³⁴ Wanli *renzi* year, autumn, ninth month 萬曆壬子秋九月, equivalent to the end of September to October 1612.

³⁵ 萬曆壬子臘月十九日卯時. Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, p. 677, middle part, ligne 2.

(*dougong* 斗栱) and *pisé* (*banzhu* 版築). The word *tumu* 土木 (lit. earth and wood) means “building” in the common language. The finest and most remarkable innovations were made in the frames, roofs, consoles, lever arms, etc. Mortars, brick and stone walls are rarely mentioned in the sources mainly due to their marginal use in the “noble” architecture (*l’architecture savante*). In large buildings in the Forbidden City of Beijing, the wood frame is laid on wooden pillars that form the structure. Brick walls are not bearing the load but are only closures and partitions. In the popular architecture, wood frames were very numerous especially in Central and South China. In the north, where the lack of wood is constitutive for at least 500 years, a masonry architecture with most of the characteristics of the classical Chinese architecture (especially the house shape) has been developed.

2.1. *The Vault Structure: A Widespread Knowledge*

The masonry vault remains a rarity whose near absence in contemporary vernacular architecture as in the classical architecture is bound to be raised. However, the vault and the arch are not entirely absent, and have a very long existence in four types of building: tombs, bridges, arch openings (gates and windows) of pagodas, and city gates. Here it is not a question of making an exhaustive history of the vault in Chinese architecture but of giving some historical points of reference in order to demonstrate the mastery of these techniques since ancient times.³⁶ During the Eastern Han, tombs involving arch or dome structures in bricks were widely distributed in China. At the beginning, the curvature of the barrel vault was relatively small. From the middle Eastern Han onwards, stone tombs were very much in vogue,³⁷ the typical arrangement being a single-chambered construction, rectangular in plan, with walls faced with stone blocks. Arch construction, as a structural pattern, was adopted in brick and stone tombs. This practice continued well after the Sui and the Tang when most of the stone tombs were built in a square shape and a cupola-shaped roof. Between the latter Han and the early Ming, the barrel arch was widely adopted in above-ground construction, for example in the Ming tombs where the vault shape was the more common type.³⁸

Stone and brick can withstand very high pressure. The arch structure is the ideal form for stone construction.³⁹ As far as I know, the earliest records of the arch bridge are provided by the description on a molded brick made

³⁶ Bodolec 2005, chaps. 1, 2 and 3.

³⁷ Cheng Te-k'un 1980.

³⁸ Kuhn 1996, pp. 42, 53-54. *Zhongguo Tianye Kaogu Baogaoji*, pp. 14-15.

³⁹ Mao Yisheng 1986.

during Eastern Han Dynasty.⁴⁰ One of the oldest remaining bridges, the famous Anji bridge 安濟橋 in Hebei which was built during the Sui period (589-618), presents a great segmental arch bridge consisting of a single arch, 37 meters in span which is in turn composed of 28 separated arches built up side by side in a series.⁴¹ Like the building of an arch, the construction required only a narrow centering capable of being moved on as each arch was completed. The long practice in the Ming and Qing brought forth a new development in the technique of brick and arch construction. During this period, arched city gates were generalized because they allow to create wider openings in the walls. Formerly before the Yuan, wood framework was used to carry load in the gateway and it was only from the southern Song to the Yuan that wood framework was gradually replaced by the barrel arch construction, for example the Heyi gate 和義門 of Dadu capital of the Yuan Dynasty.⁴²

As we have seen in his biography, Miaofeng is known not only for his beamless halls but also for his stone bridges. John Kieschnick has shown with many examples, from at least the 6th century to the end of the Qing, that monks played a prominent role in building and maintaining Chinese bridges.⁴³ The sources most of the time only indicate the dates of construction, the place and the name of the monk in charge of the site. Rarely, technical details or the precise role of the monk in the building process is indicated. Some of them are known to have built tens or even hundreds of bridges, which suggests that they would have mastered some knowledge in architecture and labor management.⁴⁴ Bridges are also seen as acts of virtue and merit, as acts of compassion and building a bridge is valued by the Buddhist canon and the society. Miaofeng has undoubtedly benefited from the knowledge of the monks of the different monasteries where he lived, monks who probably had had the experience of such buildings.

It can therefore be said that Chinese artisans had mastered brick and stone masonry architecture since ancient times. The knowledge on mortars and bricklaying has allowed them to build quite sophisticated structures. The beamless halls attributed to Miaofeng Fudeng, in this sense, belong to the Chinese constructive system and he was probably able to lean on craftsmen familiars with the techniques of vault building. His expertise in bridges is proof of this. Nevertheless, a closer look at the vault structures permits to realize that the beamless halls use different construction techniques which can bring new elements to understand their rather scarce presence in Chinese architecture.

⁴⁰ Lü Pin & Zhou Dao 1965, p. 17.

⁴¹ Liang Sicheng 1936, pp. 1-16.

⁴² Zhang Yuhuan 2000, pp. 176-177. *Tushuo Beijing Shi*, pp. 217, 227.

⁴³ Kieschnick 2003, pp. 199-208.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 204. Mao Yisheng 1986 p. 236. Needham et al. 1965, p. 160.

2.2. *Vault with Abutments: A Technical Innovation*

Technically, the underground vaults for tomb, the bridges, the pagoda windows and the city gates have in common to be just “a hole in a mass”, a vault which transmits its load (vertical force) and pressure (horizontal force) to a huge mass of earth (tombs, gates in the walls) or in the case of bridges, to bases on the ground. The forces which naturally cause the collapse of the vault are perfectly balanced thanks to these masses. These buildings belong to a same architectural environment. On the other hand, Ming beamless halls are built with extra-heavy walls to counterbalance the horizontal thrust of the barrel-arch construction. The emergence of buttress pilasters was an improvement, reducing the amount of brick needed and at the same time increasing the span of doors and windows and, of course, of the entire vaulted structure, enabling these to let in more light. At this time the vault, “which was just a hole in a massive structure, has been liberated to form a free structure above the ground.”⁴⁵

The still extant beamless halls attributed to Miaofeng are of two types: large buildings (averaging 25 meters in length) and the smaller ones sometimes called in the documents “halls of flower” *duodian* 朵殿, which are smaller in size. The large structures exist at the Yongzuo monastery in Taiyuan, at the Xiantong monastery in Mount Wutai, but also at Wangu monastery where only some ruins remain. The structure of the Mount Emei monastery is quite different. The hall is unique in Miaofeng Fudeng’s work with a square plan and a dome roof. On all four sides vaulted openings bring in light. At each corner of the roof and in the center of the dome are decorative Tibetan-style stupas.⁴⁶

Going back to the four buildings with important similarities, one might consider separately the interior and the exterior of the construction. While the outside aims to look like an ordinary Chinese temple, the inner structure is relatively complex, consisting of an elongated vault crossed by three or five oblong vaults. This helped to create a larger space in which Bodhisattva statues were installed. In the Yongzuo monastery, the vaulted buildings form the three sides of a square courtyard. The main building is 25 meters long and comprises five oblong rooms, each with a span of 3 meters. The elongated vault that crosses the oblong ones is more than 6 meters long. The layout of the other buildings in the courtyard is similar (Fig. 4).

The main building of Xiantong monastery in Mount Wutai is 28.2 meters long and 16.2 meters wide with only three oblong vaults and an elongated transverse vault that is quite wide. At the rear of this building,

⁴⁵ Translated from Adam 1995, p. 180.

⁴⁶ As far as I know, the sources do not give information about the particular form of this building. See Millbank 2014, p. 18 for a more detailed description.

one can observe the two constructions called *duodian*. As they can be called beamless hall because of their vault structure, they are significantly smaller.

In a very interesting way, these two buildings are very close stylistically to those built at Mount Baohua and at the Yongzuo monastery in Taiyuan. The *Mount Baohua Gazetteer* tells us the measurements: 10.24 meters high, and 6.72 meters wide.⁴⁷ Their length is close to 8 meters.⁴⁸ Their vaults are elongated, which means that they are perpendicular to the main entrance. The vaults have a span of 3.50 meters (Fig. 5).

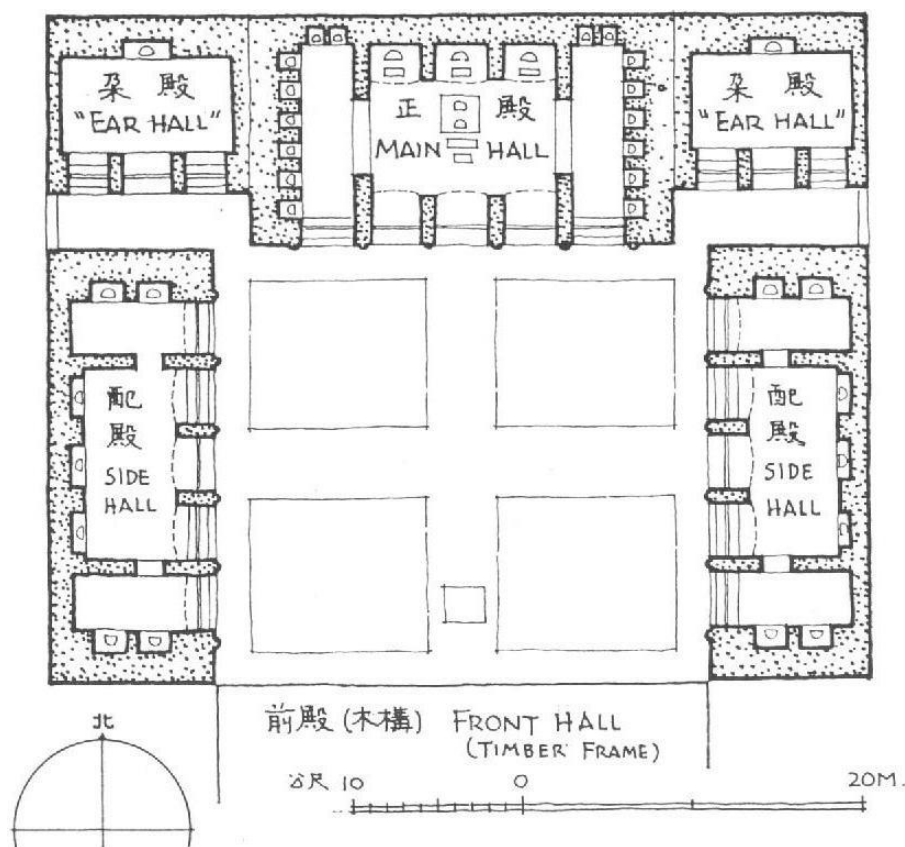
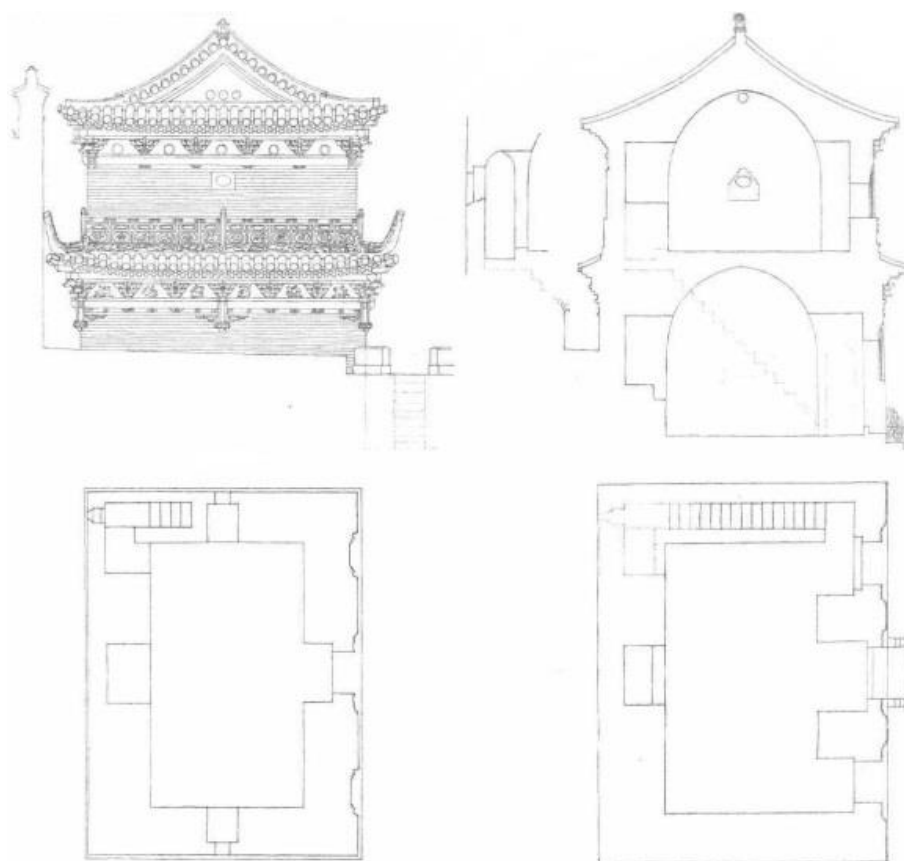


Fig. 4. Yongzuo Monastery, Taiyuan, Shanxi, 1612
(after Liang Ssu-Ch'eng and Fairbank, 1983, p. 173)

⁴⁷ The measurements are respectively 3 *zhang* 丈 2 *chi* 尺, and 2 *zhang* 1 *chi*. "Wenshu Wuliang Dian" and "Puxian Wuliang Dian", in *Baohua Shan Zhi*, *juan* 3, pp. 1b-2a.

⁴⁸ Prip-Møller 1937, p. 266. See also Jiang Shirong et al. 1955, p. 87, fig. 2.



292. KIANGSU. PAO HUA SHAN. *Hui Chü Ssu*.
Wen Shu Tien. Vaulted Brick Structure. North Gable, Cross Section and Plans. 1:100.

Fig. 5. Longchang Monastery, Mount Baohua, Jiangsu, 1605
(after Prip-Møller, 1937, p. 266)

The beamless halls attributed to Miaofeng have remarkably shallow abutments: 3.5 to 4 meters thick for the largest vaults, and 1.5 meter for the smaller ones. I did not find any Chinese source describing a method for calculating the thickness of the vault support walls, but according to a 17th century French book, a 6-meter barrel vault can be supported by an abutment of 1.5 meters. The calculations are not very complicated for skilled craftsmen but require a particular technicality.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Adam 1995, p. 182. *L'architecture des voûtes ou l'art de bâtir des traits et coupe des voûtes*, p. 10.

There are no buildings of this style in later periods, although one exception is known: the Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺 in Suzhou (Jiangxi). Situated in the Ruiguan monastery 瑞光寺 in the southwestern quarter of the city, it is the only building remaining after many fires.⁵⁰ This beamless hall is attributed to a monk named Ruyuan 如緣 and was built in 1618 according to the documents.⁵¹ Its exterior style and inner structure are very similar to those built by Miaofeng,⁵² which he most likely used as a model although no formal proof thereof can be provided (Figs. 6 and 7).



Fig. 6. Kaiyuan Monastery, Suzhou, Jiangsu, 1618 (Chinese postcard around 1920)

As we have already said, very few buildings have these technical characteristics and can be called beamless halls. But the techniques of the arch shape for bridges, gateways of city walls and temples have been preserved during the Ming and Qing dynasties, and the techniques of the vault with abutments have been maintained until nowadays for vernacular architecture in Shanxi province and northern Shaanxi (so-called Shaanbei).

⁵⁰ Demiéville 1925, p. 245. *Suzhou Fuzhi*, juan 39, pp. 9-10. Liu Dunzhen 1984, pp. 257-317.

⁵¹ *Kaiyuan Si Zhi*, p. 13a. *Wuxianzhi*, juan 24, p. 24a-29b. Wu Xiuzhi & Cao Yunyuan 1933, juan 36, p. 6b-7b. Liu Dunzhen 1984, p. 316, no. 24.

⁵² Jiang Shirong et al. 1955, pp. 85-86, fig. 1; Boerschmann 1925, p. 35, abb. 10.

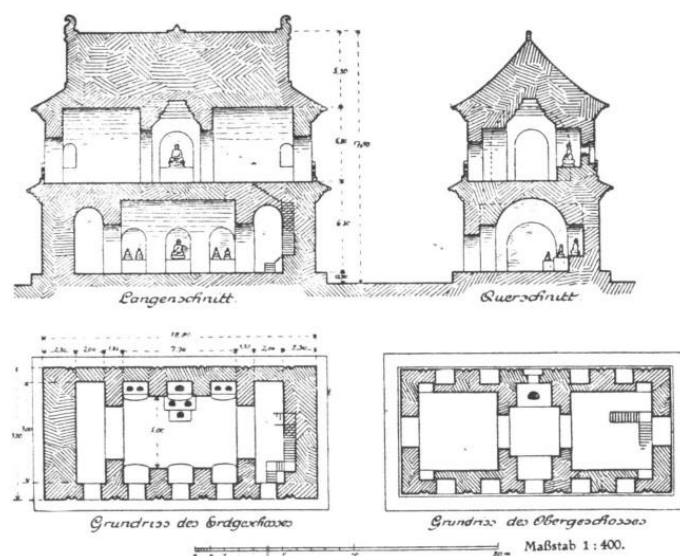


Fig. 7. Kaiyuan Monastery, Suzhou, Jiangsu, 1618 (after Boerschmann, 1925, p. 35)

2.3. The Vault with Abutment for Houses

Houses called *yaodong* 窑洞 are located in the northern part of the loess tableland, in the basin of Huanghe, one of the most important alluvial deposit zones in the world. The golden colored loess is sometimes two hundred meters high. In this area, a high concentration of cave dwellings dispatched on seven regions shelter nearly forty million people. In Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Gansu, more than fifty per cent of the inhabitants still live in *yaodong*.⁵³ Those houses may be divided into three different groups: the *tu yaodong* 土窑洞 (only made in earth, deeply excavated in the cliff), the *tianjing yaodong* 天井窑洞 (a type of dwellings of very spectacular effect because they are ten meters deep in a very flat landscape), and the *duli yaodong* 獨立窑洞 (independent type). The three groups have in common their name (*yaodong*) and also their plan, on average nine meters in length, four meters in width, three and half meters in height, and the use of the vault shape. The “independent type” presents certain architectural and technical similarities with beamless halls (Fig. 8). Even though this architecture is less impressive and not intended for temple or monastery construction, there are numerous common elements: rectangular form, entry by the narrower side, bricklaying

⁵³ Zizhou Xianzhi 1993, p. 267; Zichang Xianzhi 1993, p. 440; Lingshi Xianzhi, p. 193; Mizhi Xianzhi 1993, p. 257.

techniques, barrel vaults, etc. Could there be a connection between these vernacular constructions and Miaofeng Fudeng?

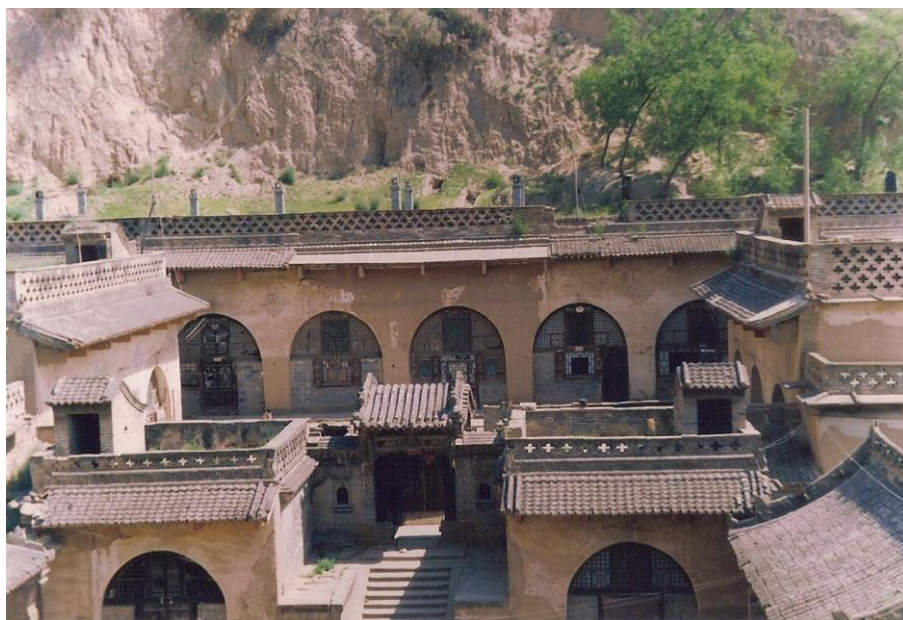


Fig. 8. Jiang family manor, Liujia mao, Mizhi, Shaanxi (©author)

Indeed, the biographies of the monk give us some clues. Miaofeng was born in 1540 at Pingyang 平陽 (modern Linfen 臨汾) in Shanxi province to a family named Xu 續. From the many episodes of his life before 1586, we learn that he had many opportunities to cross villages on his trips to the Xiyang Temple 棲岩寺 on Mount Zhongtiao 中條山⁵⁴ or to Mount Jiexiu 介休山.⁵⁵ In the prefecture of Linfen, where Miaofeng was born and where he lived for several years, independent *yaodong* made of brick are still quite numerous today. The oldest among them were built for the local elite, like the Shi family manor of Shijiagou 師家溝 in Fenxi 汾西 district which probably dates back to the years 1760-1770. The independent *yaodong* for wealthy people were also built in cities, like the ones in Pingyao 平遙, as well as in rural areas, such as the huge manor of the Wang family in Jingsheng 靜升, in Lingshi 靈石 district (Fig. 9).

Independent *yaodong* served not only as private houses but also as monasteries and temples in this region. This is the case for the Longtian

⁵⁴ Mountains in southeastern Yongji district.

⁵⁵ Also known as Mian Shan 綿山 in the district of Jiexiu 介休.

temple 龍天廟 in the district of Fenyang 汾陽, Shanxi province, where epigraphs specified that the wood buildings and the *yaodong* were restored during the Qianlong era.⁵⁶ Sometimes these *yaodong* exist in the same places locations as the beamless halls, for example in the Yongzuo monastery in Taiyuan (Fig. 10). It is reasonable to suppose that, if independent *yaodong* were as numerous in Miaofeng Fudeng's time as in the late 17th century, he was familiar with the form as well as the techniques of construction. If we can refer to the current situation, the building of brick vaults requires many workers, laborers hired for the duration of the project. The only professionals are the master masons who understand the calculations for constructing the vaults (Fig. 11). Today, and most probably also in the Ming period, the most skilled ones were very much in demand and were engaged all around the district and sometimes beyond.⁵⁷

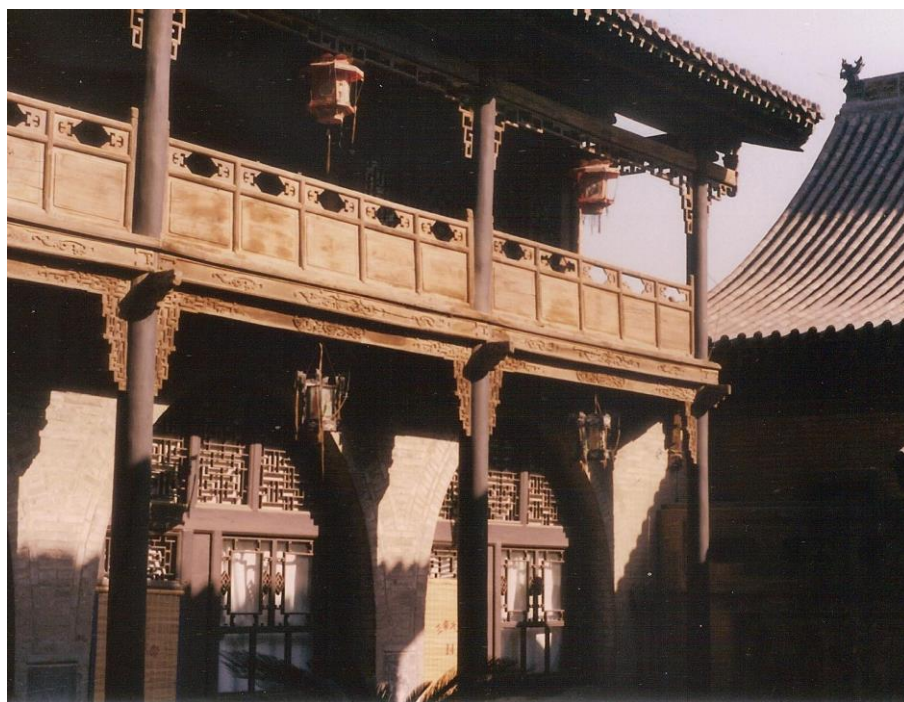


Fig. 9. Wang family manor, Jingsheng, Lingshi, Shanxi (©author)

⁵⁶ Lin Huiyin & Liang Sicheng 1934-35, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁷ Bodolec 2010, pp. 6-7.



Fig. 10. One of the lateral temples, Yongzuo Monastery, Taiyuan (©author)



Fig. 11. Building site in Yanchuan district 延川縣, 2011 (©author)

Like the building of the arches in the beamless hall and the *yaodong*, the construction of bridge arches required only a temporary structure to center the vault. The bricks were laid in the same manner, layer by layer from the springing point to the keystone (Fig. 12). One piece of evidence of this shared knowledge is found in Miaofeng Fudeng's biography. He was summoned several times to conceive other types of vaults than beamless halls, including the multi-arched bridges on the Wei River in Shaanxi and on the Yang River in Hebei. These bridges, constructed upon the request of civil officials, were great successes: much of Miaofeng Fudeng's fame came from bridge architecture. In a sense, this makes him part of the tradition of bridge building amongst Buddhist monks. But one still has to account for the uniqueness of his technique and style within this tradition.

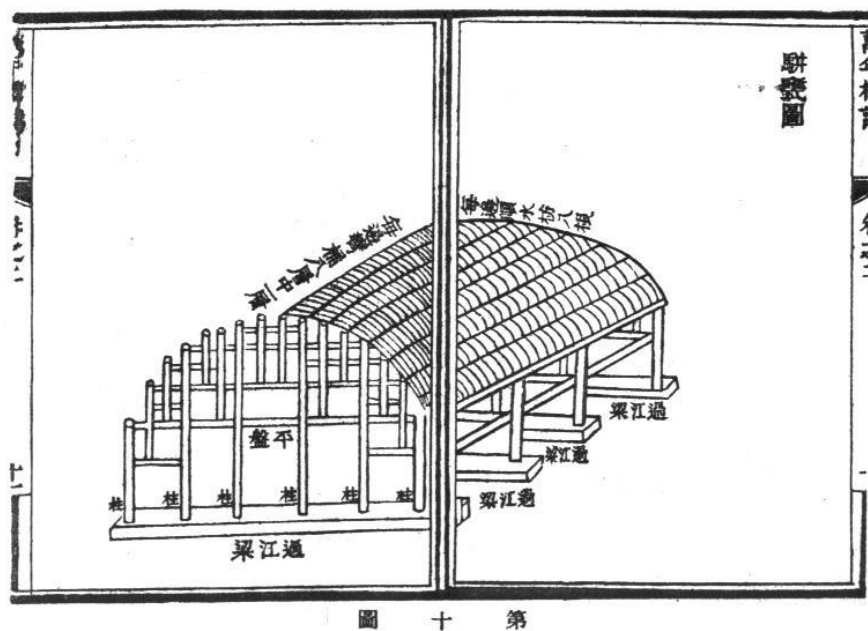


Fig. 12. Wannian bridge 萬年橋, Nancheng, Jiangxi, 1634-1647
(after Liu Dunzhen, 1933, fig. 10).

The assumption is made that Miaofeng, on the building sites in Sichuan or in Jiangxi, was able to presumably hire masons and bricklayers specializing in brick bridge construction. They could work on beamless structures and there was therefore no need to move a team of artisans from Shanxi province. This hypothesis is also corroborated by the architectural style of the beamless halls which borrow their decorative vocabulary from timber construction, but do so

through carved brick pilasters, railings, and brackets.⁵⁸ Between the openings in the facade are brick pilasters set on molded pedestals. These pilasters have no capitals but decorative brackets instead, which support an architrave with three layers of brackets as a sort of cornice. All these elements are made of brick. The roofs also imitate the classical wood-temples: they are of saddle-back hipped roof *xieshan wuding* 歇山屋頂 following the roof style typically found in one-room palace halls in Chinese architecture. The upper part is surmounted by a canopy. Miaofeng, familiar with the techniques of abutments was able to supervise their building and lead the artisans.

However, such technical skills are not sufficient to explain how Miaofeng successfully carried out these gigantic projects. Furthermore, we do not have much information about the cost of such achievements. If we follow Timothy Brook's indications, a full-scale reconstruction, which might take decades to complete, could cost some ten thousand taels; to restore or relocate an existing monastery would require two or three thousand. The cost of construction of one major building like a Buddha hall varied according to its size and magnificence, though the budget usually exceeded a thousand taels and could run as high as two thousand.⁵⁹

3. Miaofeng Fudeng and His Patronage

3.1. Local Elite and High Officials

As we have already seen, very early in his life Miaofeng received support from a member of the imperial clan, Zhu Junzha 朱俊柵 (r. 1558-1603), a fifth generation descendant of the founder of the Ming Dynasty. Referred to as the Prince of Shanyin in historical sources, he played an important role in the first period of Miaofeng Fudeng's life. He encouraged him to further his knowledge of Buddhist texts and travel around the empire. The influence of this prince was certainly decisive for the architectural education of the monk, since he had had the opportunity to visit many monasteries. Miaofeng crossed the paths of two other princes. The first was Zhu Xiaoyong 朱效鏞, known and mentioned above as Prince Shen. Miaofeng asked him for the funds necessary to cast the first of the three statues, as well as the bronze pavilion for the monastery at Emei Mountain in Sichuan province. He agreed to finance that specific project and he accompanied Miaofeng to Jingzhou in Huguang, where the elements were cast.⁶⁰ In Taiyuan, circa 1610, Zhu Qiugui, known as the Prince Jin, asked him to repair the Yongzuo monastery.

⁵⁸ Weidner 2001, p. 130.

⁵⁹ Brook 1993, p. 162.

⁶⁰ Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, *juan* 73, no. 1456, p. 675.

These persons were members of the local elite, in Chinese: *jin* 衿, *shen* 紳 or even *shi* 士, in other words people who can be defined as “a social elite that sustained its dominance through the mobilization of cultural and social, as well as economic and political, resources in the local context.”⁶¹ Local elites, who shared with the government the control of local affairs, represented an informal power in contrast to the formal power invested in the local government.⁶² The Chinese gentry was the only group that could legitimately represent the local community in discussing local affairs with officials and in participating in the governing process. The gentry consisted of officials—active, retired, or even dismissed—including those who had purchased their official titles or ranks, and also included the holders of degrees or academic titles. Wealth or landed property *per se* was not a qualification for gentry status. Commoner-landlords did not belong to the gentry class, no matter how much land they owned.⁶³ In the case of a local district’s public works, the role of the gentry was very important. Their members could finance a large part of infrastructure projects, such as the restoration of a city’s walls or the construction of bridges. The construction of a bridge or a road was an opportunity to increase the prestige of the donor, and such constructions could be officially described as “acts of virtue” (*yiju* 義舉) or “good deeds” (*shanju* 善舉).⁶⁴ Indeed, Miaofeng was appointed to supervise the construction of bridges in various places in Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces. Those ultimately responsible were, however, high-ranking members of the imperial government. Among them were men such as Li Shida, the Minister of Justice; Wang Xiangqian, governor of the North Metropolitan Province and later governor of Sichuan province; or the governor of Shanxi province, whose name does not appear in the sources. It is unclear whether these officials summoned Miaofeng to build bridges within the framework of an official request or as the result of a benevolent action by the local gentry. In the case of Li Shida, for example, who was a native of Jingyang district in Shaanxi, near the Wei River where Miaofeng erected a bridge, we can argue that this represented a gentry-sponsored project. But for Wang Xiangqian, a native of Shandong province, the connections are more tenuous.

It is in relation to beamless halls and statues of Bodhisattvas that the role of the gentry in Miaofeng Fudeng’s activity was more obvious. In the case noted above, Wang Chonggu, a native of Puzhou in Shanxi, chairman of the Ministry of War, asked Miaofeng to restore the pagoda and the main building of the Wangu monastery, where Miaofeng Fudeng had lived as a monk in his youth. Another important magistrate, Wang Jiyu, Grand Coordinator of Sichuan province, agreed to patronize the Wannian monastery on Mount Emei in circa 1600. These names are not the only examples of the involvement of officials in

⁶¹ Brook 1993, p. 15.

⁶² Ch’ü Tung-ts’u 1962, p. 168.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-172.

⁶⁴ Yang Liansheng 1964, p. 13. Kieschnick 2003, pp. 208-212.

the restoration and building of Buddhist temples. Although they were educated in Confucianism, the local elite of late Ming period had chosen to patronize Buddhism, and particularly Buddhist monasteries, instead of other forms of benevolent deeds. As Timothy Brook demonstrated, “monastic patronage became significant in the late Ming because it constituted a local forum for the autonomous organization of the gentry.”⁶⁵ Buddhism provided a context for social elites to create an identity for themselves in terms that were to some measure independent of the state. The individual itinerary of Miaofeng is another example of this fortunate situation. Like other monks, he was able to benefit from opportunities to spread Buddhism and to develop the monasteries. The fact remains that the most important sponsor of Miaofeng was at the top of the social pyramid in the person of the Empress Dowager, mother of the Wanli Emperor. How could a simple monk get such support? Let Hanshan Deqing explain how it happened.

3.2. Miaofeng Fudeng's Prestigious Patron: The Empress Dowager

In 1571-1572, the Prince of Shanyin, Miaofeng Fudeng's protector and mentor, had just built a monastery at Mount Nan 南山,⁶⁶ and he invited Miaofeng to reside there. Some time later, the Prince wanted to obtain a copy of the *Yongle Beizang* 永樂北藏 (the so-called Northern version of the Tripitaka) for the new monastery. He did Miaofeng the great honor of asking him to carry out this task. Being the owner of one of these sets of the Buddhist canon was not a trivial privilege. It seems that only fifteen sets of the Tripitaka were given away by the throne in the 1590s.⁶⁷ Miaofeng met up with Hanshan Deqing again when he arrived in Beijing in winter of 1572, and their friendship grew stronger. In 1573, the first year of Wanli reign, Miaofeng obtained a copy of the *Yongle Beizang*, and when he returned to Puzhou, Hanshan Deqing accompanied him. The Prince of Shanyin was particularly pleased and agreed to let Miaofeng go to Mount Wutai. At the end of February 1574,⁶⁸ Miaofeng and Hanshan Deqing started out towards the sacred mountain, nearly 700 km to the north. The route ran through Pingyang, where Miaofeng was born. As his parents had died unburied several years earlier, he decided to perform the appropriate rites. Arriving at Mount Wutai, the two took up residence in Longmen 龍門, on the Beitai 北臺,

⁶⁵ Brook 1993, p. 320.

⁶⁶ There are at least eight places named Nanshan in Shanxi province; I assume this was the place nearest to the residence of the Prince of Shanyin, at the Wangu monastery, Yongji, Yuncheng district.

⁶⁷ Hsu Sung-peng 2000, pp. 95-96.

⁶⁸ Wanli *jixu* year, spring, first month 萬曆甲戌春正月, equivalent to the end of February to the beginning of March 1574.

for three years.⁶⁹ During all this time, they continued to be anxious about the after-life of their respective parents, and they decided to make a copy of the *Huayan Jing*, the Flower Garland Sutra. Hanshan Deqing decided to use ink made of blood and gold flakes, while Miaofeng chose instead the blood of his own tongue mixed with red ink.⁷⁰ We assume that they began to copy the sutra in 1577.

When the copies were completed, Miaofeng wanted to hold an Undiscriminating Great Assembly (*wuzhe dahui* 無遮大會, Sanskrit, *pañcavarsikāparisad*), which was a meeting of religious figures and the faithful for confession and forgiveness of sins. During a whole year, Miaofeng Fudeng raised funds and support, and finally, in December 1581, the ceremony was ready to be held. The presentation of the copied sutras and the preaching took place in the Dayuan temple, newly restored thanks to donations from the Empress Dowager. Originally, this restoration in which Miaofeng Fudeng seems to have had no implication involvement, was planned in memory of the late emperor and for the reiging of the new emperor Wanli. The Empress Dowager sent artisans to help complete the work along with officials on behalf of the outer court (Ministry of Works) and from the inner court (eunuchs actually).⁷¹ The ceremony lasted 120 days,⁷² and it is said that Miaofeng Fudeng invited 500 eminent monks to participate. In his autobiography, Hanshan Deqing described the ritual and said that there were no less than ten thousand people who came from all directions.⁷³ While the ceremony was already underway, messengers from the Empress Dowager came to Mount Wutai to pray for the birth of a crown prince. This was part of a major effort to help Wanli Emperor, who had married three years before, have a son. Hanshan Deqing suggested incorporating the prayer in the ceremony but both the envoys and Miaofeng Fudeng objected mainly not to interfere with Wanli Emperor own messengers sent to Mount Wudang 武當山, a sacred Daoist mountain in the northern part of Junxian 均縣 in Hubei province. The Empress Dowager's request was thus unofficial but in the end the two monks accepted to change the object of the ceremony and pray for the birth of an heir. In the eighth month of Wanli 10 (1582), Zhu Changluo 朱常洛 (1582-1620) Wanli's first son, was born and it seems that the credit was given to the Mount Wutai cere-

⁶⁹ The *Mount Wutai Gazetteer* adds details on the exact place of their stay: the Miaode An 妙德庵, where a temple still exists today. "Miaofeng Dashi Zhuan", *Qingliang Shan Zhi*, *juan* 3, p. 30a.

⁷⁰ The Mount Wutai gazetteer even specifies that the gold flakes and the paper were provided by the Empress Dowager herself. Frequent references to the practice of blood writing appear from throughout Chinese Buddhist history in biographies of monks, see Kieschnick 2003, pp. 174-175.

⁷¹ For a complete depiction of the *wuzhe dahui* see Zhang Dewei 2010, Appendix E, pp. 275-286.

⁷² From the Wanli *xinsi* year, winter, eleventh month 萬曆辛巳冬十一月 to the *renwu* year, spring, third month 壬午春三月, equivalent to December 1581 to April 1582.

⁷³ Hanshan Deqing, in *Xu Zangjing*, *juan* 53, p. 960a.

mony and personally to Miaofeng Fudeng and Hanshan Deqing.⁷⁴ Right after the end of the *wuzhe dahui*, the two friends departed from Mount Wutai and separated. As Hanshan Deqing went to Zhengding 正定 (Hebei) to convalesce,⁷⁵ Miaofeng Fudeng went to Mount Luya in northern Shanxi province to retire to a small hermitage (*an* 庵).⁷⁶

After the birth of the heir which apparently took place at the end of 1582, the Empress Dowager sought to express her gratitude to the two monks. As mentioned above, when she learned of Miaofeng Fudeng's retreat, she ordered him to restore the main temple of Luya Mountain, the Huayan monastery, and give funds to build the iron pagoda of seven stories, the Wanfo pagoda 萬佛铁塔, on the top of the mountain. Miaofeng Fudeng, at the age of forty-two, thus began a new career as an architect.⁷⁷ Imperial benevolence towards him continued throughout the rest of his life. When he died, in February 1613, the imperial family contributed lavish gifts for his funeral; the Empress Dowager herself sent 1,000 *jin* 金 and 500 pieces of cloth. The Emperor ordered that a tomb pagoda be erected for him in the western part of the Xiantong monastery. It is recorded that an inscription calling him *Zhenzheng Fozhi* 真正佛子, "true disciple of Buddha", was carved.⁷⁸ The Emperor also ordered the completion of all the buildings in progress at the time.⁷⁹

The biography written by Hanshan Deqing emphasized the close relationship between Miaofeng Fudeng and the Empress Dowager Cisheng. In doing so, he indicated that the ritual organized in 1582 proved to be a key event in Miaofeng Fudeng's life. As written in his autobiography, he stressed the correlation between this event—which took place in spite of strong objections from his contemporaries—and the birth of the crown prince ten months later. Without entering into details, we have to keep in mind that Hanshan Deqing himself had had a special relationship with the Empress Dowager. Specifically, he wanted to attract her attention to his personal project: the restoration of the Dabao'en monastery in Nanjing, which was severely damaged by fire in 1566. The insistence on incorporating the two events could be a way to establish a link with the imperial court, especially with the Empress Dowager. Miaofeng Fudeng, sometimes reluctantly, according to the sources, also benefited from these circumstances.

Hanshan Deqing, more directly involved than Miaofeng Fudeng in

⁷⁴ This son was the subject of a major dispute between Wanli Emperor and his mother. Zhu Changluo under the reign name of Taichang 泰昌 only reigned for one month in 1620. Zhang Dewei 2010, chap. 3, p. 73 sq.

⁷⁵ Hsu Sung-peng 1978, pp. 74-75.

⁷⁶ District of Kelan 苛嵐縣.

⁷⁷ These constructions were destroyed during the battles that brought the Ming Dynasty to an end; see the gazetteer of Shanxi province, quoted by Glahn 1976, p. 463.

⁷⁸ Mount Wutai stele. Su Weilin (*jinshi* 1598) text copied in Zhao Lin'en 2005, p. 341. Zhang Dewei 2016, p. 328, note 6.

⁷⁹ "Miaofeng Dashi Mu", *Qingliang Shan Zhi*, juan 3, p. 30b.

power struggles within the Imperial court, was less fortunate.⁸⁰ He was arrested in 1595 and exiled to Canton a few months later. Indeed, at this moment, a court controversy centering on the issue of succession occurred: the Empress Dowager and her son, the Wanli Emperor, were the leaders of two opposing factions. During this court dispute, religion, especially Buddhism, was widely used as both a protective shield and a weapon. As a consequence, we can see some effect in the support of temple construction when, for example, the Empress Dowager's party was the weaker, in the years 1595 to 1602.

However, the Empress Dowager Cisheng was the most powerful woman in the religious life of the court, in the capital, and in the empire. The number of her patronage projects and the sums she provided were enormous. Miaofeng Fudeng was not the only Chan monk she protected and financed. In the year 1602 alone, two other monasteries were restored with funds from the Empress Dowager. The Yuquan monastery 玉泉寺 in Dangyang district 當陽 (in modern Hubei province), underwent a major restoration led by the Abbot Wuji Zhenghui 無跡正誨 (fl.1602), a monk of empire-wide reputation. The project was initiated with the help of imperial patronage, when Empress Dowager Cisheng gave Zhenghui a grant of 10,000 taels to carry out the work. She also presented him with a copy of the imperially printed Tripitaka in the name of the Wanli Emperor.⁸¹ In the same year, another monk, named Xinkong Mingkai 心空明開 (1568-1641), went to Beijing precisely to procure a copy of this document. Knowing that the Empress Dowager had long suffered from an incurable eye affliction, Mingkai presented to the throne a medical lotion, which proved to be effective in easing her condition. The Empress Dowager showed Mingkai her gratitude by having the emperor present not only a copy of the Tripitaka but also 1,000 taels of silver. The imperial donation stimulated a spate of contributions from provincial, prefecture and district officials, as well as from eight prominent members of the Zhucheng district's gentry 諸城. Within five years, the Guangming monastery 光明寺 was completed. Its library housed the 6,780 volumes of the Tripitaka, which were delivered to the monastery in 1607.⁸² The Empress Dowager seems to have financially supported at least forty-seven Buddhist temples, from the foundation of institutions to renovation, rebuilding, and erecting statues.⁸³ She also had close links with monks, as we saw in the case of Miaofeng Fudeng. She was central to most of his projects; perhaps she even was at the source of his building activity as an architect.

⁸⁰ Zhang Dewei 2014, pp. 263-285.

⁸¹ See *Yuquan Shan Sizhi* (1694), *juan* 1, p. 5a; and *Dangyang Xianzhi* (1866), *juan* 13, p. 35b, as quoted in Brook 1993, p. 291, no. 30.

⁸² *Wuliang Shanzhi*, *juan* 2, pp. 1a, 4a-b, 14a-16b as quoted in Brook 1993, p. 241, no. 46.

⁸³ Zhang Dewei 2000, pp. 85-86.

Conclusion

Miaofeng Fudeng's individual renown as a leading monk responsible for a number of important construction projects involving the beamless form is unquestionable. I would argue that the period and historical circumstances in which he lived were favorable to Miaofeng Fudeng's work. He lived in a very particular time of the Ming Dynasty, the Wanli era, when Buddhism flourished more than in other periods. The late Ming was a period of revival for religious institutions, when Buddhist monasteries were restored all over the empire. Sometimes the abbot received financial assistance or moral patronage from the emperor himself or from the members of his family such as the Empress Dowager. In other cases, the funding came from civil servants in the provinces or from influential eunuchs. The temples were then said to be *gongjian* 公建 (built by officials); this had a moral connotation and could encourage members of the elite to contribute donations to the work in progress.⁸⁴ Although restrictions on building temples were officially maintained, they were often not enforced.⁸⁵ The Ministry of Rites had a say in the appointment of monastery officials and abbots of important temples. Thus, Miaofeng Fudeng was promoted to the status of abbot *zhuchi* 住持 of the Xiantong monastery on Mount Wutai. He contributed to its development by building a beamless hall there.⁸⁶ As Timothy Brook has shown, the chief context of this revival was the formation and expansion of the local gentry.⁸⁷ It seems that one can identify two periods of greater activity in Buddhist construction during the Ming. The first was at the beginning of the dynasty, during the Hongwu 洪武 (1368-1398) and Yongle 永樂 (1403-1424) eras, which correspond to the phase of rebuilding the empire after the reconquest. A second period opened during the Wanli reign (1573-1620), and continued until the beginning of the Qing Dynasty in 1644.⁸⁸ The beamless halls attributed to Miaofeng Fudeng were all built during this period.

However, it was more difficult to understand why all Miaofeng Fudeng's constructions belonged to the field of masonry architecture and rather than that of classical wood architecture—why his expertise lay in the knowledge of the forces governing vaulted structures. As we learned in his biography, he was summoned several times to conceive types of vaults other than beamless halls, for example, the multi-arched bridges on the Wei River in Shaanxi and the Yang River in Hebei. These bridges were commissioned by civil officials and were recognized as great achievements. Much of Miaofeng Fudeng's fame came from the bridge architecture. But Miaofeng Fudeng's

⁸⁴ Goossaert 2000, pp. 136-137; Eberhard 1964, p. 314.

⁸⁵ Goossaert 2000, p. 140.

⁸⁶ Gu Yue 1997, p. 22.

⁸⁷ Timothy 1993, pp. 3-4; Zhang Dewei 2010, pp. 17-26.

⁸⁸ Eberhard 1964, pp. 277-289.

work on brick-vaulted temple structures is impossible to dissociate from his origins in Shanxi, where brick vaults were relatively common in vernacular architecture, and which were undoubtedly inspired by a long experience by the time-honored use of the “vault with abutment” technique.

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THE FIRST CHINESE TRAVELOGUES IN EUROPE: THE RESPONSES OF ZHANG DEYI AND WANG TAO TO WESTERN SOCIAL LIFE¹

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Introduction

After the Chinese defeat during the Opium Wars (1839-1842, and 1856-1860), the Western presence in China became increasingly significant. This event had serious consequences on the society of late imperial China, which had to face countries that did not present themselves as tributary states. *De facto*, China was included in the concert of nations and the Chinese government recognised the need to learn more about these nations, their social systems, institutions and technologies. In order to reach this purpose, the Empire established two important institutions: the Zǒnglǐ yámén 總理衙門, a prototype of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,² in 1861; and the Tóngwén guǎn 同文館, the School of Combined Learning,³ in 1862, whose goal was to educate interpreters for the diplomatic missions.

In this context of significant changes, and especially under the reigns of the Qing Emperors Tóngzhì 同治 (1862-1875) and Guāngxù 光緒 (1875-1908), some Chinese officials undertake a journey to discover the West. In 1866, Bīn Chūn 斌椿 (1803-1871) left China for an “unofficial” mission, whose main purpose was to gather information about the Western countries. The delegation was composed by Bin Chun, his son, Sir Robert Hart (1835-1911), at that time inspector of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, Edward Charles Bowra (1841-1874) and Emile de Champs, interpreters working for the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, three Chinese students of the *Tongwen guan*, including Zhāng Déyí 张德

¹ With thanks to the reviewers for their insights and to the editorial board for all their work.

² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be officially established in 1901.

³ Melissa Mouat has made an in-depth analysis of this institution in an article that examines the origin and the development of the *Tongwen guan*. Mouat 2015, pp. 733-755.

彝 (1847-1919) who wrote a travelogue about his first experience in Europe titled *Hánghǎi Shùqí* 航海述奇 [*Strange Tales from Over the Ocean*],⁴ and six servants. Among the other officials on duty who visited the West and reported their experience, we can mention Guō Sōngtāo 郭嵩燾 (1818-1891), who was appointed as Chinese ambassador in England and was the editor of the journal *Lúndūn yǔ Bālí Rìjì* 伦敦与巴黎日记 [*London and Paris Diary*]; Lí Shùchāng 黎庶昌 (1837-1897), who was sent in Europe in 1876 as counsellor for the Chinese embassy, first in England and then in Germany, France and Spain between 1877 and 1881, and wrote the *Xīyáng Zázhi* 西洋雜誌 [*Miscellaneous Notes about the West*]; Xú Jiànyín 徐建寅 (1845-1901) who served as counsellor for the Chinese embassy in Germany in 1878 and wrote a travelogue entitled *Ōuyóu Zálù* 欧游杂录 [*Collection of Voyages in Europe*], just to name a few.⁵

However, some travellers visited Europe for personal reasons as Wáng Tāo 王韜 (1828-1897), a significant figure of late imperial China who is often undervalued. He was working with James Legge (1815-1897) at the London missionary to translate the Chinese Classics into English, and he visited Europe on the invitation of the Scottish sinologist. Since he was a guest of Legge and his family, he travelled mainly in Great Britain, but he had also the opportunity to visit Paris. Wang Tao compiled the *Mànyóu Suílù* 漫游随录 [*Jottings from Carefree Travel*] which is a diary about his journey to Europe.⁶

In this article, we analyse some excerpts from the diaries of Zhang Deyi and Wang Tao,⁷ two figures who differ in their social status, academic education and travel reasons. Wang is a scholar with a classical education who did not pass the official examination to become a mandarin; Zhang is a young student of the *Tongwen guan* where he studied mainly English and French. Wang travels as individual and writes down his experience for himself, for his friends and for the

⁴ This is the account of the first of eight travels that Zhang Deyi accomplished in the West. The *Hanghai Shuqi* first appeared in the collection *Collected Books on Geography from the Xiaofanghu Studio* 小方壺輿地叢鈔, compiled by Wáng Xīqí 王錫祺 (1855-1913) and published between 1891-1897. The *Hanghai Shuqi* was then re-edited, included into the modern collection 走向世界丛书 [English series title: *From East to West: Chinese Travelers Before 1911*] by Zhōng Shūhé 钟叔河 (b. 1931) and published between 1984 and 1986. The excerpts presented in this article are taken from the modern collection.

⁵ For further information on these travels, refer to Zhong S. 1989.

⁶ The *Manyou Suilu* has been first serialised in the *Dianshizhai Huabao* 點石齋畫報 between 1887 and 1889, and then published as a book in 1891 by the same lithograph printing press. It also appeared in the collection of Wang Xiqi 王錫祺 (1855-1913) and in the modern collection of Zhong Shuhe mentioned above.

⁷ Professor Meng Hua 孟华 proposes an analysis of the travelogues of Zhang and Wang in a very interesting article about the construction of the Chinese 'romantic' image of France. She examines different excerpts referring to France, some of which are also analysed in this article but in another perspective. Meng Hua 2008, pp. 304-320.

sake of memory as he said in the Preface of his travelogue.⁸ On the other hand, Zhang travels as part of a delegation aiming to collect information about the West⁹ and so he records his peregrination not just for himself, but also for the Chinese Court. However, as Miriam Castorina underlines, even if Zhang was a member of a governmental delegation, he was still a student and thus more free to relate his experience in Europe.¹⁰ Notwithstanding these differences, they both had the opportunity to have a more direct contact with European societies and to observe the everyday life in different European cities. This is the reason why we choose to analyse together the travelogues of these two atypical figures of the late imperial period: they both note “trivial” observations and events, that might have seemed superfluous, irrelevant or even futile to the Qing Court, but give us a livelier image of the Western society they met.

The excerpts presented in this article introduce us some events apparently banal: the first impression of a European capital, a theatrical performance, the description of a gloves shop, the nightlife of a park frequented by prostitutes and the opinion of the educational system in Great Britain. However, the accounts of Zhang and Wang reflect the Chinese travellers’ impression about five important aspects of the Western social life: the city and its physiognomy, the business, the social problems, the role of women and the part played by education in the society. The texts presented below reveal the reaction of these two travellers facing the West. In these passages, there is nothing about the institutional meetings and the typical visits of the other travelogues of the Chinese diplomatic missions in the West; however, in their simplicity, these accounts and descriptions give us the opportunity to read some aspects of the relation between China and the West that was changing at that time. We can observe the reactions that the contact with the Western society and the European people provokes on Zhang and Wang. In order to understand these reactions, we focus on the way the Chinese travellers relate these events, and on the textual devices used to rewrite their experience of the West.

⁸ “When we are looking at a marvelous landscape, it happens that we just gaze across it. But when we think about it again days afterwards, it feels like chasing after something missing. If we have no verses to retain what we have seen and not even illustrations or lyrics to transmit it, it will be swept away by the wind as traces of dust and soap bubbles. Wouldn’t it be a shame? This is the why [I wrote] my *Jottings from Carefree Travel*.” The original reads: 诚以佳景当前而易忽，事后回思，如追亡遁；非有诗词以记之，图咏以传之，直付之飘风尘迹，梦幻泡影而已，不大可惜哉！此余《漫游随录》之所由作也（*Manyou Suilu*, p. 41).

⁹ Zhang Deyi explains the reason of his travel across Europe while answering to an English man who was asking what he was doing in a park in Berlin. He says: “we are travelling across different countries inquiring into social customs.” The original reads: 然既游历各国，察访风俗（*Hanghai Shuqi*, p. 564).

¹⁰ Castorina 2008, p. 49. Even John David Frodsham, with regard to travels of Zhang Deyi in the West, underlines his “frivolous, almost Pepysian interest in trivia for their own sake”, Frodsham 1974, p. XL.

Wang Tao and Zhang Deyi's Responses to the West

The West affected both Zhang and Wang: the cities, the forms of entertainment, the modern technologies, the customs, the traditions as well as the social interactions caught their attention. However, this fascination has met with mixed reactions between the two travellers: sometimes, they felt the need to affirm their identity as Chinese by rejecting the European way of life, sometimes they wonder about the authenticity of what they are observing, and sometimes they call into question their own culture and tradition. The excerpts presented below show a dual perspective: the travellers' vision of Europe on one side, the travellers' response to it on the other.

The first element that impressed both Zhang and Wang is the appearance of the Western cities, as we can read in the following two excerpts from their travelogues which express the authors' impression of two European capitals. The first one is the incipit of episode 26, "Taking a Rest in London" (伦敦小憩) from *Jottings from Carefree Travel*, where Wang Tao describes the English capital:

余至伦敦，时己酉刻，阳乌藏山，昏鸦集树，易乘马车，径造寓所。从车中望之，万家灯火，密若繁星，洵五大洲中一盛集也。寓在敖司佛街，楼宇七层，华敞异常。客之行李皆置小屋中，用机器旋转而上。偶尔出外散步，则衢路整洁，房屋崇宏，车马往来，络绎如织，肩摩毂击，镇日不停。入暮，灯光辉煌如昼，真如不夜之城，长明之国。

When I arrived in London it was six o'clock p.m., the sun was hiding behind a hillside and the dark crows were gathered on the trees. Riding a carriage, I went to my lodging. From the carriage I could look over the city, which was ablaze with houses lights, dense to such an extent that it seemed like a sky full of stars. It is truly one of the most populated places among the five continents. My lodging was in Oxford Street;¹¹ it was a magnificent seven-storey building, extremely spacious. The guests' luggage was placed in a small room and there was a rotating machine to bring it up. Sometimes I go out for a walk. The avenues and the streets here are clean and tidy, the buildings are high and imposing, the carriages come and go in a continuous wavelike motion. The streets are crowded with people and vehicles all day, without interruption. At nightfall, the lamplights are so brilliant that it seems like daytime; it is really like a city without night, a country constantly shining.¹²

In this extract, Wang outlines an image of London as a city "without night", constantly lighted and "crowded with people and vehicles all day, without interruption." The Chinese scholar is strongly fascinated by the population

¹¹ The original reads "敖司佛街" (*aosi fojie*), a phonetic transcription of the modern "牛津街" (*niujin jie*).

¹² *Manyou Suilu*, p. 96. All translations in this article are my own.

density and the comings and goings of people and carriages that reminds him “a wave.”

However, London was not the only European capital that attracts the Chinese travellers and we find the same astonishment in these lines from Zhang Deyi’s *Strange Tales from Over the Ocean*, where the young traveller notes his first impression of Paris:

当晚乘车街边十数里，道阔人稠，男女拥挤，路灯灿烂，星月无光，煌煌然宛一火城也。朝朝佳节，夜夜元宵，令人叹赏不置。法国京都巴黎斯，周有四五十里，居民百万，闾巷齐整，楼房一律，白石为墙，巨铁为柱，花园戏馆、茶楼酒肆最多。四围火轮车道，遥望如蛛网。

At night, riding a vehicle, we travel for more than ten *li*. The streets are full of people; men and women jostle each other. The street lights shine without requiring that the moon and the stars sparkle; everything is so bright, the city seems like a fire lit. The city is immersed in [a joyful atmosphere of] celebration and at night, it reminds us the Lantern Festival. This scenery arouses a profuse admiration in everyone. Paris, the capital of France, has a circumference of forty or fifty *li* and his population is about one million. The alleys are very neat and the buildings are multi-storeys with white stone walls and huge iron pillar. Gardens, theatres, teahouses and wine shops are extremely numerous in this city. All around the city there are railways that seen from distance seem like a cobweb.¹³

In these lines, Zhang describes Paris as he saw it for the first time riding a vehicle. The feature that most impressed him was the lighting of the streets that he compares to “a fire lit.” This element of modernity (i.e. the illumination of the streets by the gas lamps) transforms the city that reminds the young traveller the Lantern Festival. Moreover, Zhang remarks with amazement the Hausmannian buildings, another important aspect of Paris modernity. Their “white stone walls and huge iron pillar” contribute to the imposing appearance of the French capital. As Wang Tao, also Zhang underlines his awe for the streets extremely populated and illuminated, and for the railways that surround the city, reminding him a “cobweb.” The traveller also reports some encyclopaedic information about the French capital, such as his size and the population density.

The sight is the core element of the two excerpts presented above: by using rhetorical tropes such as the metaphors of the city as a “sky full of stars” and a “fire lit”, or the busy streets that remind “a wave”, both Wang and Zhang play on the visual imagination of the reader. The two travellers note the same characteristics of the two capitals: their size, the dense population, the high buildings and the illumination of the cities. Nevertheless, by reading these summary descriptions, we can notice that their real interest lies in the urban

¹³ *Hanghai Shuqi*, p. 490.

physiognomy, which is characterised by multi-storey residences, theatres, stores, gardens and so on.

During their journey across Europe, along with the discovery of the appearance of the cities, the Chinese travellers had the opportunity to observe the different entertainment spots that the West could offer. An example is the theatre, which fascinated Wang Tao, as we can read in an excerpt taken from episode 22, “Attending a Theatrical Performance in the French Capital” (法京观剧):

戏馆之尤著名者，曰“提抑达”，联座接席，约可容三万人，非逢庆赏巨典，不能坐客充盈也。其所演剧或称述古事，或作神仙鬼佛形，奇诡恍惚，不可思议。山水楼阁，虽属图绘，而顷刻间千变万状，几于逼真。一班中男女优伶多或二三百人，甚至四五百人，服式之瑰异，文采之新奇，无不璀璨耀目。女伏率皆姿首美丽，登台之时袒胸及肩，玉色灯光两相激射。所衣皆轻绡明縠，薄于五铢；加以雪肤花貌之妍，霓裳羽衣之妙；更杂以花雨缤纷，香雾充沛，光怪陆离，难于逼视，几疑步虚仙子离瑶宫贝阙而来人间也。或于汪洋大海中涌现千万朵莲花，一花中立一美人，色相庄严，祥光下注，一时观者莫不抚掌称叹，其奇妙如此。英人之游于法京者，到余往观，座最居前，视之甚审，目眩神移，叹未曾有。

The most famous theatre hall is called “*Tiyida*” (Theatre)¹⁴ a building which can hold approximately thirty thousand people [*sic*]; thereby, excluding the most important celebrations, this theatre is almost never full. Here we can watch the representations of ancient histories or fantasy and strange tales, with immortals and spirits as main characters. The scenery is painted, however as it changes in an instant it seems absolutely real. In a troupe there are, more or less, two or three hundred actors, including boys and girls, but the number can increase up to four or five hundred. Their costumes are marvellous, new and strange, with brilliant colours. The actresses are all beautiful. When they go on the stage, their chest and shoulders are uncovered and brightened by the lamps light, and their skin seems like jade. They all wear clothes light and bright as fine silk. Their skin is white as snow, their faces beautiful as flowers; their costumes are so rich in decorations and feathers that when they dance they remind the *Dance of Rainbow Skirt and Feather Dress*.¹⁵ The flowers fall like rain and their fragrance is so rich, strange and diverse that it's difficult to observe for a long time and straight to the scene; actually, I was wondering if an immortal of Heaven hasn't accidentally left her precious palace to join us. The scene looks like the vast ocean, full of countless lotus flowers and wonderful women,

¹⁴ The author here may refer to the *Théâtre du Châtelet* opened in 1862 in the period of Haussmann's transformation of Paris during the Second French Empire. The theatre was famous for its great shows, with special effects and pyrotechnics, all elements corresponding to Wang Tao's description.

¹⁵ Tang dance, composed between 718 and 720 A.D., traditionally attributed to the Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (685-762), famous for the elegance of its movements and costumes, to the extent that lately it became synonymous with exquisite dress.

shining on the public. At that moment, all the spectators began to clap hands and they sighed as a sign of admiration for that marvel. It was an English traveller staying in Paris that had took me there to see the show; I was sitting in the front row, so I could see every single detail. I was short of breath.¹⁶

During his visit to Paris, Wang assists to a theatrical performance invited, as he said at the end, by an English traveller. In this account, the author starts reporting some generic information about the theatre, such as his size and the different kind of theatrical shows; however, he makes no mention of the contents of the spectacle. He notes the marvel of the decorations, the theatrical scenery and the aspect and costumes of the actresses. All these details, as well as the illumination of the theatre and the speed of scenic changes, elements of the Western technological modernity, impress the Chinese traveller and make him wonder if what he sees is real or not, as we can read through his words: “the scenery is painted, however as it changes in an instant it seems absolutely real.” The theatre, privileged form of entertainment in the 19th century Europe, fascinates the Chinese traveller but it also puzzles him, and Wang insists on the ambiguity between fact and fiction. For example, he states: “the flowers fall like rain and their fragrance is so rich, strange and diverse that it’s difficult to observe for a long time and straight to the scene; actually, I was wondering if an immortal of Heaven hasn’t accidentally left her precious palace to join us.” He plays on evocation and uses metaphors in order to transmit to the reader the wonder he was witness of during his journey. He uses adjectives as *guiyi* 瑰异 ‘marvellous’, *xin* 新 ‘new’, and *qi* 奇 ‘strange’, or expression as *guangguai luli* 光怪陆离 that indicates something ‘strange, bizarre, and fantastic’ to describe what he sees in the Parisian theatre. This lexical choice illustrates that Wang Tao was ambivalent about what he saw in the West, feeling a sense of wonder and incredulity.

This ambivalence about the beauty and the questioning about the veracity of what they see is an important element in the Chinese travelogues in Europe. The blurring boundaries between reality and imagination, truth and illusion, can be read either as an attempt to create an effect of exoticism and as a hint of the illusory quality of Western lifestyle.

Let us look, for example, at this passage from Zhang’s *Strange Tales from Over the Ocean*, where the young traveller describes a park in Berlin:

亥正，坐车行二里许，至“敖尔佛木园”，一带玻璃房，满燃煤气灯。中有六角亭，盛栽花木，名妓满座，皆赤壁露肩，长裙委地，半启樱桃之口，一捻杨柳之腰，如花解语，比玉生香，堪以持赠。游者或与文饮，则豪放自若；或与之舞，则宛转生风；更有携手同归者。适有数妓款步来前，故作许多娇媚引人态，而明等弗顾也。时有英人曰：“君等何修而至此？”对曰：“此地虽系烟花，然既游历各国，察访风俗，亦可驻足于其地，实未注意于其人。所谓‘淫

¹⁶ *Manyou Suilu*, p. 88.

而不緇’者，汝知之否？”其人闻而大笑曰：“公言谬矣。大丈夫生于世间，何不及时行乐。倘白驹过隙，浪掷年华，则悔无及矣。君视诸妓，无不国色仙姿，令人魂飞意醉。请择其尤者告予，予必令君入巫山之梦也。”明闻而怒斥之其人复笑曰：“予故以一言相戏耳，君何悻悻如此。”遂退。

Around ten o'clock at night, we covered around 2 *li* by riding a vehicle until a park called *Ao'erfomu*¹⁷ near a crystal palace completely lit by gas lamps. In the middle of the park, there was a hexagonal pavilion, with plenty of flowers and trees. The pavilion was full of famous prostitutes. These women had their arms and shoulders naked, they wore long skirts touching the ground and their mouths half-open were similar to a cherry. They shook their waists like poplar and willow trees. They were like a flower who understands the language,¹⁸ and a jade releasing a sweet perfume which invites you to offer homage to them. Some travellers drink with them boldly and at ease, some others dance with them, turning as the wind; some visitors even go home with them, hand in hand. At that moment, many of these women slowly drew near us and with sweet and charming approaches tried to attract us; however, I did not consider them. At the time, there was an English man who said: "Why did you come here, Mister?" I answer: "Certainly this is a place of pleasure,¹⁹ nevertheless we are travelling across different countries inquiring into social customs, and so while visiting this place we do not pay any attention to these women. It's what we call: *may be steeped in a dark fluid without being made black*,²⁰ you do not know that?" Listening and laughing he said: "What you said is wrong. Why should a man born in this world not enjoy life while ye may? How time flies!²¹ Years pass as waves breaking on the shore and it is too late for regrets. When you look at all these prostitutes, your soul flies away as intoxicated by alcohol, since their beauty is matchless and their aspect is similar to that of an immortal. I invite you to choose the one with the most outstanding qualities and to let me know, I will certainly make you enter in the dream of Mount Wu."²² Having heard his words and condemning them fiercely, the English man still laughing said: "Since my words were just a joke, why have you been so affected by them?" and then he left.²³

¹⁷ The original reads “敖尔佛木园” (*ao'er fomuyuan*). It may refer to *Tiergarten*, the most famous park inside the city.

¹⁸ *Jieyu hua* 解語花 literally means “a flower who understands human language” and it suggests a beautiful woman.

¹⁹ In the text, we find the word *yanhua* 烟花 that, especially in the Yuan theatre, indicates the prostitutes.

²⁰ *Nie er bu zi* 涅而不緇 is an expression taken from *The Analects of Confucius* (chap. *Yang Huo* 陽貨, 17: 7). Here it serves to indicate someone incorruptible.

²¹ *Bai ju guo xi* 白驹过隙 literally means “a white steed flits past a crack” or “a glimpse of a white colt flashing past a chink in a wall.” This expression is taken from the *Zhuangzi*'s outer chapter, *Knowledge Rambling in the North* 知北遊, and is used to represent that the time is fleeting.

²² *Wu shan zhi meng* 巫山之夢 is an allusion to charnel love. It refers to the king Huai of Chu (Warring States period) who dreamed to encounter the goddess of Mount Wu as described in the *Ode on Gaotang* 高唐賦 attributed to the poet Sòng Yù 宋玉 (ca. 319-298 B.C.).

²³ *Hanghai Shuqi*, p. 564.

This excerpt relates a visit to a park in Berlin at night. Zhang notes in his diary the presence of several prostitutes, whose appearance catches the attention of the young traveller. Even if he carefully describes their looks throughout the use of metaphors taken from the natural world,²⁴ the Chinese student denies to have been attracted by them, and says: “at that moment, many of these women slowly drew near us and with sweet and charming approaches tried to attract us; however, I gave no consideration to them.” The Chinese traveller does not let himself be seduced by the deceptive enchantments of the West. Zhang then reports a conversation between him and an English man that he met that night at the park, in order to underline his integrity. Indeed, the dialogue shows the image of the incorruptibility of the Chinese traveller challenged by the licentious invitations of the Western man. Zhang relies on the direct speech to make more lively and authentic his narration. Additionally, it is worth noting that, on two occasions we find that, in the English character’s talk, two expressions are taken from the Chinese literary tradition, namely “白驹过隙” and “巫山之梦.” This linguistic cliché, entailing an alteration in the English figure, allows us to highlight two important elements. First of all, the attempt to reduce otherness to something already known, to approach what we see for the first time by giving it a familiar shape;²⁵ to reach this purpose, the travel writers use metaphors, similitudes or references belonging to their own culture and tradition, as Zhang does in this account about an encounter made in a park in Berlin. Secondly, Zhang seems more concerned about his image as a Chinese confronted to the Western reality than to relate the English man he met in his most authentic otherness. Indeed, this episode represents an attempt of the young traveller to depict the confrontation between the Chinese Empire, with its moral integrity (represented by himself in this episode) and the West, with its debauchery (manifested through the propositions of the English man) and its ephemeral beauties (epitomized by the prostitutes). In this case, the Chinese traveller, facing the question of prostitution in the West, expresses a strong criticism about this aspect of European societies and proudly reaffirms his identity as Chinese by refusing to yield to the deceitful words of the English man.

Another element that impresses the Chinese travellers is the way of doing business in the West. As mentioned above, the markets and the stores catch the eyes of the Chinese travellers and their observations go beyond the simple architecture, as we can see in this passage from the *Strange Tales from Over the Ocean*:

²⁴ For instance, he alludes to ‘cherries’ (*yingtao* 樱桃) to indicate the mouth of the prostitutes he sees in the park and to ‘poplar and willow’ (*yangliu* 杨柳) to suggest the movement of their waists.

²⁵ As Véronique Magri-Mourgues underlines, the paradox of the description in travel literature is the author’s claim to objectivity but the inevitable reduction of the otherness to a familiar reference framework. Magri-Mourgues 1996, pp. 35-48.

开铺者多是鬚眉男子，而伙计则多袅娜佳人。若铺中一无女子，恐终年不售一物也。铺店不必卖胭脂，而主顾不愁无郭华矣，此亦风俗使然也。即如手套铺，有人买物，必有娇女酬应。每启口问答，必笑容可掬，连称，“莫四约”。法言“莫四约”即华言大爷也，老爷也。问毕取手套，必亲持之套于客指，以试大小，试毕始讨价值。值四开者要六开、七开，设主顾不忍驳价而欢然如其价以与之，彼必另有一番留情，以冀频来照顾。如往来已熟，至礼拜日可择其美且都者，邀而与之游，久则想必有佳境在也。铺主雇觅此等人，其价必昂。若惜其价而少靳之，是未读陶公致富之书也。

The shop owners are mostly men, but the sellers are usually beautiful and graceful women. If in the store, there are no women, I am afraid there would be no only one article sold at the end of the year. The shop does not sell cosmetics, however the clients do not have to worry, because they will find local beauties; this is part of the customs and practices here. Thereby, when in a gloves shop there is someone who purchases the products, there will definitely be a pretty young lady to interact with; to each question, she will surely answer with big smiles and calling the client “*Mosiyue*” (Monsieur). “*Mosiyue*” is the equivalent in French for the Chinese *Daye* (Uncle) or *Laoye* (Master). Once the client had asked and chosen the gloves, the salesgirl will be the one who takes the gloves and who fits them on the fingers of the client, to see if they are big or small; only when the client will have tried them, they will discuss about the price. If the value is four, the salesgirl asks six or seven, and if the client does not bargain over the price, but willingly pays, then there will be other acts of kindness ensuring that he becomes a regular customer. The client who comes several times, becoming a regular customer, can choose among all the girls the prettiest one and ask her out to go for a walk on a Sunday; they believe that in the long term this will turn into a beautiful situation. The store owner looks for this kind of women to hire, in order to maintain high prices. If he is stingy, it is because he has not read Tao Gong’s book²⁶ on how to become rich.²⁷

Here Zhang notes a commercial practice in a gloves shop. The element that most impresses him is the interaction between the salesgirl and the client. The young traveller, in fact, lays stress on the female beauty as the essential factor of the successful business in the West. He states that the intimacy between the shop assistant and the customer evolves in proportion of the increase of sales. At the beginning the salesgirl just smiles and calls the client “Monsieur”,²⁸ then there is the first contact when she helps him trying the gloves, and if he is willing to pay more than the product’s real value and become a regular customer, he will be allowed to invite her out. According to the allusion of the Chinese traveller, the reader may ask whether the client is looking for some items to buy or just female company. As we can read, the Chinese traveller implicitly associates this trade

²⁶ *Táo Gōng* 陶公 refers to *Fàn Lǐ* 范蠡 (5th cent. B.C.), also known as *Táo Zhū Gōng* 陶朱公. He was a minister of the ancient Yue state and a legendary figure famous for his ability in making money.

²⁷ *Hanghai Shuqi*, pp. 491-492.

²⁸ In the Chinese text we find the phonetic transcription “莫四约” (*mosiyue*).

with prostitution, and throughout the account of this strange way of doing business he also depicts an image of the moral dissoluteness of the West. It is interesting to note the closing phrase of this excerpt where we can read the reaction of Zhang to the Western trade that he depicts. He says: “the store owner looks for this kind of women to hire, in order to maintain high prices. If he is stingy, it is because he has not read Tao Gong’s book on how to become rich.” The reference to Tao Gong, symbolising business skills, is a hint for the Chinese reader, but above all is an expedient to assert China’s superiority in the realm of trade. The West needs to look at this figure, and by extension to China, in doing business.

In other cases, the Chinese travellers look at the West as an invitation to reform the Chinese policies, as for example in the field of education. An example is given in this passage from the travelogue of Wang Tao:

英人最重文学，童稚之年，入塾受业，至壮而经营四方；故虽贱工粗役，率多知书识字。女子与男子同，幼而习诵，凡书画、历算、象纬、舆图、山经、海志、靡不切究穷研，得其精理。中土鬚眉，有愧此裙钗者多矣。国中风俗，女贵于男。婚嫁皆自择配，夫妇偕老，无妾媵。服役多婢媼，侯门甲第以及御车者则皆用男子。

The British lay stress on study; since childhood, they get into school to receive an education so that, when they are adults, they can engage in any kind of business. Hence, even if they are humble worker or simple servants, generally most of them know how to write and read. Women are like men, since childhood they learn to read; everyone studies painting and calligraphy, mathematics, maps, astronomy and geography.²⁹ There is nothing that they are not eager to study and no subject that they study poorly; indeed, they have a fine understanding. The Chinese men should feel ashamed facing most of these women! In accordance with local customs, women are valued more than men. Every woman can decide freely the man to marry, and then they live together for a lifetime without any concubine. Most of the servants are girls or old women, although servants in the noble residence and vehicle drivers are all men.³⁰

This excerpt is taken from episode 30, “An Account of Customs” (风俗类志) in which Wang takes notes about a variety of British customs and practices that he came to know during his trip in England, including the weather, the animal husbandry, the commerce of wine or the consumption of cheese as staple food. Among all these diverse notes, the Chinese traveller records also the central

²⁹ Wang Tao uses “海志” (*haizhi*) which may refer to the *Hǎiguó Túzhì* 海國圖志 [Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms] compiled by Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) and published for the first time in 1844. The treatise focuses on the geography and history of foreign countries and was very successful at its time. Here I chose to translate “海志” (*haizhi*) as “geography”, even if the modern word for this branch of study, “地理学” (*dilixue*), according to Federico Masini, is an original loan from Japanese that first appeared in China in 1879. Masini 1993, p. 169.

³⁰ *Manyou Suilu*, p. 107.

position of education in the British society. He also asserts that even women attend school since childhood, where they study several subjects, from humanities to mathematics and from astronomy to geography. Wang, however, does not merely praise the British for their education, but he adds a harsh judgment about his compatriots saying: “the Chinese men should feel ashamed facing most of these women!” It is interesting to note that Wang opposes a physical manhood’s connotation (*xumei* 鬚眉, beard and eyebrows) to an expression about the coquettish look of the women (*qunchai* 裙釵, petticoats and hairpins). This literary choice highlights the final assumption of the Chinese traveller position about the greater value of British educated women compared to Chinese men. Moreover, this personal comment hides a double affirmation: on the one hand, the supremacy of the West in the field of education, and, on the other, the superiority of the majority of Western women compared to the Chinese men. Through this sentence, the Chinese traveller also underlines the urgency of a change in Chinese society, and with particular regard to the educational system, it is worth remembering that Wang could never fit in the traditional system of examination (*kejuzhi* 科舉制). The need of an educational reform is a topic that emerges throughout his travelogue. Indeed, as Paul A. Cohen underlines, “[i]t could be argued that *all* of Wang Tao’s reform efforts were at bottom educational”³¹ and, as is known, the educational issue was highly debated during the last decades of the Qing Dynasty, especially during the Hundred Days’ Reform movement.

Conclusion

Throughout the texts presented in this article, we could observe some aspects of the Western social life as discovered by Zhang and Wang at the end of 19th century. The Chinese travellers could experience the pleasures that European cities have to offer, such as theatrical performances that astonish Wang Tao for their incredible verisimilitude, but also the dissolute pleasures linked to the prostitution that scandalise the young Zhang Deyi. They could observe the business practices and the importance of education in the West. Moreover, they remark the interaction and relationships among men and women, and analyse the role of women in Western societies. Although they depict a very different image of Western women, it is worth noting their insistence on the female universe that will later become a recurring topic in the reformist discourse as an embodiment of the core values of a powerful nation.

³¹ Cohen 1974, p. 157 (italics in the original). Paul A. Cohen outlines different aspects in Wang Tao’s view on educational reform, such as China’s need of “men of ability”, the importance of practical knowledge, the question of examination system, lack of recognition of human talents, and the necessity of a new school system. Cohen 1974, pp. 154-184.

The reading of *Strange Tales from Over the Ocean* and *Jottings from Carefree Travel* makes us wonder what is the core question posed by these journeys to European countries? The reflections of these Chinese travellers revolve around two axes. On the one hand, they focus on the culture, history, ideas, customs and traditions, as well as on the technologies and society of each of the countries that they had the opportunity to visit. On the other hand, the discovery of the West raises a common question: has the Chinese Empire something to learn from this new world? As underlined by Charles A. Laughlin, late imperial Chinese travelogues have an “allegorical dimension”³² for they represent both the author’s journey and some important steps of Chinese path to modernity. Although the issue of the confrontation between China and the West is seldom expressed so explicitly, it echoes throughout the comparisons, the descriptions and the comments that frequently enrich their travel notes and represent the responses of these travellers to the Western societies they had met. The above literary analysis shows that in facing the Western social life, Zhang and Wang react in different ways. Sometimes they are completely fascinated, other times they are doubtful, questioning the beauty they see in the West. As shown in the excerpts, the question of the beauty is a core element. The beauty of the Western cities, women or theatrical scenery visually impresses the Chinese travellers. However, in the travelogues of Zhang Deyi and Wang Tao this element also underlines the ambivalence between legitimate and illegitimate, reality and imaginary, truth and illusion of what they have observed and experienced in the European cities. Sometimes, encountering the West make them feel the need to reaffirm their identity as Chinese, and other times, on the contrary, they challenge their tradition and culture, calling on their compatriots to reform social policies. All these responses contribute to illuminate the complex framework of the relationship between China and the Western nations in the second half of the 19th century.

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³² Laughlin 2002, pp. 42-43.

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RETHINKING “SHAME:” *LITERATI* CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE EARLY QING

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After the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, “self-regret” emerged as a major theme in the writings of Han *literati*. As expressed in those texts, their remorse almost universally deepened to a feeling of shame (*chi* 恥) that derived from a paradoxical attitude toward the past. Having crystallized into a dream, the past now seemed a rosy world that would never return, yet it was precisely that dreamy way of life and all its beauty that was now shunned, suspected to be a major cause of the Ming’s demise.

Thus, one can find “shame” extended across the gulf between past and present in the early Qing. *Literati* felt ashamed of both their past life and their present powerlessness; they were nostalgic for the past, and simultaneously felt guilty about this nostalgia. Such feelings of shame embodied complex attitudes toward the past, and a variety of terms such as shame, guilt (*zui* 罪), and self-regret (*zichan* 自懺) were used interchangeably in literary texts of this period.

Unlike poets and essayists, whose remembrance of the past was filled with tears from their feelings of shame, scholars began to think about *chi*¹ in terms of a possible revival of the spirit of *literati* and Han culture. Starting with self-reflection on their own experience, their writings also distinguished different layers of *chi*. For example, in a letter to Zhang Lüxiang 張履祥 (1611-1674), Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578-1645) indicated that, in the wake of the Ming’s downfall, it was shameful to be involved in any empty discussion of learning.² Although Liu died as a Ming

¹ In classical Chinese, the word *chi* has various meanings and can be used as a noun or as a verb. In this paper, I would like to translate *chi* in different ways according to specific contexts. The translations include “shame”, “sense of shame”, “having a sense of shame” or “cultivating the capacity of shame/critical self-reflection.” My paper will only focus on the productive concept of *chi* instead of other concepts that could also be translated as “shame” in English. While the concept of shame in the Western context is more considered a psychological notion, the idea of *chi* is more a political, ethical, and philosophical concept. While the sense of shame is often intertwined with guilt or sin and thus related to the Christian tradition, the idea of *chi* is rooted in the political, ethical, and philosophical tradition of Confucianism.

² See “Fu Liu Xiansheng Fushu” 附劉先生復書 [Attached: Master Liu’s Reply], in *Yangyuan Xiansheng Quanji*, p. 24. Zhang Lüxiang lived in the Yang Garden, thus was called “the Master of the Yang Garden” (Yangyuan Xiansheng) by other scholars.

subject in the Southern Ming, he and other Han *literati* in the early Qing shared similar concerns on certain things such as the issue of shame. Second, the sense of *chi* came to be considered a good virtue in young people so that when Zhu Shunshui 朱舜水 (1600-1682), after fleeing to Japan, wrote his friend Chen Zunzhi 陳遵之 asking him to send a grandson to live with him, he insisted that the requirement for the boy is “having a sense of shame.”³ In point of fact, in the system of Confucian ethics, the idea of *chi* had long functioned as a starting point of moral and ethical reflection rather than the end point of emotion. In such cases, “*chi* as feeling” was replaced by “*chi* as idea”, a moral and ethical concept. Thus, “*chi*” in these scholars’ writings did not function as a literary motif for passive, private feelings, but served as a productive notion which could lead to the revival of *literati* spirituality. In other words, the idea of *chi* addressed and re-examined in early Qing scholars’ writings, not only reflected the most urgent problems of society at that time, but also embodied a dimension of the future, illuminating possible paths toward *literati* salvation.

Although in the title of this paper, I use shame as the translation of *chi* to help readers with the Western language backgrounds get a sense of this paper, I would like to emphasize here that the idea of *chi* in the Confucian tradition is quite different from the Western understandings of shame; the inner logic of *chi* is within the philosophical framework of Confucianism. Hence, in this paper, rather than focusing on the endless expression of shame and guilt in the literary writings of poets and essayists (*wenren* 文人), I want to examine the idea of *chi* in the writings of scholars (*xuezh* 學者), not “*chi* as feeling”, but “*chi* as a moral and ethical concept.”

Unlike other scholars who treat the many emotions and feelings similar to shame, my own focus is the idea of *chi*, which is key to one’s self-cultivation. I will also show how scholars treated it historically in the transitional context of the early Qing. By exploring relationships between shame and other concepts and issues (i.e. “loyalty” and “living”), I also want to examine the political, moral, and ethical concerns behind the treatment of shame in the period in question. I will focus on three well-known authors: Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682), Li Yong 李顥 (1627-1705), and Zhang Lüxiang. Through a detailed analysis of their texts, I hope to show how these three scholars articulated their own moral and cultural projects in an effort to solve the most urgent problems of society. Their common purpose of re-addressing the issue of shame in the context of the early Qing was not only to recall the spirit of Han *literati*, but also to reestablish morality and ultimately to revive the Han regime and culture.

³ Zhu Shunshui, “Yu Chen Zunzhi Shu” 與陳遵之書 [Letter to Chen Zunzhi], in *Zhu Shunshui Ji*, p. 43.

1. The Issue of Shame in Historical Perspective

Before going into the context of the early Qing, I would like to summarize the genealogy of *chi* in the Chinese tradition and how the issue of shame has been examined in Western and Chinese scholarship. In pre-Qin texts, *chi* is presented not only as a virtue, but also as a means to govern people and a crucial element in politics (*zheng* 政). While a sense of *chi* is considered an integral part of the definition of gentlemen (*shi* 士) (see *Analects*), *chi* is sometimes regarded as one pillar of the state (*Guanzi*). These texts established two fundamental ideas around *chi*: it was a requirement for elites and officials (*Analects*), and one of the “four dimensions” of a country (*Guanzi*); the sense of *chi* was also considered a basic virtue in all people as they fit into their immediate communities and society. These ideas have long shaped China’s tradition of “shame culture.” In this paper, instead of discussing “shame culture” in general, I would like to approach the notion of *chi* and its capacity to shape the mind of Chinese *literati*. My point is that the idea of *chi* in the Confucian tradition is quite different from the Western understandings of shame. In “The Virtue of Righteousness in Mencius”, Bryan W. Van Norden has provided a summary titled “Western Discussions of Shame.”⁴ From Aristotle to Rawls and Martha Nussbaum, most Western thinkers consider shame a feeling. I argue that in the Confucian tradition, *chi* is not just a feeling, but a political and moral/ethical concept that penetrates the levels of self, family, and community to the levels of society, state, and *tianxia* (all under Heaven). While Aristotle “denies that a sense of shame is a virtue”,⁵ *chi* is considered one of the fundamental virtues in the Confucian classics.

There is already a body of scholarship on this that contrasts Oriental “shame-cultures” and the Occidental “guilt-cultures.”⁶ In *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Ruth Benedict puts it this way:

In anthropological studies of different cultures the distinction between those which rely heavily on shame and those that rely heavily on guilt is an important one. A society that inculcates absolute standards of morality and relies on men’s developing a conscience is a guilt culture by definition [...]. In a culture where shame is a major sanction, people are chagrined about acts which we expect people to feel guilty about. True shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behaviour, not as true guilt cultures do, on an internalized conviction of sin.⁷

In *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, the authors discuss three types of personalities: “tradition-directed”, “inner-directed”, and “other-directed.”⁸ For the tradition-directed type, the authors assert,

⁴ Van Norden 2004, pp. 148-182.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁶ Roetz 1993, p. 174.

⁷ Benedict 1946, pp. 222-223.

⁸ Riesman, Glazer, and Denney 1950, pp. 3-30.

The tradition-directed person feels the impact of his culture as a unit, but it is nevertheless mediated through the specific, small number of individuals with whom he is in daily contact. These expect of him not so much that he be a certain type of person, but that he behaves in the approved way. Consequently, the sanction for behaviour tends to be the fear of being *shamed*.⁹

Based on *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, and *The Lonely Crowd*, Heiner Roetz in his *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age*, argues that the distinction between “shame cultures” and “guilt cultures” “relates to that of heteronomy and autonomy, ‘tradition-oriented’ and ‘inner-oriented.’”¹⁰ With such approaches, “shame is understood as an external sanction, executed at the pillory of the collective, while guilt is regarded as a personal inner feeling.”¹¹ He criticizes the view that shame is external.¹² He believes that it is not absolutely external and suggests differentiating external and internal shame.¹³ Roetz is correct in his criticism of these conclusions and in his view that “these quite common distinctions are unsuited for a reconstruction of China’s classical ethics.”¹⁴

The tendency to apply external approaches to the issue of shame can be seen in the work of many other scholars, including those specializing in Confucian ethics. Fingarette insists that shame “looks ‘outward, not ‘inward’” and “is oriented to ‘traditionally ceremonially defined social comportment, rather than to an inner core of one’s own, the ‘self.’” Hall and Ames call shame “ritual-orientated in that it describes a consciousness of how one is perceived by others.”¹⁵ This focus on externalized shame prompts scholars to look into topics related to *mianzi* 面子 (face).¹⁶ For example, Hu Hsien-chin’s “The Chinese Concepts of ‘Face’” discusses issues like “losing face” and “having no face” from the perspective of social psychology.¹⁷ Hu links losing face (*diulian* 丟臉) to “losing man” (*diuren* 丟人), and interprets “man” as character.¹⁸ In examining the same issue, Jin Yaoji takes a different tack in his “Face, Shame, and An Analysis of Chinese People’s Behaviours” (“‘Mian’, ‘Chi’, *yu Zhongguoren Xingwei zhi Fenxi* ‘面’、‘恥’與中國人行為之分析”). As Paolo Santangelo has incisively pointed out, “Jin denies the prevalence of a ‘shame culture’ in China, and gives a *moral* interpretation of the Chinese

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁰ Roetz 1993, p. 174.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ However, Roetz himself also lists shame together with punishment, guilt, disgrace as “negative sanctions” when discussing “the moral person.” See *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Roetz notices that “face-saving,” “an external form of shame,” “has often been described as a characteristic of China.” See *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Hu Hsien chin 1944, pp. 45-64.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

ideas of ‘shame-responsibility’ and ‘face’: it is not a purely formal and external inner sanction.”¹⁹

Based on previous discussions around the distinction between “guilt society” and “shame society”, and between the guilt-oriented personality versus the shame-oriented personality pursued in Western and Chinese academia, Zhu Cenlou 朱岑樓 provides a sociological approach to the issue of shame by placing it in the tripartite structure of society, the individual, and culture.²⁰ He explores the shame-oriented elements in ancient Chinese society as these are reflected in the Confucian classics and influenced by the humanistic tradition and environment of China.²¹ Zhu concludes that Chinese society should indeed be considered a shame society, Chinese culture a shame culture, and the Chinese personality likewise shame-oriented.²² However, Zhu’s treatment is more of a summary than a deep investigation of this phenomenon.

Most scholarly works on China’s shame culture tend to stay general instead of focusing on *chi*. Using the question “Once again: Guilt or Shame?” to open his book *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*, Eberhard provides a short account of shame societies and guilt societies in various areas of the globe. It is helpful that he provides a terminological analysis of Chinese words related to shame, in particular *chi*, *ru* 辱, and *xiu* 羞.²³ However, this analysis is very brief and he quickly turns to a more general examination of shame, sin, and guilt in ancient Chinese society. His focus is more on popular texts such as folk tales instead of classical texts.²⁴ In “The Virtue of Righteousness in Mencius”, Van Norden links “righteousness and shame.”²⁵ He discusses *chi* but also describes “shame” as including various types of emotions such as *xiu wu* 羞惡 and *yuan mu* 怨慕.²⁶

Instead of employing external approaches such as the sociological or psychological ones, I would like to trace the inner logic of *chi* within the philosophical framework of Confucianism. I disagree with Eberhard’s conclusion that there is no clear difference between the sense of shame in the Confucian tradition and the feeling of guilt. Furthermore, I would like to transcend the shame/guilt dichotomy. Although I am eager to use “shame culture” to describe ancient Chinese culture, I disagree with Benedict’s assessment of “shame culture” as external. Instead, I prefer Roetz’s approach in his *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age*. After calling attention to both the “physis and psyche” as reflected in terms like *xichi* 洗恥 and *xuechi* 雪恥, Roetz indicates that the teachings of the Zhou Confucians show that “shame is an

¹⁹ Thanks to Prof. Paolo Santangelo’s personal correspondence to me (July 8, 2016).

²⁰ Zhu Cenlou 1973.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²³ Roetz also provides similar analyses in his *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age*. See Roetz 1993, p. 177.

²⁴ *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*, pp. 1-13.

²⁵ Bryan W. Van Norden, “The Virtue of Righteousness in Mencius”, p. 152.

²⁶ *Mencius*, 5a: 1.

inner-oriented process.”²⁷ Roetz not only suggests differentiating external and internal shame, but also asserts the necessity of differentiating between “two possible forms of internal shame”:

It can be aroused by the internalized judgement of the empirical community, or be felt before oneself or an idealized audience. Hence, next to external shame, we have a second, internalized form which no longer takes its orientations from the actual but from the imagined judgment of others, and a third, autonomous form related to self-chosen ideals instead of alien expectations.²⁸

While appreciating Roetz’s suggestion of two types of internal shame, my emphasis is a bit different. I would like to highlight how a sense of *chi* is key to one’s self-cultivation. I will stress the interaction of “moral autonomy and heteronomy” behind the Confucian concept of *chi*.²⁹ A sense of *chi* not only enables Confucian scholars to watch their conducts carefully and thus shape their self-images, but also helps them establish their identification with a larger community—the *shi* community and the Confucian tradition. The spiritual force behind cultivating a sense of *chi* does not reside only in one’s own self-reflection (moral autonomy), but also in “the imagined judgment of others” (moral heteronomy).

My understanding of *chi* as a productive political and moral/ethical concept encourages transcending the “surface structure” of Chinese society created by favor (*renqing* 人情), relationship (*guanxi* 關係), and face to investigate the “deep structure” created by Confucian ethics, as Kwang-kuo Hwang has suggested in his “The Deep Structure of Confucianism: A Social Psychological Approach.”³⁰ Generally speaking, in the Confucian system, *chi* is a political and moral/ethical concept in two senses: it is a part of one’s self-awareness as it encourages one to reflect on their behaviors, while it is also linked with further action in addition to “cultivating a sense of shame.” It embodies subjective elements, yet simultaneously is always evident in the social context.³¹ Thus, it is

²⁷ Roetz 1993, p. 177.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178. Roetz is different from Ruth Benedict, who insists that “shame is a reaction to other people’s criticism [...]. it requires an audience or at least a man’s fantasy of an audience” in her analysis of shame culture in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. See Benedict 1946, p. 223.

²⁹ In addition to Roetz, other scholars such as Tu Weiming, Thomas Metzger, and Yu Yingshi also call attention to the moral autonomy of Confucianism. As Paolo Santangelo has inspiringly pointed out, they “emphasize the active and autonomous role of the individual in Confucianism and its moral tension for self-improvement and changing reality, against the Weberian view that attributed to the spirit of Neo-Confucian morality a pure compromise and adaptation function to the world.” Prof. Santangelo’s personal correspondence (July 8, 2016).

³⁰ Kwang-kuo Hwang 2001. Thanks also to Prof. Santangelo for his personal correspondence (July 8, 2016).

³¹ In “The Virtue of Righteousness in Mencius”, Van Norden indicates that “Aristotle stresses

subjective but not subjectivistic,³² personal yet social. It belongs to both the private inner self and the public domain. This sense of *chi* not only embodies a self-reflective and self-referential dimension, but also points to a social and public evaluation system, which grows from common moral standards and determines what is shameful and what is not. It emphasizes one’s capacity for self-evaluation, which eventually leads to self-realization, self-cultivation, and self-salvation, but the end of such self-fulfillment still concerns social morality. For the individual, the sense of *chi* functions as a warning signal, which prevents him/her from behaving badly.³³

Furthermore, I would like to borrow Immanuel Kant’s concept of “moral feeling” to interpret the sense of *chi*. It is a kind of moral feeling which grows from one’s mind depending on whether one’s actions are compatible with the law of duty, in Confucian terms, righteousness. The sense of *chi* is both similar with, and different from, the Kantian notion of moral feeling in the following aspects: first, both the sense of *chi* and the Kantian concept of moral feeling are “ästhetisch”; second, while the Kantian concept of moral feeling and the sense of *chi* at the level of feeling are both “vorhergehend” and “natürlich”, the sense of *chi* as a political and cultural concept is rooted and cultivated by the Confucian tradition.

Informed by the texts of *Guanzi*, Confucius, and Mencius, *literati* (*wenren*), scholars (*xuezhe*), and officials throughout later ages have used the concept of “shame” to critique political situations and assess their own spiritual conditions. The early Qing continued this tradition, as we will see in Gu Yanwu, Li Yong, and Zhang Lüxiang. My analysis of their teachings in the following section will show how the general characteristics of the idea of *chi* in Chinese tradition were reflected and developed to address specific problems of the time.

To explore why the issue of shame loomed so large for these scholars and the new meanings they gave to it, I will discuss the following texts: (1) Gu Yanwu’s “Lianchi” 廉恥 [Incorruptibility and *Chi*] and “Yu Youren Lun Xue Shu” 與友人論學書 [Correspondence with a Friend on Learning] from his *Ri Zhi Lu* 日知錄 [*Daily Accumulation of Knowledge*];³⁴ (2) Li Yong’s teachings on shame as recorded by one of his disciples Wang Xinjing 王心敬 in “Nanxing Shu” 南行述 [A Narrative of the Travel toward the South], and Zhang Lüxiang’s collected works.

the social context of shame”, although Aristotle’s understanding of shame is totally different from that of Mencius. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³² Van Norden also argues that “Mencius’ account of shame is not subjectivistic”, although his treatment of the idea of shame in Mencius’ texts is different from what I shall suggest in this paper. See *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³³ Refer to my article “Virtue, Action, and the Way of Governing: Shame in Pre-Qin Texts.”

³⁴ Preface dated 1676, published 1695.

2. *Incorruptibility and Chi: Gu Yanwu's Treatment*

Beginning with Gu Yanwu's famous essay "Incorruptibility and *Chi*", we find an attack on a specific group: the "shameless" Han *literati* who surrendered to Manchu rule. Gu Yanwu asserts *chi* as an essential moral and ethical quality of Confucian scholars, directly linked to the fate of the entire country, especially in times of disorder. He implies that the main reason for the downfall of the Ming Dynasty was the *literati*'s loss of the sense of *chi*.

Gu starts this essay with a paragraph from Ouyang Xiu's "Feng Dao Zhuanlun" 馮道傳論 [The Biography of Feng Dao], a critical essay in *The New History of Five Dynasties* 新五代史:

《五代史·馮道傳論》曰：「禮義廉恥，國之四維；四維不張，國乃滅亡。善乎，管生之能言也！禮義，治人之大法；廉恥，立人之大節。蓋不廉則無所不取；不恥則無所不為。人而如此，則禍亂敗亡，亦無所不至。況為大臣，而無所不取，無所不為，則天下其有不亂，國家其有不亡者乎？」

"The Biography of Feng Dao" in *The History of Five Dynasties*³⁵ says, "propriety (*li* 禮), righteousness (*yi* 義), incorruptibility (*lian* 廉), shame (*chi* 恥), are the four pillars of a country. If these four pillars cannot be maintained, then this country will collapse. How correct these words of Mr. Guan Zhong are! Propriety and righteousness constitute the basic law of governing people; incorruptibility and shame constitute the general principle of cultivated human beings. If people are corruptible, they will try to get everything they want; if people do not have the sense of shame, they will do anything without any limit. Then all kinds of catastrophes will come. More importantly, if officials can get anything they want, do anything they want to do without any limits, then how could *tianxia* not descend into disorder? How could our country not collapse?"³⁶

³⁵ *The History of Five Dynasties* here refers to Ouyang Xiu's *The New History of Five Dynasties*.

³⁶ Gu Yanwu, "Lianchi", in *Ri Zhi Lu Jishi*, pp. 782-783. Gu's quote is slightly different from the original text in Ouyang Xiu's "Feng Dao Zhuanlun", which reads: 傳曰：「禮義廉恥，國之四維；四維不張，國乃滅亡」。善乎，管生之能言也！禮義，治人之大法；廉恥，立人之大節。蓋不廉，則無所不取；不恥，則無所不為。人而如此，則禍亂敗亡，亦無所不至。況為大臣，而無所不取無所不為，則天下其有不亂，國家其有不亡者乎！」 "It is said that 'propriety, righteousness, incorruptibility, shame, are the four dimensions of a country. If these four dimensions cannot be maintained, then this country will collapse.' How correct these words of Mr. Guan Zhong are! Propriety and righteousness constitute the basic law of governing people; incorruptibility and shame constitute the general principle of cultivated human beings. If people are corruptible, they will try to get everything they want; if people do not have the sense of shame, they will do anything without any limit. Then all kinds of catastrophes will come. More importantly, if officers can get anything they want, do anything they want to do without any limits, then how could *tianxia* not descend into disorder? How could our country not collapse?" See "Feng Dao Zhuanlun", in *Xin Jiaoben Xin Wudai Shi Bing Fubian Erzhang*, p. 611.

In “The Biography of Feng Dao”, Ouyang Xiu elaborates on the famous idea in *Guanzi*: without its four pillars—propriety, righteousness, incorruptibility, shame—a country will collapse.³⁷ Clearly, Ouyang Xiu wants to emphasize the importance of “incorruptibility and shame” and explain the implications of their absence. The sentence that ends this quoted paragraph, which Gu Yanwu chose not to include, relates the issue of “incorruptibility and shame” to one’s political community:

予讀馮道《長樂老敘》，見其自述以為榮，其可謂無廉恥者矣，則天下國家可從而知也。

I read Feng Dao’s “Changle Lao Xu”, and see how proud he is in talking about himself; it is really what we call “having no virtue of incorruptibility and *chi*”, and shows what might happen to “all under Heaven” and our country!”³⁸

The person Ouyang Xiu criticizes here is an official who served three different regimes in the Five Dynasties period. To Ouyang Xiu, Feng represented the opportunistic *literati*. In fact, the main point of the essay is the importance of *literati* loyalty and righteousness, which, for Ouyang Xiu, are closely linked to incorruptibility and a sense of shame. Thus, to cultivate the virtue of incorruptibility and *chi* is to develop the spirit of loyalty and righteousness (*zhongyi* 忠義).³⁹ Ouyang records his shock on discovering that in moments of regime change, so many Confucian *literati* surrendered to foreign rulers, despite claiming themselves to be disciples of the sages of ancient times! After a comparison of loyal women with these so-called *literati*, Ouyang Xiu concludes that those who chose to continue living under foreign rule in spite of feeling shame certainly should feel ashamed.⁴⁰

After quoting Ouyang Xiu’s opinions on shame and loyalty, Gu Yanwu declares: “Among those four things (propriety, righteousness, incorruptibility, and *chi*), *chi* is the most important” 四者之中，恥尤為要。⁴¹ Echoing the similar judgment in the *Guanzi*, Gu Yanwu’s claim is very clear. If we compare Ouyang

³⁷ The original text in *Guanzi* is: 國有四維，一維絕則傾，二維絕則危，三維絕則覆，四維絕則滅。[...] 何謂四維？一曰禮、二曰義、三曰廉、四曰恥 “A country has four dimensions. If the first dimension is lost, then the country will be shaky; if the second is lost, then the country will be in danger; if the third is lost, then the country will collapse; if the fourth is lost, then the country will be destroyed [...]. The first is *li* (propriety), the second is *yi* (righteousness), the third is *lian* (incorruptibility), and the fourth is *chi* (shame).” See *Guanzi Jiaozhu*, pp. 2-3.

³⁸ *Xin Jiaoben Xin Wudai Shi Bing Fubian Erzong*, p. 611.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 611-612.

⁴¹ *Ri Zhi Lu Jishi*, p. 783. In most cases, I translate *chi* in Gu’s texts as “sense of shame.” However, as Paolo Santangelo has inspiringly pointed out, “for Gu Yanwu sometimes *chi* can be rendered also with ‘sense of dignity’, which is not the same as ‘sense of shame.’” See Santangelo 1993.

Xiu's argument with Gu's, we find that Gu also takes up Ouyang's emphasis on "incorruptibility" and "sense of shame", but places all the stress on the sense of shame. In addition, Gu traces his argument back to Confucius and Mencius,

故夫子之論士曰：「行己有恥」。孟子曰：「人不可以無恥。無恥之恥，無恥矣」。又曰：「恥之於人大矣！為機變之巧者，無所用恥焉」。所以然者，人之不廉而至於悖禮犯義，其原皆生於無恥也。故士大夫之無恥，是謂國恥。

Thus, Confucius says, "conducting oneself with a sense of shame."⁴² Mencius says, "a man may not be without the sense of shame. One is ashamed of having been without the sense of shame, he will afterwards not have occasion to be ashamed." "The sense of shame is to a man of great importance. Those who form contrivances and versatile schemes distinguished for their artfulness, do not allow their sense of shame to come into action." If one has no incorruptibility and even is against propriety and righteousness, it is all because he has no sense of shame. Therefore, the shamelessness of *literati* is the shame of the entire country.⁴³

In the *Analects*, virtue (*de* 德) and propriety (*li* 禮) are considered the origins of shame:

子曰：「道之以政，齊之以刑，民免而無恥；道之以德，齊之以禮，有恥且格」。

The Master said, "if the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishment, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good."⁴⁴

While inheriting the ideas of Confucius and Mencius, Gu turns this on its head by arguing that the fundamental reason for people's corruption and loss of propriety and righteousness was their lack of a sense of shame. In his commentaries on this passage, Yan Ruoqu 閻若璩 (1636-1704)⁴⁵ justifies Gu's emphasis on *chi* compared to incorruptibility:

【閻氏曰】今人動稱廉恥，其實廉易而恥難。如公孫弘布被脫粟，不可謂不廉，而曲學阿世，何無恥也！馮道刻苦儉約，不可謂不廉，而更事四姓十君，

⁴² It is my own translation. James Legge translates it as "he who in his conduct of himself maintains a sense of shame" (on-line at <https://ctext.org/analects/zi-lu/zhs?en=on>). Another translation is "act with the sense of shame" (<http://www.confucius.org/lunyu/ed1320.htm>). The original text is from *Lunyu*, Chapter 13 "Zilu" 子路, item 20.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ *The Chinese Classics*, p. 146. This quote also shows that in Chinese "sense of shame" is similar to "sense of duty" and "sense of dignity." Thanks to Prof. Paolo Santangelo's personal correspondence (October 1, 2016).

⁴⁵ Yan was an early Qing scholar.

何無恥之甚也！蓋廉乃立身之一節，而恥乃根心之大德，故廉尚可矯，而恥不容僞。

Yan Ruoku comments: Now people often talk about incorruptibility and shame, but in fact, it is easy to be incorruptible but it is difficult to have a sense of shame. For example, Gongsun Hong uses cloth quilt and eats unshelled rice; we cannot say he is not incorruptible, however, how he is shameless by distorting his ideas to flatter the world! Feng Dao lives frugally; we cannot say he is not incorruptible, however, how he is shameless by serving for ten lords with four surnames! In general, incorruptibility is one part of self-establishment, but a sense of shame is the radical virtue rooted in heart. This is why it is not hard to pretend to be incorruptible, but it is not easy to pretend to have a sense of shame.⁴⁶

Gu Yanwu’s argument on shame derives from his reflections on the downfall of the Ming Dynasty. Looking yet further back into history, he concludes that since the three dynasties, the world has experienced inevitable decay and the Great Way has been in decline. The *literati*’s loss of incorruptibility, a sense of shame, propriety, and righteousness, is not a sudden event, but the result of a long process. Gu then develops his criticism of Ming *literati* into a critique of *literati* morality in general. His claim that “the shamelessness of *literati* is the shame of the entire country” was intended not only as a historical lesson drawn from the past, but also as a warning for future Han *literati*. Another piece in *Daily Accumulation of Knowledge*, entitled “Zhengshi” (正始), differentiates the loss of the country (亡國) from the loss of *tianxia* (亡天下).⁴⁷ To Gu, the latter refers to a situation of despair when benevolence and righteousness are totally lost and human beings reduced to beasts.⁴⁸ Since Gu here still considers “the shamelessness of *literati*” the shame of the country instead of the shame of world, we see he still harbors hope for the recovery of the *literati* spirit.

Gu firmly places the issue of shame in the context of the early Qing. When *literati* were confronted with the dilemma of retaining their identity as Ming loyalists or allowing themselves to become subject to Manchu invaders, Gu believed the sense of shame was the decisive factor. Only those with a sense of shame could make the correct choice. After indicating the importance of the sense of shame, Gu quotes a story in *Yanshi Jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 and criticizes a Han official in the Qi 齊 Dynasty who taught his son the language of Xianbei 鮮卑 so as to encourage him to serve the officers of the new regime governed by Xianbei invaders. To Gu, such conduct was shameless. Thus, we can see the clear moral concern behind this essay. For Gu, after the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, a Han gentleman with a strong sense of shame should never work for the Manchu government. Gu also emphasizes the relationship between just governing and *literati*’s virtue of incorruptibility and sense of shame:

⁴⁶ *Ri Zhi Lu Jishi*, pp. 783-784.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 766.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

羅仲素曰：「教化者，朝廷之先務；廉恥者，士人之美節；風俗者，天下之大事。朝廷有教化，則士人有廉恥；士人有廉恥，則天下有風俗」。

Luo Zhongsu says, “to cultivate people is the primary concern of a government; the virtues of incorruptibility and a sense of shame are general principles of gentlemen. Custom is a significant issue for *tianxia*. If a government cultivates its people, then gentlemen will have the virtue of incorruptibility and the sense of shame; if gentlemen have the virtue of incorruptibility and the sense of shame, then *tianxia* will have customs.”⁴⁹

Here the ideals of incorruptibility and sense of shame derive not only from self-cultivation, but they also depend on cultivation by government. These ideals, in turn, form the basis of good customs. Gu’s quotation of Luo demonstrates his agreement. However, it is impossible for Gu, a Ming loyalist, to elaborate on any legitimate “cultivation” accruing to the Manchu Court. In this sense, Gu’s picture of changing social customs via “Incorruptibility and Shame” is more like a utopian blueprint. Instead of planning a vertical transformation of social customs (from up to down/ from Court to commoners), Gu follows a horizontal approach from internal (mind/self) to external (action/society).

Close reading of “Incorruptibility and *Chi*” reveals Gu’s commitment to these ideas and virtues. A key essay in his corpus, it offers a critique of the collapse of morality and culture at the time, and further serves as a core text for his cultural and moral project to reestablish the Han regime and culture. Gu argues that incorruptibility and the sense of shame are indispensable not only for Confucian scholars, but for generals and their soldiers—ultimately, for all individuals, the entire country and *tianxia*.⁵⁰ On the individual level the twin virtues of incorruptibility and sense of shame functioned most importantly as guiding principles for actions and choices. On the macro level, from directing *literati* conduct to organizing military systems, cultivating proper customs to establishing morality, these fundamental *literati* virtues such as incorruptibility and shame, should not only penetrate all the different layers of politics, but form a vital connection between virtue and politics as well.

Another essay by Gu Yanwu, “Yu Youren Lun Xue Shu” 與友人論學書 [Correspondence with a Friend on Learning], emphasizes how a sense of shame is at the root of being a Confucian scholar. Gu begins by noticing the tendency among scholars to talk about “heart-mind” (*xin* 心) and “nature” (*xing* 性) in the last one hundred years.⁵¹ Tracing the history of such discourse back to Confucius, Gu points out that Confucius himself rarely talked about benevolence (*ren* 仁), nature (*xing* 性) or the Way of Heaven (*tiandao* 天道). As for the principle of *xingming* 性命, Confucius only mentioned them in *Yi Zhuan*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 784.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁵¹ See Gu Yanwu, “Yu Youren Lun Xue Shu”, in *Gu Tinglin Shiwen Ji*, p. 40. Tinglin was Gu Yanwu’s courtesy name.

易傳 (*Commentaries on the Book of Change*), but never talked about them with other people. But when asked what kind of people can be considered a *shi*, Confucius answered: “conducting oneself with a sense of shame” (*xingji youchi* 行己有恥).⁵²

Xingji 行己 (translated as “conducting oneself” in the previous quote) refers to one’s practice and action. This is why some scholars choose to translate it as “act.”⁵³ In calling attention to the relationship between shame and action, a point originally raised by Confucius, Gu clearly had his own political and ethical concerns. First, he believed that the tendency among scholars to talk about metaphysical issues while ignoring practical problems played a real and significant role in the downfall of the Ming Dynasty. For Gu, the only way to remedy this situation was to cultivate effective action with a clear sense of shame. Gu’s approach was to criticize and stop the tendency of hollow discussion at the theoretical/metaphysical level caused by the abuse of the Yangming teachings in the late Ming. Second, at that time, Han *literati*’s choices and actions were always associated with the revival of the Han regime and Han culture. Gu believed that only a sense of shame could determine and guide correct choices—together with dedication to learning and good conduct, a sense of shame set one on the path toward the great Way of a sage:

愚所謂聖人之道者如之何？曰「博學於文」，曰「行己有恥」。

What is what I call the way of the sage? It is “extensively studying all learning”; it is “conducting oneself with a sense of shame.”⁵⁴

With this idea in mind, Gu begins to develop other connections to the sense of shame:

自一身以至於天下國家，皆學之事也；自子臣弟友以至出入、往來、辭受、取與之間，皆有恥之事也。恥之於人大矣！不恥惡衣惡食，而恥匹夫匹婦之不被其澤，故曰：「萬物皆備於我矣，反身而誠。」嗚呼！士而不先言恥，則為無本之人；非好古而多聞，則為空虛之學。以無本之人，而講空虛之學，吾見其日從事於聖人而去之彌遠也。

From oneself to a country and *tianxia*, all of this is related to the issue of learning. From issues concerning identity (being a son, subject, younger brother, or friend; respectively *zi chen di you* 子臣弟友) to issues concerning conduct—working or retiring (*churu* 出入),⁵⁵

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ See footnote 42.

⁵⁴ Gu Yanwu, “Yu Youren Lun Xue Shu”, in *Gu Tinglin Shiwen Ji*, p. 41.

⁵⁵ *Churu*, literally meaning “going out or going in”, is always used as a metaphor, a collective noun which includes *literati*’s varied conducts, especially referring to *literati*’s choice of duty: Being officer (going out) or staying at home (going in). In this specific context of the early Qing, it referred to *literati*’s choice of going out to work for Manchu rulers (working), or

communication and networking (*wanglai* 往來), rejection or reception (*cishou* 辭受), receiving or giving (*quyu* 取與),⁵⁶ all of these things concern the sense of shame. The sense of shame is so important for human beings! This means, you should not feel ashamed of bad clothes and bad food, but you should feel ashamed if normal people cannot benefit from your conduct. As Mencius said: “All things are already complete in us, be conscious to do a self-examination.”⁵⁷ Oh! If a man of letters does not speak of shame first, then he is a person without roots; if he does not appreciate the ancient and extensively experience, then he is doing a kind of hollow scholarship. When a person without roots talks about hollow scholarship, I see he is far away from the sage though he is trying to approach the sage every day.

By quoting the famous Mencius dictum, Gu suggests that with a sense of shame, *literati* could find their ways in everything. In other words, the sense of shame provides a basic principle for action and choice in all the different conditions and relations of human life. In addition, Gu links the issue of shame with learning (*xue* 學). He argues that when *literati* lose the sense of shame and engage only in empty scholarship, they create a dangerous situation. At the root of being a Confucian scholar, the sense of shame informs his learning and concerns issues beyond the personal sphere as he contributes to the great mission of *tianxia*.⁵⁸

In “Songshi Fengsu” 宋世風俗 [The Customs in the Song Dynasty], another essay in *Daily Accumulation of Knowledge*, Gu explicitly connects loyalty and righteousness (忠義之氣) with the issue of shame. He notes that in the early Song, when incorruptibility and the sense of shame prevailed among gentlemen, the *literati* virtues of loyalty and righteousness were also in the ascendant.⁵⁹

In *Mingqing Ruxue Zhuanxing Tanxi: Cong Liu Jishan Dao Dai Dongyuan* 明清儒學轉型探析：從劉戡山到戴東原 [On the Transformation of Ming-Qing Confucianism: From Liu Jishan to Dai Dongyuan], Zheng Zongxi 鄭宗義 points out the “theoretical difficulty” of Gu Yanwu’s using shame to include all virtues and cover the complete content of the learning of *xinxing* 心性.⁶⁰ Zheng argues that since Gu does not like Song-Ming moral metaphysics, the shame he discusses can only be placed on non-metaphysical levels such as “working or retiring”, “communication and networking”, “rejection or reception”, and “receiving or giving.”⁶¹ For Zheng, shame at the “flat” (*pingmianhua* 平面化) level of

staying at home to be loyalists (retiring).

⁵⁶ *Churu*, *wanglai*, *cishou*, and *quyu*, all of these notions, in the context of the early Qing, referred to one important issue for *literati*: being officials for the Manchu regime or being loyalists for the Han regime?

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ *Ri Zhi Lu Jishi*, p. 768.

⁶⁰ The original text is: 亭林的確是對明末清初士人的失節降清有痛切地實感，所以立身行己首重有恥。然而他由此意圖進一步用恥來統括一切德性，涵蓋心性之學的全幅內容則恐怕有很大的理論困難 (Zheng 2009, p. 137).

⁶¹ The original text is: 亭林既不屑宋明儒的道德形上學，其所謂的恥自然只能落在形下

everyday life is just a kind of moral feeling similar to *xiu wu*. Thus, Zheng believes that such a one-dimensional sense of shame cannot cover all dimensions and implications of the learning of *xinxing* and cannot function as the root of being a human being.⁶² But I see the shame Gu discusses going far beyond the level of moral feeling. I suggest that it links *shi* and *tianxia* and is the starting point of *literati* reflection. As a productive moral/ethical and political concept, it lies at the center of Gu's dream of bringing back the Han regime.

In summary, Gu's argument on the issue of shame comes down to three points. First, the sense of shame is at the root of a Confucian scholar's character. Shame is in fact lynchpin of propriety, righteousness, and incorruptibility. It provides access to those other values and is the basis of loyalty. Second, the loss of this sense among *literati* was a significant cause of the downfall of the Ming Dynasty. Since shame is not only a psychological feeling, but also a moral standard, it anchors the possibility of shaping a new political and ethical community. Third, the only way to save the world is to save the nature of human beings, and the only way for Han scholars to preserve Han culture is to re-cultivate a sense of shame. Shame is not just an abstract concept; instead, it is something to be achieved through the *literati*'s learning and action. This essential virtue is necessary for the cultivation of customs and should become the basic principle informing individual action and choice. If we compare Gu's treatment of shame with that in the pre-Qin period, we see that Gu calls more attention to the disorder of the day as the historical context of shame. In other words, he inserts another framework for defining it. Between the level of state preservation and the level of personal virtue (propriety, righteousness, incorruptibility, and shame) as stated in *Guanzi*, Gu also inserts the level of social customs. Furthermore, as shame concerns the very nature of human beings, this principle should also guide decisions at all levels of *zheng* 政 (politics in the broad sense): from regime management to military organization.

Virtue (incorruptibility and the sense of shame) should therefore not be limited to private life and morality—only functioning as a moral and ethical principle—but should participate in the whole process of politics. In an age of disorder and regime change such as the early Qing, virtue was articulated as a new starting point for politics. Beginning at the discursive level, Han *literati* were expected to regain political power and ultimately overthrow the foreign regime. But how the idea of shame could be productively practiced under such conditions—that is how a discursive construction could be turned into action—posed a different problem.

實然的層面講‘處處、去就、辭受、取與之間’。更嚴格地說，這種平面化的日常生活義的恥如果不只是道德條目，充其量亦不過是一近乎羞惡的道德感覺，又焉能以之統括其他的道德感覺而爲人之本，爲心性之全幅義蘊呢？(Ibidem).

⁶² Ibidem.

3. “Shame” and “Yiming” 義命: Li Yong’s Approach

Like Gu Yanwu, another scholar, Li Yong 李顥, considered a representative of the school of Guan Learning,⁶³ also addressed the sense of shame as the cardinal moral principle for *shi*. “Nanxing Shu” 南行述 [A Narrative of the Travel toward the South], written by one of his disciples Wang Xinjing 王心敬, records Li Yong’s teachings on shame and other Confucian virtues. According to Li, most *literati* in his time had forgotten basic virtues such as propriety, righteousness, incorruptibility, and the sense of shame. To save the world and its morality, true Confucians needed to develop righteousness and the ordinance of Heaven, and activate their sense of shame. Only then could those basic virtues be reestablished and general moral principles avoid being destroyed—this is what he called saving the world. And, for Li Yong, it was the most urgent issue of his time.⁶⁴

In Li Yong’s argument, “incorruptibility and shame” was intertwined with “righteousness and *ming*” (*yiming* 義命):⁶⁵

義命廉恥」，此四字乃吾人立身之基，一有缺焉，則基傾矣。在今日，不必談玄說妙，只要於此着脚，便是孔孟門下人。[...]

Righteousness, *ming*, incorruptibility, and a sense of shame are the four things that constitute the foundation of humanity. If any one is lost, then this foundation will collapse. At present, we do not need to talk about metaphysical issues, but only need to talk about these things, and then we can become true disciplines of Confucius and Mencius.⁶⁶

Here Li replaces the idea of propriety (*li* 禮) in the traditional “propriety, righteousness, incorruptibility, and shame” (禮義廉恥) with *ming*, and pairs it with *yi* (righteousness).

⁶³ The “Guan Learning” (*guanxue* 關學) refers to the learning of a school of Confucianism since the Northern Song Dynasty. The Guan school originated from the teachings of Shen Yan 申顏 and Hou Ke 侯可, and was well developed by Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077). “Guan” in “Guanxue” refers to Guanzhong 關中, an area in ancient China westward of Hangu Guan 函谷關 and eastward of Dasan Guan 大散關. The school got this name because most scholars in this school lived in the area of Guanzhong.

⁶⁴ See “Nanxing Shu”, in *Erqu Ji*, Vol. 10, p. 76. Erqu was Li Yong’s pseudonym.

⁶⁵ Because it is hard to find a perfect translation for the Confucian notion of *ming* (命), I choose to keep *ming* instead of putting an English translation of this term here. Different Confucian scholars of antiquity had various interpretations. The notion embodies both the level of what is ordained by Heaven and the level of the individual, including one’s fate, success or failure that one has no control over. To some extent, this is similar to the Western notions of natural right or natural law. In Song-Ming neo-Confucianism, it also carries the meaning of life or being.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

To better understand Li Yong's thought, I would like to trace the genealogy of *yiming* in the Confucian tradition. Confucius and Mencius each provided arguments around *yi* and *ming*. The mention of *yiming* together as a phrase also occurs commonly in various types of ancient Chinese texts, including works in the categories of *jing* (classics), *shi* (historical works), *zi* (philosophical works), and *ji* (literary works). In the long hermeneutic tradition, there have been two basic interpretations of *yiming*: *yiming fenli* 義命分立 (righteousness and *ming* separated), and *yiming heyi* 義命合一 (righteousness and *ming* combined), or *yiming bu'er* 義命不二 (righteousness and *ming* undifferentiated).⁶⁷ Lao Siguang 勞思光 argues that the concept of *ming* was differentiated from *renge tian* 人格天 (Heaven with personal character) in the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of Songs*), and thus refers to *keguan xianding* 客觀限定 (objective qualifications).⁶⁸ Lao suggests that *yi* and *ming* belong to two different domains: while *ming* concerns success or failure, *yi* concerns what is just and right, and belongs to the domain of value. According to Chen Zhiqiang 陳志强, Lao defines *ming* within the human/physical world without any metaphysical dimensions. Lao's discussion of *yi* and *ming* is all about the moral subjectivity of human beings.⁶⁹ Differently, Tang Junyi 唐君毅 considers all external conditions to be related not only to *ming*, but also to *yi*.⁷⁰ *Ming* does not merely refer to one's limits, but also to one's appropriate attitudes and choices made with regard to those limits.⁷¹ In his explanation of Mencius' elaboration of Confucius' discussion of *ming*, Tang Junyi indicates that Mencius' interpretation shows that Confucius linked *ming* with *yi*. Tang further concludes, “*ming* locates at where *yi* is.”⁷² Tang argues that the search for the *Dao* is *yi*, while “accepting the demise of the *Dao*” is not only *yi*, but also *zhiming* 知命 (knowing the *ming*).⁷³ To Tang, “all the difficult situations and issues of life and death one encounters in the effort to follow the *Dao* are what *yi* consigns one to undertake [...]. Hence it is all done for *yi* and the *Dao*, and all one encounters is completely related to *yi*, and completely belongs to *ming* [...]”⁷⁴

Tang also compares Confucius and Mencius in terms of their elaborations on *ming*. While Confucius discusses “knowing the *ming*”⁷⁵ as related to the

⁶⁷ For example, Zhang Zai argues that “*yi* and *ming* are combined and both exist in *li*” (義命合一存乎理). See the chapter of *Chengming* 誠明篇第六, in *Zhangzi Zhengmeng* 張子正蒙. Tang Junyi mentions “*mingyi heyi*” in his *Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun* (*Daolunpian*), p. 332.

⁶⁸ Lao Siguang 2005, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁹ Chen Zhiqiang, “Lun Kong Meng de Yiming Guan” 論孔孟的義命觀 (on-line at <http://www.wangngai.org.hk/47-chan.html>).

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

⁷² *Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun*, p. 332.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 332-333.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

⁷⁵ James Legge translates *zhiming* into “recognizing the ordinances of Heaven.”

situations one encounters, Mencius addresses *liming* 立命 (establishing one's Heaven-ordained being) in terms of self-cultivation,⁷⁶ which prepares one to make appropriate responses to either good times or bad.⁷⁷ As Chen Zhiqiang has indicated, if we compare the approach of “righteousness and *ming* separated” and “righteousness and *ming* undifferentiated”, we see that in the former approach, *ming* is within the physical world and external to human beings, while in the latter approach, it is transcendent and yet internal to human beings.⁷⁸

Together, the two concepts—righteousness and *ming* (*yiming*)—suggest the issue of choice. While *ming* represents one's inevitable fate and limits, righteousness emphasizes duty and asks the gentleman to think about what he should do; while *ming* calls attention to objective difficulties and limitations, righteousness points to one's subjective efforts and appropriate attitudes and choices toward these difficulties and limitations. All of this suggests a tension—that while one should try one's best to take on responsibility, it is simultaneously necessary to have a clear sense of the limits of one's efforts. And at the same time, one should assume the appropriate attitudes and make appropriate choices when facing such situations.

Although *yiming* was not a new concept in the early Qing, Li Yong was the one who shed new light on the notion by connecting it with *lianchi* (incorruptibility and shame). In the long Confucian tradition, Li was unique for pairing the terms in the phrase *yiming lianchi* (righteousness, *ming*, incorruptibility, and shame). Li's decision to replace propriety (*li*) with *ming* was surely made with the special concerns of his time in mind. After the downfall of the Ming, it was inevitable for *literati* to feel despair at their destiny. Even as they tried to figure out solutions for their problems, they could not avoid despair over their limitations. Li Yong's re-visioning of “incorruptibility and shame” and “righteousness and *ming*” sought to address this despair. At the same time, by establishing *yiming lianchi* as the basis of a Confucian scholar's self-establishment—what makes a *shi* a *shi*—Li emphasized the dimension of individual self-cultivation. Comparing Li's argument on shame with those in *Guanzi*, we see that the close connection between shame and the state highlighted by *Guanzi* is replaced by Li's emphasis on principles for individuals. If we place Li Yong in the genealogy of the Guan Learning, we also see how he inherited and transcended Zhang Zai 張載, the founder of the Guan school. As I quoted above, Zhang once argued that “*yi* and *ming* are combined and both exist in *li* (principle)” 義命合一存乎理. While Zhang's interpretation of *yiming* embodied a metaphysical and transcendental dimension in relating them to *li*, Li Yong's elaboration of *yiming* was more related to the external world of politics and morality when he linked *yiming* and saving the world. While Zhang highlighted the ultimate fate of *yiming*, Li considered *yiming* a starting point for

⁷⁶ *Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun*, p. 336.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁸ “Lun Kong Meng de Yiming Guan” (on-line at <http://www.wangngai.org.hk/47-chan.html>).

the Confucian scholar. Zhang’s another famous saying “to secure life and fortune for the people” (為生民立命) inherited Mencius’ notion of *liming* 立命 and extended it from the horizon of one’s self-cultivation to the horizon of all the people. Li Yong, differently, returned to Mencius’ original emphasis on self-cultivation as preparation for facing one’s *ming*.⁷⁹

Gu Yanwu and Li Yong shared the same critical opinion of empty scholarship, suggesting a shift in attitude among scholars away from abstract, metaphysical issues. To Gu and Li, it was that kind of disengagement that contributed to the downfall of the Ming Dynasty. Both Gu and Li argued that to preserve Han culture and revive the Han regime in the future, the most important thing was to return to the true core of Confucian teaching: to cultivate the sense of shame.

Both Gu and Li’s arguments on the sense of shame contain two dimensions. One is inward, pointing to human nature and our inner world; the other focuses outward, toward politics and morality in the external world. The former emphasizes that the sense of shame is at the core of being human. The latter argues that the cultivation of *literati*’s sense of shame can lead to the reestablishment of morality and beautiful customs. These two dimensions are inherently intertwined. In other words, the issue of shame functions as a key point connecting politics and virtue, morality and learning. For Gu and Li, the world can be saved only by saving human nature, only accomplished through learning. And a sense of shame is crucial for the development of powerful learning.

Both Gu and Li emphasize the practical level of morality. After his elaboration of *yiming lianchi*, Li Yong further argues that,

於出處、進退、辭受、取與、飲食、男女間見操持，此處不苟，方可言道，方可言學。

Only when one is strict about taking up a position or retiring (*chuchu* 出處), advancing and retreating (*jintui* 進退), rejection or acceptance (*cishou* 辭受), receiving or giving (*quyu* 取與), everyday existence (*yinshi* 飲食)⁸⁰ and behavior during private meetings between men and women, can he start talking about the *Dao* and learning.⁸¹

In “Yu Youren Lunxue Shu”, Gu Yanwu emphasizes that what Confucius and Mencius always discuss is taking up a position or retiring, assuming or not assuming the office (*qujiu* 去就), rejection or reception, receiving or giving.⁸²

⁷⁹ In his Introduction as a commentator to *Er’qu Ji*, Chen Junmin argues that Li Yong not only returned Zhang Zai following the path of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming, but also returned to Mencius’ teaching of *siduan* 四端 (Four Sprouts) following the path of Wang Yangming’s teaching of *liangzhi* 良知 (innate knowledge). See *Er’qu Ji*, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Here, *yinshi* is also a metaphor referring to everyday life.

⁸¹ *Er’qu Ji*, p. 7.

⁸² *Gu Tinglin Shiwen Ji*, p. 41. In the same essay, Gu also uses words with similar meanings but slight differences in expression such as *churu*, *wanglai*, *cishou*, and *quyu*, as quoted above.

Here we see that Gu and Li shared a pragmatic attitude toward Confucian conduct and everyday practice around the notion of shame. Both Gu and Li emphasize the mutual interactions between moral practice and learning.

Gu and Li differ, however, in their approaches toward *ming* in the context of shame. In “Yu Youren Lun Xue Shu”, Gu asserts that Confucius seldom talked about *ming* and *ren*.⁸³ Gu’s argument is related to his criticism of *lixue* 理學 (Learning of Principle) and *xinxue* 心學 (Learning of Mind). As I have shown above, Confucius had his own elaboration of *ming*, such as *zhiming* 知命. The long hermeneutic tradition of treating the relation between *ming* and *yi* also has traced it back to Confucius. While Gu’s criticism of the Lu-Wang school of Mind 陸王心學 prompted him to emphasize the non-metaphysical face of Confucius and Confucian teaching (including his arguments on shame), Li’s inheritance of Wang Yangming’s teaching and the Guan Learning (which lays stress on pragmatic practice) enabled him to connect *yiming* and *lianchi*, and retained both the metaphysical and everyday dimensions of this newly formed concept.

We can better understand the metaphysical and everyday dimensions of Li Yong’s reflections on *yiming lianchi* by looking at his famous theory of “reflecting on faults and self-renewing” (*huiguo zixin shuo* 悔過自新說). To me, these closely intertwined theories were both rooted in Li’s historical context and functioned as responses to the era.⁸⁴ Reflecting on long-established notions such as “nature” (*ziran* 自然), “innate knowledge” (*liangzhi* 良知), and “bright virtue” (*mingde* 明德), Li argues that the basic principle of Confucianism should be “reflecting on faults and self-renewing”, which can include all the other principles addressed by previous scholars comprising those mentioned above. On the one hand, Li highlights the metaphysical elements of his theory by describing a kind of innate virtue that one owns by nature, and by stating that renewing means returning to the original status of one’s virtue/nature.⁸⁵ He also asserts that “if one has one piece of thought that is not pure in terms of principle, it is a fault” 苟有一念未純於理，即是過。⁸⁶ This teaching can be extended to the level of the state and *tianxia* and is helpful for regulating the state and bringing peace to the entire world.⁸⁷ But the notion of “reflecting on faults and self-renewing” is not only for rulers, magistrates, or *shi*, but also for the common people.⁸⁸ An absolutely pure state of mind is the highest stage a Confucian scholar can reach, still Li Yong also provides approaches to this goal for common folk:

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁸⁴ In “Lun Li Yong de Huigui Zixin Shuo” 論李顥的悔過自新說, the authors also argue that “reflecting on faults” is for the renewing and “righteousness and *ming*” and the developing of “incorruptibility and shame.” See Zheng Xiaosheng & Huang Ke 2010.

⁸⁵ *Er’qu Ji*, p. 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

若在未嘗學問之人，亦必且先檢身過，次檢心過，悔其前非 [...]

For those who are not scholars, they also need to first check their faults at the level of the body, then check those at the level of the mind, and repent for previous mistakes/wrongs [...]⁸⁹

Obviously, a sense of shame would be necessary for this process of reflection and self-renewal.

4. Shame and “Making a Living”: Zhang Lüxiang’s Argument

Unlike Gu Yanwu and Li Yong, Zhang Lüxiang called attention to the relation between the problem of “making a living” (*zhisheng* 治生) and the sense of shame. According to the Confucian tradition of loyalty, it is shameless to live, manage to live, or talk about “make a living” under a foreign regime. Hence, governed by Manchu rulers, Han *literati* encountered new difficulties of “making a living”, which inevitably undermined their sense of shame. Zhang Lüxiang argued that under foreign regime, to maintain a sense of shame, *literati* first had to solve the problem of living. Zhang once quoted from Xu Heng 许衡, a scholar during the Song-Yuan period: “The most urgent issue for scholars is living.” With this in mind, Zhang decided the best way for scholars to make a living is through farming. By supporting themselves, they become independent and do not need to beg from anyone. As a result, the virtues of incorruptibility and shame might be re-established, propriety revived, and people’s hearts and minds corrected. The Way of the world would eventually thrive.⁹⁰

If Gu and Li maintained the biggest problem in their time was the *literati*’s loss of shame, Zhang Lüxiang went further, explaining the reason for this loss; if Gu and Li emphasized the relationship between the sense of shame and the fate of the country, Zhang called attention to possible ways of re-establishing a sense of shame. Both Gu and Li discussed their concerns at the level of spirituality. Although they also talked about everyday practice, they approached it at the level of principle. In contrast, Zhang stuck to the various details and problems as they occurred at the level of everyday life. After suggesting the connection between the sense of shame and the issue of living, Zhang turned the problem of shame into the problem of making a living.

If we compare Zhang with earlier scholars’ treatment of shame, we find that his predecessors tended to keep it on a metaphysical level or connect it with broader topics, generally neglecting its mundane dimensions, while

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁰ *Qingshigao Liezhuan*, item 267.

Zhang called attention to those very aspects. Zhang criticized that,

近世縉紳之子，溺於膏粱，寒士詭辭代耕，罔知稼穡，一旦失所，飢寒隨及，以至志行不立，廉恥道盡 [...]。

In contemporary times, the descendents of the gentry spoiled themselves in luxury lives; the poor *literati* engaged themselves in sophistry instead of farming; thus, they did not know anything about sowing and reaping; if they lose their positions, they would be driven by hunger and cold and thus would not be able to establish their mind, and would lose all virtue of incorruptibility and sense of shame [...].⁹¹

Here, Zhang returned to the Confucian tradition of combining farming and learning and attributes one of the causes of Han *literati*'s loss of the virtue of incorruptibility and shame to *literati*'s encounter with the difficulty of making a living after losing farming skills. On the other hand, Zhang's arguments also reveal his anxiety: in watching other *literati* increasingly lose their sense of shame as they tried to get on with life under the Manchus, Zhang's trying to find an excuse for that loss was itself embarrassing. When scholars had to find objective causes for the problem of morality,⁹² this showed just how huge the problem had become.

To better understand Zhang Lüxiang's focus on the connection between shame and problem of making a living, we need to consider the identity crisis common in the early Qing. One of the most challenging issues facing Han *literati* after the fall of the Ming, it bore directly on both psychological and practical questions of making a living. *Literati* were haunted as they sought to re-establish their life in a world of ruins—ruins of culture and of morality. Any reestablishment, of course, would be conditioned by their solutions to the problem of making a living. Thus, Zhang Lüxiang filled his works with discussions covering nearly every aspect of life—how to educate young people, how to choose a job, how to maintain *literati* honor, and how to preserve the Han gentleman's identity. And all of them Zhang links with the issue of shame. In a long article written for his late generations, entitled “Xun Zi Yu” 訓子語 [On Educating Descendants], Zhang strictly designates positions unacceptable for *literati* (robbers, and slaves), but he also writes that if one has no sense of shame, he falls below the thief.⁹³ In the same section of the article, Zhang emphasizes the importance of education and suggests that without it, the *literati* will naturally lose their sense of shame and degenerate to the level of beasts.⁹⁴ Behind such claims, we detect Zhang's deep identity crisis or anxiety related to the issue of how a Han man of letters should live under the Manchu rule, the only cure for which was the *literati* reacquiring a sense of shame.

⁹¹ See “Ti Liu Zhongxuan Gong Yishi” 題劉忠宣公遺事, in *Yangyuan Xiansheng Quanj*, Vol. 20, p. 587.

⁹² *Ibidem*.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1352, 1354.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1353.

At that time, this crisis of identity was not limited to individuals, but applied also to entire families, particularly “prestigious families” (*gujia* 故家). Traditionally, “prestigious families” with high cultural heritage were considered important for the preservation and development of culture. With the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, and the displacing of the Han by the Manchu regime, continuation of “prestigious families” seemed especially crucial for Han *literati*. In another section in “On Educating Descendants”,⁹⁵ Zhang reiterates the importance of a sense of shame for members of these prestigious families. Such status, he reminds them, does not have to mean holding high office from generation to generation, since if individuals lose their sense of shame, titles are useless for preserving honor. By quoting Lü Benzong’s famous saying “be careful not to lose a prestigious family’s style. Believe what you should believe, and be ashamed by what you should feel ashamed of”, Zhang shifted the concept of a “prestigious family,” placing its capacity for shame at the center.⁹⁶

Although in his works, Zhang Lüxiang does occasionally link *literati*’s sense of shame with the fate of the entire *tianxia*, his emphasis is primarily on the idea of shame at the personal, moral level. Thus, he focuses on the sense of shame of individuals and families, stressing its relevance for the *literati*’s living, rather than directly addressing the larger framework of *tianxia* and calling for the reestablishment of “propriety” throughout the country. He argues that in ages of great peace, everything is in harmony under a single form of morality and custom. But in periods of chaos, propriety is lost, custom and morality split into different forms, and it becomes difficult for people to be morally good.⁹⁷ In eras of turmoil, the most important and most difficult thing is to make Propriety and Righteousness perfect and to encourage people to respect the law, while in times of disorder, it was difficult to keep the honor and morality of families and local customs.⁹⁸ In the face of this situation, Zhang believed that maintaining a sense of shame became the most reasonable moral requirement for *literati*.⁹⁹ At the same time, *literati* should focus on solving the problem of living and totally abandon unreasonable, empty illusions; otherwise their sense of shame would be destroyed.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1383.

⁹⁶ The original text is: 所謂「故家舊族」者，非簪纓世祿之謂也。賢士大夫，固為門戶之光，若寡廉鮮恥，敗壞名檢，適為家門之累。[...] 呂東萊先生曰：「大凡人資質各有利鈍，規模各有大小，此難以一律齊。要須常不失故家風味。所向者正，所存者實，信其所當信，恥其所當恥」[...] (*Ibidem*).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1381.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁹ The original text is: 人家不論貧富貴賤，只內外勤謹，守禮尚法，尚謙和，重廉恥，是好人家的 (*Ibidem*).

¹⁰⁰ The original text is: 處貧困，惟有內外勤勞，刻苦以營本業，自足免於饑寒。[...] 當以窮乃益堅自勵自勉，勿萌妄想，勿作妄求。妄想壞心術，妄求喪廉恥 (*Ibid.*, pp. 1379, 1381).

Gu, Li, and Zhang all sought to re-claim the sense of shame, but for Gu and Li, the issue of shame eventually leads to *literati*'s responsibility for *tianxia*; Zhang, instead, operated from a more conservative attitude, pointing to the sense of shame less as a high moral standard than as the minimum requirement for *literati* to avoid immorality while making a living. Scholars' self-conscious lowering of moral standards in turn shows the atmosphere of despair at that time.

In terms of one's situations and choices in life, Zhang highlighted the same issues as Gu Yanwu and Li Yong did: taking up a position or retiring, advance or retreat.¹⁰¹ Zhang linked the continuance of learning (signaled by the existence or disappearance of books) to one's determined tracks of life and considered them something which should not be changed:

書之存亡備缺，與身之出處進退，亦只一般，大行不加，窮居不損。

The existence, disappearance, preparation or lack of book[s], and one's taking up a position, retiring, advance or retreat, are the same that would not be increased by the largeness of his sphere of action, nor diminished by his dwelling in poverty and retirement.

Here, "not being increased by the largeness of his sphere of action, nor diminished by his dwelling in poverty and retirement"¹⁰² is quoted from *Mencius*. In the Chapter "Jinxin" 尽心, *Mencius* uses these two phrases plus another after: "because it is determinately apportioned to him by Heaven" (分定故也), which highlights the unchangeableness of one's nature as prescribed by Heaven.¹⁰³ Zhang also incorporates this meaning by mentioning "what is apportioned to the superior man" (君子早有定分).¹⁰⁴ His quotation of *Mencius* shows that Zhang was here working from *Mencius*' thought. Since one of the most important topics of this chapter in the *Mencius* is *ming*, we see here a latent element of *ming*—what is apportioned to a human being by Heaven. Returning to Zhang's arguments on the connection between *lianchi* and *yiming*, we see the latent determinism of his earthly approach to the issue of shame.

Conclusion

As these three famous scholars—Gu Yanwu, Li Yong, and Zhang Lüxiang—developed their individual approaches to the question of *chi*, all of them

¹⁰¹ *Yangyuan Xiansheng Quanj*, p. 54.

¹⁰² This is James Legge's translation, on-line at <https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i/zh?en=on>.

¹⁰³ One of the most important topics of the chapter of "Jinxin" 尽心 in *Mencius* is *ming*—what is apportioned to a human by Heaven.

¹⁰⁴ *Yangyuan Xiansheng Quanj*, p. 54.

regarded it as both a core value of the gentry-class and the starting point for a revival of Han culture and power. Their arguments on *chi* were rooted in the intellectual tradition during the Ming-Qing transition. Interestingly, both scholars belonging to the Yangming school and scholars against Yangming teachings emphasized *chi*.

Their differences are mostly in emphasis. While Gu emphasized the sense of shame's importance for decisions and actions, Li wanted to link it with righteousness and *ming*. Gu saw the re-establishment of a sense of shame as vital to the revival of customs while Li argued that the way to activate the *literati's* sense of shame was through learning. With the same purpose, Zhang Lüxiang offered a different way: the revival of the sense of shame was primarily based on solving the problem of living. At the same time, we also see the latent element of *ming* in Zhang's reflections on shame.

Through rethinking the issue of shame, Gu Yanwu, Li Yong, and Zhang Lüxiang had the chance to rethink what makes a human being and a *shi*. Their reinterpretations of shame enabled them not only to propose remedies for the problems of their time, but also to add new content to the old issue of shame in the genealogy of classical Confucianism. While Gu Yanwu connected shame and action and emphasized the power of shame in transforming customs and preserving Chinese culture as a way to rescue *tianxia*, Li Yong's pairing of *yiming* and *lianchi* created a new phrase of *yiming lianchi* (righteousness, *ming*, incorruptibility, and shame). Li was more realistic and pragmatic than Gu, but Zhang was even more realistic and pragmatic than Li. All of these three theoretical approaches link various fields such as personal emotion, moral cultivation, and social practice. Their treatments of shame not only show *literati's* reconstruction of their identity as *shi* at the external and internal levels, but also highlight one of the most significant facets of Ming-Qing Confucianism and its influence upon the social culture.

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CHRISTIAN *LITERATI* OF THE LOWER ECHELON IN LATE MING CHINA: THE CASE OF XIONG SHIQI¹

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This study attempts to explore the thoughts and actions of Christian *literati* of the lower echelon such as *shengyuan* 生員 (the lowest degree-holders) or *buyi* 布衣 (scholar-commoners) to map the role they played in late Ming Christianity. Christianity in Ming-Qing intellectual history has long attracted scholars' interests. Previous studies on the eminent missionaries and top-elite Christians have undoubtedly provided a very informative picture of its development in the late Ming.² Nonetheless, this period of the Ming Dynasty is a time of social changes that witnessed vibrant interactions among almost all social groupings and strata, like for example scholars of the Taizhou School 泰州學派 and Lin Zhao-en 林兆恩 (1517-1598), founder of the Three-in-One Religion.³ In the development of Christianity in late Ming society, the Christian *literati* of the lower echelon, who were in essence Confucian scholars, may very well have played a similar role as those aforementioned scholar-activists, but their roles were more complex. While Confucian scholars of lower strata aimed at bringing indigenous Neo-Confucian ideas to the masses, Christian *literati* of the lower echelon who stood between outsiders (i.e. missionaries) and insiders (Chinese Catholics) in local areas needed to bring a foreign religion and Western culture to the Chinese populace, and help to set up Christianity's foundation in Chinese society. Our knowledge of Christian *literati* of the lower echelon in the vibrant society of the late Ming is thus essential in helping us understand the development of Christianity at the local level.

¹ The author would like to thank Professor Paolo Santangelo for his encouragements and Professors Miaw-Fen Lu, Ping-yi Chu and Feng-Chuan Pan for their critical comments of the earlier version of the manuscript.

² There are many publications on eminent missionaries and top elite Christians. For English publications, see for example Gernet 1985, Standaert 1988 and 2008, Mungello 1994, Elman 2005, Paulos Zhanzhu Huang 2009, Menegon 2009, Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia 2016. For Chinese works, see Xu Zongze 1938, Fang Hao 1966, Mu Qimeng 1981, Jiang Wenhan 1987, Sun Shangyang 1994, Lin Jinshui 1996, Zhang Kai 1997, Wang Xiaochao 1997, Huang Yilong 2007.

³ For the Taizhou school, see De Bary 1970, Yu-Yin Cheng 2009. For Lin Zhao'en, see Dean 1998.

Indeed, despite the fact that the lives and writings of the earliest eminent missionaries to China and of the most prominent Chinese converts at the turn of the 17th century have been exhaustively surveyed, this is not yet the case for Christian *literati* of the lower echelon. The study of the thought of Christian converts, especially first-generation Christians who were active during the anti-Christian Movement in 1618-1622, has tended to focus on the top elite Christians. The most researched include the Three Pillars of Chinese Catholicism (i.e. Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 [1562-1633], Li Zhizao 李之藻 [1565-1630] and Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠 [1562-1627]); all of them held high official positions.⁴ Other than the Three Pillars are works on Wang Zheng 王徵 (1571-1644), Qu Taisu 瞿太素 (1549-1611) and Han Lin 韓霖 (1601-1644). Wang Zheng held official posts as well. Although both Qu and Han never earned the *jinshi* 進士 degree, they came from rich families with several family members holding official titles.⁵

However, according to missionary data collected in 1636, there were 326 Christians who possessed various civil service degrees.⁶ Among them, 291 were the lowest degree-holders (88.7%) who received minimum stipends from the government, and 35 were second and highest levels of degree-holders (11.3%) who were eligible for official appointment.⁷ This means that the lowest degree-holders were eight times more than the upper two levels combined. If scholar-commoners who never passed or took civil service examinations were included, the percentage of Christian *literati* of the lower echelon would be much higher than the record of 1636.

These Christian *literati* of the lower echelon lived very differently from those scholar-officials. Due to China's policy of avoidance, officials could not hold appointed posts in their hometowns and were also required to rotate to another position every three or six years. In their lifetime, unless they retired or were in mourning, scholar-officials' direct communications with local people of their native place were limited. The lowest degree-holders and scholar-commoners were different in that they had to work as tutors, scribes or any occupations related to knowledge in local areas to support their families. These people were basically homebound, having frequent communications with hometown folks, including their fellow Christians, in daily life. Issues thus arise as to what activities they performed in the local church and how they contributed to the development of Catholicism in Chinese local society in the late Ming period.

⁴ For Li Zhizao, see Fang Hao's *Li Zhizao Yanjiu*. For Xu Guangqi, see Jami, Engelfreit and Blue (eds.) 2001. For Yang Tingyun, see Standaert 1988, and Peterson 1988. See also Liu Yu 2015. Liu's book covers Matteo Ricci, Li Zhizao, Xu Guangqi, Yang Tingyun and Qu Taisu.

⁵ For Wang Zheng, Qu Taisu and Han Lin, see Huang Yilong 2007, pp. 33-64, 131-174, 253-286.

⁶ This is Martino Martini's record published in Rome in 1654. Data cited from Standaert (ed.) 2001, p. 387.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

Another aspect worthy of note is the ambivalent relationships between Christian *literati* of the lower echelon and the Jesuit fathers. Like the Society of Jesus in Europe, the approach that the Jesuits adopted in China in the beginning to promote Catholicism was top-down, gaining the support from top echelon elite in society. This approach, however, led to divergent attitudes of the Jesuits to Chinese *literati*. Reading through missionaries' works such as Matteo Ricci's (1552-1610) *Li Madou Shuxin Ji* 利瑪竇書信集 (Collections of Matteo Ricci's Letters), Matteo Ricci and Nicholas Trigault's (Jin Nige 金尼閣, 1557-1629) *Li Madou Zhongguo Zhaji* 利瑪竇中國札記 (A Discourse on the Kingdom of China), and Alvaro Semedo's 曾德昭 (1585-1658) *Da Zhongguo Zhi* 大中國志 (The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China), one has no difficulty discerning that "Mandarin" (i.e. scholar-officials or top-echelon *literati*), Christians or otherwise, were often highly praised by missionaries. However, *literati* of the lower echelon would receive confusing and sometimes even negative comments from missionaries due to local people's distrust of this new foreign religion.⁸ It would be interesting to see how Christian *literati* of the lower echelon negotiated their roles and lived their lives when they faced ambivalent feelings from the Jesuit fathers and the pressures from the antagonistic Chinese elite during the anti-Christian movement in 1617-1622.

This research takes Xiong Shiqi 熊士旂 (birth and death dates unknown, but probably active in the Catholic Church during 1598-1637) as a case to provide a preliminary study of the thought and activities of the Christian *literati* of the lower echelon. Xiong Shiqi, a native of Jiangxi, belonged to the lower-echelon *literati*. He became interested in Catholic teaching in 1598, more than a decade before his close fellow Christian, Yang Tingyun. He can thus be counted as a first-generation Christian. In his lifetime, Xiong produced two religious essays, *Tianjiao Pianshu* 天教駢述 (A Survey of the Teachings of Heaven) and *Cedai Jingyu* 策怠警諭 (Admonishing about Sloth),⁹ one preface and one epilogue. He also helped to transcribe and translate works by the Jesuit father Giulio Aleni 艾儒略 (1582-1649). The two essays provide us a glimpse of distinctive characteristics of the Christian *literati* of the lower echelon.

On the basis of Xiong's two religious essays and related church materials, this paper first reconstructs Xiong's life, focusing especially on how and why he became a Christian. It then moves to one of his writings, *Tianjiao Pianshu*, written in 1617 in classical Chinese, to explore his thoughts of the Heavenly Teaching and his comments on the Three Teachings of China (i.e. Confucianism,

⁸ *Li Madou Shuxin Ji*, pp. 159-160; *Da Zhongguo Zhi*, pp. 217, 236-237; *Li Madou Zhongguo Zhaji*, pp. 173-192, 220-230.

⁹ Microfilms about Xiong's *Tianjiao Pianshu* and *Cedai Jingyu* are obtained from Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. *Tianjiao Pianshu* is preserved in *Juejiao Tongwen Ji* 絕微同文紀, prefaced by Yang Tingyun in 1617, M. Courant's Catalogue, No. 9254, pp. 134-141. *Cedai Jingyu* is in M. Courant's Catalogue, No. 7175.

Buddhism and Daoism) in the late Ming. Finally, the study turns to Xiong's *Cedai Jingyu*, a piece he wrote in 1621 in colloquial style, to discuss the characteristics of this religious essay that are connected to and directed towards his fellow Christian-commoners and *literati* of the lower echelon in local churches. The paper ventures to propose that Christian *literati* of the lower echelon like Xiong Shiqi were in essence grassroots activists whose actions contributed to building up the foundation of Christianity at the local level.

1. A Brief Sketch of Xiong Shiqi's Life

Xiong Shiqi was a native of Jinxian 進賢, Jiangxi province. The name of Jinxian was said to be given by Confucius' disciple, Dantai Mieming 澹台滅明, who was highly impressed by local people's "appreciation and willingness to recruit capable and worthy scholars" (*jin'neng naxian* 進能納賢).¹⁰ The official recognition of Jinxian's name came much later in 1103 CE, when Jinxian was designated first a township and later a county under the jurisdiction of Nanchang prefecture 南昌府. But Jinxian's geographical location and cultural connection made it more intriguing than it administratively appeared. It is about 60 *li* 里 (72 km) east of Nanchang, and 40 *li* (63 km) northwest of Fuzhou prefecture (撫州府).¹¹ Because Nanchang is the capital of Jiangxi province, Jinxian was receptive to the mainstream Confucianism popular there in the Ming Dynasty (i.e. Jiangyou 江右 branch of the Wang Yangming school). On the other hand, because local people in Jinxian spoke the dialect that belonged to Fuzhou and Jianchang (建昌) prefectures in eastern Jiangxi instead of the Nanchang dialect,¹² the natives of Jinxian actually communicated more easily with people in Fuzhou and Jianchang than those in Nanchang. Consequently, the mainstream Confucianism in the Jianchang and Fuzhou regions in the Ming Dynasty such as the Taizhou School also became attractive to Jinxian natives. As we will see below, Xiong Shiqi's early life seemed to correspond well with this intriguing situation.

About Xiong Shiqi, there is no biography of any sort. The extant materials suggest that he took the civil service exam. His fellow Christian, Yang Tingyun, mentioned that Xiong used to spend time in preparing for the civil service exam,¹³ but left no details. In the various sections about the exam in local gazetteers, there is no mention of Xiong's name.¹⁴ It seems that Xiong was at best a *shengyuan* or simply a scholar-commoner without degrees.

¹⁰ *Junxian Shiming*, in section *Jiangxi Junxian Shiming* 江西郡縣釋名, *juan* 1.

¹¹ *Nanchang Fu Zhi*, *juan* 1, 3.

¹² Li Rong, Xiong Zhenghui, and Zhang Zhenxing (eds.) 1987-1990.

¹³ *Cedai Jingyu Yin* 策怠警諭引, p. 5, in M. Courant's Catalogue, No. 7175.

¹⁴ *Nanchang Fu Zhi*, *juan* 37-41, and 42.

Xiong was somewhat active in writing. His name is associated with six works in the church records. Two of them, as mentioned previously, are his own essays *Tianjiao Pianshu* and *Cedai Jingyu*. He contributed a preface to *Xixue Fan* 西學凡 (A General Account of Western Learning) and an epilogue to *Zhifang Waiji* 職方外紀 (Records of Areas beyond the Tributary States). He also transcribed *Zhang Mige'er Yiji* 張彌格爾遺蹟 (The Life of late Zhang Shi) and assisted in the translation of *Shengmeng Ge* 聖夢歌 (*Ode to a Holy Dream*).¹⁵

Similar to Jinxian's geographical location, Xiong Shiqi's intellectual experience is also intriguing. In his "Self-epilogue to *Cedai Jingyu*" (*Cedai Jingyu Ziba* 策怠警諭自跋), Xiong gave a succinct account of his intellectual journey. He said,

I was poor and unable to buy books. In the past, I used to study under Master Qu Pinjun of Chu (楚瞿聘君先生) and was fortunate to read through all of his family collections. When these books touched upon the words of two other Teachings (*ershi yu* 二氏語), I thought that the great completion of enlightenment (*dashi jiujiing* 大事究竟) had all been expounded by the branch of Zhuqian 竺乾氏. Later, I came across the Masters from the Western Sea (西海諸先生) and heard their explanation of the learning of serving Heaven and [teachings] beyond human nature. I then realized and had faith in the long existence of the true ultimate teaching (*zhen jiujiin* 真究竟) between Heaven and Earth.¹⁶

The passage quoted above indicates that Xiong started with Wang Yangming's learning and then moved to Buddhism, but finally settled on Catholicism. The following paragraphs will detail these transitions.

To begin with, Xiong's study "under Master Qu Pinjun of Chu" suggests his earliest intellectual interest was in Wang Yangming's learning and the Taizhou philosophy. The term "Pinjun" is an appellation for a Confucian scholar who declined to serve at Court. Qu Pinjun of Chu here refers to Qu Jiusi 瞿九思 (1546-1617), a native of Huangmei 黃梅, Hubei province. Qu's life and thoughts were closely associated with Wang Yangming's learning and the Taizhou School. His father, Qu Cheng 瞿晟 (1513-1564), was a *tongnian* 同年 (i.e. passing *jinshi* degree in the same year) of the Taizhou leader Luo Rufang 羅汝芳 (1515-1588) in 1553. In 1556, when Qu Cheng, then Secretary of Ministry of Revenue, was assigned to investigate grain taxation in Jiangxi, Qu Jiusi followed his father to Ji'an 吉安 prefecture, Jiangxi, and studied under Luo Hongxian 羅洪先 (1504-1564), one of the most prominent philosophers of the

¹⁵ Information of Xiong's writings is based on Ad Dudink & Nicolas Standaert, Chinese Christian Texts Database (CCT-Database) (<http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/sinology/cct>). The author would like to take this opportunity to thank Professors Dudink and Standaert.

¹⁶ "Self-epilogue to *Cedai Jingyu*", p. 1, in M. Courant's Catalogue, No. 7175.

Jiangyou branch of the Wang Yangming School. At age twenty, Jiusi returned home to study the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) from Geng Dingxiang 耿定向 (1524-1597) of Huang'an 黃安, Hubei. Geng was a friend of Luo Rufang; he and his younger brother Geng Dingli 耿定理 (1534-1584) were regarded as belonging to the Taizhou School.¹⁷ Qu Jiusi later became an active Yangming scholar in the regions of Jiangxi, Hubei and Hunan, and constantly gave lectures at famous academies such as Bailudong 白鹿洞, Lianxi 濂溪 and Yuelu 嶽麓.¹⁸ One may thus surmise that what Qu Jiusi offered to Xiong Shiqi is likely the Wang Yangming's learning and the Taizhou teaching.

Xiong probably studied under Qu Jiusi after Qu returned home from exile in Mongolia in 1580. Earlier, in 1575, Qu Jiusi was imprisoned by the county magistrate of Huangmei, Zhang Weihuan 張維瀚, who wrongfully accused Qu of "organizing local people to create disturbance" (*jiuzhong changluan* 糾眾倡亂) and exiled him to Mongolia. Qu stayed there five years until 1580, when Tu Long 屠隆 (1543-1605) and Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1548-1595) brought his case to Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582). The case was reopened, and Qu Jiusi was exonerated. Qu returned home this year with an even higher reputation. Soon after that, many more people came to pay homage to him.¹⁹

An unexpected twist of Xiong's study under Qu Jiusi was his shifting interest from Neo-Confucianism to Buddhism. In the quote above, *ershi yu* (words of two other Teachings) means the words of Daoism and Buddhism, and *Zhuqian shi* (branch of Zhuqian) is Buddhism. After Xiong exhausted all of Qu's family collections, he immersed himself in Buddhism with the belief that Buddhism embodied the "great completion of enlightenment" (*dashi jiujiing* 大事究竟). The timeframe of his shifting interest to Buddhism was the period between 1580 and 1598 because in 1598 Xiong met the Jesuit fathers and started to pursue Catholicism.

The year 1598 was significant to Xiong Shiqi. He mentioned in his *Tianjiao Pianshu* that "in the year *Wuxu* 戊戌 [i.e. 1598] [I,] the humbled one, began to experience the true religion" (*zhenjiao* 真教).²⁰ "The true religion", as suggested by the title *Tianjiao Pianshu* (A Survey of Teachings of Heaven), is Catholicism. This is the final stage of his spiritual and intellectual pursuit. His long searching for the ultimate concerns of life were finally satisfied after his discussions with missionaries from the far West, as evidenced by the aforementioned quote that he "came across Masters from Western Sea by chance and heard what they explained about the learning of serving Heaven, [...] then realized and had the faith in the long existence of the true ultimate teaching between Heaven and

¹⁷ *The Records of Ming Scholars* by Huang Tsung-hsi, pp. 191-195.

¹⁸ About Qu Jiusi, see *Mingshi*, juan 288; see also Meng Fanyun 2005.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, p. 141a.

Earth.” Although there is no record of the exact date that Xiong was baptized, 1598, as mentioned above, is crucial and he was likely among the earliest group of Chinese *literati* who converted to Christianity, more than a decade before Yang Tingyun, who converted to Catholicism in 1611.²¹ One thus is not surprised to read Yang Tingyun’s praise of Xiong, who “has long studied with Western worthies (*jiuxi xixian* 久習西賢). Working with [Mr. Xiong] is like entering a room of orchids and one is naturally transformed by him.”²²

“The Masters of the Western Sea” (see above, note 16) who guided Xiong to turn to Catholicism in 1598 are probably the Jesuits Matteo Ricci, Jacobus Socirus (Su Rouwang 蘇若望, 1566-1607), João Da Rocha (Luo Ruwang 羅儒望, 1566-1623) and François Martinez (Huang Mingsha 黃名沙, 1573-1606). Matteo Ricci arrived in Zhaoqing 肇慶, Guangdong province, in 1583. He unsuccessfully approached Beijing and Nanjing in 1595, and returned to Nanchang in 1596. Ricci stayed there until the end of 1598 to try the Beijing mission again.²³ In his “Letter to Father Girolamo Costa” in late 1596, Ricci told Costa that there were “three missionaries” working in Nanchang.²⁴ According to Luo Yu’s 羅漁 research, these three are Ricci, Jacobus Socirus, and François Martinez.²⁵ Jacobus Socirus often travelled between Nanchang and Shaozhou 韶州 to help Ricci. When Matteo Ricci left Nanchang, Socirus started his long residence in Nanchang until his death in 1605. François Martinez was a Chinese Jesuit born in Macao. João Da Rocha, who arrived in Nanchang in 1598, was one of the successors of Ricci in the Nanchang church. He stayed there until 1616, when the anti-Christian movement began and was forced to seek refuge in Jianchang prefecture.²⁶ On the basis of this information, these four missionaries probably are the ones who taught Xiong Shiqi the learning of Heaven around 1598.

In 1605, Xiong indicated that his comprehension of Catholic teachings evolved to another stage. In *Tianjiao Pianshu*, he gave the following account:

Since the year *yisi* 乙巳 [i.e. 1605], I have had opportunities for frequent communications with many esteemed people (*qungong* 群公, i.e. the Jesuit fathers).²⁷

²¹ Yang Tingyun was baptized in 1611, see *Yang Qiyuan Xiansheng Chaoxing Shiji*, p. 1a.

²² “Introduction to *Cedai Jingyu*”, p. 4.

²³ Ricci arrived in Nanjing on February 6th, 1599; see *Li Madou Zhongguo Zhaji*, p. 341.

²⁴ *Li Madou Shuxin Ji*, p. 236.

²⁵ *Ibidem*; *Da Zhongguo Zhi*, p. 217.

²⁶ *Da Zhongguo Zhi*, p. 266; see also Sweeten 2001, pp. 17-18.

²⁷ The Jesuit fathers here may include the newly arrived Jesuit fathers such as Manuel Diaz Senior (Li Manuo 李瑪諾, 1560-1639) and Brother Pascoal Mendes. Manuel Diaz Senior was Rector of the Madre de Dues College in Macao in 1597; he further became Rector of Southern Residences in 1603 in charge of church affairs in Shaozhou, Nanchang and Nanjing regions. In late 1605, Diaz and Pascoal Mendes arrived in Nanchang to work with João Da Rocha to help expand Catholicism in Nanchang area. They stayed in Nanchang until 1609. See *Da Zhongguo Zhi*, pp. 261-271; *Li Madou Shuxin Ji*, p. 530; Pina 2007.

I was challenged by them from various perspectives, which greatly enlightened me as if I was no longer a tiny insect in a big wine jar (*xiji zhi weng* 醯雞之甕); the personal practice and the witness they bore personally made me so embarrassed by the slow progress of the past as if I was a crippled turtle (*bobie zhi cheng* 跛鰲之程). Heaven and human beings are fundamentally not the same (*tianren ben fei tongtang* 天人本非同堂), and the issue is hard to talk about. Unaware of the sources of [human's] life and death is simply intact.²⁸

The passage quoted above is significant because it confirms that Xiong now departed from the concept of oneness of Heaven and human beings (*tianren heyi* 天人合一), which is the fundamental idea of Neo-Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist philosophies, and accepted the concept that “Heaven and human beings are fundamentally not the same”, as derived from the Catholic religion.

In 1616, the anti-Christian movement initiated by Shen Que 沈淮 (d. 1624), Vice-director of the Nanjing Ministry of Rites, occurred in Nanjing. In the subsequent year in 1617, the Ming government issued an edict prohibiting Christianity. European priests in the Nanjing area were arrested, and several missionaries were flogged, imprisoned and sent back to Macao.²⁹ Missionaries in Nanchang, including João Da Rocha, Manuel Diaz Senior (Yang Manuo 陽瑪諾, 1574-1659), Pascoal Mendes (Qiu Lianghou 邱良厚, 1584-1640), Pierre van Spierre (Shi Weizhen 史惟貞, 1584-1628) and Pedro Ribeiro (Li Ningshi 黎寧石, 1570-1640), decided to take refuge in rural Jiangxi. With the help of local Christians, missionaries settled in Jianchang prefecture, southeast of Jiangxi.³⁰ On the way from Nanchang to Jianchang, Xiong Shiqi's hometown, Jinxian, is the place they had to pass and, as mentioned above, local people here spoke the same dialect as those in Jianchang. It is presumable that Catholics in Jinxian such as Xiong Shiqi played an active role in helping the Jesuits settle in Jianchang during this difficult time. Indeed, by the end of the Ming Dynasty, Jianchang had become the second-largest Christian center in Jiangxi.³¹

Around the year 1617, when the anti-Christian movement started, Xiong Shiqi wrote *Tianjiao Pianshu* 天教駢述 (A Survey of the Teachings of Heaven). The piece covers topics such as his understanding of the Creator, his defense of the legitimacy of Catholicism and the critique of the Three Teachings (for details, see below). It was preserved in *Juejiao Tongwen Ji* 絕徼同文紀 (Record of Commonality of Languages at the Distant Frontiers), prefaced by Yang Tingyun in 1617.

In 1619, Xiong Shiqi travelled to Hangzhou 杭州, where he and Yang Tingyun met in person for the first time. In *Cedai Jingyu*, Xiong gave the following account of their encounter: “in the spring of *jiwei* 己未 [1619] I

²⁸ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, p. 141a.

²⁹ Peterson 1998.

³⁰ *Da Zhongguo Zhi*, pp. 261-271; Wu Wei 2003, pp. 21-22.

³¹ Wu Wei 2003, pp. 22-23.

travelled to Wulin 武林 [i.e. Hangzhou]. When I heard that Masters Yang [Tingyun] and Li [Zhizao] were holding public lectures and discussions (*jiangxue* 講學) in Western Lake to illuminate the fundamental principles of [our religion] of serving God, I went there and made my inquiries about the Way.”³² After their meeting, Xiong presented his manuscript *Cedai Jingyu* 策怠警諭 (Admonishing about Sloth) to Yang Tingyun. Apparently, Yang was very impressed by Xiong’s essay. So, he initiated sponsorship to print this work in 1621 and wrote an introduction for it.³³

In Hangzhou, Xiong Shiqi also had the opportunity to meet with the Jesuit father Giulio Aleni, who was taking refuge at Yang’s house because of the anti-Christian movement. From 1619 until Yang Tingyun passed away in 1627, the three of them had close collaborations. They worked together on *Xixue Fan*, *Zhifang Waiji*, and *Zhang Mige’r Yiji*. *Xixue Fan*, which was published in 1623, is a book on western learning. Aleni gave the oral account, Yuan Shengwen 袁昇聞 served as the transcriber, and both Yang Tingyun and Xiong Shiqi wrote the preface and epilogue, respectively. In the same year, Aleni, Yang and Xiong collaborated again to write *Zhifang Waiji* on world geography, culture and customs. The work was dictated by Aleni and transcribed by Yang, and Xiong wrote the epilogue. *Zhang Mige’r Yiji* was a work about the life of a young Christian, Zhang Shi 張識, who was a pious Catholic and met an untimely death. Aleni decided to give a detailed account of Zhang’s life and his contributions to the church. This time, Xiong transcribed Aleni’s account, and Yang wrote the preface. Despite Aleni having been credited as the author of all three works, Christian *literati* from the top echelon such as Yang Tingyun to the lower echelon such as Xiong Shiqi also made important contributions in copying, editing and transmitting Catholicism and Western learning to China.

After the death of Yang Tingyun in 1627, perhaps because Xiong was also old, he was gradually forgotten. The last time Xiong’s name appeared in the church records is his help in translating *Ode to a Holy Dream*,³⁴ orally transmitted by Aleni and first printed in 1637.

2. Xiong’s Thoughts and Actions as a Scholar-Activist at Local Church

Unlike other prominent Christians whose voluminous materials have been preserved, Xiong had only two extant essays, *Tianjiao Pianshu* and *Cedai Jingyu*, a total of less than thirty pages preserved in church archives. Fortunately,

³² “Self-postscript of *Cedai Jingyu*”, p. 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁴ Information is derived from CCT Database (Chinese Christian Texts Database) at http://heron-net.be/pa_cct/index.php/Detail/objects/2067.

they are informative as to his thoughts on Christianity and his activities in engaging his fellow Christians at the local level. *Tianjiao Pianshu* offers us the insight to see his understanding of Christianity and his thoughts about the problems of China's Three Teachings (i.e. Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism). The importance of the second essay, *Cedai Jingyu*, written in vernacular language, lies not only in its content, but also in Xiong's intention to appeal to his fellow Christians who were illiterate and less educated in the local church that made him distinctive as a Christian *literatus* of the lower echelon at the local level. The following two sections will give detailed descriptions of the two essays to reveal the commonalities that Xiong shared with the first-generation Christian elite and the uniqueness of him as lower-echelon Christian *literati* when this Western religion tried to take root in late Ming society.

2.1. Tianjiao Pianshu 天教駢述: *A Christian-Commoner's View on Religions in China*

Xiong Shiqi's *Tianjiao Pianshu*, written in classical Chinese in 1617, contains only eight leaf-pages of 3,275 words, focused on his understanding of Christianity, his justification of Christianity in China and his comments on the problems of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism. Since it was written in classical Chinese around the time of the anti-Christian movement, the audience he attempted to address was likely non-Christian *literati*, including anti-Catholic officials and scholars, Buddhist monks, Daoist priests and their affiliates. The following discussion will elaborate further upon the aforementioned three focal points.

A) Xiong's understanding of Christianity. *Tianjiao Pianshu* begins with Xiong's introducing the Creator, whose various names Xiong used include *zaowuzhu* 造物主 (Creator), *dazao* 大造 (Great Creator), *tiandi* 天帝 (Lord of Heaven), *tian* 天 (Heaven), *zuozhe* 作者 (Creator), *ditian* 帝天 (Emperor of Heaven), *zhenzhu* 真主 (True Lord), *shangdi* 上帝 and *tianzhu* 天主 (Master of Heaven).

Xiong described the Creator as omnipotent and omniscient because he "has no beginning and end (*wushi wuzhong* 無始無終), and no one knows the origin [of him.] Everything has its beginning and transformations (*yousheng youhua* 有生有化), but the power of [these changes] resides solely in him. [...] [He] is indescribable by any human imaginations and descriptions."³⁵ It appears that Xiong believed the Creator existed before all things existed and held in his hands all the mysterious transformations. Here, Xiong borrowed the phrases *wushi wuzhong* and *yousheng youhua* from Buddhism and Daoism, but

³⁵ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, p. 141a.

reoriented his focus from a Daoist-Buddhist metaphysical sense to the divine meaning of the Christian God, as evidenced by his statement below:

[When the Creator] points to the [direction of] the sky, the image of Heaven becomes visible; when he points to the [direction] of earth, the structure of land is formed. [...] Animals, plants, birds and fish are all from the infinite divine power (*shengong* 神功). All lives and the nature [of creatures] are fashioned in accordance with their proper places. [...] Only the True Lord (*zhenzhu* 真主) possesses the secret key to these transformations. The Creator (*zuozhe* 作者) uses this infinite and divine spirit (*wuqiong zhi shengling* 無窮之聖靈) as the base for this burgeoning creation.³⁶

This view of the Creator is no different from what Matteo Ricci presented as *tianzhu* in *Tianzhu Shiyi* 天主實義 (The True Meaning of Heavenly Master), in which myriad things, including sky, land, waters, mountains, plants, creatures and humankind, were all created by God, and they were all different in nature by God's decree.³⁷

Similar to *tianzhu* in Ricci's *Tianzhu Shiyi*, Xiong's perception of the Creator also demonstrated emotions. When he talked about Adam and Eve, Xiong stated:

After the birth of human beings, Eve, the wife of Adam, surprisingly disobeyed the command [of the Creator]. She was greedy and gluttonous (*tantao* 貪饕) for [the fruit] in the forbidden garden, causing the great anger of Heaven. [God] punished them and used the punishments as warnings for their future [descendants.] Considering that human nature is easily provoked to pick a fight and to accumulate transgressions, [...] [God decides that those who disobey him] will be imprisoned in hell (*difu* 地府) where eternal darkness and cruel punishments are all genuine, and [those who obey him] will ascend to a heavenly palace (*tianting* 天庭), where spring is everlasting with numerous true blessings.³⁸

The Creator apparently could be enraged by human's greed and gluttony. Hell and punishments were therefore imposed by Him upon those who violated His decree, and Heaven and blessings were bestowed on those who honored and obeyed His order. Such a description of God is basically similar to the power of *shangdi* 上帝 or *tian* 天 (Heaven) in *Shujing* 書經 (Book of Historical Documents) and *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Odes).³⁹

In Xiong's understanding, God the Creator is compassionate, as demonstrated by his willingness to send down His son, Jesus Christ, to save humanity by sacrificing His own life. In *Tianjiao Pianshu*, Xiong described Jesus' birth, life and death as the following. He said:

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Tianzhu Shiyi*, *juan* 1, pp. 5b-7a.

³⁸ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, p. 135a.

³⁹ Many works deal with this issue, see for example, Fu Peirong 1985, chap. 1-3; Standaert 1995, pp. 85-92. Of course, there was no concept of hell in ancient China.

Six thousand years after [the Creation,] the descendants [of Adam and Eve] had spread over several hundred countries. [...] But then arrogance and evil thoughts arose, hypocrisy and immoral activities corrupted human relations, and heresy and evil talk ran rampant. [...] The True Lord was benevolent and compassionate and always sympathetic to [human beings] below (*renci minxia* 仁慈閔下). [...] He selected the Virgin Mary of Judaea to conceive. [...] The body [of the Lord's son] is a human body, but his mind-and-heart is the mind-and-heart of Heaven (體為人體, 心則天心). He was named Jesus, meaning Savior [...] [Jesus'] preaching of the Way and His love of mankind was based on the idea that all people were His children. [...] He exemplified himself as their [great] teacher (*yun dang yiji wei shi* 允當一己為師). [Later] Jesus was accused of plotting a revolt [against government] [...] charged as a traitor [...] and punished by crucifixion. [...] But, why didn't the Heavenly Emperor (*tiandi* 天帝, i.e. God) use his almighty power to instantly eliminate those violent accusers? This is because, without the birth of Jesus, [human beings'] great sins (*zhongzui* 重罪) could not be removed. Through enduring endless pain and humiliations, [Jesus] sacrificed His own life to redeem mankind (*she yishen dai shu* 捨一身代贖). Three days later, the resurrection occurred, which was the most wondrous and mysterious thing.⁴⁰

Following his narratives of Jesus' life, Xiong shifted his discussion to the development of Christianity in the West. He said:

[After the resurrection,] all of Jesus' disciples thoroughly understood the grace granted by the Spirit (*sibiliduo* 斯彼利多). His disciple Peter was the first Pope. He and those under him worked diligently in different areas without any fears and worries [for their lives]. Their reputations spread widely and people were greatly transformed. [...] Despite tyrants who recklessly and mistakenly accused them and exiled them, the chaste followers (*zhenshi* 貞士) insisted upon the correctness of [their religion] and promoted it. [...] They believed that their hair and bodies can be hurt and heads can be chopped off, but the correct/orthodox religion of the Heavenly Emperor (*ditian zhi zhengjiao* 帝天之正教) had to be promoted. [...] Their words and deeds were highly praised and all were substantiated by real records.⁴¹

By Xiong's time, Christianity had been firmly established in Europe for over a thousand years. Moreover, "regions belong to the Atlantic Ocean and to the Indian Ocean all honored the teachings of Heaven; people in Africa and Asia also heard and praised the splendid teaching."⁴²

While Xiong's brief account of Christianity is not particularly special from the viewpoint of Western tradition, it is nonetheless unusual if one examines it from the perspective of Confucian tradition, especially Ming Neo-Confucianism. Reading through all the quotes mentioned above, one notices that Xiong had

⁴⁰ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, pp. 134b-136a.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137a.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

become aware of the negative side of human nature. This is evidenced by his portrayal of Eve being “greedy and gluttonous”, his mentioning of human nature “[being] easy to be provoked to pick a fight and to accumulate transgressions”, and his use of such terms as arrogance, hypocrisy, immoral activities and evil thoughts and deeds to present the descendants of Adam and Eve (see above, notes 38 and 40). Despite there being no such term as “original sin” in *Tianjiao Pianshu*, Xiong did not hesitate to mention that human beings had committed “great sins” (see above, note 40). This is very uncommon among Confucian scholars, especially among Neo-Confucian scholars who advocated the goodness of human nature. Donald J. Munro has pointed out this trait (i.e. the goodness of human nature) among ancient Confucian scholars.⁴³ Neo-Confucian scholars who followed the path of Mencius’ (ca. 372-289 BCE) thought all treated human nature positively. Taizhou scholars were even more optimistic—so optimistic that they claimed that “the streets were full of sages (滿街都是聖人).”⁴⁴ Christianity had changed Xiong to see aspects of human nature different from those of contemporary Confucian scholars.

Furthermore, reading through Xiong’s discussion of the Creator in the context of late Ming intellectual development, one also sees the different moral and religious authority Xiong was seeking. What Xiong was seeking is the highest moral and religious authority from outside; whereas the moral authority of the Wang Yangming and Taizhou schools resides internally within one’s self. Certainly, coming from Ming Neo-Confucianism under the instruction of Qu Jiusi, Xiong would naturally borrow terms such as *tianxin* (mind-and-heart of Heaven) and *yun dang yiji wei shi* (one exemplifies one’s self as the [great] teacher of people) (see above, note 40) from Wang Yangming learning and the Taizhou School. *Tianxin* is a common term in the Wang Yangming School. The idea of “one exemplifying one’s self as a [great] teacher” comes from Wang Gen 王艮 (1483-1541), founder of the Taizhou School, who declared: “I would like to be the teacher of ten thousand generations by not holding an official position” (處為天下萬世師).⁴⁵ But the goal of the scholars of Yangming’s learning and the Taizhou School was always on an individual’s inner transformation to make themselves the same as the sage, even the same as Heaven. They thus claimed that “my own mind-and-heart is identical with the mind-and-heart of Heaven” (*jixin ze tianxin* 己心則天心).⁴⁶ Xiong, however, totally changed the focus from the individual human being to Jesus Christ because he believed that human nature possessed “great sins.” Therefore, only Jesus, not human beings, possessed the mind-and-heart of Heaven, and Jesus alone, not the Taizhou scholars, “exemplified himself as their [great] teacher.” No wonder Xiong said that he had in 1605 realized that “Heaven and humans are fundamentally not the same” (see above, note 28).

⁴³ Munro 1969, pp. 49-83.

⁴⁴ *Chongjian Xinzhai Wang Xiangsheng Quanjia*, juan 2, “Nianpu” 年譜, p. 16b.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, juan 3, “Yulu” 語錄, p. 28b.

⁴⁶ *Xutan Zhiquan*, juan 2, p. 192.

B) Xiong's justification of Christianity in China. How then did Xiong justify Christianity in China if he no longer saw the mainstream Neo-Confucianism of the late Ming as valid? Also, what was the relationship between Christianity and Chinese culture in Xiong's thought? In the very beginning of *Tianjiao Pianshu*, Xiong gave an interesting account that reveals his view regarding the relationship between them. He said,

I heard that the Great Creator (*dazao* 大造) is impartial; he deploys *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 in myriad creatures. His mysterious power is unfathomable; he bestows reason and righteousness in the human mind-and-heart. [These facts] are well covered in all lands under the sky and have never changed from antiquity to the present. Some people who were born in various periods and regions, however, had created a [decadent] fashion when they indulged in narrow viewpoints and corrupted practices. But just as [Confucius said,] “when rites get lost, we seek them in the wild” (*shi li er qiu yi yu ye* 失禮而求宜于野), and when the official/government learning (*guanxue* 官學) gets lost here, we pursue it in the land of barbarians (*yi* 夷, i.e. foreigners). Illuminating the official/government learning is our most urgent work. [Indeed,] because there was originally no clear boundary in the universe, the wondrous land outside could really possess the authentic transmission (*zhenchuan* 真傳).⁴⁷

The passage quoted above raises three important points. First is Xiong's belief that China shared the same concept of the creator with the West (i.e. “the land of the barbarians” or “the wondrous land outside”). The difference between East and West, in his view, lies only in China's using a wide array of names to call the creator. Earlier, we have seen Xiong employing different terms to describe the creator. He would further base this on Matteo Ricci's claim that “*Tianzhu* (Master of Heaven) in our country is identical with *shangdi* 上帝 (Lord-on-High) in China”⁴⁸ to prove his point. He said,

China (*zhonghua* 中華) was a great country. [...] [During the time of] Pangu 盤古, [...] Fuxi 伏羲, [...] Yao 堯, [...] Shun 舜 and Yu 禹, all had diligently served (*zhaoshi* 昭事) [i.e. *shangdi*, Lord-on-High]. King Tang 湯 and Duke Wen 文 had also quietly observed this practice without any negligence. Indeed, what was called by Duke of Zhou, Confucius, Zisi 子思 and Mencius as *huangtian* 皇天 (the great Heaven) is none other than *shangdi*. They were different in name only.⁴⁹

To Xiong, despite the Chinese using different names, since the time of Pangu, the legendary first man in China, they had already venerated a Christian God. Additionally, over the long period of time from the ancient sage-kings (i.e. Pangu, through Fuxi, Yao, Shun, Yu, King Tang and King Wen) to sages (i.e.

⁴⁷ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, p. 134a.

⁴⁸ *Tianzhu Shiyi*, *juan* 1, p. 20b.

⁴⁹ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, pp. 137a-b.

Duke Zhou, Confucius, Zisi and Mencius), China had formed a tradition of reverencing and honoring Heaven—that is *shangdi*, a Christian God.

Second, this tradition of reverencing and honoring *shangdi*, in Xiong's view, is the Confucian tradition of *guanxue* (lit. official/government learning) and is identical with the *zhengjiao* 正教 (correct/orthodox religion) of Christianity. *Guanxue* in China is generally known to have existed long before Confucius' time as a system of official learning, including "ritual and music", to educate aristocrats to serve in the government.⁵⁰ Confucius broke this tradition to receive students from all walks of life; under this circumstance, *guanxue* was no longer the privilege of aristocrats. But because Confucius was a transmitter, not a creator,⁵¹ the content of *guanxue* remained unchanged. With the ascendancy of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), Confucian learning was the only standard to recruit people to serve in the government; the Confucian tradition of *guanxue* was thus firmly established.⁵² The term *zhengjiao* of Christianity was first brought to China by Matteo Ricci, who called it *zhengjiao* or *gongjiao* 公教 (universal/public religion) in *Tianzhu Shiyi*.⁵³ Xiong accepted Ricci's idea and pointed out in *Tianjiao Pianshu* that what Jesus' disciples and Christian followers enthusiastically preserved and promoted was the "authentic transmission" of "the correct/orthodox religion of the Heavenly Emperor" (*ditian zhi zhengjiao* 帝天之正教) (see above, note 41). The Confucian tradition of *guanxue* in China is thus equivalent to *zhengjiao* in Christianity.

Third, the Confucian tradition of *guanxue*, according to Xiong, had later declined and further disappeared, and he believed that it was the urgent priority of Confucian scholars to recover the lost *guanxue* from "the wondrous land outside" (i.e. Christianity in the West). As aforementioned, owing to Chinese' indulgence in "narrow viewpoints and corrupted practices", a decadent fashion was created (see above, note 47) and by his time, the *guanxue* tradition had completely disappeared. But the correct religion of the Heavenly Emperor in Europe had prevailed, as seen from the thriving of Christianity in Europe and its gradual spread to Asia (see above, note 42). Because of "the love of Heaven who would like [His message] to spread to our China" (*wu Zhonghua* 吾中華), the Pope "dispatched Western scholars, who were ready for leaving their homes and countries", to travel over land and sea "to promote the religion." Missionaries, who "spent more than two years during the course of their journey, ignored pain, sickness and death, passed Malacca (滿刺加) and eventually landed in Macau" (*xiangshan'ao* 香山澳).⁵⁴ Once in China, they "made friends all over the empire and promoted the scriptures of the Master of Heaven"; as a

⁵⁰ Xinzhong Yao 2000, p. 49.

⁵¹ Confucius says, "I transmit but do not create: I believe in and love the ancients." *Analects*, 7: 1. Translation is from Wint-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 31.

⁵² Xinzhong Yao 2000, p. 50.

⁵³ *Tianzhu Shiyi*, *juan* 1, pp. 1a-b.

⁵⁴ *Tianjiao Pianshu*, p. 140b.

result, “those who believed in their teachings began to rise.”⁵⁵ Citing Confucius’ words of seeking rites in the wild, Xiong called for the revival of the lost *guanxue* through introducing Christianity of the wondrous land in the West as the most urgent priority for the Chinese (see above, note 47). This calling suggests that Xiong had acknowledged Christianity to be the true Way that “we Confucians” (*wuru* 吾儒)⁵⁶ urgently needed to re-learn from the West. Christianity, under this circumstance, could therefore claim its legitimacy in China.

C) Xiong’s comments on the problems of China’s Three Teachings. Xiong also commented on the problems with Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism. He pointed out that “the calamities” that brought about the decline of the Confucian tradition of *guanxue* “were due to Daoism and Buddhism that had poisoned [China] for thousands of years.”⁵⁷

In terms of Daoism, Xiong differentiated philosophical Daoism from religious Daoism. He was critical of philosophical Daoism, as shown in the following comment:

[Daoist philosophers] aspired the tranquility and non-action of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi (*Huang-Lao* 黃老) [...] and boasted the mysterious void (*xuanxu* 玄虛) of Zhuangzi and Liezi (*Zhuang-Lie* 莊列). [...] [They] stole *yin* and *yang* 陰陽, manipulated spirits and ghosts (*guishen* 鬼神) and dared to claim that the Five Phases are already held in one’s hands (*wuxing zai shou* 五行在手). They leaned on Heaven and Earth, seized the universe, and mistakenly proclaimed that myriad transformations all originated from one’s body/self (*wanhua shengshen* 萬化生身).⁵⁸

Judging from this comment, Xiong’s dissatisfactions with Daoism seemed to lie in Daoist philosophers’ emphasis on the extreme expansion of individual self, leading to their disregarding the role of spirits and the universe (i.e. disregarding the existence of God). This connects well with the reason for his conversion to Catholicism mentioned above.

But as for religious Daoism, Xiong was somewhat accommodating. Below is his comment on religious Daoism:

With the flourishing of the method of immortality, longevity was promised; exhale the old breath and inhale the new one can naturally bring back energy and nourish brain. [...] Keeping black hairs and preserving youthful face relied upon the secrets of [Daoist] internal and external alchemy. [...] But how many more people could have a good grasp of Wei Boyang’s 魏伯陽 *Cantong Qi* 參同契 (*The Seal of Unity of the Three*) and who could really be enlightened by Zhang Pingshu’s 張平叔 [i.e.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141a.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139b.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 137b-138a.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138a.

Zhang Boduan 張伯端, 987-1082] *Wuzhen Pian* 悟真篇 (*Folio on Awakening to Perfection*)? Despite this kind of mysterious discussions involving methods of transforming into immortals, in essence, they still have the name of *shangdi* in mind.⁵⁹

It appears that Xiong had a more positive attitude towards religious Daoism, as evidenced by his comment that the followers of Daoist church “still have the name of *shangdi* in mind.” Despite this, Xiong found works in religious Daoism such as Wei Boyang’s *Cantong Qi* and Zhang Pingshu’s *Wuzhen Pian* to be too narrow and mysterious, and comprehended only by a few. His interest seemed to be in a faith that could appeal to a majority of the masses.

The more serious problem, in Xiong’s view, is Buddhism. According to Xiong, the damages that Buddhism did to China are twofold. First, the wide spread of Chan Buddhism had caused a scenario in which “one sees everywhere the [meaning] of Chan 禪, as if one has cut off oneself from names (*ming* 名) and form (*xiang* 相) [to reach emptiness].”⁶⁰ Consequently, followers of Chan Buddhism acted “as if they have instantly reached non-attachment and in-action” and believed that “the Way can be understood within their grasp.”⁶¹ Xiong questioned them: “where are the self-cultivation and practice (*hexiu hezheng* 何修何證)?”⁶² To him, moral life required constant practice and self-cultivation.

The second was the grave danger that Buddhism brought to Confucianism, causing the decline and disappearance of the Confucian tradition of *guanxue*. Xiong Shiqi offered the following comments on this issue:

Alas, Buddhism has brought such a great turmoil to Confucianism! It claims that there is no lord/emperor and no Heaven (*wudi wutian* 無帝無天), which is extremely erroneous. It believes that one is already a sage or a worthy in oneself (*zisheng zixian* 自聖自賢), which is really treacherous. [...] While others are easy to clarify, Buddhism and Daoism [are more difficult]. Among them, Buddhism is the most difficult to prove false. Its [teaching] seems to be close to truth, and yet it really distorts the truth. No one, however, can see through it. [Buddhism] claims that emptiness (*kong* 空) of the dead-ash like mind-and-heart can get rid of absurdity (*wang* 妄). Even great scholars like Han Yu 韓愈 and Su Shi 蘇軾, and monks like Fo’in 佛印 and Dadian 大顓 were trapped in it.⁶³

Here, Xiong seemed to think that the Buddhist concepts of emptiness and nothingness (*wu* 無) were sources of danger for Confucianism. The idea of emptiness in Buddhism lead people to become completely apathetic, not much different from dead ashes, and the concept of nothingness made whoever tried to

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 138a-b.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139a.

⁶¹ *Ibidem.*

⁶² *Ibidem.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 138b-139b.

learn from Buddhism reject lord and Heaven (i.e. *wudi wutian*) so much so that one saw only one's self (*zisheng zixian*). This situation was evident not only among ordinary scholars, but also among renowned Confucians such as Han Yu and Su Shi. He thus had a serious concern that Confucian scholars had trapped themselves in this predicament without being able to escape.

However, Xiong did not think that Buddhism should be held completely responsible for the disappearance of the Confucian tradition of *guanxue*. The real damage, he thought, was rooted in Confucian scholars themselves because they had wholeheartedly embraced Buddhism, ignored Confucius' words and abandoned *guanxue*. He stated in *Tianjiao Pianshu*,

The mistake began with we Confucians. Despite we Confucians read books by the sage Confucius, we were never able to identify where Confucius' words came from. Moving from official/government learning (*huanxue* 宦學) to Buddhism (*qutan zang* 瞿曇藏), [we] turned against what [Confucius] had said. [...] [We] played tricks on spirits and souls and yet boasted of knowing human nature. This is none other than grasping tightly to the [Buddhist concept of] consciousness (*yishi* 意識) but declaring it unmoved by sentiment (*wangqing* 忘情). [We] confused Buddhist ideas as Confucianism (*hun shi zuo ru* 混釋作儒). It is really like inducting Confucianism into one branch of Buddhism, and further suppressing Confucianism into a secondary place (誠援儒為釋之宗, 又至擠儒為亞). Buddhism placed human beings as being identical with Heaven, whereas [we] regarded the Way of Heaven to be the same as the way of human beings, and moreover elevated human beings to be higher than Heaven and able to manipulate Heaven (既認天即人之道, 更且高人以御天). [...] All this shameless and superficial talk made us no different from dreamers. [...] Rarely can one see the origin of the great creation (鮮能窺造化之初).⁶⁴

"We Confucians" are presumably Confucian scholars of Xiong's time, possibly scholars of the Taizhou School. Although the Taizhou School never stressed the Buddhist idea of emptiness and nothingness, the idea of *wanwu yiti* 萬物一體 (lit. myriad things forming one body) had long been accepted by Neo-Confucian scholars from the Song Dynasty onward and further shifted to the focus on the individual self, especially the individual's inner transcendence, by the Taizhou scholars in the 16th century. Wang Gen in his *Dachengxue Ge* 大成學歌 (Song of Perfect Learning) promoted the idea that "the mind-and-heart [of mine] is the sage" (只此心中便是聖),⁶⁵ an emphasis on human's autonomous mind-and-heart. In his *Yulu* 語錄 (Sayings), he even said, "the cosmos lies in me and the myriad transformations come from my own self/body" (宇宙在我, 萬化生身), and "let Heaven, earth and all things comply with me, instead of the other way around."⁶⁶ Wang Gen's fourth-generation disciple, Luo Rufang, spoke about the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 139b-140a.

⁶⁵ *Chongjian Xinzhai Wang Xiangsheng Quanji*, *juan* 4, "Chidu Mizheng" 尺牘密證, p. 25b.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, *juan* 3, "Yulu" 語錄, p. 6a, 11a; *juan* 2, "Nianpu" 年譜, p. 4a.

idea of self even more straightforwardly. For example, Luo claimed, “my own body stands for Heaven’s work, and what I say represents Heaven’s words (己身代天工，己口代天言)”⁶⁷ and “what we called the Way is not descended from Heaven [...] it comes out of the juncture when a baby is born with a big cry.”⁶⁸ Luo even declared that “I am identical with Heaven and Heaven is identical with me” (我即是天，天即是我).⁶⁹ The individual self had become the focus of the Taizhou philosophy and was extended to the extreme that the self was the center of all moral authority. This is why Xiong criticized those Confucian scholars who “regarded the way of Heaven as none other than the way of human, and moreover elevated humans to be higher than Heaven and able to manipulate Heaven”, and had “suppressed Confucianism to a secondary place.” To Xiong, Confucian scholars of his time had created a serious problem for themselves by totally abandoning the Confucian tradition of *guanxue* (i.e. venerating the great creator), and he believed he had found a way out of this predicament through understanding the origin of the great creation from Christianity in the West.

In the same year that Xiong Shiqi completed his *Tianjiao Pianshu* in 1617, Yang Tingyun also published his *Shengshui Jiyan* 聖水紀言 (Record of Oral Presentations at the Holy Water Society). Comparing these two works, it appears that both Xiong and Yang shared the same ideas regarding the great creator, the history of Christianity in the West and its legitimacy in China. But in terms of Buddhism, the two presented quite different foci. Yang Tingyun’s discussions were on Buddhism as *xiangjiao* 象教 (lit. a religion of images), the different ways of fasting between Buddhism and Catholicism, and Buddhists’ attack on Catholicism.⁷⁰ It seems that Yang still had no disagreement with the Buddhist ideas of emptiness and nothingness. Therefore, he saw himself living “a quiet and profoundly empty life” (*jishou kongkong* 寂守空空) and called himself “Master of Not-knowing” (*wuzhizi* 無知子).⁷¹ Recent scholarship on *Shengshui Jiyan* also points out that Yang’s thought at this time still dwelled on Buddhism.⁷² Furthermore, Yang’s *Shengshui Jiyan* said little about Ming Confucianism. The entire work on Confucianism of his time covers only one sentence: “in recent times [in China], scholarship and learning (*xueshu* 學術) have become superficial and often lose real understanding [of Confucian tradition.]”⁷³ His dissatisfaction with “Confucians of his time” who believed that “our human nature can thoroughly understand the nature of the heavenly master” appears much later in his *Daiyi Pian* 代疑篇 (Response to Doubts), published in

⁶⁷ *Xutan Zhiquan*, juan 1, pp. 61-62.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, juan 2, p. 187.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, juan 2, p. 192.

⁷⁰ *Shengshui Jiyan*, in M. Courant’s catalogue, No. 6845.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1a.

⁷² Whalen Lai 2003; Liu Yu 2012.

⁷³ *Shengshui Jiyan*, p. 1a.

1621.⁷⁴ Still later in 1623, when Yang published his *Tianshi Mingbian* 天釋明辯 (Clear Distinction between Heavenly Teachings and Buddhism), he then strongly expressed his critique of the Taizhou philosophy. Yang pointed out that those who “compared human beings’ power with the Heavenly Lord” and proclaimed “the universe being at one’s hand” (*yuzhou zai shou* 宇宙在手) are none other than “people of later generations’ ignorant words”, who “have damaged the Way [...] [and] nothing can be worse than this!”⁷⁵ This statement appears four years after Yang met Xiong in 1619.

In summary, Xiong had accepted the Christian teachings of God, the creation story, Jesus, and so on. He believed that the relationship between the Confucian tradition of *guanxue* in Chinese antiquity and correct/orthodox religion of Christianity in the West were identical and could be rationalized. Xiong was a strong opponent of philosophical Daoism and especially Buddhism because of their contributions to the decline of the Confucian tradition of *guanxue*. He was also strongly critical of the core values of Neo-Confucianism of his time, particularly the Taizhou School, which stressed the oneness of heaven and human beings. Based on Christian teachings, he asserted that humans and Heaven were in different positions and could not encompass each other. All these viewpoints suggest that in terms of Christian philosophy, lower-echelon *literati* like Xiong Shiqi shared similar views with their top-echelon counterparts.

Despite Xiong Shiqi’s thoughts of heavenly teachings being shared by those of the top echelon, his actions as represented in *Cedai Jingyu* were unique. In 1619, Xiong used vernacular language to write the essay *Cedai Jingyu* with the goal of admonishing his fellow Christians who were the commoners or Christian *literati* of the lower stratum. This is rare in early Christianity and represents a Christian *literati* of the lower echelon’s distinctive associations with his fellow Christians at a local church. The discussion will now turn to the analysis of *Cedai Jingyu*.

2.2. Cedai Jingyu 策怠警諭: *A Scholar-Commoner in Action*

As mentioned above, an earlier draft of *Cedai Jingyu* appeared in 1619, and the final version was printed by Yang Tingyun in 1621. The entire *Cedai Jingyu* includes three parts: Yang Tingyun’s “Introduction to *Cedai Jingyu*”, the main body of the essay and Xiong’s epilogue. Altogether, it has twenty leaf pages, with the main body of the text covering only six leaf pages of 2,390 words.

Readers can immediately see the different approach Xiong employed in the main body between *Cedai Jingyu* and *Tianjiao Pianshu*. As discussed above, *Tianjiao Pianshu* was an essay written in classical Chinese with educated *literati* in mind; the main body of *Cedai Jingyu*, however, was written in vernacular

⁷⁴ *Daiyi Pian*, *juan* 1, p. 41a.

⁷⁵ *Tianshi Mingbian*, p. 316.

language with the intention of appealing to the less educated when it was read to an audience.⁷⁶ Such work says a great deal about a lower-echelon Christian-literati's sensitivity to the illiterate and less educated in his church.

The motivation for Xiong, a Christian of scholar-commoner with a direct connection to the local church, writing in the vernacular style is documented in the "Introduction to *Cedai Jingyu*" by Yang Tingyun:

[Mr. Xiong] often used simple language to adjust to the popular taste of people in his neighborhood (時作淺語，以諧里俗). [...] He [also] used popular songs and ballads (*zheyang huangkui* 折楊黃葵). So, when townsfolk heard, they quickly understood and enjoyed it. The goal of Mr. Xiong's work [was] [...] to make it easy for ordinary people to understand (*shi qimin yijie* 使齊民易解) [...] and to encourage church fellows to make progress.⁷⁷

Yang's introduction proves that *Cedai Jingyu* is an essay that reflects Xiong's actions of advocating the Christian faith to his fellow Christian-commoners (i.e. "people of his neighborhood" or "ordinary people") to make them understand so as to progress in their faith in this new Western religion.

Furthermore, Yang's "Introduction to *Cedai Jingyu*" tells us that in addition to communicating in the vernacular or colloquial style, Xiong also employed popular songs and ballads to attract less-educated Christians and illiterates. While this approach may be seen less often in the early Christian faith in China, it was not uncommon among Confucian scholars of the late Ming. Confucian scholars, especially the Taizhou scholars, since the 16th century had developed a fashion of using vernacular language, songs and proverbs in their writings to communicate their thought to the masses. Wang Gen, for example, wrote many songs, including *Lexue Ge* 樂學歌 (Song of Happy Learning), *Qiushan Fu* 鯽鱖賦 (Prose Poem of Eels and Mud Fish) and *Dachengxue Ge* (Song of Perfect Learning).⁷⁸ Yan Jun 顏鈞 (1504-1596), Wang Gen's third-generation disciple, composed *Quanxiao Ge* 勸孝歌 (A Song Exhorting Filial Piety).⁷⁹ Yan's disciple He Xinyin 何心隱 (1517-1579) wrote *Juhe Xuajiao Liyu* 聚和率教俚語 (Vulgar Words from Educational Leader of the Gathering Harmony Association) when he tried to organize lineage association in his hometown,⁸⁰ and another disciple Luo Rufang wrote *Mianbaixing Ershi Shou* 勉百姓二十首 (Twenty Poems to Admonish Ordinary People) and utilized many proverbs in

⁷⁶ The other early work written as vernacular language is *Zaowuzhu Chuixiang Lüeshuo* 造物主垂像略說, which was said to be written by Xu Guangqi in 1615. However, Ad Dudink's research has pointed out that the piece was more likely written by João Da Rocha. See Dudink 2001, pp. 124-129.

⁷⁷ *Cedai Jingyu Yin*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁸ *Chongjian Xinzhai Wang Xiangsheng Quanjì*, juan 4, pp. 25 a-b, 25b-26a, 26a-28a.

⁷⁹ *Yan Jun Ji*, pp. 57-58.

⁸⁰ *He Xinyin Ji*, pp. 68-69.

his colloquial-style lectures.⁸¹ By the late 16th and early 17th centuries, this fashion had also become popular among Donglin 東林 scholars in their charitable society, *Tongshan Hui* 同善會 (Society of Sharing Goodness).⁸² Xiong Shiqi's *Cedai Jingyu* might be better understood in terms of this trend of intellectual activism to engage local people of lower strata in late Ming China.

Certainly, the different languages used in their writings also reflect the different audiences to whom the authors tried to appeal. In his *Cedai Jingyu*, Xiong stated that he wrote the piece to admonish “members of our church” (*jiaozhongren* 教中人) and “gentlemen [...] that worked hard in the beginning but turned idle in the end.”⁸³ Thus, it is clear that *Cedai Jingyu* was focused on Christian commoners and Christian *literati* of the lower echelon in the local church, which is indicative of Xiong's special interest and distinctive actions as a scholar commoner.

In terms of content, as the name *Cedai Jingyu* (策怠警喻) indicates, it is to admonish sloth with a cautionary analogy. Sloth is one of the seven deadly sins. Prior to Xiong Shiqi's *Cedai Jingyu*, the Jesuit father Diego de Pantoja's 龐迪我 (1571-1618) *Qike* 七克 (The Overcoming of Seven Deadly Sins), published around 1610-1615, is the only work in China that employed the idea of overcoming the seven deadly sins.⁸⁴ But why would Xiong Shiqi particularly emphasize admonishing sloth, instead of dealing with the other six sins? Yang Tingyun in his “Introduction to *Cedai Jingyu*” had specified that this was because “sloth is the origin of the seven deadly sins in Christianity.”⁸⁵ Another reason might be that Xiong had already sensed the slackness of his fellow Christians when he wrote this essay.

In *Cedai Jingyu*, Xiong answered to an “inquirer [who] on one occasion asked [him]: ‘there is only one or two out of a hundred in our church who demonstrate true cultivation. A lot of people who entered our church often have become lazy. They refuse to serve God wholeheartedly, as if they have had never been to church. What kind of situation has this world [i.e. our church] turned into!’”⁸⁶ Xiong Shiqi replied to the inquirer: “good question, Brother! [...] In general, the reason for the slackness of our church members is that they value mundane affairs too heavily. Day and night, their mind and efforts are focused on worldly affairs and take lightly the matter of life after death. [...] If members of our church can cultivate virtue to make the Master of Heaven satisfied with

⁸¹ *Luo Mingde Gong Wenji*, juan 5, pp. 81a-83a.

⁸² For *Tongshan Hui*, see Handlin Smith 2009, chap. 2-3.

⁸³ “Self-epilogue of *Cedai Jingyu*”, p. 2.

⁸⁴ But because Diego de Pantoja's *Qike* was written in classical Chinese with the section of sloth covering thirty-six leaf-pages, it appears that de Pantoja's interest was to appeal to scholars and officials. Wang Zheng was the best example who was drawn to this work. *Qike* is preserved in *Tianxue Chuhan* 天學初函, prefaced by Fang Hao, pp. 698-1126.

⁸⁵ *Cedai Jingyu Yin*, p. 6.

⁸⁶ *Cedai Jingyu*, p. 8 (main text, p. 1).

them [during their lifetimes], they can ascend to Heaven and enjoy great fortune after they die.”⁸⁷

To expound his answer further, Xiong used what happened in the civil service examination hall as an analogy:

The Master of Heaven (*Tianzhu* 天主) is like the Chief Examiner; the Virgin Mary is like the Examiner or Vice Examiner; and angels are like officials such as Lower-level Examiners, Supervisors, Examination Copyists, Graders, Examination Sealers and Provisioners. Members in the church are like scholars taking tests in the examination hall; the rest of them, who have not received Holy Water, are like those who provide services of miscellaneous jobs. *Tianzhu Shengmu Jing* 天主聖母經 [i.e. Our Father and Hail Mary, whose Chinese titles, *Tianzhu Jing* 天主經 and *Shengmu Jing* 聖母經, respectively] are like the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics*. The Ten Commandments are like the exam questions for three levels. The innate knowledge and innate capability (*liangzhi liangneng* 良知良能) bestowed by the Master of Heaven is none other than the teaching of nature (*xing jiao* 性教), which serves as the universal/public opinion (*gonglun* 公論) embodied in these testing subjects. All of these are based on God’s decree.⁸⁸

This is a very intriguing analogy between the Chinese civil service examinations and Christianity constructed by the Christian scholar-commoner in the late Ming. In the “Introduction to *Cedai Jingyu*”, Yang Tingyun also highlighted this approach of Xiong’s. Yang stated, “people in this mundane world often pursue the fame of passing the civil service examinations. [...] They differentiate and analyze most clearly their gains and losses from it. Therefore, [Mr. Xiong] uses this [taking civil service examinations] as an analogy, and ordinary people understand it easily.”⁸⁹

In this analogy, Xiong indicated that there are two types of Christians: those who came to the church but had not yet been baptized, and those who received baptism. Those who had not yet been baptized were still not eligible to take “the examination” and did miscellaneous jobs in the examination hall. Those who received baptism were regarded as “examinees” like *xiucai* 秀才 and *juren* 舉人 in the civil service exam. Just as *xiucai* and *juren* used the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics* to prepare for different levels of civil service examinations, baptized Christians took *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* as the textbooks based upon the teaching of nature bestowed by God to prepare for, as well as respond to, the exam questions laid down in the Ten Commandments.

Xiong then pointed out that a Christian’s life is a given opportunity, depending on how one chooses to live, which is the same as the attitudes an examinee adopts during the exam. Xiong said,

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10 (main text, pp. 2-3).

⁸⁹ *Cedai Jingyu Yin*, p. 6.

If members of our church are only interested in mingling and socializing among ourselves on mundane matters and using our cunning minds to play the sycophants or gain benefits from others, it would be the same as *xiucaï* or *juren* who, during the time of examination, leave their examination cells to gossip with other examinees on trivial matters. If members of our church care only about food and clothing all the time, looking for good food and desiring nice clothes, it would be just like those *xiucaï* or *juren* in the examination cells who dress well to show off and indulge in good wine and cuisine to their heart's content so much so that they forget to write their essays. If members of our church become slack in all things, never cultivating virtue and unaware that time has passed, their reputations for being Christian will be in name only, and they will definitely offend the Master of Heaven. This is the same as *xiucaï* or *juren* who are lazy during the examination, and by sundown when the examiners come to inform them to leave, their tests are still not yet completed. They have wasted their opportunity to participate in the examination and are doomed to fail.⁹⁰

Xiong was using civil service examinations to caution his fellow Christians that it is up to them to walk on the path of failure or success.

However, to those who raised doubts about the oversight of the examiners during civil service exam that even a good examinee could be left out, Xiong assured them that God would not miss anyone who was satisfactory to Him. He said,

If one cultivates one's virtue and reverently serves the Master of Heaven such that the Master of Heaven is satisfied, one can ascend to Heaven. This is the same to ten, hundreds, thousands, ten thousand or countless believers; all will be able to ascend to Heaven.⁹¹

In the meantime, Xiong warned those baptized Christians who claimed to be Christians in name only without cultivating virtue and diligently serving God:

Church members who do not cultivate virtue will infuriate God, and once they die, they will be immediately condemned to Hell, suffering endless [punishments] and bitterness.⁹²

Furthermore, to those Christians who committed sins against commandments, Xiong advised them that they would be subjected to punishment even worse than non-believers:

In Hell, they will suffer endless tortures. The sins they commit are worse than outsiders who had not joined our church. This is just like *xiucaï* or *juren* who were discovered to have cheated in the exam or bribed [examiners]; they would be

⁹⁰ *Cedai Jingyu*, pp. 11-12 (main text, pp. 4-5).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14 (main text, p. 7).

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15 (main text, pp. 7-8).

handcuffed, sentenced and deprived of their chances to take the exam forever, suffering endless hardships and carrying limitless regrets.⁹³

Finally, Xiong admonished that it is not enough to respect God in the heart only. Practices, including attending worship in a local church and truthfully carrying out the teachings and sacraments of Catholicism, are equally important. Again, he used the civil service exam as an analogy:

There are certain people who have claimed that “as long as I truthfully respect the honorable Master of Heaven in my heart, I have no need to make any efforts [in practice.]” They do not know that this is not enough. They must observe the major regulations in [our] church and practice them in person. Such are the merits and virtues (*gongde* 功德) of climbing the ladders of the Heavenly Road (*tianlu* 天路). This is no different from *xiucai* and *juren*; despite their having ideas about how to write well on the exam subjects, they must write them on the examination sheet and submit to the examiners. Otherwise, will it be adequate to view them as good candidates only because they think well, but are incapable of putting their thoughts in writing?⁹⁴

Thus, by using the analogy of life in the church to civil service examinations, Xiong pressed his fellow Christians in this given opportunity with both positive and negative allegories to highlight the importance of cultivating virtues and practices to ensure eternal happiness in Heaven.

Besides the aforementioned major theses presented in the content, *Cedai Jingyu*, despite being written in such a plain vernacular style, provides us a glimpse into Xiong's thoughts about Confucianism and Buddhism. In Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, the present life (or the confirmation of this world) is the central focus. Confucius, for example, said, “if you do not know life, how can you know about death?”⁹⁵ Song Neo-Confucians such as Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073) stated that “scholar-officials emulate the worthies, the worthies emulate the sages, and the sages emulate Heaven.”⁹⁶ Ming Neo-Confucians, especially the Taizhou scholars, as aforementioned, took one's self and present life as being of paramount importance. In the Confucian tradition, dedicating one's efforts to the present life (or focusing on this world) has always been a scholarly pursuit since antiquity. But Xiong had deviated from this traditional Confucian pursuit and looked for other worlds as the crucial goal. This is evidenced by his words to his fellow Christians in *Cedai Jingyu*:

The world we live in right now is not the place in which we enjoy happiness, nor is it the place we experience suffering. Happiness and suffering [of this world] that passes swiftly in the blink of an eye is not real happiness and suffering. Nonetheless, this

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16 (main text, pp. 8-9).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17 (main text, p. 10).

⁹⁵ Confucius, *Analects*, Chapter 11: 11.

⁹⁶ *Tongshu*, in *Siku Quanshu*, 897: 34a-35b.

world is the place we cultivate our mind and practice our virtue; we should not take it lightly and miss our opportunity. If we can cultivate our true virtue to the full and meet God's satisfaction, we will ascend to Heaven and enjoy infinite happiness and blessings. At that time, the happiness and sufferings of this world will be like useless soil and waste, unrelated to us. This is the same as those *xiuca* or *juren* who, after passing the high levels of the civil service exam, will enjoy honor and wealth; the old scenes of the bustling streets outside of the examination hall and examination cells and the old acquaintances who took the examination together will all disappear and become irrelevant.⁹⁷

Xiong's message is clear. While he did not ignore the importance of this world, happiness in the afterlife is of paramount importance and much worthier than the happiness and sufferings in the human world.

Indeed, in a line asked by the inquirer, Xiong also brought out a similar point when he admonished his fellow Christians to pay attention to not only "food of the physical body" (*roushen liang* 肉身糧) but also "food of the spiritual soul" (*linghun liang* 靈魂糧). He said,

The inquirer asked: "[...] [As you ask for devotion of the church fellows], do you mean to ask them to sit at home, burn incense, read sutra and worship God day and night without considering their livelihood just as *xiuxai* or *juren* know only burying their heads to write their essays in the examination cells without paying attention to any other affairs?" [Xiong replied,] "[...] the teaching of the Heavenly Master does not interfere with human affairs at all. Church members can cultivate themselves anytime and anywhere while [they are] doing any work. As long as their mind is constantly on the Master of Heaven, they can truly improve themselves to their finest. This is to say that it would be fine if one devotes half of the time to the daily needs of the physical body and half of the time to thinking of saving one's spiritual soul to meet the Master of Heaven when one dies. [...] Moreover, if a Christian is wholeheartedly serving and revering the Master of Heaven, even if he/she is burdened with mundane affairs, he/she could still find time to go to the Hall of the Heavenly Master (*tiangzhu tang* 天主堂) to pay homage to God. [...] The Master of Heaven has compassion for scholars, farmers, artisans and merchants, and offers them their jobs to provide them with daily food (*riyong liang* 日用糧). He does not require Christians recite sutra and worship Him day and night to the extent that they neglect their human affairs. [...] It would be sufficient if they understand that working on the food of the spiritual soul is more important than working on the food of the physical body and to truly make solid efforts toward it."⁹⁸

In Xiong's view, Catholicism pays attention to both daily life and spiritual needs, and he had no hesitation telling his fellow Christian converts about this in the local church.

⁹⁷ *Cedai Jingyu*, p. 12 (main text, p. 5).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18 (main text, pp. 9-11).

Thinking of the present life lightly in China mainly comes from Buddhism. We have seen in *Tianjiao Pianshu* that Xiong was vehemently against Buddhist views regarding the concept of emptiness and the lack of self-cultivation and practice. In speaking to his fellow Christians in *Cedai Jingyu*, Xiong offered another critique of Buddhism by commenting how the Buddhist idea of reincarnation, an idea that easily appeals to the commoners in Buddhism, made people become lazy. He said to his fellow Christians,

When one fails the examination once, there is still another chance to take it. But Christians who do not cultivate virtue and offend the Master of Heaven will be immediately sent to hell after they die and endure endless sufferings. Where can they get a second chance to become human beings again? Because of the talk of reincarnation, how many people's efforts have been wasted, and how many people have become lazy and lose their ambition?"⁹⁹

It appears that Xiong had found Buddhist idea of reincarnation, which was a popular idea in the Ming society of his time, as a source of sloth.

We can summarize here the significance of Xiong Shiqi's *Cedai Jingyu*. It differs from most other church works by first-generation Christians in that Xiong paid direct attention to engaging the common people and *literati* of the lower echelon. As early as 1619-1621, he had started to advocate it, which makes him a grassroots religious activist for Christianity in local area. As mentioned above, the focus of the missionary work in China, as shown in the Jesuits' writings, was mainly appealing to Chinese elites of the upper echelon, as they were the leaders in society and held political power. The awareness of the importance of recruiting *literati* of the lower echelon and the common people, according to Nicholas Standaert, had to wait until the late 1620s, possibly after 1627.¹⁰⁰ Xiong's actions highlighted the overlooked contributions of the lower echelon in late Ming Christianity.

Conclusion

Previous studies of the beginnings of Christianity in China have typically focused on the missionaries and top echelon elite. However, in the vibrant and dynamic social interactions across every social stratum in the late Ming, an understanding of the landscape of Christianity could not be complete without knowing the role played by other Chinese Christians, especially Christian *literati* of the lower echelon. Focused on a scholar-commoner, Xiong Shiqi, this preliminary study reconstructs Xiong's intellectual journey to his conversion, and uses two pieces of his essays, *Tianjiao Pianshu* and *Cedai Jingyu*, to

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14 (main text, pp. 7-8).

¹⁰⁰ Standaert (ed.) 2001, pp. 382-383.

explore his thoughts on Christianity and his actions and communications with Catholics in his same group and with the common people.

Xiong Shiqi, who was at best a *shengyuan*, but most likely a scholar-commoner, was mainly active in his local area. The history of his intellectual background is not much different from that of many scholars of his time in the late Ming (i.e. a Confucian scholar who was exposed to Buddhism and Daoism). In his early days, he was influenced by Wang Yangming teaching and the Taizhou School, which promoted among the common people the idea of the autonomous mind-and-heart of each individual. He was, like many of the Taizhou scholars, an intellectual at the grassroots level. At the turn of 17th century, possibly beginning in 1598, he converted to Catholicism as one of the first-generation Christians.

In his lifetime, Xiong, a scholar-commoner, was mostly involved in transcribing writings of the Jesuits and produced only two major essays of his own. *Tianjiao Pianshu*, written in classical Chinese, is aimed at audiences of non-Christian Chinese *literati*, Buddhist monks, Daoist priests and their supporters. He followed the teaching of Scripture and argued vehemently against the Buddhist idea of “nothingness” and “emptiness”, which he viewed as the source of the late Ming Neo-Confucian idea—especially the Taizhou philosophy—of “the oneness of Heaven and humans being”, causing in Xiong’s view the extreme expansion of the individual and the decline and disappearance of Confucian tradition of *guanxue* (i.e. official/government learning). Facing the dilemma of reconciliation between Heaven and human beings, he was drawn into the Learning of Heaven introduced by the Jesuit fathers and believed that the Christian belief in the Creator had long existed in China in ancient antiquity. He therefore departed from late Ming Neo-Confucianism and accepted original Confucianism in ancient times. It may be that with this adaptation, Christian ideas became acceptable to him, as the new religion was connected to the long-lost “official/government learning” of ancient Confucianism, and missionaries at his time had brought them to China from the West.

What is most telling about his role as a scholar-commoner is his direct and frequent contact with Catholics in the local church. Xiong’s *Cedai Jingyu* is a writing of direct communication to caution the members in the local church about the grave consequence of not serving God diligently. This is different from other contemporary Christian *literati* of the top echelon, whose works focused more on philosophical discourse and/or Western science. *Cedai Jingyu*, as discussed above, is a vernacular piece comprehensible even to the illiterate when it was read or preached. Xiong used the analogy of the civil service examinations in *Cedai Jingyu* to make his ideas easy to comprehend. It is evidently an effort of a local Christian scholar to affirm the faith of church members. The contribution of *literati* of the lower echelon to the development and sustenance of Catholicism in the late Ming period is thus significant.

So far, the study touches upon only the smallest portion of the Christian *literati* of lower strata and their local activities in early Christianity during the

late Ming period (i.e. the case of an individual Christian convert, Xiong Shiqi). However, as mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the lowest degree-holders in Christianity of the Ming-Qing era were the majority, much more so than the *literati* of the upper echelon. A further exploration of the Christian *literati* of lower echelon in local communities could provide us multiple perspectives from not only the viewpoint of cultural encounters, but also from the position of the dynamic development of local communities and local histories in late imperial China. This is a vast area still awaiting exploration.

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MERCHANTS, BRIGANDS AND ESCORTS: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE *BIAOJU* 鏢局 PHENOMENON IN NORTHERN CHINA

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The most remarkable thing about the economic upsurge of China in the eighteenth century was the size of the commercial streams and the extent of the regions controlled by certain corporations of merchants. [...] These rich merchants, who sometimes formed famous “dynasties”, played a political role thanks to the mere size of their fortunes and to the extent of their influence at the local level. They were also often men of taste and patrons of the arts, and this fact alone entitles them to a place in the intellectual history of the Qing epoch.¹

Introduction

While historical research struggles to identify the founder of the first *biaoju* 鏢局 or “escort company”, historians agree at least on the period during which they formally appeared. The *biaoju* are defined as structured companies providing escort, protective and insurance services that operated from the 17th century until their decline in the early 20th century. They were responsible for the transport of goods, for example money (tael), salt, silk and tea, but were also in charge of protecting the traders, who were victims of plunder organized by brigands during their journeys.

These traders came from Shanxi province and are commonly called Jinshang 晉商 (“Jin traders”, in reference to the short name of the province) since the beginning of the 20th century. The formal dimension of the *biaoju* recognized as a legal company system of protection and transport insurance was progressive: this formalization is manifested with the emergence of new professions embodied by a peasant social class interacting with the merchant class.

The origins of the *biaoju* phenomenon are nebulous, owing to the lack of data in the imperial archives. This absence, or rather lack of primary

¹ Gernet 1996, p. 488.

documentary sources may be an occasion to explore the question from an anthropological point of view.² Since the subject belongs to history and, therefore, cannot be confirmed by field investigation, the following analysis does not have the ambition to expose historical truth.³ Nonetheless, the method used for this research, namely ethnographic interviews,⁴ tends to provide new understanding of the *biaoju*, especially in questioning this phenomenon through the social interaction between escorts and merchants, but also through the role played by the threat of brigandage during the Qing period.

Biaoju composition, which is structured around the transmission of clannish martial art traditions founded on orality, may therefore be studied with greater insight through ethnohistory. Furthermore, the confidential practices born through intercultural exchange such as, for example, Daoist exercises in “internal martial arts” (*neijia quanshu* 内家拳術) and their inscription in China’s religious landscape,⁵ could also be approached from the perspective of structuralism,⁶ which contains the idea that “human activities are not intelligible except through their interrelation.”⁷ The microhistorical approach is also of great help, and leads us to focus on the cultural activities of social groups localized in precise places and time. Therefore, despite a certain lack of data in textual sources, we hope that the multiplicity of approaches used in this research will reveal new fields of understanding.

The information in historical literature is rare, however, two documents are of particular interest in that they are concrete historical markers essential to this analysis. The first one is a “request letter”, *zouzhe* 奏折, addressed to the court by a local official *difangguan* 地方官 from Shanxi province named Yan Ruilong

² Regarding the value of orality in the search for historical data. As Claude Lévi-Strauss pointed out, “the ethnographer is above all interested in what is not written, not so much because the people he studies are incapable of writing, but because that with which he is mainly concerned differs from everything men ordinarily think of fixing on stone or paper [...]”. See Lévi-Strauss 2003, p. 39.

³ I agree in this respect with the historian Paul Veyne’s idea that “[h]istory exists only in relation to the questions that we ask of it [...] every historian is implicitly a philosopher, since he decides what he will take to be anthropologically interesting [...]”. See Veyne 1976, pp. 9, 50.

⁴ This survey has been conducted together with the descendants of late-Qing’s escorts, who are currently representatives of the martial tradition’s schools concerned in my doctoral research. During this period, which totals four successive months of investigation (from January to April 2017), I did a participative observation of these practitioner’s groups, as well as long and non-directive ethnographic interviews. My field was mainly the districts of Taigu, Qixian, Yuci and Pingyao—precisely with the Dai 戴, Song 宋 and Che 車 lineages of martial arts practitioners.

⁵ As such, it is worth considering the idea dear to K. Schipper that Daoism is a concept invented by the West, see Schipper 1995, pp. 467-491.

⁶ Also, the structural approach “for the anthropologist comparative studies compensate to some extent for the absence of written documents.” See Lévi-Strauss 2003, p. 28.

⁷ Blackburn 2016, p. 461.

嚴瑞龍 (n.d.-1751).⁸ This letter, written in 1742, the 7th year of the reign of Qianlong 乾隆 (1735-1796), is entitled “Official Communication from Shanxi Province Governor Yan Ruilong Calling for Prohibition of Illegal Activities of Escorts” (山西布政使嚴瑞龍為請嚴禁保鏢胡作非為事奏折). The second document is an inventory of weapon possession written on May 14, 1906, that is to say during the 32nd year of the reign of Guangxu 光緒 (1875-1908), in which the mandarins identified the existence in Beijing of 13 escort companies, comprising a total of 134 rifles.⁹

My latest ethnographic research reveals that except those few pieces of information, scholar-bureaucrats of the imperial government did not actually record the social composition and economic activities of *biaoju*. This is not only due to the confidentiality of convoy activities and the process of transmitting escort knowledge based on orality, but also to the lack of interest on the part of officials for escort groups and their activities, thus explaining the lack of information in *difangzhi* 地方志, the local monographs. Moreover, the illiteracy of the escorts, originally from peasant backgrounds, is one of the causes for the very limited written information available in the *jiapu* 家譜, the family registers (many of which were burned during the Cultural Revolution).

This article is divided into three sections. The first two sections deal with two social factors which fostered the creation of the escort profession, namely: (1) the trade activities of Shanxi merchants and their rise from the end of the 16th century to the foundation of their banking system in China at the end of 19th century; and (2) the threat of brigandage in Northern China during the Qing Dynasty. The last section, taking into account the aforementioned factors, presents the *biaoju* phenomenon first in its informal, then formal dimensions, with the emergence of an escort profession in the middle Qing.

1. The Shanxi Merchants

1.1. Two Turning Points in Their Evolution

The purpose of this section is not to outline the history of Jinshang, but to present two of the main historical markers of their evolution: the “salt license” and the “market opening policies.” For this reason, we shall skip from one dynasty to another to focus only on the most significant turning points of their trading activities.

Since the beginning, trade activities in China have been closely related to the production and commerce of salt. In his historical work, Professor Zhang

⁸ Qianlong *Qi Nian Baobiao Shiliao*, 4: 157.

⁹ Guangxu *Sanshi'er Nian Jingcheng Guanli Biaoju Qiangzhi Shiliao*, 3: 61.

Zhengming 張正明 explains that the character 賈 (*gu*, meaning merchant) comes from its homophone *gu* 鹽 (lit. unrefined salt) related to the natural saline lake of Yuncheng 运城, and called *xiechiyan* 解池鹽, in Shanxi province. Professor Zhang argues in particular that the first three dynasties, the Xia 夏 (ca. 2070-1600 B.C.), the Shang 商 (ca. 1600-1027 B.C.) and the Zhou 周 (ca. 1046-256 B.C.) based their economy on the exploitation and consumption of salt which Yuncheng Lake, geographically close, offered in abundance. According to Zhang's researches, China's first merchants may well have been the Jinshang.¹⁰

However, the salt trade really turned to Jinshang's advantage a few centuries later. That brings us to 986, during the Song 宋 Dynasty (960-1279). The Song government established a monopoly on salt, issuing salt licenses, called *yanyin* 鹽引, to the merchants.¹¹ The *yanyin* policy of the Song may be considered as one of Jinshang's greatest development factors and, therefore, a factor that helped them establish their influence in the world of trade. Indeed, the Song took into consideration the advantage of the geographical location of Shanxi merchants, and the license to sell salt was first granted to them before it was applied to merchants from other provinces.¹²

The following dynasty, the Yuan 元 (1279-1368), imitated the Song *yanyin* policy. As early as 1284, the Mongolian authorities granted all traders the right to sell salt, provided they had a license.¹³ Nevertheless, the Jinshang kept the advantage of their privileged geographical location under the Ming 明 Dynasty (1368-1644), because the Ming government needed to transport army provisions to border posts, *bianzhen liangxiang* 邊鎮糧餉. In order to facilitate the transport of supplies to soldiers posted along the northern borders, the Ming introduced an economic measure called *kaizhongzhi* 開中制, the "[market] opening system." Implemented in 1370, it is a mutual agreement¹⁴ between the authorities and the merchants, aimed at removing the government monopoly on salt, as well as all restrictions on its production, sale and transport.¹⁵ However, this mutual and "informal" agreement was that the *yanyin* would be granted only on one condition: that

¹⁰ Zhang Zhengming 2001, pp. 1-8.

¹¹ Huang Jianhui 2002, p. 2.

¹² Zhang Zhengming 2001, pp. 8-30; Ye & Wilson 2001, p. 155. Among the various groups of merchants were the Huishang 徽商 (Anhui merchants), the Yueshang 粵商 (Cantonese merchants), the Minshang 閩商 (Fujian merchants), Jiangyoushang 江右商 (Jiangxi merchants), and Wuyueshang 吳越商 (Zhejiang merchants).

¹³ Huang Jianhui 2002, p. 2.

¹⁴ On the measure inherited from the Northern Song 北宋 (960-1127) called *zhezongzhi* 折中制 (trade-off policy), see *ibid*.

¹⁵ *Mingshi Shihuozi Jiaozhu*, 77: 155.

the armies at the border posts be supplied.¹⁶ It is also interesting to note that the *kaizhong* policy was applied in Datong prefecture 大同鎮 (current city of Datong), which became one of the nine military garrisons of China in 1372, called *jiuzhen* 九鎮 or *jiubian* 九邊,¹⁷ because of its location in a strategic area at the northernmost border of Shanxi province.

To summarize, the *kaizhong* policy satisfied the interests of merchants as much as it facilitated the transport of foodstuff to border regions. In other words, the government saw this “agreement” as a major means of solving both logistical and economic problems, while merchants could once again profit from the free trade, which made this social class one of the richest in late imperial China.

1.2. Interactions between Merchants and Peasants

In 1681, the Manchu government entered a period of stability¹⁸ that proved prosperous since a number of economic reforms were implemented at that time. These encouraged the resumption of regular trading activities, which were held back for more than fifty years by revolts and conflicts.¹⁹ The various groups of regional merchants once again resumed their activities, travelling the roads towards major urban centres. Large fairs with multiple regional characteristics, formerly known as *tianxia siju* 天下四聚 (“The Four Great Assemblies”), were created in the four important urban centres of that time: Beijing for the northern regions, Foshan for those in the South, Suzhou for the

¹⁶ According to Professor Liu Jiansheng 劉建生 (Shanxi University), this agreement was “informal” by nature, in the sense that the government had made a special “deal” with the merchants from Shanxi province. Prof. Liu also argues that this “deal” meant that a relative freedom in trade would be granted the Jinshang only if they invested money to support the building of the Great Wall sections at the northern border of Shanxi. Ethnographic note collected in Taiyuan (Shanxi) on 20.03.2017.

¹⁷ *Qianlong Datong Fu Zhi*, 4: 32.

¹⁸ Indeed, trade did not immediately resume when the Manchus seized power. The Revolt of the Three Feudatories (*sanfan zhi luan* 三藩之亂), led by General Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612-1678) and two other vassals, Geng Zhongming 耿仲明 (1604-1649) and Shang Kexi 尚可喜 (1604-1676), again paralyzed trading, from 1673 to 1681, mainly in the provinces of Sichuan, Guangxi, Hunan, Fujian, Guangzhou, Jiangxi, Shaanxi and Gansu. See Spence & Petterson 2002, p. 159.

¹⁹ Popular uprisings, linked to tensions between the peasant class and the powerful landowners, were expected to lead to a slowdown in trading activities for almost half a century. Firstly, the Wang Er 王二 revolt in 1627 in Shaanxi 陝西 province, which lasted 31 years and marked the end of the Ming Dynasty. Secondly, from 1644 to 1658, another war led by the peasants in a dozen regions such as the Mianchi 澠池 in Henan province, Shanhaiguan 山海關 in Hebei, and Xiangyang 襄陽 in Hubei. See Guo Chengkang 2002, pp. 293-294.

East and Hankou (now Wuhan) for the West.²⁰ These fairs were to produce a trade flow, which inevitably required the establishment of logistical organization for long-distance transport. This concerned the transport of merchandise, but above all, the essential factor in all commercial exchange: the convoy of merchant's capital.

Consequently, as we will see in the section below devoted to the brigands, the frequent traffic and movement of caravans through isolated roads led to an increase of insecurity embodied by the phenomenon of brigandage. The risk thus incurred by the merchants on the roads received little attention from the Qing government. Indeed, the Qing inherited the *kaizhong* policy from their predecessors,²¹ but, paradoxically, they also retained another policy from previous dynasties which was to "promote agricultural development and restrict commercial activities" (*zhongnong yishang* 重農抑商).²²

At that time, China's imperial economic ideal was, to a certain extent, close to the physiocracy theory,²³ according to which the promotion of land agriculture was deemed more "natural" and therefore put forward instead of trading activities.²⁴ As a result, it was inconceivable for the Manchus to even consider placing at the disposal of the merchant class a military service whose function would be to ensure the protection of convoys. The convoys of funds consisted in the transport of silver money, and two social classes were, at this period, mainly concerned with long-distance travel, namely merchants and future candidates for imperial examinations.

The volume and the weight would become problematic not only for the provincials who applied for imperial examinations in the capital, but also for the merchants, whose sums of money exceeded by far those of the scholars.²⁵ We note in this regard that, as far as brigandage was concerned, the implicit rules of travel through isolated areas placed two hierarchically different, even opposed social classes—merchants and scholars—on the same level. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe how the appearance of a new efficient agent—the brigand—tended to modify the structure of the "field", and forces social relationship between the two classes which otherwise would not interact.²⁶

²⁰ *Guangyang Zaji*, p. 54.

²¹ Ye & Wilson 2001, p. 155. However, at the end of Ming, the *kaizhong* policy was replaced by a system close to *kaizhong* (the so-called *gangyunzhi* 綱運制) which allowed the traders to continue their commercial business. See Zhang Zhengming 2001, pp. 9-29; Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan (ed.) 2008, p. 49.

²² Reynolds 1985, pp. 102-103.

²³ According to the notion of "rational economy" defined by the anthropologist Maurice Godelier. See Godelier 1965, pp. 32-91.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Wang Ermin 2009, pp. 396-397.

²⁶ Bourdieu 2000, pp. 235-259.

The martial arts practitioners belonged to the peasant class. But because they were in charge of protecting the convoys, they were certainly one of the social classes that had the strongest collaboration with the traders. This collaboration, which increased with the emergence of brigandage in the northern regions of the empire, would become, for the numerous families of merchants travelling through dangerous and isolated roads, a safe and sustainable means of developing their commercial activities.²⁷ Finally, the collaboration with peasants who had inherited a martial art tradition not only helped the merchant class activities, but also promoted social recognition of the traders. Initially located at the bottom of the social ladder, the traders were then able to compete with social classes of higher rank. Indeed, during the Ming-Qing period, the merchant class was ranked at the fourth position in the traditional hierarchy of the four social classes in imperial China: bureaucrats (mandarins) and scholars, *shi* 士; peasants, *nong* 農; workers, *gong* 工; and merchants, *shang* 商.²⁸

1.3. *Piaohao: The Jinshang's Banking System*

As we have seen above, brigandage in Shanxi province, which essentially took place in the remote northern plains of the region, forced collaboration between two social classes—peasants and merchants—that everything seemed to oppose. This social interaction supported a regional economy which led to a form of economic liberalization. Merchants could thereby enjoy a new autonomy in capital exchange which can be “characterized as [an] old [version of] capitalism where free competition prevailed.”²⁹ In return, this form of liberal economic system induced cooperation between merchants and escorts. These factors gradually gave birth to the first formal escort companies.

Besides the responsibility of protecting merchants and their goods, the escort companies also played an important role in enforcing loans repayment. Indeed, due to increasingly dynamic monetary exchanges, transportation under escort contributed significantly to the coordination of commercial transactions submitted to delays and applied to the entire circle of regional trading. Thus, new financial structures aimed at providing better conditions for the opening of credit and acquisition of debt rights for traders were soon to appear. In comparison, the merchants of late imperial China closely resembled the European merchants of the 16th century, who made up the pre-eminent capitalist organizations.³⁰

²⁷ Liu Jiansheng 2014, pp. 28-31.

²⁸ Ye & Richard 2001, p. 174.

²⁹ It can be argued that merchants were the bearers of a capitalist tendency in late imperial China, and the word “capitalism” is used here according to the meaning that is given in the long-term historical approach. See Braudel 2008, pp. 117-118.

³⁰ Pairault 2009, pp. 25-26.

Moreover, the argument which defines this new commercial dynamism as the preamble of a merchant capitalism trend is becoming more convincing, as trade has been linked, during the 18th century, to the creation of firms based on a banking system called *piaohao* 票號, “[money] order firm.” The Rishengchang 日升昌 firm is recognized as the first *piaohao* of China, founded in Pingyao by the merchant Lei Lütai 雷履泰 (1770-1849).³¹ Nonetheless, historical research based on primary sources contained in the *Shanxi Piaohao Shiliao* 山西票號史料 [*Historical Documents of Shanxi's Order Firms*], presents some controversial hypothesis about the origins of *piaohao*.³² Indeed, to quote only one example, according to the manuscript *Pingyao Piaozhuang Jilüe* 平遙票庄紀略 [*Memories of Pingyao's Order Firms*], from the Institute of Historical Research of Pingyao, the first *piaohao* would, actually, have been the Xiyucheng 西玉[裕]成 firm.³³

Piaohao structures were obligated to produce *huipiao* 匯票, a sort of paper document guaranteeing the payment of money at a set time. Indeed, in order to overcome the problems encountered due to the weight of the goods carried and insecurity on the roads, Lei Lütai set up a new system of exchange of these documents based on a secret code, *mimafa* 密碼法.³⁴ The other existing related monetary structures such as *qianzhuang* 錢庄 (lit. cash reserve) or *zhangju* 賬局 (account companies) were also adapted to the settlement mode of the goods transit system operated by the *piaohao*, as well as on the common calendar of transits, *biaoqi* 標[鏢]期. The interest earned by merchants by providing these particular banking services, called *biaoli* 標[鏢]利, were calculated on a monthly or annual rate applied to the money deposited by customers.³⁵

2. The Brigands

2.1. Shanxi Province and Brigandage

To understand the context in which the phenomenon of brigandage took place in the life of merchants, we have to consider the natural environment, the distances travelled and the administrative situation of the areas crossed.

³¹ Wei Juxian 2008, pp. 80-81.

³² Huang Jianhui (dir.) 2002, pp. 11-15.

³³ The head office was located in the actual West Street (Xidajie 西大街) of the ancient town of Pingyao, and the second branch in Beijing, precisely in the 10th alley of Caochang 草厂, south part outside the gate of Chongwen 崇文. See Wei Juxian 2008, p. 11.

³⁴ Data collected during my ethnographic survey in Rishengchang 日升昌 Museum, Pingyao, Shanxi, 09.03.2017.

³⁵ Kong Xiangyi 2004, pp. 117-125.

A commercial trip, depending on the means used for the transport of goods—animals (i.e. horses, and camels) or vehicles (one- or two-wheel carts, and boats)—could take from one month to a whole year, which would be spent on the road. Throughout the imperial era, environmental and political conditions in Northern China made Shanxi a geographically closed space, in which the movement of men was particularly difficult. On the one hand, natural conditions such as the encirclement of the province by the Taihang Mountains 太行山 to the East and the Yin Mountains 陰山 and Loess Plateau to the North, made the region hardly accessible. On the other hand, the region was controlled by border guard posts, *menguan* 門關, particularly by the Mengjin 孟津 post in Henan province and the Tongguan 潼關 post (Shaanxi) in the South, and especially the city of Lüliang 呂梁 in the West and the Yanmen 雁門 雁門 post in the North.

Historical research has pointed out that brigandage tends to be present in areas where state authority is weak. In other words, brigands lurk in mountains and frontier zones.³⁶ Due to its geographical location, Shanxi was a favorable environment for organized groups involved in criminal activities such as plunder. The north of Shanxi province is indeed a vast desert plateau covered by fertile loess sediment suitable for agriculture, but the population distribution is uneven because of the erosion of soil and arid climate, which make human settlement difficult.

In late imperial China, Shanxi was, among other provinces like Sichuan or Anhui, one of the “brigands’ regions”, and the Qing government treated these regions differently in its penal code.³⁷ It is interesting to note that Shanxi province was receiving special attention from the authorities without real consequences: acts of plunder appeared to be more severely punished than in other provinces, but the willingness of merchants to escort their goods may show the state’s lack of power when faced with robbery. As for the escort activities, robbery as a phenomenon itself does not seem to be well documented in archives³⁸ essentially because of its minor historical significance. However, we can appreciate how seriously caravan attacks were taken from the following comment:

In Shansi, a general provision prevails that robbery by three or more entails a degree greater severity of punishment than for the ordinary offence. The above provisions in their entirety apply to what are called ‘armed bands’, to constitute which it is sufficient that but one member of the band has but a knife: but not much distinction is made in the application of the rules to unarmed bands—the various penalties being lessened by one degree.³⁹

³⁶ Braudel 1947, pp. 129-142.

³⁷ *Notes and Commentaries on Chinese Criminal Law, and Cognate Topics*, p. 402.

³⁸ At least at the current status of my research.

³⁹ *Notes and Commentaries on Chinese Criminal Law, and Cognate Topics*, p. 403.

2.2. Brigandage Linked to Governmental Corruption and Violence

The purpose of this brief section is not to provide exhaustive research or to focus on one precise dynasty, but to underline two factors which come into play in the development of brigandage and that we consider relevant for this article: corruption during the Ming Dynasty, and violence during the Qing Dynasty. During the Ming period, the majority of banditry cases were concentrated in South China, and had been since the reign of Yongle 永樂 (1402-1424), because of a lack of governmental presence.⁴⁰ Indeed, at that time, the capital, which represented the government's power, had been transferred to the North. However, the atmosphere of insecurity, to a certain extent, was no less real in the desert regions of the North close to the capital than on the maritime coasts of the South.

In this regard, the proposal supporting the fact that a strong imperial presence around Beijing could have played a role in the development of brigandage is particularly interesting.⁴¹ This point of view makes it possible to grasp another logic that could drive a population to plunder. In this sense, brigandage in northern China during late Ming Dynasty should not be separated from the corrupt mode of governance. The two are linked by a complex interaction between officials and smugglers.⁴²

By the time of the Qing conquest of China, however, another factor that may relate the mode of governance to the development of brigandage is the many massacres and slaughters perpetrated by the Manchus. Although these lasted for several years, some were virtually forgotten. The Yangzhou massacre, for instance, remained so until the discovery of the *Yangzhou Shiri* 揚州十日 (*Ten Days of Yangzhou*), which “is certainly the most complete testimony of the worst atrocities that occurred during the Ming-Qing transition.”⁴³ The Manchus established their domination on the whole Chinese territory with such violence that it is difficult to imagine how this conquest could have no consequences on the social stability of the country, especially in the most remote regions of the North shared by Han and Manchu ethnic groups. Violent governance caused social disorder⁴⁴ in the major

⁴⁰ It is well explained in historical researches how and why pirates and “mountain bandits” could precisely thrive in the southern regions. See James Tong 1991, p. 58; Calanca 2011, pp. 135-136.

⁴¹ Robinson 2000, p. 528.

⁴² This would also be the reason why the flourishing salt trade, encouraged by the authorities and undertaken by the merchants, was to be the subject of a great deal of smuggling. Moreover, the six places where salt was stored, were located around the capital, so that it could be transported to the strategic defensive border areas such as Datong, and the northern part of this region, the actual border of Inner Mongolia, was paradoxically renowned as being a particularly risky area for merchants. See Robinson 2000, p. 533.

⁴³ Wang Xiuchu (Pierre Kaser transl.) 2013, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁴ Ethnic conflicts, class tensions due to social inequalities and the appearance of anti-Manchu sectarian movements under the cover of secret societies were among the main social disorders.

urban centres that diverted the authorities' attention away from rural areas, and thus provided a suitable ground for the development of "highwaymen"⁴⁵ plunder on border roads. In this sense, far from being an isolated and innocuous phenomenon, brigandage is by nature a social activity that remains the result of economic and political decisions, but also of social order which relates to the degree of virtue and moral duty emanating from the powerful representatives of society.⁴⁶

2.3. Brigandage on Long-distance Commercial Trips

While during the Ming Dynasty Jinshang's development relied primarily on the flourishing salt trade and the success of the *kaizhong* policy, from the 17th century onwards Shanxi merchants also started trading tea, thus opening a new *chashang* 茶商—a "commercial tea [road]" which connected Shanxi province to Kyakhta, near the Mongolia-Russia border. Moreover, at that time, the Jinshang also traded precious lacquer from Sichuan, sheep wool and buffalo hides from the Hure Banner in the south-east of Inner Mongolia. The success of commercial business manifested itself through the increasing volume and frequency of caravan's convoys and naturally attracted the attention of thieves.⁴⁷

An archival document presenting the history of Sino-Russian relations under the Qing Dynasty states that trade between Shanxi and Russian merchants took place as early as 1733—the document relates, in particular, that various goods were exchanged between Zhangjiakou and Kyakhta.⁴⁸

In 1765, Jinshang's commercial activities became more international. As it is mentioned in *Shanxi Lishi Ditu Ji* 山西歷史地圖集, tea exports to Mongolia and Siberia even reached Europe.⁴⁹ Xu Jiyu 徐繼畲 (1795-1873), a geographer and a Shanxi native who had collected information about the Jinshang's trading activities, also wrote a few words about the Shanxi province brigandage activities in his scholarly work.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Since brigandage has its own field, governed by its rites, its laws, its code of honour and even its justice, it results in a complex phenomenon, which can however be understood through two social dimensions, namely the "declared" brigands and the "illegal" brigands, also named "highwaymen." See Guichet 2005, pp. 131-141.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ Huang Jianhui 2002, pp. 109-115.

⁴⁸ *Qingdai Zhong-e Guanxi Dang'an Shiliao Xuanbian*, pp. 119, 272-274.

⁴⁹ See also "Qingdai Jinshang Shanglu" 清代晉商商路, in *Shanxi Lishi Ditu Ji* 山西歷史地圖集, mentioned by Liu Jiansheng 2014, p. 37. The tea was transported from Fujian province to Henan province, from where the goods transited to Shanxi province via Pingyao, Qixian, Taigu, Xinzhou and Datong. The merchandise was then transported again from Datong to Zhangjiakou in Hebei province; from there, the transit resumed to Kyakhta after crossing the Mongolian steppes of the Hure Banner, see *ibid*.

⁵⁰ *Song Kan Quanji*, 3: 3.

2.4. *Collective Representations of Brigands*

This section proposes a modest reflection about the image of brigands in the civil society's collective representation⁵¹ of northern China by exposing, first, a Chinese classification of plunderers and, secondly, by defining their socio-cultural identity. In my research, the information collected about the brigands emanates essentially from the vision that merchants and escorts had of them, whether this information being recorded either in official historiography or transmitted by popular narratives from one generation to the next. The methodological approach used in this survey is less concerned with the historical truthfulness of the information studied as facts to understand brigandage,⁵² than by the way brigand's image fed into the collective consciousness, that is to say, into a set of moral attitudes, shared beliefs and ideas, which operated as a unifying force within society.⁵³

In northern China, brigands were commonly associated with the marginal and barbaric populations living beyond the Great Wall, “*saiwai* 塞外”, and were called *tufei* 土匪, *daofoi* 盜匪 or *zei* 賊 which are all terms used as synonyms of “brigand.” However, there are subtle nuances between the terms used in Chinese to describe robbery.

At least two practices of brigandage are to be distinguished: *daoqie* 盜竊, “steal furtively”, and *qiangjie* 搶劫, “armed plunder”, or robbery by force and violence. Brigands did not systematically resort to violence during their attacks, and according to escort's descendant testimonies, there were three kinds of plunderers:⁵⁴ the “professional” exerting his hegemony in an isolated territory; the ancient criminal “specialized” in robbery and hidden in rural areas; the “amateur” in a situation of desperate poverty.⁵⁵

The “professionals” avoided conflict as much as possible because they knew that violence was not profitable. They endeavoured to open negotiations by forcing the merchants to pay a right of way, and a complex cooperative relationship was established between them and the escorts. The “specialists” were former criminals on the run, and their interest in money pushed them to risk their life in plundering a convoy, but these attacks were always well

⁵¹ Durkheim 2014, pp. 339-340.

⁵² In an anthropological approach, man as a social being and his activities are always observed and analysed through their ethnic background and cultural context. Considering writing history as a social activity in itself, the historian is therefore never entirely free from social conditioning. This research is more focused on how merchants and escorts considered brigands rather than on the veracity of their testimonies. Far from refuting the historiographical approach, it nevertheless raises the epistemological question of truth in history. See also Jacques Derrida's thought on history by Hervé 2016, pp. 231-244.

⁵³ D. Jary & J. Jary 1991, p. 93.

⁵⁴ Liu Jiansheng 2014, pp. 176-178.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

prepared. They preferred to “steal furtively” rather than use violence. On the contrary, “amateurs” represented the most dangerous threat to merchants and escorts because of the absence of an organizational framework structured around a long-term logic. They were wandering groups, had little regard for life and little prospect for the future.⁵⁶

In the north of Shanxi, the brutality of attacks against convoys is expressed in some popular narratives. For example, the following popular song describing the region of Shahukou 殺虎(胡)口⁵⁷ probably best symbolizes the Shanxi merchants’ fear of brigands.⁵⁸

殺虎[胡]口，殺虎[胡]口，
沒有錢財難過口。
不是丟錢財，
就是刀砍頭。
過了虎[胡]口心還抖。

The Killing-tigers [strangers]-pass⁵⁹
Hard to cross without wealth.
By the sword, your head will be cut off,
If all of your belongings are not given.
But even after passing through,
Your heart keeps shivering.

The above information is somewhat relevant to plunder practices which affected Shanxi merchants on their commercial trips in northern China, but says little about the brigand’s ethnicity nor what language they spoke during the Qing period. Knowing more about their cultural background and language would tell us a lot about their mode of interaction with merchants and escorts, which is essential to understand how escort companies organized the protection of caravans.

According to historical research and considering that these brigands were groups inhabiting the steppes “beyond the Great Wall”, that is to say belonging to various “nomad tribes” of Northern China, they certainly had a

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁵⁷ Originally 殺胡口 (lit. the “killing-strangers-pass”), the toponymy reveals that the name used for this place was considered as an offense for the Manchus authorities, who changed the character *hu*, 胡 “stranger”, into its homophone *hu* 虎 “tiger”, to finally become Shahukou 殺虎口 (the “killing-tigers-pass”). Shahukou being the only commercial route to connect Shanxi province to Baotou, the merchants had no alternative but to take this route; it was the main border linking Shanxi to the Mongolian steppe. Data collected during an ethnographic survey at Shahukou’s museum in Shuozhou, Youyu County, on April 2nd 2017.

⁵⁸ Liu Jiansheng 2014, p. 37.

⁵⁹ See *supra.*, footnote 58.

social and cultural affiliation. During early imperial China, some of their ancestors may well have been the Xiongnu 匈奴⁶⁰—a population organized around a pastoral, semi-nomadic tradition⁶¹ and living in yurts or troglodytic houses. They dwelt in peripheral regions of the empire and, according to the Chinese historical vision that the “Middle Empire” is at the centre of the world, the Xiongnu appeared as an “uncivilized” population in the mind of the Chinese.⁶² The non-Han people of the steppes were therefore assimilated to barbarians under generic and recurring terms such as *yi* 夷, *rong* 戎, *di* 狄 and *man* 蠻.⁶³

The Jesuit missions during the late Qing Dynasty led the missionaries to Mongolian lands, but also to Manchuria, where the missionaries’ observations indicate that these tribes could speak a little Chinese, notably Mongols living between Shanxi and the current Inner Mongolia.⁶⁴ Among the scattered tribes of northern China, those met by the missionaries were mostly “Tungus, Evenks, Daurs, Solons, Mongol Khalkas, Nivkh (Ghiliaks), Oroquens, Goldes (Nanai) and Yakuts”,⁶⁵ but also Chinese.⁶⁶

Merchants and escorts were travelling through lands where these ethnic groups lived and, without claiming to have identified the groups which threatened travellers in these regions, we can however imagine that the ethnic groups mentioned above could have a place in the complex robbery network operating during the Qing.⁶⁷

Still, the threat of brigandage was real for merchants and escorts who perceived it via either physical violence or at least some sort of psychological pressure:

按著鏢行的規矩，“賊”是朋友[...] 可是干鏢行的死在賊手裡的，也不在少數。⁶⁸
In accordance with the rules of the escort profession, “brigands” are friends [...].
However, a large number of escorts died by the looters’ hand.

⁶⁰ Grousset 2008, pp. 209, 419, 466.

⁶¹ According to Charles Hucker, northern nomads were not entirely nomad, especially the Manchus who, for Hucker, were not nomads. Hucker, in fact, claims that after 1368 “the tension between farmer and nomad was no longer a major theme in Chinese history.” See Hucker 1978, p. 2 (cited in Wakeman 1985, p. 24).

⁶² The following question seems quite relevant: “[...] mobility, the strategic position of Mongolia, and a space offering a certain fluidity of movements are ideal conditions for the exchange of goods. Why would the Xiongnu use such assets only for looting in China [...], when they had the opportunity to get rich in long-distance trade?” See Holotová Szinek 2009.

⁶³ Rabut (ed.) 2010, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁴ *Monseigneur Verrolles et la Mission de Mandchourie*, p. 104.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁶⁶ The Han were admitted to Manchuria, but they could not build a home nor start a family; they were vagabonds and no longer represented a social elite. See *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

⁶⁷ I am therefore careful not to confuse any of the aforementioned ethnic groups with the brigands involved in the plunder of trader’s caravans.

⁶⁸ *Baobiao Shenghuo*, pp. 236-237.

Nevertheless, the reality and the effectiveness of brigandage should not be investigated only through the stories growing out of collective imagination, but should also be taken into consideration from the point of view of the social organization of the above steppe groups. Therefore, understanding the nature of the interactions between merchants, escorts and brigands calls for an inquiry on the very nature of their plunder practices, and deeper research on their cultural background and social organisation in late imperial China.

3. *Biaoju*: The “Escort Companies”

3.1. *Non-formal and Formal Dimensions of Escort*

The existence of formal escort companies is directly linked to the needs traders had to ensure the frequency and the routing of high-value goods by inland waterways or by land.⁶⁹ This research, according to the ethnographic data mentioned in the introduction, confirms the hypothesis that formal escort activities date back to the reign of Qianlong 乾隆 (1735-1796). The existence of the first company, *Xinglong Biaoju* 興隆鏢局, is well attested during this period, but it remains unsure who founded it.

The creation of the *Xinglong* company is attributed to a martial artist supposedly from Shanxi province and known as Zhang Heiwu 張黑五 (n.d.).⁷⁰ The term “*biaoju*”, translated as “escort company”, would yet appear lately and for the first time under the form “鏢局” during the Republican period (1912-1949).⁷¹

However, we cannot ignore the fact that a non-formal escort activity had to exist long⁷² before the historical appearance of private and formal companies.⁷³ Li Yaochen 李堯臣 (1876-1973), former escort from late imperial period until the first decade of the Republic, for example, mentions in his testimony that vagrants with some skill in martial arts used to improvise escorting by selling their rudimentary protection services to travellers and traders in roadside inns.⁷⁴ Yet,

⁶⁹ Wang Ermin 2009, p. 396.

⁷⁰ Wei Juxian 2008, p. 4.

⁷¹ Ji Canzhong 2013, pp. 13, 185; see also Wan Laisheng 1929, p. 257.

⁷² It would be relevant to identify from the ancient texts and imperial archives the various activities related to the escort of traders since the beginning of the Chinese imperial era. Current conditions do not allow me to explore such a broad chronological framework, so I am essentially sticking to the Ming and Qing periods.

⁷³ The meaning I give to the notion of “formal” corresponds to the definition of anthropologist Jean-Marc de Grave, according to whom “the formal dimension implies a will to rationalize knowledge or know-how in order to systematize its transmission.” See de Grave 2012, p. 31.

⁷⁴ *Baobiao Shenghuo*, p. 231.

rather than hiring vagrants of unknown reputation, the merchant class from Shanxi preferred to trust masters who could claim a socially recognized martial lineage. It is under these circumstances that the connection between Shanxi merchants and renowned local martial arts masters initiated the new profession of *biaoshi* 鏢師, the “escort-masters”, and the structure of escort activity formally took shape.

To summarize, at the current stage of research, the escort activity can be chronologically divided in two moments: before 1735, escort existed in a non-formal dimension; afterward, it progressively became formal. The professionalism at work during transport explains this distinction insofar as it is part of the degree of cooperation initiated by merchants and escorts. Indeed, the primary forms of escort had a limited spatial and material scope. These “amateur’s” services were mainly concerned with occasional close protection: the transport of heavy goods, over long distances, often exceeded their organizational framework. The creation of formal escort companies, on the other hand, made it possible to structure the profession, in particular to allow the market value of the skill that the escort-masters implemented in the protection of caravans to increase in parallel with the evolution of their social status.

3.2. *Escort Activity in Classical Literature and Oral Tradition*

As is mentioned above, the non-formal escort activity carried out by “vagrants” and “amateur” martial arts practitioners may well be prior to the Qing period. Based on studies done on pre-modern Chinese fiction literature and on oral tradition, hypotheses have been proposed about the first escort activities. The historian Fu Yiling 傅衣凌 (1911-1988) expressed his doubts as to the fact that escort companies originated in the Qing Dynasty. According to him, during the Ming period the convoy’s activities were known as *biaoke* 標客 ([to make] goods travel) and the origin of escort companies would date back to the Wanli 萬曆 era (1563-1620).⁷⁵ This is a plausible version considering that, at that time, it was quite common for goods stored in the capital to be moved under protection.⁷⁶

Classical fiction literature also provides information on escorts before the Qing. It would have been surprising if the *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳⁷⁷ (14th century) had not mentioned this phenomenon. Chapter 16, for example, describes the transport under close protection of a gold and silver merchandise convoy.⁷⁸ Moreover, the narrative gives precise details as to the tactics being used by brigands to steal

⁷⁵ Fu Yiling 1956, p. 174.

⁷⁶ Wei Juxian 2008, p. 6.

⁷⁷ See Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1985.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 197-225. Research concerning escort activities through information in classical literature is, in fact, detailed in most Chinese studies about *biaojū* phenomenon. See notably Li Jinlong & Liu Yinghai 2007, pp. 9-11.

merchandise, but very little about the methods to protect it. Chapters 55, 66 and 69 of *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅⁷⁹ (late Ming) also mention the transport of money under protection on “escort boats”, *biaochuan* 標船. The unknown author of the novel used the character *biao* 標 to designate the convoy.⁸⁰ This character appears again in the works of Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715), where he describes the crossing of a dangerous region of Shanxi province: “[...] 雇了二十名標槍 [...]” (“[...] twenty lancers were hired” [...]). This brief passage clearly illustrates that the practice of the employment of a non-formal armed escort group existed at the beginning of the Qing.⁸¹

Lastly, another version, based on oral traditions and exposed by the contemporary researcher Wei Juxian, remains acceptable considering the social context of the Ming-Qing transition, but cannot be seriously taken as historical evidence of the creation of escort companies in their formal dimension. The hypothesis in question suggests that escort companies were created by the historian and linguist Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682), with the support of the scholar and calligrapher Fu Shan 傅山 (1607-1684), who both were fervent opponents of the Manchus. They would then have set up an organization to protect convoys carrying the funds for revolutionary militias composed essentially of peasants and martial arts practitioners. Protecting merchants and their goods would have been a disguise to dispel doubts the authorities might have had.⁸²

3.3. Transmission of Escorts and Martial Arts Lineage

Since Qianlong’s reign, in order to avoid any risk of attack in the steppes, several escorts-masters formally accompanied merchant’s convoys. Like men, animals were also part of the caravans. Among them were camels or pack-horses and dogs, which had a guard role along the journey, especially at night.⁸³ The escorts travelled at an average of three to four times a year. A convoy usually lasted three months. Since merchants and escorts had a relationship based on mutual trust, the receipts for the delivery of goods were not claimed by the latter and they were paid once a year, on the first month of the Lunar Year.⁸⁴ At the end of the 19th century, escort activity was specialized in six distinct sectors: “escort of letters”, *xinbiao* 信鏢; “escort of mandates”, *piaobiao* 票鏢; “escort of money”, *yinbiao* 銀鏢; “escort of food”, *liangbiao* 糧鏢; “escort of various merchandise”, *wubiao* 物鏢; and “escort to the person”, *renshenbiao* 人身鏢.

⁷⁹ Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng 1992, vol. 1, pp. 727, 904; and *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 963.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁸¹ Pu Songling 1999, pp. 676-677.

⁸² Wei Juxian 2008, p. 6.

⁸³ *Qing Bai Lei Chao*, 5: 2309.

⁸⁴ Liu Jiansheng 2014, pp. 53-54; Ji Kongrui 1986, p. 49.

Escort-masters claimed to belong to a specific martial lineage going back to a founding master, to whom they attributed the creation of the martial skills used in their profession. The process of lineage transmission based on the master-disciple relationship was thus used to legitimate, through its diachronic continuity, the authenticity of their skills which were organized around a “set of techniques”, that is to say “acts traditionally held to be effective.”⁸⁵

In this sense, the *biaoju* acquired a formal dimension insofar as they are structured around the transmission of martial arts—fighting skills that supposedly guaranteed the effectiveness of the implemented protection service. The Shanxi merchants were themselves martial arts enthusiasts, so they found a response to the threat of brigandage by using the martial skills of local peasants.⁸⁶ According to Chinese martial arts classification, escort-masters were both “boxers” and “swordsmen”,⁸⁷ since their bare hand fighting skills fell into the *quanshu* 拳術 category, that of the “art of boxing.”⁸⁸ One of the main boxing lineages involved in the escort profession was the *Xinyiquan* 心意拳 (lit. boxing of intention), from which a new style called *Xingyiquan* 形意拳 (boxing of form and intention) was created in the second part of the 19th century.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, the martial tradition claimed by Shanxi escorts—in particular by the lineage of the Dai 戴 family (*xinyiquan*)—finds its origin in the military art of spear handling, a process based on the principle of the “transformation of an art of the spear into an art of boxing” (*jiang qiangfa wei quanfa* 將槍法為拳法). The first known document to mention this evolution is the *Quanlun Zhiyi Xu* 拳論質疑序 [*An Essay that Raises Doubts about the Boxing Theory*], written by the military Wang Zicheng 王自(子)成 (n.d.) during the reign of Yongzheng 雍正 (1678-1735).⁹⁰ Nowadays, both *xinyiquan* and *xingyiquan* lineages belong to *neijia* 內家—an “internal martial art” based on Daoism’s conception of human body and Chinese ancient cosmology thought such as *Yin Yang Wu Xing Jia* 陰陽五行家 (Yin Yang and Five Phases).

⁸⁵ Mauss 1950, pp. 368-369.

⁸⁶ Ethnographic note taken on 16.03.2017 during an interview with Wang Jianzhu 王建筑, Shanxi, Yuci.

⁸⁷ I use the term “swordsmen” first because of the armed fighting origin of the escort’s martial arts, and secondly because of various weapons such as single and double swords or spears carried by escorts during convoys.

⁸⁸ *Quan* literally means “fist.” During the late imperial period, it designated unarmed fighting techniques. Despite the fact that it can refer, as mentioned by Meir Shahar, to a specific Western sport, I have chosen to keep the term “boxing” instead of “hand combat” or “fist.” See also Shahar 2008, p. 113.

⁸⁹ Huang Xinming 1985, pp. 71-75; Wu Dianke 1993, pp. 14-15.

⁹⁰ *Yuncheng Renwu Zhi*, p. 50.

3.4. Martial Arts as *Biaoju*'s Intangible Assets

In this research, the link between *biaoju* and clannish martial arts traditions is studied through the ethnographic investigation presented in the introduction, in particular through interviews with the Dai family lineage, who trace their origins back to Qi County in Shanxi province. Dai family members were the founders of the Guangsheng 廣盛 company in Henan province (Shedianzhen 賒店鎮, localized in the current Nanyang 南陽 prefecture).

The company was active between 1802 and 1830, and oral testimony, as well as archival documents, reveal that the creation of the company is attributed to Dai Erlü 戴二間 (1778-1873), the nephew and heir to Dai Longbang 戴隆邦 (1713-1803).⁹¹ The Dai family owed the Guangsheng's reputation to their martial art tradition. Merchants had great confidence in the effectiveness of their close protection.

However, the very confidential nature of Dai's skill "transmission within a closed circle" (*fengbi shidi* 封閉式地) based on the rule *yidi yixing yizu de chuanbo* 一地一姓一族的傳播 (lit. to pass down [knowledge] in one's region, to one's descendants, and within one's clan) proved to be a brake to their *biaoju*'s business.

The commercial success of an escort company naturally depended on the number of contracts signed with the merchants: the more a company hired and trained escorts, the better it could meet the trader's expectations, especially since their convoy's frequency was increasing. The Dai family therefore had to allow their knowledge and the teaching of their art to spread in order to remain competitive relative to other companies and to save the family business.

And so, since the second half of the 19th century, driven by a commercial development logic in cooperation with Shanxi merchants, Dai's lineage began an unprecedented expansion and transmission of its local and family tradition. We can therefore see how the *biaoju* phenomenon pushed martial traditions inheritors to open up the transmission of their confidential art, which became, in a way, an intangible asset guaranteeing commercialization of the escort services.

The peasants who were martial tradition inheritors were then able to exploit their fighting skills as a means of subsistence. Moreover, being an escort to merchants proved particularly lucrative for those peasants who also gained a degree of social recognition.⁹²

⁹¹ Ethnographic note taken during an interview with Dai Chuanceng (zeng) 戴傳曾 on 07.03.2017, Qixian, Shanxi.

⁹² Especially in the context of economic reforms initiated by the Manchus, and the government decision to break with sharecropping based on an autarkic system.

Tab. 1. Formal *biaoju* list⁹³

Escort companies	Place of foundation	Period of activity	Representative founder
Xinglong 興隆	Beijing, Shuntian Pref.	Qianlong (1735-1796)- Jiaqing (1796-1820)	Zhang Heiwu 張黑五 (n.d.); Zhang Huaiyu 張懷玉 (n.d.)
Huiyou 會友	Beijing, Qianmen	Qianlong (1735-1796)- 1921	Liu Dekuan 劉德寬 (1826-1911); Song Caichen 宋彩臣 (1868-1943); Wang Zhiting 王芝亭 (n.d.); Li Shaochen 李堯臣 (1876-1973)
Chengxing 成興	Cangzhou, Hebei	Jiaqing (1796-1820)- Tongzhi (1861-1875)	Li Kouming 李寇銘 (n.d.); Li Fenggang 李風崗 (n.d.); Liu Hualong 劉化龍 (n.d.); Ma Fuli 馬福利 (n.d.)
Yongsheng 永勝	Beijing	Daoguang (1820-1850)- Late Qing	Zhang Huaiwu 張懷武 (n.d.)
Weihai 衛海	Tianjin	Daoguang (1820-1850)- Xianfeng (1850-1861)	Dai Guoye 戴國爺 (n.d.)
YuYong 玉永	Suzhou, Jiangsu	Qianlong (1735-1796)- 1839	Zhang Delou 張德樓 (n.d.)
Wansheng 萬勝	Raoyang, Hebei	Jiaqing (1796-1820)- Daoguang (1820-1850)	Unknown
Zhongyi 忠義	Beijing	Tongzhi (1861-1875)- Xuantong (1908-1912)	Zhang Zhan'ao 張占鰲 (n.d.)

⁹³ List of Qing and early Republic's formal *biaoju* collected during an ethnographic survey at the Tongxinggong Escort Company Museum (Tongxinggong Biaoju Bowuguan 同興公鏢局博物館), on 08.03.2017, Pingyao, Shanxi.

Guangsheng 廣盛	Shedianzhen, Henan	1802-1830	Dai Erlü 戴二間 (1778-1873)
Changlong 昌隆	Suzhou, Jiangsu	1840-1911	Zuo Erba 左二把 (1808-1879)
Tongxinggong 同興公	Pingyao, Shanxi	1855-1913	Wang Zhengqing 王正清 (1801-1877)
Taifen 太汾	Taiyuan, Shanxi	Daoguan (1820-1850)- Tongzhi (1861-1875)	Dai Liangdong 戴良棟 (1834-1915); Li Luoneng 李洛能 (1788-1876)
Yuanshun 源順	Zhushikou, Beijing	1878-1900	Wang Zibin 王子斌 (1844-1900)
Sanhe 三合	Zhangjiakou, Hebei	1890-1907	An Jinyuan 安晉元 (n.d.); Zhao Guangdi 趙光第 (n.d.)
Wantong 萬通	Baoding, Hebei	1891-1899	Li Cunyi 李存義 (1847-1921)
Xingyuan 興元	Sanchahe, Inner Mongolia	Late Qing	Wang Fuyuan 王福元 (n.d.)
Hongqi 紅旗	Xuzhou, Jiangsu	Guangxu (1875-1908)- Republic (1912-1949)	Xu Xingwu 徐興武 (n.d.)
Desheng 德勝	Shenyang, Liaoning	Guangxu (1875- 1908)-Republic (1912-1949)	Dong Zhongyi 佟忠義 (1878-1963)
Gongsheng 公勝	Beijing	Daoguang (1820-1850)- Xianfeng (1850-1861)	Ma Fen 馬芬 (n.d.)
Qidong 濟東	Feicheng, Shandong	Daoguang (1820-1850)- Republic (1912-1949)	Yan Jiyun 嚴繼蘊 (n.d.)
Yongsheng 永勝	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Daoguang (1820-1850)- Xianfeng (1850-1861)	Wu Zhiying 武智英 (n.d.)
Qingyuan 清遠	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Daoguang (1820-1850)- Xianfeng (1850-1861)	Fu Jiannan 傅劍南 (n.d.)
Longxin 龍信	Chongqing, Sichuan	Guangxu (1875-1908)	Du Xinwu 杜心五 (1869-1953)

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to highlight the importance of the social relationship between peasants and merchants, but also the importance of brigandage practices, in order to understand the logic of formal escorting activity in late imperial northern China. The concept of social interaction which is so important to structural anthropology is therefore central in this analysis, and for this reason the approach could not fail to mention the main socio-economic factors that contributed to the emergence of the escort profession.

This research does not claim to be exhaustive, nor does it claim to be free from any misinterpretation. However, we hope that it provides a modest contribution and that it will help further studies on the subject, which might expand on, or even refute the present work.⁹⁴

The idea commonly accepted in most *biaoju* historical research is that, through their unarmed and armed fighting skills, peasants were able to protect traders and their goods from brigand's attacks. From this point of view, it can be argued that without martial arts, there would not be any formal escort profession. Nonetheless, in order to explore new lines of inquiry, extend debate and reflection, I would like to propose the idea that fighting skills were less important than communication competence. Indeed, the efforts undertaken by escorts to pacify relationships with brigands were a guarantee to the safety of convoys, and the escort's defensive art rarely had to be put into practice against the brigands.⁹⁵ Both groups, escorts and brigands, were interested in maintaining friendly relationships rather than conflictual ones.

According to the testimonies collected during my ethnographic survey, this process of relational exchanges between escorts and brigands was based on the implementation of a communicative competence, a form of common "language", devoid of written tradition and coming from marginal social groups. Popular representation of these marginal circles converged to form the word *jianghu* 江湖. *Jianghu* is an environment inhabited, among others, by travelling buskers, acrobats, brigands, martial artists and prostitutes. The *jianghu chundian* 江湖春點 (the "codeword of the marginals"),⁹⁶ also called *heihua* 黑話 (the "dark jargon"), established the structural coherence and the social logic of the relationship between the different groups concerned.⁹⁷ This mode of communication is considered unconventional because of its "slang" and "secret" nature (*yinyu* 隱語), but it is in fact structurally close to the same

⁹⁴ I would like to thank Mr. Philippe Che and Mr. Mark Collins for the English revision.

⁹⁵ Ethnographic note taken during an interview with Zhang Yuren 張育人 on 08.03.2017 in Pingyao, Shanxi.

⁹⁶ Also written *chundian* 唇典, which is translated as "argot" or "codeword."

⁹⁷ *Baobiao Shenghuo*, pp. 236-238.

linguistic codes that are characteristic of the *hanghua* 行話, or “professional language.”⁹⁸

The role of martial arts may have been more dissuasive than effective. In other words, the martial skills of the escorts had to intimidate the robbers and favour the negotiation of a “passage fee.” This peaceful means of exchange was to encourage the dynamism of commercial activities and increase the lucrative nature of escort activities.⁹⁹ The interaction of the social group represented by the “merchants/escorts/brigands” trio, built upon mutual interest, can therefore be described as a set of forces within which the agents involved can guarantee their existence only through “working collectively towards an agreement.”¹⁰⁰

In addition, the protection of these convoys, which covered a vast network of trade routes linked together by important commercial hubs, would in return significantly contribute to the economic development of the provinces concerned by this trade.¹⁰¹ Again, the emergence of the escort profession proved to be particularly rewarding for peasants, and also became a means of recognition and social ascension.¹⁰²

Finally, the building of railways, the evolution of means of communication and of the banking system among others, but also the progressive collapse of Shanxi merchant’s activities during the Qing-Republic transition, led to the obsolescence of *biaojū*. Nowadays, the escort profession has disappeared, however, the escort’s martial art practices—the Dai’s know-how for instance—although certainly different in form from what they were in the *biaojū* times, are still transmitted in Shanxi province, as well as outside China.

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⁹⁸ However, this mode of communication cannot be defined as a sociolect. Indeed, its exclusive nature fosters a secret mutual understanding, limited only to the field of action between escorts and brigands, and it is not implemented in all known marginal spaces.

⁹⁹ Max Weber 1995, p. 137.

¹⁰⁰ Bourdieu 1994, pp. 54-55.

¹⁰¹ Liu Jiansheng 2014, pp. 28-37.

¹⁰² Qu Yanbin 1991, pp. 123-141.

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LITERATURE AND IDENTITY: THE MOTIF OF “LAMENT FOR THE SOUTH” DURING THE MING-QING TRANSITION

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The Ming Empire had faced a series of domestic troubles and foreign invasions during the reign of emperors Tianqi 天啓 (r. 1621-1628) and Chongzhen 崇禎 (r. 1628-1644). On the one hand, areas of northern China were overrun by non-Chinese nomadic peoples who came to establish states of their own.¹ On the other hand, the empire was torn apart by various peasant uprisings provoked by extreme weather events, heavy taxes and food shortages.² The fall of the Ming Dynasty was followed by decades of disunity amid warfare between the Manchu regime which had yet gained full control of China and the rival Southern Ming courts (emperors Hongguang 弘光, Longwu 隆武, Shaowu 紹武, and Yongli 永曆, and the Prince of Lu regent 潞王監國) existing from 1644 to 1661.

The Ming-Qing dynastic transition was of crucial importance in the late history of imperial China. Although conventionally 1645 marks the year in which the Qing Dynasty replaced the preceding Ming Dynasty, it is inaccurate to assume China changes all at once. The Southern Ming courts and loyalists' resistance survived for decades, which made the change of ruling house a messy and prolonged affair. The transition of contentious politics during this period has received most analytical attention from historians.³

¹ A multitude of ethnonyms that denote non-Chinese nomadic peoples can be found in different kinds of primary sources. Instead of referring to them by any particular language, geographic place, or cultural complex, I choose not to translate the terms specifically. When these are clearly used in opposition to “Chinese” and similar terms, I translate them as “non-Chinese” depending on the context.

² James B. Parsons provides scatter diagrams of peasant rebellions year by year from 1628 to 1642, with two “cumulative maps.” Although social turmoil was certainly a critical factor in the fall of the Ming Dynasty, it appears that the severe and persistent drought was the more direct cause of widespread famine and peasant rebellions that eventually overthrew the Ming Empire before the invasion of Manchus. See Parsons 1970, pp. 86-87.

³ In the last three decades, a spate of research brought to light the dynamics of contentious politics during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition. These studies suggested that although this was a period when China witnessed profound changes in the social, political, and economic landscape, the Qing rulers retained or adapted the Ming's institutions of bureaucratic

Still, previous studies tend to take politics out of its spiritual-moral context. As Tze-ki Hon points out:

[The] “Records of the Ming Loyalists” showed that the Ming-Qing transition was more a moral struggle than a change in political power [...]. The Ming-Qing transition started a long racial war between the Han Chinese and the Manchu [...]. The racial war was first fought in the battlefields; it was later turned into a long moral struggle that lasted for three hundred years.⁴

These drastic changes in the political power had a major impact on people not only at the physical level but also at the psychological one. Ming remnants whose deepest psychological forces of the minds were touched by the rise and fall of the Ming Dynasty continued to see salvation in the adherence to proper identity rather than in a change of institutions.⁵ Having been imposed on competing moral demands and responsibilities, they played an active role in leading resistance in all fields. Literature was used by them as a vehicle for social criticism and emotional expression, one of the most successful of which was written by adherents of the former dynasty under the motif of “lament for the South.”⁶ Traditionally, Yu Xin 庾信 (513-581) was looked on as the patriarch of this well-known motif.⁷ He was born in the South but forced to relocate to northern China after the South’s defeat, and spent the rest of his life writing of the loss of the South as a loss of an entire culture and way of life.⁸

government. Just as David Ownby said, “[t]he Manchus succeeded in refurbishing crumbling Ming institutions so that the late imperial regime, altered only superficially in the change of dynasties, continued to function for another two hundred years, until threats of a rather different order began to bring China’s imperial model of government to an end.” See Ownby 1998, p. 87.

⁴ Hon 2013, p. 108.

⁵ I designate the term *Ming yimin* 明遺民 as the “Ming remnants.” The late Ming loyalist poet-scholar Gui Zhuang 歸莊 (1613-1673) once drew a boundary between the term “remnant subjects” (*yimin* 遺民) and the term “eremitic/reclusive subjects” (*yimin* 逸民). He finds that, “in the case of those who encompass the Way, embrace virtue, and yet are not employed in the world, they are called ‘eremitic subject.’ But remnant subjects exist only at the margins of decline and rise, [and the term] refers to those who are left behind by the former dynasty [...]. That is why the designation of remnant subjects hinges on the decision to leave or participate [in the new order] at the moment of [dynastic transition] and does not depend on the illustriousness or obscurity of a lifetime.” See Gui Zhuang’s preface to *Lidai Yimin Lu* 歷代遺民錄, *Guizhuang Ji*, pp. 170-171. For the translation of this citation see Idema, Li and Widmer 2006, p. 7. There are a few different translations of the same term, for instance, “Han dissident”, see Lydia Liu 2006, p. 72. On “Ming adherents”, see Crossley 2002, p. 119.

⁶ He Shijian 2015.

⁷ As William Graham mentioned, “[t]he ‘Lament’ is always paired with the ‘Li sao’, for the best of reasons; the opening genealogy alone would be enough to place it in the ‘Li sao’ tradition”, however, “the ‘Lament’ itself resists categorization, there is nothing else quite like it in Chinese literature.” See Graham 1980, p. 41.

⁸ Xiaofei Tian 2010, p. 270.

The long poem, “*Fu* on the Lament for the South” 哀江南賦 (FLS hereinafter), being hailed as perhaps the highest development of the *fu* form of poetry, is Yu’s most famous piece. It has long been credited for brimming with literary allusions and rhetorical ornaments.⁹ His lament over the passing of the Liang Dynasty was set in a long poetic meditation on his own life, his family, and the fate of his dynasty.¹⁰ It became a literary motif in the guise of “Southerners lamenting for the South”, which contributed towards the development of the theme, whereas the theme of the “FLS” was disputed. It was judged by the choice of title that the twin themes of Yu’s work were his own exile and the fall of a state.¹¹

After its completion in the 570s, it not only became a model for the northern poets of the late 6th century, but also produced a far-reaching influence. The activities of further annotations, notes and commentaries on this magnum opus continued to thrive.¹² The canonical status of the “FLS” has been almost irreversibly secured while the formation of the canon was occurring in a long-term process.¹³

The motif of “Lament for the South” as an accumulative and persistent literary reservoir which endured the vicissitudes of time was continued to be widely written during the Ming-Qing transition. Inspired by Yu, a large number of texts—such as “*Fu* on Great Sorrow” 大哀賦 (FGS hereinafter) and “*Fu* on Lament for the South (Sequel)” 續哀江南賦 (FLSS hereinafter), have arisen

⁹ Murck 2000, pp. 18-19.

¹⁰ Owen 1990.

¹¹ The title of “FLS” is taken from the last line of “Zhao Hun” 招魂 [The Summons of the Soul]: “O soul, come back! Alas for the Southern Land!” See *The Lament for the South: Yu Hsin’s ‘Ai Chiang-nan fu’*, p. 104.

¹² The date was disputed. There are mainly six different opinions. It was written (1) in the year 578, the first year of the Xuanzheng era of Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou (see Chen Yinke 1941); (2) during the Tianhe 天和 (566-572) era of Emperor Wu’s reign (see Wang Zhongyong 1988); (3) in December 557 (see Lu Tongqun 1997, p. 110); (4) in December 568 (see Niu Guihu 2000); (5) in December 566 (see Lin Yi 2000); (6) in December 557 (see Hu Zheng 2004). The earliest collection of Yu’s works was made in 579 by Yu’s patron, Yuwen You 宇文逌 (556-581). According to Yuwen’s preface, this edition which is no longer extant consisted of twenty *juan* containing Yu’s writings being composed during the Wei and Zhou periods. The monograph on bibliography of the *Suishu* 隋書 lists Yu’s collection in twenty-one *juan*. Scholars have speculated that the additional *juan* included Yu’s poems that he had written in the South. During the Tianbao 天寶 era (742-756) of Emperor Xuanzong’s reign, this edition still circulated among the people. The “FLS” was collated by three important commentators of the period (i.e. Wang Daogui 王道珪, Zhang Tingfang 張庭芳, and Cui Lingqin 崔令欽). The two Tang histories record a collection in twenty *juan* which may have been a re-editing of the twenty-*juan* version being lost during the Song. The surviving collections are all reconstructions. The best one is by Ni Fan 倪璠, which is dated 1687.

¹³ During the process of canon formation of this motif, Du Fu’s (712-770) works stand out among many later imitations. For the influence Yu exerted on Du, the great Tang poet and admirer of Yu, see Mc Craw 1992, pp. 186-196.

since then. A great deal of modern scholarship has been focused on the imitations or variations on the literary styles under this established motif, and the usual way to approach the works of the Ming-Qing transitional period is to view them in the light of Ming remnants' reception of the "FLS" and fit the works back into the setting that produced them.¹⁴

Nevertheless, there is another dimension to these works that has been overlooked by most critics: Yu's *fu* barely contains any racial prejudice towards the northerners of his generation. On the contrary, while adhering to the conventions of Yu's "FLS", Ming remnants managed to record their reactions to the real situations with special emphasis on their intense griefs over identity, and engage in serious discussions about the racial issues facing them through the poetic medium. Thus, their works undertook a different transformation during the emergence of discourse on the distinction between *hua* and *yi*.

1. *The Motif in Poetry and Fu*

By 1644, desperation among the rural poor, declining fiscal control, and a renewed challenge from the North brought down the Ming Dynasty, leaving Ming remnants devastated and heartbroken. Qing army had successfully pushed the Southern Ming deep into southern China. Despite the setback of 1644, Ming loyalism was not dead yet. Their defense lasted until the mid-17th century.¹⁵ One of the reasons that pushed the Ming remnants to organize support for the Ming regimes was their "genuine pride and belief in basic Ming institutions which were seen as having undergirded for almost three centuries a major, successful, indigenous ruling order."¹⁶

This motif of "Lament for the South" has formed the basis of innumerable poems. Qian Zhonglian's 錢仲聯 collection of poems by Ming loyalists,

¹⁴ The function of style, vocabulary and allusion which the motif of the cannon serves throughout the history has been explored by Cheng Yu-yu (2001) who lays stress on the weight of established canons. She points out that in the motif of "Lament for the South", the specialized subspecies represented by Xia Wanchun's "*Fu* on Great Sorrow" are not only directly modeled after Yu's "FLS", but also influenced by the conventions of *Chu Ci*.

¹⁵ In 1644, Li Zicheng's soldiers breached the walls of Beijing. The Chongzhen Emperor committed suicide the next day to avoid humiliation at their hands. Remnants of the Ming imperial family and some court ministers then sought refuge in the southern part of China and regrouped around Nanjing, the Ming auxiliary capital, south of the Yangtze River. Four different power groups emerged: (1) loyalists fled to Nanjing, where they enthroned the Zhu Yousong, Prince of Fu. The Nanjing regime lasted until 1645, when the Qing captured Nanjing; (2) the Shun Dynasty, led by Li Zicheng, ruled north of the Huai River; (3) Zhang Xianzhong's Great Western regime controlled Sichuan province; (4) the Manchu-founded Qing Dynasty controlled the northeast area beyond the Shanhai Pass, as well as many of the Mongol tribes.

¹⁶ Struve 1984, p. 195.

Qingshi Jishi 清詩紀事, yields two poems titled “Ai Jiangnan” 哀江南 by Chen Que 陳確 (1604-1677) and Qian Bingdeng 錢秉鐙 (1612-1694).

Chen Que’s “Ai Jiangnan” comprises three sub-topics. The first topic is “Ai Fanping” 哀藩屏, which describes the lamentation for loyalists and resentment for defectors. After the Hongguang Emperor’s enthronement in Nanjing, four defense areas along the southern bank of the Yellow River were designated by the Southern Ming Court to deal with challenges from the Qing. The governors of these defense areas who paid attention only to their own selfish interests defected to the enemy except Marquis Huang Degong 黃得功 (?-1645) of Jingnan 靖南 who fought to the death. The second topic is “Ai Chaoting” 哀朝廷, which is a lamentation for the lack of trustworthy and capable officials. While the Qing troops met little resistance from the Hongguang government, crafty and fawning officials made the Hongguang Emperor a mere figurehead. The third topic is “Ai Jinling” 哀金陵, which describes the lamentation for the fall of the Hongguang regime. In the last stanza of the poem, Chen Que addresses the deeply ingrained distinction between *hua* and *yi*:

百代儒冠淪草莽，六朝宮粉汙羶腥。

High Confucian caps passed down from generation to generation were laid waste; palace ladies of the Six Dynasties were deflowered by disgusting barbarians.

契丹莫漫貪降晉，自古南人不易平。

Khitan should never cast greedy eyes on the surrendered Jin; southerners will not be easily conquered at all times.¹⁷

The high Confucian cap (*ruguan* 儒冠), which refers specifically to the severed feature of Chinese narratives, was emblematic of the Confucians. It underscores, in its symbolism, the deeply ceremonial, ritualistic or performative aspects of identity. The southerners’ defiant gesture of refusing to yield to the Khitan, a nomadic people from Northeast Asia, was not only an elite response but served also to unite men across classes.

Another notable poem echoing Yu is Qian Bingdeng’s “Ai Jiangnan.” In 1645—two years after the dramatic suicide of Chongzhen—Qian Bingdeng composed a set of poems telling the stories of as many as thirty-nine Ming martyrs. The heroic Ming remnants’ resistance to the Manchus was enshrined in these romantic accounts, encouraging the emotional outpourings of grief for their demise.

If we take the terms “Ai” and “Jiangnan” more broadly as an emotional experience, then poems on the theme of lamentation of the conquered south are ubiquitous from the Ming-Qing transitional period.¹⁸ Chen Hu’s 陳瑚

¹⁷ *Chen Queji*, pp. 743-744.

¹⁸ Zhuo Ercan’s 卓爾堪 (ca. 1653-1712) collection includes more than three thousand

(1613-1675) “Bei Hongdu” 悲洪都, Qian Bingdeng’s “Bei Xiangtan” 悲湘潭, “Bei Xingfeng” 悲信豐, and “Bei Nanchang” 悲南昌, Shen Hanguang’s 申涵光 (1618-1677) “Ai Liumin” 哀流民, Yan Ermei’s 閻爾梅 (1603-1679) “Xi Yangzhou” 惜揚州, and Gui Zhuang’s 歸莊 (1613-1673) “Bei Kunshan” 悲崑山 all draw heavily on Yu’s “FLS.”

Yu’s influence over other literary forms of the post-Chongzhen suicide period can hardly be overemphasized. Let alone poetry, this reveals the extensive range of genres which the motif has inspired. Jia Fuxi’s 賈鳳西 (ca.1590-1676) epilogue of *Drum-Ballad on History Through Ages* (*Lidai Shilüe Guci* 歷代史略鼓詞) portrays the desolate state of Jinling in the late 1640s.¹⁹ It includes seven songs entitled “Ai Jiangnan” 哀江南, which are sung to the style of Yiyang 弋陽. The “Jiangnan” in these songs refers to Jinling, where the Southern Ming Court was located. The seven songs consist of an introduction and six laments for the historical sites of Jinling.

All the above-mentioned authors may have individual style and approach to the narration of “Ai Jiangnan”, however, they have at least one thing in common: they all stress the significance in recovering both the lost Ming territories and identities. Constrained by the specific characteristics of each genre, these works are not a perfect example of the motif of “Lament for the South.”

1.2 The Motif in *Fu*

While works from different genres may tackle the same motif, they often do so in a way that is befitting the genre itself. The better examples of motif directly modeled after Yu’s work is *fu*. Within the *fu* genre, a couple of the painstaking writings, to a certain degree, forge an enduring link with of Yu’s “FLS.”

Works in different genres will, by nature, approach similar motif in different ways, but works in the same genre will not necessarily handle an issue the same way. For example, “Ai Jiangnan” is handled very differently in Yu’s work than in Ming remnants’ works. In the former, the mourning for Jiangnan does not take on ethnic overtones, while in the latter, “Ai Jiangnan” is something much more complicated.

Xia Wanchun 夏完淳 (1631-1647) was a literary prodigy who started writing poetry at a very young age. In the wake of the fall of the auxiliary capital Nanjing, the net around Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608-1647), the spiritual leader of the revolt, was tightened. As his right-hand men, Xia’s family was tracked down. After his father’s suicide over the failure of the anti-Qing movement, Xia

poems of four hundred poets. See Zhuo Ercan 1961. Zhang Qigan’s 張其淦 (1859-1946) collection includes more than one thousand nine hundred poems of five hundred and eighty poets. See Zhang Qigan 1985.

¹⁹ Zhao Yingzhi 2014, pp. 216-217.

sold off the family assets to fund another campaign in support of the Ming Dynasty. He joined the group of the Lake Tai bandits which was crushed by the Manchu conquerors. At the age of sixteen, Xia was arrested and beheaded for conspiring with the Southern Ming.²⁰ He wrote a number of *fu* while fleeing his hometown of Songjiang (county in modern Shanghai) in the face of an invading Qing army. His most melancholic piece is "Da'ai *Fu*" 大哀賦 [*Fu* on Great Sorrow], in which he gives expression to his political aspiration and his battlefield experience in the larger context of the destruction of Jiangnan. This *fu* is extolled as second only to Yu's.²¹

Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623-1716), a native of Xiaoshan in Zhejiang province, was a Chinese scholar and philologist of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. After the fall of the Ming in 1644, he took part in the anti-Qing military campaign led by the Prince of Lu. When the rebel came to an end, he refused to serve the Qing government in the first place.²² The "*Fu* on Lament for the South (Sequel)" 續哀江南賦 was written around 317, when he withdrew from a combat role and sought refuge in remote mountains. The text is, unfortunately not extant nowadays.²³

Shen Shihan 沈世涵 (dates unknown) is a native of Jiaxing in Zhejiang province who lived during the difficult times of the Ming-Qing transition. His "*Fu* on Lament for the South (Sequel)" 續哀江南賦 is dedicated to the motif of "Lament for the South." The text is contained in *Zaolin Zazu* 棗林雜俎 by Tan Qian 談遷 (1593-1657).²⁴ It is hard to tell the exact date of writing, but according to the textual meaning of this *fu*, it is estimated that it was written slightly after 1646.²⁵

²⁰ For the chronology of Xia's Life, see *Mingshi*, *juan* 277, pp. 7098-7099. Also see Michael 1985, p. 749.

²¹ Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709) proposed that the only comparable treatment of this motif is in Xia's "FGS." See *Jingju zhi Shihua*, *juan* 21, p. 644.

²² For the chronology of Mao's Life, see Tu Lien-chê 1943, pp. 563-564.

²³ The *juan* of Mao's collection containing the text of "FGSS" had been lost. See *Xihe Wenji*, p. 2073.

²⁴ *Zaolin Zazu*, pp. 262-265.

²⁵ In Shen's "FLSS", there are a few messages conveyed between the lines. See for instance "[the *xiongnu*] stopped a horse on top of Mt. Wu. He hunted elks at the waterside of Gusu Terrace (立馬於吳山之顛, 射麋於蘇臺之)". "[The Qing army] drew the bow from the shore of the Dongting Lake. They arrayed troops for battle at the south side of Taihu Lake (控弦洞庭之浦, 校陣彭蠡之陰)." "[The Qing] army brandished their weapons in Hankou. The Ming defenders surrendered without fighting in Shouchun (戈既揮於漢臯, 守無聞於壽春)." "The souls of those died in battle wandered on the Phoenix Terrace. The flame of fen-fire guttered on the small piece of land surrounded by the Xiang River (殤魂遊於鳳凰之臺, 鬼火亂於瀟湘之渚)." "The empire was once united in one household. It relies on the Southeast as a natural defense. By employing the worthless and crafty, they took the whole Jianghuai Plain—which is found between the Yangtze and Huai rivers—and threw it away (昔天下之一家, 倚

When it comes to the literary borrowings from Yu, there are commonalities between the poems and *fu* written by Ming remnants. In terms of the aspects of borrowings, they can be divided into the following categories: (1) the title, (2) the verbal structure, (3) the topic, (4) a combination of the aforementioned.

1.2.1 Title

Xia's "*Fu* on Great Sorrow" clearly is a continuation of Yu's "FLS", while Shen's "*Fu* on Lament for the South (Sequel)", as the title itself suggests, is the closest to "FLS."

1.2.2 Vocabulary

The vocabulary available to Ming writers of *fu* on the motif of "Lament for the South" was sometimes limited to what their predecessor, Yu, had used. Yu's poetic exposition provides a blueprint for the sorts of topics to be mentioned and phrases to be employed when describing the ruined Jiangnan.

1.2.3 Paragraph

Yu's "FLS" offers a melancholic narrative that illustrates an episode of mass murder and mass looting committed by Hou Jing (503-552) troops against the residents of Nanjing.

崩於鉅鹿之沙，碎於長平之瓦。於是桂林顛覆，長洲麋鹿。潰潰沸騰，茫茫慘黷。天地離阻，神人慘酷。晉鄭靡依，魯衛不睦。競動天關，爭回地軸。探雀穀而未飽，待熊蹯而詎熟？乃有車側郭門，筋懸廟屋。鬼同曹社之謀，人有秦庭之哭。

Crumbled like the sand of Chu-lu. Broke up like the tiles at Ch'ang-p'ing. Cassia Forest was laid waste. Long Isle stripped of its deer. Turbulent, boiling. Disordered, chaotic. Heaven and Earth were cut off from us. Spirits and men vented their wrath. Chin and Cheng refused to help. Lu and Wei were not in harmony. They struggled to move the gate of Heaven. Fought to turn the axis of the Earth. He hunted for young sparrows, without satisfying his hunger. Waited for bear's paws, but no one would cook them. Then chariots were buried by the outer gate. One was hung by the tendons from the roof of the temple. Ghosts planned as at the altar of Ts'ao. Men mourned as in the Court of Ch'in.²⁶

東南之藩蔽。自付託之庸邪，舉江淮而全棄)." These descriptions correspond with the facts of the Hongguang Emperor's execution in 1645, the joint military alliance between the Great Western and Longwu regimes in 1646, and the demise of the four designated defense commanders along the southern bank of the Yellow River in the same year. See Gu Chen 2011, pp. 112-143, 235-236, 286-309.

²⁶ 'The Lament for the South': Yu Hsin's 'Ai Chiang-nan fu', lines 213-230, pp. 75-77.

Comparison Chart

Yu's "FLS"		Xia's "FGS"	Shen's "FLSS"
Line 106 Pheasants cackled in the palaces. 宮鳴野雉。		At the passes pheasants cackled in the palaces. 爾乃宮鳴野雉	
Line 108 The Yu-huang ship ran around. 餘艦失水。	The Yu-huang ships used to carry out a drill stretched eight hundred <i>li</i> . 組練餘艦者八百里。		The Yu-huang ships vanished without trace. 餘艦煙散。
Line 125-129 The jackal was sharpening its teeth in secret. The viper was blowing out its poison unnoticed. Thinking about the nine cauldrons light, he was about to inquire Though cut off by three rivers, he would finally peer in. 豺牙密厲，虺毒潛吹。輕九鼎而欲問，聞三川而遂窺。		The viper was blowing out its poison fiercely. The jackal was sharpening its teeth furiously. 虺毒吹熾，豺牙橫厲。	
Line 481-482 If others had not been removed, how could he have risen? 不有所廢，其何以昌？		If Heaven had not interposed, how could he have risen? 天之所廢，其何以昌。	
Line 489-492 By employing worthless upstarts, they took the whole South and threw it away. One grieves that the empire, united in one household. Should have met with rebellion in the Southeast. 用無賴之子弟，舉江東而全棄。惜天下之一家，遭東南之反氣。		By employing the worthless and crafty. They took the whole Jianghuai (the Yangtze and Huai rivers) Valley and threw it away. 自付托之庸邪，舉江淮而全棄。	The empire was once united in one household. It relies on the Southeast as a natural defense. 昔天下之一家，倚東南之藩蔽。

The very scene of utter destruction of the War of Nanjing is reminiscent of the aftermath of Yangzhou massacre.

嗟乎揚州歌舞之場，雷塘羅衣之地。一旦煙空，千秋景異。馬嘶隋苑之風，蜃吐海門之氣。潮上廣陵而寂寞，枝發瓊花而憔悴。巨鹿沙崩，長平瓦碎。豺虎相鄰，蛟鯢遠退。

Alas! Yangzhou was once a metropolis where song and dance flourished. Leitang was once a place where poets gathered. All vanish in an instant. The face of the city has been fundamentally changed. As the horse neighs, it blows the Sui palatial garden in the wind. As the clam opens its shell, it envelops the area in a mirage. The city of Guangling above the tides was changed into a solitary place. The branches with viburnum on them became wan and fallow. Crumbled like the sand of Julu. Broke up like the tiles at Changping. Tigers and jackals are drawing near. Flood dragons and female whales are fleeing.²⁷

The quoted passage is taken from Xia's piece “FGS.” The consuming flames of war spread over the greatest part of the Jiangnan area. After the debacle of the war, Yangzhou was never the same again. In Xia's time, it lay abandoned after being ruined in the battle.

1.2.4 Structure

Moreover, the Ming writers adopt the structure of Yu's “FLS.” For the convenience of comparison, the compendium below is made to bring together the Ming-dynasty *fu* in Yu's “FLS” meter, which as a whole shares a stable and coherent frame of reference.

1) A Preface in which the Author Gives the Reasons for Writing the *fu*

Yu was explicit about his intention to write the “FLS” as a means of reflecting upon the events that led to the fall of the Liang, and also as a means of relating his personal experience from the early life at the Liang Court to the time not too long before he died.²⁸ He gives an account of his entire life, spanning four different dynasties. Later generations would learn of the chaos that had taken place in the South through his writing. As much as Xia and Shen tried to dispel their sorrow, they both have unceasing anguish in their hearts. The grief was their first reason for writing the *fu*.²⁹

²⁷ Xia Jiemín *Quanjī*, p. 16.

²⁸ The preface to the “FLS” reads: “So looking back I wrote this *fu*. That it might serve as a record. Not without words of fear and suffering. It is still, at the core, a lament (追為此賦，聊以記言。不無危苦之辭，惟以悲哀為主).” See *The Lament for the South: Yu Hsin's 'Ai Chiang-nan fu'*, lines 31-34, pp. 52-53.

²⁹ The preface to the “FGS” reads: “Had it not been for a bit of self-commiseration now and

They also realized that it was necessary to reminisce about the past and change the memory of the past into a hope for the future.

2) Lineage Tracing: The Previous Dynasty in Retrospect

From lines 1-80—"we aided the Chou as Director of Granaries, for generations of service being granted that name"—to "or for Feng T'ang to assess the generals' merits", Yu traces his lineage directly back to the Zhou Dynasty. He laments the fact that in his family history his ancestry was originally from the North. Seven generations ago his great-grandparents settled in the South, but now he is forced to return to the North. The heavenly will moves in a full circle and governs people's lives.³⁰ It invoked memories of the early years of his official career in the Liang Dynasty, and a time of great prosperity under the reign of Emperor Wu of the Liang. These autobiographies all set against the backdrop of the situation of the time.

In the second section of Ming writers' *fu*—in "FGS", lines from "Alas! The yellow banners and the purple roofs" 嗚呼! 黃旗紫蓋 to "the divination predicted the dynasty last longer than the Shang and Zhou dynasties" 尚殷周而卜年; and in "FLSS", lines from "climbing an islet in the river and looking around" 臨江皋以四望兮 to "yi are captured in a flash" 不旋踵而夷囚—a partly autobiographical passage also serves as a bridge across time, connecting the past to the present. The Ming writers had the impression that the Ming Empire attained its zenith of power and glory during the reign of Emperor Taizu (r. 1368-1398). Being aware of the forthcoming attack, they find fault with the present by eulogizing the golden age of the past.

3) Hidden Crisis Lurking in the Time of Peace and Prosperity

From lines 81-140—"who could have told that mountains and peaks were blazing inside"—to "unicorns fought on the east tomb mound", Yu reminds how things went steadily downhill. In the later phase of the Emperor Wu's reign (502-549), Hou Jing secretly slipped out of the Liang's control. With the reduction of armaments and military training, the Liang royal court gradually slid into its decay. It was followed by abnormal astronomical events which were generally translated as inauspicious.

In the third section of Ming writers' *fu*—in "FGS", lines from "who could

again, I would not be here to complain. In an effort to find consolation, I write this *fu* (已矣何言, 哀哉自悼。聊為茲賦, 以舒鬱懷。)" See *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjia*, p. 2. The preface to the "FLSS" reads: "Those who were rendered homeless by war all left behind a literary legacy. The motives for writing are historical impulse and political purpose (並在亂離, 咸有著述。興言往吊, 追賦斯篇。)" See *Zaolin Zazu*, p. 262.

³⁰ Archie Chi Chung Lee 2008, p. 128.

have told that the bright moon would eventually disappear behind the clouds” (不意瑤輪無長炯之期) to “or the ceremonial guards went on an expedition” (或班劍以任鼓鉦); and in “FLSS”, lines from “the palace maids indulged in the pursuit of pleasure” (於是士女遊冶) to “the act of begging for food had not ceased” (猶呼庚而未止)—the Ming Empire plunged into a state of civil war, with much of the state overrun by peasant rebellions. Simultaneously, the Empire was embroiled in military threats from Mongols and Manchus along the borders. On top of that, it was divided by intense political bickering between competing political groups, such as the Donglin Faction, and the Eunuch Faction.³¹ All these power abuses resulted in rampant corruptions and illegal dealings. The steady decline of the Ming Dynasty has been predicted like the bad fortune caused by the occurrence of a celestial phenomenon.

4) Swaying in the Midst of a Raging Storm

From lines 141-230—“he then stirred up the unruly” to “men mourned as in the Court of Ch’in”—Yu talks about the moments of profound grief on Jiangnan. Hou declared a rebellion in summer 548. In winter of the same year, he arrived at Jiankang and immediately put the capital under siege. Next year Emperor Wu deceased, and Yu’s whole world therewith was subverted. He experienced great personal distress when fleeing to Jiangling where the administrative headquarter of Prince of Xiangdong was based. His family was also caught up in the fire. The vast region of Jiangnan had suffered a lot from chaos and instability.

An equivalent can be found in the fourth section of Ming writers’ *fu*—in “FGS”, lines from “ultimately the army of Yellow Turbans and Black Calves clustered together” (卒之黃巾黑犢之屯聚) to “men and women were immersed in the suffering of shaving heads” (薙髮有髡髻之累); and in “FLSS”, lines from “at the passes pheasants cackled in the palaces” (爾乃宮鳴野雉) to “the crisis deepened, only leaving behind a good reputation” (獨名存而禍酷). In 1644, when Li Zicheng 李自成 (1606-1645) launched a major attack on the Ming Empire and sacked the capital Beijing, Chongzhen Emperor committed suicide by hanging himself on a tree. After the combined forces of the defecting Ming and Qing generals inflicted a devastating defeat on Li’s army in May 1644 at the Battle of Shanhai Pass, Li fled from Beijing towards his base in Shanxi. On the downfall of Beijing, the Prince of Fu was then enthroned as Emperor Hongguang.

The Yangtze River became, in the 17th century, the only immediate natural barrier separating Jiangnan from the Manchu regime. Shi Kefa’s 史可法

³¹ The Ming Dynasty marks the climax of eunuch power. There is a correlation between the decline of the emperors’ interest in government and the increase in eunuch power. See Crawford 1961, pp. 115-148. For a discussion of the Donglin Faction’s critical stance towards the domination of the eunuchs at the Ming Court, Ono 1995. See also Dardess 2002.

(1601-1645) riverine troops were positioned to counter the incoming aggression from Qing. The rotten Ming rulers indulged in factional disputes which facilitated the Qing's capture of Yangzhou. This resulted in the Yangzhou massacre and the death of Shi in May 1645. It also led directly to the failure of Nanjing regime. Plundered and burned by the Qing army, Jiangnan was no longer what it used to be. The remaining unoccupied territory was on the brink of disintegration.

5) A Pleasant Interlude in the Dark History

From lines 231-394 "at the passes I pretended [to make] official business" to "the year of the entry into Ying had come", Yu takes on a soft tone. There were some encouraging signs that the flagging dynasty would be revitalized. Of the Liang potentates, the one with the most military strength at their disposal was the Prince of Xiangdong, Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (r. 552-555). For years he contended with a succession of rival brothers. After he achieved overwhelming superiority over his rivals, he redeployed the commanders and other units to quell Hou's rebellion in 552.

There also occurred a turn to the brighter side in the fifth section of Ming writers' *fu*—in "FGS", lines from "numerous heroes rose up in arms" (於是竿木群興) to "encounter merciless Heaven" (丁窮酷之蒼天); and in "FLSS", lines from "Lord Xin Ling of the Wei stole the commander's seal to lift the siege of Zhao" (爰有河橋魏將之符) to "there are no more dragons, earthworms, and ants" (別無虬龍之與螾蟻). The Qing's ethnic oppression brought out a resurgence of local loyalist military participation. Additionally, peasant militias and other alien ethnic groups in northern China took up arms against Qing armies. The latter was forced to call a temporary halt to the military advance and withdraw their forces from the front line near the Huai River. The concurrent rebellion of former Ming generals helped the Hongguang regime retake most of southern China, leaving the Qing in control of only a few enclaves in the north of the Huai River.

6) Situation Deteriorating at a Rapid Pace

Form lines 395-494 "Chou had incurred the wrath of Cheng" to "how could God have been so drunk", Yu reverts to a subject which is uppermost in his mind. Xiao Yi turned the tables on Hou and was crowned as Emperor Yuan of the Liang in December 552. However, his position was at stake, for he was both under assault from the Western Wei in the north and the Chengdu regime established by his brother Xiao Ji 蕭紀 (508-553) in the southwest. In November 554, the Western Wei raided Jiangling. Xiao Cha 蕭譽 (519-562), Xiao Yi's nephew, defected to the Wei. In December Jiangling was surrounded by the Wei army and in January next year it was stormed. Xiao Yi together with

his royal family were captured. Yu attributes the tragedy of the Liang to its rulers' wrong policy of appointing worthless officials to key positions, and to the mismanagement of rebellious factions within the country.

Ming writers had to face the harsh reality of being powerless to avert the fall of the country as expounded in the sixth section of their *fu*—in “FGS”, lines from “then the capital was established in the South” 若乃天南鼎定 to “what else can I say” (已矣何言); and in “FLSS”, lines from “the day dawn is breaking in the north wind” 於是胡風曉白 to “indeed a piece of firm and unyielding iron” (實鐵中之錚錚). The loyalist militias enjoyed a few small victories over the Qing army when Yongli, Longwu, and the Prince of Lu regent ruled over Jiangnan briefly as the emperors of the short-lived Southern Ming Dynasty. Yet the Southern Ming continued to be plagued by internal strife among the Donglin 東林 Faction, the Eunuch Faction, and other groups searching for political interests. Aside from that, the several Southern Ming regimes failed to cooperate, making their chances of success even lower. The Qing Empire sent these regimes into disarray after building up well-fed and well-supplied troops. Being significantly outnumbered and overpowered, this wave of resurgence sadly fell into ruins. Either fate or mistakes in the Ming government could explain the destruction of the once mighty Ming Empire.

7) An Exquisitely Moving and Tragic Finale

From lines 495-520 “the heavens move in circles” to “among the commoners of Hsien-yang, not only the Prince longs for home”, Yu became increasingly nostalgic for his home in the south and the depth of his grief intensified. As the calamity of Jingling unfolded, in the concluding paragraph the wandering poet laments the times have no chance to return.

In the final section of Ming writers' *fu*—in “FGS”, lines from “Alas! I was born during the reign of Chongzhen” (嗚呼！余生於烈皇之年) to “I rested my head on weapons and felt depressed” (枕戈而於邑者也); and in “FLSS”, lines from “trouble of Jingling arose” (原金陵之始禍) to “see changes that have been made to Jiangnan” (觀江南之變態)—the authors themselves had not faltered in their quest for upholding the institutions and etiquette even in the midst of national destruction. Given that rebel peasant militias were annihilated, loyalist resistance was suppressed, and the hopes of many Han Chinese were shattered, the Southern Ming regimes seemed powerless to stem the rising tide of the Qing Empire.

Referring back to the list of the above three *fu*, one will discover that the development of this motif follows an established sequence, and successive *fu* differ chiefly in length. By simply observing the striking resemblance these works bear to Yu's “FLS”, it appears that in this series both history and literature repeat themselves. They all give an impression of a few parallel sets of an interconnected history of turbulent times and chilling accounts of a destroyed Jiangnan.

2. The Evolution of the Identity in the Motif

2.1 Discourse on the Distinction between Hua and Yi and Its Origin³²

Having extrapolated these results from research done in recent years, modern scholarship identified that the conceived contrast between *hua* and *yi* was accentuated during the Eastern Zhou period (770-256 BC).³³

The terms *hua*, and *xia*, or *huaxia*, were used not only on the biological level, but also on the sociological one. The revered Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) was prompted to formulate principles for relationships with the barbarians, briefly recorded in his *Analects*:

夷狄之有君，不如諸夏之亡也。

The Yi and Di barbarian tribes with rulers are not as viable as the various Chinese states without them.

微管仲，吾其被髮左衽矣。

If there was no Guan Zhong, we would likely be wearing our hair loose and folding our robes to the left [which is the custom of the Di barbarians].³⁴

Confucius explicitly states that the civilization gap is one which cannot be bridged by establishing China's rule over non-Chinese peoples. As for Guan Zhong (ca. 723-645 BC), Confucius thinks that his chief contribution lies in preserving the essence of Chinese culture, including the ritually proper clothing of the dwellers of the Central Plain. Considered as one of the most influential Confucian scholars in Chinese history, Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) in his most important work—the *Wujing Zhengyi* 五經正義 [Correct Meaning of the Five Classics]—defines *huaxia* mainly as a civilized society which stands in contrast to what is perceived as the barbaric peoples around it:

中國有禮儀之大，故稱夏；有服章之美，謂之華。華、夏一也。

Xia—which has the meaning of “grand”, was used to signify the ceremonial etiquette of China, while *hua*—as it means “illustrious”, was used in reference to the beautiful clothing that the upper class wore.³⁵

The confederation of tribes collectively known as the *huaxia* lived along the

³² The Sinitic sources contain a plethora of terms relating to ethnicity but also an overarching dichotomy between two semantic categories that I shall designate using the two most representatives, and likely most common terms: *hua* and *yi*.

³³ Ge Zhaoguang 2011, p. 44.

³⁴ *Analects* 3.5 & 14.17, see Ames & Rosemont 1998.

³⁵ *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhengyi*, p. 1586.

Yellow River. The *huaxia* people were deemed to be the ancestor of what later became the Han ethnic group in China.³⁶ Having a superiority complex, they were convinced that they were geographically, culturally and ethnically distinct from the Four Barbarians bordering ancient China—namely, *dongyi*, *nanman*, *xirong*, and *beidi*.³⁷ In short, *huaxia*, surrounded by inferior ethnic groups in its four directions, was matched with a higher valued civilization that rejected the barbarians. The sinologist Yang Lien-sheng 楊聯陞 concludes that, “in theory, this hierarchical structure at least has three layers: ‘China’ is internal, large and high; while ‘barbarian tribes’ are external, small and low.”³⁸ This would, above all, assume that initially “territory” was a primary consideration in the discourse on the distinction between *hua* and *yi*, whereas the “consciousness of common origin” and other cultural factors, such as “language”, “the acceptance of certain forms of material culture”, “the adherence to certain rituals”, and “the way of life” later became of utmost importance.³⁹

This ethnocentrism, literally the Sinocentric worldview, has been held and observed by the great majority of Han Chinese from very ancient times. Rules and standards are specifically designed by the dominant group to create the Others—the non-Chinese—and set the latter in a disadvantaged position from the outset. Throughout Chinese history, the boundaries and definitions for such discourse have been fluid and disputed. Professor Lydia Liu’s observation concerning *yi* provides us with a foreground for the complexity of distinguishing between *hua* and *yi*:

Countless events and fantastic happenings have come to pass over the last two centuries, but none could rival the singularity of the Chinese word *yi* in its uncanny ability to arouse confusion, anxiety and war. *Yi* is one of those monstrous creatures one must reckon with, subdue, destroy, or exile before it comes back to haunt us. What is the meaning of this all powerful and dangerous word—“barbarian”, “stranger”, “foreigner”, or “non-Chinese”?⁴⁰

There is considerable ambiguity about the term *yi*. Although *yi* is often translated as “barbarian”, “stranger”, “foreigner”, or “non-Chinese”, it sometimes arbitrarily refers to generic “Others” regarded as ethnically or culturally different in general. Actually, the same also applies to the terms *man*,

³⁶ Cioffi-Revilla & Lai 1995.

³⁷ The *Zuozhuan* has an early usage of *man-yi-rong-di* 蠻夷戎狄 (meaning “all kinds of barbarians”) in Cheng 3, which reads: “When any of the wild tribes, south, east, west, or north, do not obey the king’s commands, and by their dissoluteness and drunkenness are violating all the duties of society, the king gives command to attack them.” Cf. Legge 1872, Vol. 5, p. 349. In Kriukov’s view, during about the middle of the first millennium BC barbarian tribes were classified schematically according to the four cardinal points of the compass. See Kriukov et al. 1978, pp. 272-282.

³⁸ Yin Haiguang 1990, pp. 184-185.

³⁹ Keightley 1983, p. 229.

⁴⁰ Lydia Liu 2006, p. 31.

rong, *di* and even *hua* itself. The impressive superstructure of the discourse on *hua* and *yi* rests on an extremely narrow base of politicized or outmoded theories, unspoken or unproven assumptions, and a penchant for compartmentalizing or simplifying the role of Chinese identity.⁴¹ The connotations of *hua* and *yi* are not fixed because the standard of differentiating the Chinese from the Others loses its consistency. Chinese and non-Chinese identities are determined by certain mixture of geographical, ethnical, or cultural standards. They exist in different proportions and in different times. In many respects, it kept evolving in different historical periods to make it suitable for new purposes or situations.

In other words, this fluidity left room for *yi* to become *xia* and vice versa, depending on whether they behave in *xia* ways or *yi* ways.⁴² Having realized that there was no clear and lasting boundary between them, Qian Mu 錢穆 remarked that: "If the various *xia* use the *yi* ritual, then they should be called *yi*. If they use Chinese rituals, then they should be called Chinese" 諸夏用夷禮則夷之, 夷狄用諸夏禮則諸夏之。⁴³

The discourse on the distinction between *hua* and *yi* could take political, ethnical or cultural overtones, especially in times of war. When this discourse took a more racial guise, however, it could have harmful effects on those groups not considered *hua*.

From its inception under Hongwu Emperor (1328-1398), the Ming Dynasty, the last era of indigenous Chinese rule, alternated between warfare and diplomacy with non-Chinese. When the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty ended, the emperor was advised to concentrate on defending against the *yi*, rather than attacking.⁴⁴ The "Imperial Edict on Running Schools in Commandaries and Districts" 命郡縣立學校詔 issued by Hongwu shows his bias in defending Chinese blood ties and cultural nexus:

自胡元入主中國，夷狄腥膻，污染華夏，學校廢弛，人紀蕩然。

Since the Mongols swept across China, *huaxia* has been contaminated with the toxic customs of *yi* and *di*. Traditional community schools have been discontinued from use and boycotted. Order in human relationships has completely lost.⁴⁵

In line with these views, he abolished, then re-instituted, and reinstated the Confucian civil service and imperial examination system.

Ming China entered the phase of a systemic breakdown in the middle of the

⁴¹ Abramson 2007, p. 2.

⁴² See the critique of He's position and the quoted passage by Kung-chuan Hsiao 1978, pp. 25, 137-140. Hsiao argued that the theory of "the adoption of Chinese ways to transform the barbarians" was an enduring theme in Chinese history.

⁴³ Qian Mu 1996, p. 57.

⁴⁴ Johnston 1998, p. 223.

⁴⁵ *Ming Taizu Shilu*, *juan* 46, pp. 924-925.

16th century.⁴⁶ Military and diplomatic successes provided incentives for nomads to move into closer contact with China. The Ming-Qing cataclysm of the mid-17th century was influential in stirring up the xenophobic sentiments of the Chinese. The Manchu military conquest in the 1660s revived the remembrance of China falling again to an alien kind. Ming holdouts went on to wage fierce battles against the Qing Dynasty to guard their identity. Being replaced with a sense of ethnocentric intolerance that extended to non-Chinese, this discourse helps reinforce, rather than revolutionize, the sense of dominion over cultural and ethnic outsiders.

After tracking the Chinese historical trajectory on the discursive relationship between Chinese and non-Chinese, one can find that the dividing line between *hua* and *yi* has been constantly reframed within the larger context of the discourse. The discourse represents a type of cultural re-evaluation undertaken by Chinese *literati* from time to time, when China began to face severe social, economic, and political crises.

2.2 Yu's Discourse on the Distinction between Hua and Yi

As stated before, Yu was sent on a diplomatic mission to the North in 554. Three years later, his home country was severely buffeted by the invasion of the Western Wei. In the fallout from the incident, his mission did not meet with success. Instead, he was held in Chang'an, the capital of the Wei, for the rest of his life, and was never allowed to return.⁴⁷

With such a unique and twisted experience, he completed the *fu* while serving the Northern Zhou regime in which he lived his final decades, reflecting on the fall of the southern dynasty. One can well imagine how language difficulties, cultural differences and homesickness overtook him during his stay in the foreign land. On the contrary, in this *fu* Yu did his utmost to prevent implied readers from associating the text with an exotic scenery or atmosphere at all. Almost without exception, all the satires on barbarians have been directed against Hou. Readers would be struck by the nasty insinuations Yu repeatedly made about him.

見被髮於伊川，知百年而爲戎矣。

Seeing a man with streaming hair at Yi-ch'uan, one knew within the century there would be barbarians there.

大則有鯨有鯢，小則為梟為獍。負其牛羊之力，肆其水草之性。

At his worst, a whale or a shark. At best, an owl or a *ching*. Drawing on his strength of ox or sheep. Wild by his nomadic nature.

⁴⁶ Ray Huang 1982, p. 64.

⁴⁷ Murck 2000, pp. 18-19.

見胡柯於大夏，識鳥卵於條枝。豺牙密厲，虺毒潛吹。

Seeing in him the foreign stem from Ta-hsia. Recognizing the bird's egg from T'iao-chih. The jackal was sharpening its teeth in secret. The viper was blowing out its poison unnoticed.

輕九鼎而欲問，聞三川而遂窺。

Thinking about the nine cauldrons light, he was about to inquire. Though cut off by three rivers, he would finally peer in.⁴⁸

出狄泉之蒼鳥，起橫江之困獸。

A gray bird emerged at Ti-ch'üan. The cornered animal turned in Heng-chiang.⁴⁹

爾乃桀黠構扇，馮陵畿甸。擁狼望於黃圖，填廬山於赤縣。

He then stirred up the unruly; and invaded the royal domain. Thus, putting down Lang-wang on the Yellow Map; and adding Lu-shan to the Red Region.⁵⁰

埋長狄於駒門，斬蚩尤於中冀。

The giant Ti was buried at the Chü gate. Ch'ih-yu was beheaded at Chung-chi.⁵¹

This narrative alludes to the story about Hou's humble barbarian origin, fast rise to power, tremendous wrongs perpetrated in Jiangnan, and his disgraceful end.

Ironically, the word *di* which particularly designates Hou, was presented as one distinct sort of barbarian. As a matter of fact, there existed two rival claimants to the Northern Wei throne which led to a division in 530s: the Eastern Wei where Hou came from, and its Western counterpart where Yu ended his life in exile. Neither the Eastern Wei, nor the Western Wei (including its successor the Northern Zhou), was founded by one category of ethnic groups identifying a common and distinctive culture, religion, and language. It is also worth mentioning that the *Xianbei* rulers of the Northern Wei established a policy of systematic Sinicization which adopted Chinese surnames, institutions, and culture.⁵² The ruling family of the Eastern Wei and Western Wei adopted those

⁴⁸ *Huke* 胡柯 [pasania cuspidata], a foreign stem originating from Shan-shan Kingdom 鄯善國 in the Western Regions (see *Han Shu*, *chuan* 96A). Bird's egg refers in particular to Ostrich's egg. Daxia 大夏 and Tiaozhi 條枝 were kingdoms in the Western Regions.

⁴⁹ An analogy was made between Liu Yuan 劉淵 (304-310), the emperor of the *xiongnu* state Han Zhao 漢趙 (304-329), and Hou Jing.

⁵⁰ *Langwang* 狼望, and *Lushan* 廬山 are the place names of *xiongnu*. Yellow Map 黃圖 is the designate of the capital. The *Chixian* 赤縣, short for the Spiritual Continent of the Red Region (*Chixian Shenzhou* 赤縣神州) which covers the administrative and cultural spheres, designates China in Zou Yan's 鄒衍 (ca. 305-240 BC) theory of the Five Elements.

⁵¹ 'The Lament for the South': Yu Hsin's 'Ai Chiang-nan fu', lines 109-110, 113-116, 123-126, 127-128, 135-136, 141-144, 303-304, pp. 66-69, 82-83.

⁵² For fear of being absorbed by its Chinese subjects, Toba Turks' traditionalist tribal aristocracy reacted violently, and the ensuing tensions brought about the division of the

Chinese elements to varying degrees. If Yu is racially biased against non-Chinese, these two non-Chinese states are supposed to be treated equally by him. Indeed, while touching briefly on the topic of the Western Wei and seldom dealing with events after his own exile, Yu is lavish in his dispraise of the Eastern Wei represented by Hou. The author does not use the *yi* generalized terminology here or elsewhere in the *fu*.

既而齊交北絕，秦患西起。

The relations with Ch'i were broken off in the North, and the enmity of Ch'in developed in the West.⁵³

周含鄭怒，楚結秦冤。有南風之不競，值西鄰之責言。

Chou had incurred the wrath of Cheng, and Ch'u had provoked the vengeance of Ch'in. Just when our weakness was betrayed by the airs of the South, we met with the reproaches of the neighbor to the West.⁵⁴

Yu describes the relationship between the Liang and Western Wei with the most subtle phrasing, such as, “the enmity of Ch'in” 秦患, “the vengeance of Ch'in” 秦冤, “the neighbor to the West” 西鄰. Interestingly, he specifically condemns Chen Baxian 陳霸先 (503-559), a general of the Liang, who usurped the throne after controlling the Liang regime for several years:

梁故豐徒，楚實秦亡。不有所廢，其何以昌？有鳩之後，將育於姜。輸我神器，居為讓王。天地之大德曰生，聖人之大寶曰位。用無賴之子弟，舉江東而全棄。惜天下之一家，遭東南之反氣。以鶉首而賜秦，天何為而此醉？

Feng was now transferred to Liang. Ch'u was in fact wiped out [by] Ch'in. If others had not been removed, how could he have risen? This descendant of the Kuei was indeed nurtured by the Chiang. He took away their sacred vessel. And left them abdicated rulers. As the greatest gift of Heaven and Earth is life. So the greatest treasure of the sage is the throne. By employing worthless upstarts, they look the whole South and threw it away. One grieves that the empire, united in one household. Should have met with rebellion in the Southeast, and have given the Quail's Head to Ch'in—How could God have been so drunk!⁵⁵

Beginning with line 479 the complaint takes on a more personal tone. Chen's effort to save people from being tortured was totally ignored by Yu. The author was caught in the dilemma—whether or not to offend the Northern Zhou authority. Having realized that he could not evade history, in his work Yu proposed an interpretation of the legitimacy of the dynastic change of Liang and

Northern Wei empire into two separate states. See Twitchett 1979, p. 3.

⁵³ *The Lament for the South*: Yu Hsin's 'Ai Chiang-nan fu', lines 359-360, pp. 88-89.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, lines 395-398, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, lines 479-494, pp. 98-101.

Western Wei. He gave a strong hint that the Western Wei's subjugation of the Liang was conformed to the trend of the times. Finally, when he confronted himself, he found himself torn between living as a Chinese faithful to his mother country and serving as an entourage of Emperor Ming (534-560) and Emperor Wu (543-578) of the Northern Zhou.⁵⁶

When reaching the final lines,⁵⁷ the unhappy ending of this *fu* unveils Yu's compromise on the idea of being loyal to his home country and ruling family of the North. All his feelings had to be integrated into one: a longing for home. Here "Jiangnan" is used in the general sense of a former residence in Jiangling 江陵, and the one-time capital of the Liang Dynasty, Jiankang.⁵⁸ His careful phraseology is eventually intended to distance himself from the discourse on the distinction between *hua* and *yi*. This kind of choice of obscurity is in part motivated by fear of getting himself into trouble with his *yi* masters. While his contemporaries spoke publicly in support of strict divisions between *hua* and *yi*, Yu perhaps felt ambivalent about it. On his return from Chang'an to Jiankang in 556, Shen Jiong 沈炯 (503-561) composed "Guihun *Fu*" 歸魂賦 [Fu on the Returned Soul] in which he wrote: "Books presented by *Beidi* were accepted; tributes paid by *Dongyi* were well received [...]. People are won by virtue and punishments; barbaric *Di* are awed by the fame based on great strength" 受北狄之奉書，禮東夷之獻使 [...] 雖德刑成於赦服，故蠻狄震乎雄名. Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531-591) put forward China-centered view in his "Guan Wo Sheng *Fu*" 觀我生賦 [Fu on Observing My Life]: "one treats the various *xia* as internal, and all *yi* and *di* as external" 內諸夏而外夷狄. The implication is obvious: both of them insist on the need to safeguard the distinct Chinese identity.

⁵⁶ Lines 515-516 says: "As an honored guest of the Commandant, the Grand General. Treated with kindness by the Prime Minister, the Marquis of P'ing-chin. I see bells and cauldrons with the Chin and the Chang. And hear strings and song with Hsu and the Shih (幕府大將軍之愛客，丞相平津侯之待士。見鐘鼎於金張，聞弦歌於許史)." See *'The Lament for the South': Yu Hsin's 'Ai Chiang-nan fu'*, pp. 102-103. In Yu's biography of the *Zhou Shu* 周書, it says: "Both Emperor Ming and Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou had the appetite for literature, thus Yu was treated with great respect. As for the Prince of Teng 滕 (d. 580), and the Prince of Zhao 趙 (d. 580), they appreciated and befriended Yu, regardless of their social status." See *Zhou Shu*, *juan* 41, p. 734. These documents tell us much about the honor Yu received from the greatest families of the Northern Zhou.

⁵⁷ Lines 519-520 says: "The one hunting at night below Pa-ling still is the General of past times. Among the commoners of Hsien-yang, not only the Prince longs for home (豈知灞陵夜獵，猶是故時將軍。咸陽布衣，非獨思歸王子)." See *'The Lament for the South': Yu Hsin's 'Ai Chiang-nan fu'*, pp. 102-103. The original source of these allusions comes from biographies in the *Shiji*, where General Li Guang 李廣 (d. 119 BC) and Lord Chunshen 春申 (314-238 BC) experienced extreme nostalgia. See *Shiji*, *juan* 78, and 109, pp. 2393-2394, 2871.

⁵⁸ Shi Guanhai 2007, p. 157.

2.3 Ming Remnants' Discourse on the Distinction between Hua and Yi

Educated Chinese social *stratum* facing the collapse of the Great Ming were filled with conflicted feelings about the historical transition. On the one hand, being acutely aware of the dynasty's numerous problems, they criticized the profligacy of the imperial household and bureaucrats' unquenchable thirst for private interest, lack of foresight, and hunger for power. On the other, the two fatal challenges to the dynasty's existence—insurrections of peasants and invasions by barbarians—brought directly to mind the principal question of how to accept the fact of living under aliens' rule. Through analyzing and comparing Xia and Shen's wording, it is notable that in their hearts barbarians are viewed with particular disfavor, and Manchu fared worst of all. These disparities manifest themselves in their choice of words and phrases.

Ming elites deliberately look for excuses for the series of peasant revolts which took place by the late Ming period, although these revolts were reprimanded by them.⁵⁹

所以遼海東西，人多犯順。大河南北，野咸饑饉。瓜田藉以益繁，尤來聚而愈迅。
Therefore, people from the east and west of Liaohai tend to rise in revolt. Famine all stalks the land of the south and north of Huang River. The number of peasant militias sitting by melon field increased abruptly. The Youlai Army flocked to the uprising quickly.⁶⁰

In their opinion, the violent anger of dispossessed peasants that outbursts against the Ming Court were triggered by climate change which reduced agricultural yields and cut state revenues. Whatever the cause, the mob of displaced peasants had no alternative but to stage uprisings. It culminated in a revolt led by Li Zicheng which overthrew the Ming in 1644.

In order to drive the Qing out and restore the Ming, it was necessary for the Ming loyalists to rally support. Accordingly, the rebel peasants, initially cursed by Xia and Shen, were treated sympathetically in the second half of their *fu*:

於是竿木羣興，風雲畢會。興六月之師，振九天之銳。橫海伏波，戈船下瀨。
軌亡秦之陳勝，效安劉之翟義。

Numerous heroes rose up in arms, just like the meeting of wind and clouds.

⁵⁹ In the “FGS” and “FLSS”, there are couplets relating to historical events, such as: “Ultimately the army of Yellow Turbans and Black Calves clustered together. The rebels in black robes rode white horses and ran amok (卒之黃巾黑犢之屯聚，青袍白馬之橫行)”; “The army of Yellow Turbans issued a rousing call to action. The troop of Bronze Horses came in crowds like ants from their nests (黃巾大呼，銅馬如蟻).” See *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, p. 9. See also *Zaolin Zazu*, p. 263.

⁶⁰ *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, p. 9.

Righteous armies were established in June. Royal elite troops were invigorated. Sailing in the sea and floating on the wave. The general Gechuan and Xialai's navies follow the steps of Chen Sheng (d. 208 BC) who overthrew the Qin Dynasty, and learn from Zhai Yi's (d. 7) experience of securing the Han house.⁶¹

爰有河橋魏將之符，關路田文之客。拭玉張旂，尋盟許國。
Then comes the commander seal stolen from the Wei general; the hanger-on of Tian Wen. They polish jade and lift flags; seek allies and serve the country.⁶²

Multitudes did respond to their defiant call and rise up in arms. Drawn from historical documents and texts, there was a wave of hopeless sacrifice by loyalists who vowed to erase the shame of Nanjing. Xia states explicitly:

國亡家破，軍敗身全。招魂而湘江有淚，從軍而蜀國無弦。
The country is in ruins and the home is falling apart. The troops were trounced but my life was saved. The Xiang River shed tears when the wandering souls of the dead were being summoned back. The overland route to the Shu State was found impassable when I intended to join its army.⁶³

This passage should be read in conjunction with his poem "Freeing Myself from the Encounter with Bandits" 遇盜自解:

綠林滿地知豪客，寶劍窮途贈故人。
A true hero will stand out from the crowd when needed. A treasured sword would make an ideal present for an old friend when he hit a dead end.⁶⁴

Xia's words accord well enough with his actual practice. He was involved in the Volunteer Army Lake Tai 太湖義軍, a combination of former Ming soldiers, gentry-led militia and social bandits. The leader, former Ming official Wu Yang 吳易 (d. 1646), took command of Ming naval forces along with the Barefoot Zhang San's 赤腳張三 lake bandits to repulse the Qing.⁶⁵ It can be inferred from what he said that after their plots were foiled, Xia escaped from a land route to northeastern Jiangxi and mountainous areas in Sichuan. It was during this period that he was secretly in touch with the anti-Manchu militias.⁶⁶

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶² *Zaolin Zazu*, p. 264.

⁶³ *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, p. 22.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁶⁵ *Tongqiao Yizhaolu*, p. 50. See also Wakeman 1986a, pp. 663-664.

⁶⁶ Tian Jujian 1980.

2.3.1 Territorial Boundaries: The Division Epitomized in the Location of Residency

Under the reign of Emperor Taizu who was revered as the great dynastic progenitor, Ming Empire attained control of largest territory in its history:

執帝柄而司命，聿嶽鎮而辰懸。掃旄頭以靜街，鞭角端以定邊。窮邛笮，通浪玄。朔方大出，南交凱旋。

Emperor [Taizu of the Ming] took the helm. The Five Mountains guard the empire like the stars ride high in the sky. The cavalry cleared the way as a spearhead. The divine beasts were harnessed to pacify the border area. The country stretched from Qiongzhusi and Zuodu in the west, to Lelang and Xuandu in the east. A full-scale offensive was launched from Shuofang in the north, and a triumphant return was made from Jiaozhou in the south.⁶⁷

Ming remnants' labeling this Ming territory as the center of Heaven is meant to take a China-centered view. They had never ceased to be proud of the past glories of the empire and refused to see the Southern Ming survive on such a limited territory.

The movement of the Manchus from the periphery to the center is seen resumptively in three steps:

1) Prior to the 17th century, the primary military menace to the Ming Court mainly came from the north and northwest (i.e. the Mongols and Manchus). After the Ming was defeated after three successive battles and lost its stronghold in the North, Manchus considered military expansion in the entire region outside the Shanhai Pass. As testified by Ming remnants' remarks:

見伊川之披髮，鳴天山而掛弓。笳鼓震於遼陽，旌旗明於塞上。

Seeing a man with streaming hair at Yi-ch'uan. Shooting a whistling arrow near Mt. Tian but renouncing the use of bows. The sound of *jia* and drums shook Liaoyang. The color of banners and flags illuminated the frontier fortresses.⁶⁸

2) The Manchus appeared in force along the northern frontier outside the Shanhai Pass. While the Ming was preoccupied in the south and southwest during the revolts of Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 (1606-1647), they expanded their interests into the Chinese hinterland. Reactionary Ming generals then opened the gates of the Great Wall to the Qing, hoping they would fight the peasant rebels. As testified by Ming remnants' remarks:

⁶⁷ *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, p. 6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

迨單於虎帳不朝，匈奴漁陽直入。遼水無聲，醫閭慘色。[...] 徒帳幕南，空群漠北。

Arriving at the time when Chanyu was plotting a rebellion in the tent, the *Xiongnu* drove straight to Yuyang. The Liao River was silenced. The Mt. Yi Luwu 醫巫閭 felt grieved [...]. The tent was moved southwards. Flocks of horses disappeared from the north of the desert.

問九鼎之重輕，窺三川之保障。

Thinking about the nine cauldrons light, he was about to inquire. Though cut off by three rivers, he would finally peer in.

將軍之樹北偃，單於之部西臨。

The general's tree is tilting northwards. The Chanyu's troops are approaching from the west.⁶⁹

3) Yet Qing's ambition was not satisfied. By then, its army had begun to move southwards with wider territorial claims. It had occupied Xuzhou and was preparing to cross the Yangtze River.

望北來之浴鐵，飲馬姑蘇。

The armored horses came from the North. They were watered in Suzhou.

何以南朝天子，竟投大將之戈。北部單於，遂擊降王之組。

For what reason did the emperor of the South disarm his troops? The Chanyu originating from the North pursued the subjugated soldiers.⁷⁰

The discourse on the distinction between *hua* and *yi* privileges the core areas of predominantly Han China, assigning the rest to a remote, peripheral frontier. The cruelty of the *yi* and the martial tendencies of its people are just attributed to a barbarians' frontier state located in a region inhabited by non-Chinese people. These references demonstrate that Ming remnants became laden with anxieties about the continuous infiltration of *yi* influences into the core region—the basin valley of the three rivers (the Yi, Luo and Yellow rivers).⁷¹ Any attempt to encroach upon sovereignty and dignity in this domain is viewed as showing great disrespect to

⁶⁹ *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, p. 13.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁷¹ It is in the vicinity of present-day Luoyang in central Henan province, stretching between western Shaanxi and central Henan. Its significance weighs heavily on Chinese. In post-Western Zhou sources it is referred to as the “royal domain” (*wangji* 王畿). In the *Book of Poetry*, it is said: “The royal domain of a thousand *li* is where the people rest (邦畿千里，維民所止).” Cf. Legge 1893, p. 362. The *Rites of Zhou* 周禮 says: “Then distinguish the nations and states of the nine fees. A thousand *li* square is called the royal domain (乃辨九服之邦國，方千里曰王畿).” See Cikoski 2011, p. 50.

longstanding hierarchical relations. Their rhetoric represented one pole of the political discourse concerning the relations of Chinese with their neighbors.

2.3.2 Origin Boundaries: What Mattered is not only Territory but also Birth

In Ming remnants' works, the origin of *yi* is emblemized by compound words which carry pejorative meanings:

逞其鴟梟之性，鼓其鯨鯢之濤。

They show off owls' evil nature. They stir up big waves and rough surf like male and female whales.

虺毒吹熾，豺牙橫厲。

The viper was blowing out its poison unnoticed. Whilst the jackal was sharpening its teeth in secret.⁷²

烏桓鮮卑之部，封豕長蛇之力。

The *Xianbei* and *Wuhuan* survived as the main remnants of the Donghu confederation.⁷³ They are as greedy as big pigs, and as ruthless as giant snakes.

嘶風則苜蓿千群，臥雪則駒駉萬帳。

The clovers filled the whole sky when horses whinnied in the wind. The wild horses gathered in large groups when barbarians rested on the snow.

借蚌鷸之利，逞虎狼之心。

When shepherds quarrel, the wolf has a winning game.

若夫龍種困而被奴，鳳儀降而為婢。逐燕支而上馳，抱琵琶而北去。⁷⁴

The cornered dragons fell into slavery. The downfallen phoenixes slide into maid-servants. Cross Mt. Yanzhi and advance northwards. Hold the pipa and leave for the North.⁷⁵

Barbarians are characterized as an animal-like, greedy and violent group which is per se “the Paradigm of Barbarian Inferiority.”⁷⁶ It came to be widely accepted and quoted by Han Chinese since remotest times. As Guan Zhong put it: “The *rong* and *di* are wolves and jackals who cannot be satiated; the several *xia* are kin

⁷² Zaolin Zazu, p. 263.

⁷³ The *Xianbei* and *Wuhuan* descended from the Donghu who were defeated by the *Xiongnu* Modu Chanyu 冒頓單于 around 209 BC. See the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Ch. 120).

⁷⁴ *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, pp. 8, 13, 17.

⁷⁵ In the spring 121 BC (2nd year of Yuanshou 元狩 reign), Emperor Wu of the Han dispatched the troops of Huo Qubing 霍去病 to the Mt. Qilian 祁連山 and Mt. Yanzhi, causing tremendous loss of life and property to the *Xiongnu*.

⁷⁶ Amitai & Biran 2005, p. 63.

who cannot be abandoned" 戎狄豺狼，不可厭也。諸夏親昵，不可棄也。⁷⁷ The *Zhangguo Ce* 戰國策 [Stratagems of the Warring States]—a collection of model speeches attributed to historical figures from the Warring States period—asserts:

秦與戎翟同俗，有虎狼之心，貪戾好利而無信，不識禮義德行。

Qin has the same customs as the *rong* and *di*. It has the heart of a tiger or wolf; [it is] greedy, loving profit, and untrustworthy, and knowing nothing of ritual, duty or virtuous conduct.⁷⁸

As the phraseology suggests, the savage represents the primitivity or brutal nature of the *yi*. It has been negatively stereotyped by the dominant groups who called themselves *hua*. In their eyes, "a nomadic life in that era meant a close tie with animals as well as one inclined to militarization."⁷⁹ Ming remnants make a similar observation. Analogies were drawn between Manchus and exotic animals. There has always been an element of stigma attached to the origin of Manchus. Since beasts are uneducable animals, this implies an impermeable boundary between the superior *hua* and the barbarians of the four directions.

2.3.3 Cultural Boundaries: Elevating Culture into a Status Symbol

In the cultural field, much more detailed references to sources which use rich descriptive vocabularies and present a variety of ostensibly ethnic phenomena can be found in the *fu*.

The cultural conflict between Han-Chinese and non-Chinese groups continued in new form during the early Qing times. Compared to the mere military confrontation, this conflict seemed even more challenging for the Qing government employed extreme measures to subdue the Ming elites. The notorious orders "shaving hair" and "changing costumes" issued in 1645 were the principal source of abrasion in Chinese-Manchu relations. The Ming *literati* dismissed the Manchu cultural oppression as an effective weapon for the Qing in legitimating and consolidating the empire. They wrote a bitter indictment of the discriminatory policy:

室處有荼毒之淫，薙髮有髡髻之累。

[Chinese] households were left in great affliction. Men and women were immersed in the suffering of shaving heads.

使腥穢之北風，陷泥塗於南紀。

The filthy northern customs are being practiced. The South becomes bogged down.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Yang Bojun 1981, p. 256.

⁷⁸ *Zhangguo Ce*, *juan* 24, p. 275.

⁷⁹ Lin Yi 2008, p. 22.

⁸⁰ *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, pp. 17, 25.

五陵冠舄，邈矣華風。萬里縵繡，此焉戎俗。

The rich and powerful once resided in the vicinity of the five imperial mausoleums of the Han Dynasty. The “Chinese” customs disappeared long ago. On the roads is a continuous stream of troops going to the front. This is what the *rong* customs are.

曩時衣冠帶履之俗，莫不輸金繒於穹帳，謝簪笏於龍庭。

Those wearing old Chinese style robes, caps, belts and shoes all pay tribute to the barbarians living in yurts, and gave up positions in the Chinese Court.⁸¹

The Manchu regime compulsively demanded all Chinese men to shave their forehead and braid the rest of their hair into a queue which was viewed as a symbolic gesture of servitude by many Chinese who thought that changing their dress to the same as *yi* would be contrary to the spirit of *hua*. The Manchu’s move immediately provoked the opposition of Ming remnants. They acted in defiance of the orders and suffered martyrdom because of their religious beliefs or ethnic rituals. The preservation of their Chinese long hair, topknots and flowing robes amounted to a last-ditch defense of civilization from barbarians whose redefinition of fashion not only signified dynastic change, but also the desecration of their very identity. As featured prominently in the works mentioned above, the cultural differences between Manchu and Han Chinese were specifically amplified. The Chinese superiority becomes uncompromisingly focused on self-preservation, in such a way as to create explicit anti-Qing sentiments.

Historian F. W. Mote once wrote the following: “They [Yue Fei and Qin Hui] have come to embody noble-minded loyalty on the one hand and, on the other, base treachery.”⁸² It is not surprising, therefore, that in Ming remnants’ works the authors express their disappointment about Chinese traitors who betray their master to obtain promotion, honor or power in an inexpressibly poignant way and openly convey the depth of their regard for those dying for a righteous cause.

中行之背未答，趙信之城再立。

Xun Linfu 荀林父 (d. 593 BC) was not been punished according to his deserts. Zhao Xin (d. 108 BC) was able to rebuild his old fortress.

寧右則孔愉江總，閩外則祖約王敦。

Kong Yu (268-342), Jiang Zong (519-594) and their kind are in the court. Zu Yue (d. 330), Wang Dun (266-324) and their kind are on the frontier.⁸³

既主器之沈淪，乃不恥乎降北。

As the crown prince perished, they surrendered themselves to the North yet felt no shame.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Zaolin Zazu, pp. 262, 264.

⁸² Mote 2003, p. 299.

⁸³ Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao, pp. 8, 14.

⁸⁴ Zaolin Zazu, p. 264.

Those leading a luxurious and extravagant life under the Manchu regime seemingly achieved success. Some Ming remnants even despised the Chinese defectors, notwithstanding the similar ethnic identity they both held. A good example is that of Hong Chengchou, a man whose reputation is beclouded by his collaboration with the Manchu rulers. No matter how complex the actual history and facts of his betrayal may seem, these defectors are forever decried for their ignominy.

國殤悲而陰雨深，戰鬼哭而愁颯厲。

Those who died for their country are sad and the rain is ceaseless. The ghosts of war are sobbing and the storm wind is howling wild.⁸⁵

是知崖山執節，終靡信國之旗。

The principles of integrity and moral values were upheld in the Naval Battle of Mt. Ya; the flag of Duke of Xinguo [Wen Tianxiang, 1236-1283] finally toppled.

更有孤臣危淚，烈士墜心。

There are abandoned courtiers with tears in their eyes, and martyrs with broken hearts.

漢老想司隸之儀，南人望壽皇之址。⁸⁶

Chinese cherish the memory of the Director of Retainers [Li Ying 李膺, d. 169].⁸⁷ Southerners yearn for Shou Huang's [Emperor Xiaozong of the Song Zhao Shen 趙昀, 1162-1189] site.⁸⁸

Figures who championed territorial claims in dynastic transition times are held up as moral exemplars for their sacrifice in the name of cultural beliefs and ritual practices which symbolize Chinese identity.

In a paper authored by Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I* as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience", published in his book *Écrits*, the French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist attempts to understand the experience of an infant looking in the mirror and how it relates to the child's concepts of "self":

It is this moment that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge into

⁸⁵ *Xiawanchun Ji Jianjiao*, p. 19.

⁸⁶ *Zaolin Zazu*, pp. 262, 265.

⁸⁷ He was later appointed commandant (*xiaowei* 校尉) to oversee the tribal federation of the *Wuhuan* in the northeast. He was able to defeat the steppe people of the *Xianbei* several times. In 156 he was appointed general and suppressed a rebellion of the *Qiang* tribes in the west. For his success, he was promoted to the Director of Retainers.

⁸⁸ The northern expedition against the Jin was launched during Emperor Xiaozong's Longxing 隆興 reign (1163-1164). Although it ended in defeat, "he [Emperor Xiaozong] is praised as the best ruler of the Southern Song." See McMahon 2016, p. 24.

mediatization through the desire of the other, constitutes its objects in an abstract equivalence by the co-operation of others [...].⁸⁹

He believes the formation of self that we experience while looking in a mirror is part of our drive to make sense of our world, creating a rational view of the world. If this theory of the “mirror stage” is proved true—which is to say that the entire problem creates an existential image—then it is otherness that identifies ourselves and not vice versa. The “Other” is instrumental in the awakening of ethnic group identity. It is only when people in surrounding regions are treated as the antithesis of Chineseness that the Chinese community becomes conscious of its identity boundaries.

A stronger sense of identity will develop during an outbreak of violence, especially when the language, religion, geography, shared interests, or a spiritual principle which are the bases an identity is formed on are severely challenged. Just like the political scientist Benedict Anderson said,

Beneath the decline of sacred communities, languages and lineages, a fundamental change was taking place in modes of apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to ‘think’ the nation.⁹⁰

By the same token, the turmoil throughout the Ming-Qing transition stimulated the emergence of the awareness of identity. It is not uncommon for *literati* to express their sympathy and love for the occupied territory and the people inhabiting therein, accompanying every dynastic transition. Nonetheless, not every piece of literary works, even the finest ones, are meant to be interpreted from the Ming remnants’ perspective. The Ming works contain a feature not at all typical of earlier works of the same type. The deeply rooted gap between *hua* and *yi* made Ming writers reflect upon Chinese identity, which introduced new elements into the literature on patriotism.⁹¹

Conclusion

The discourse on the distinction between *hua* and *yi* goes back to antiquity, but its meaning in various historical periods remains highly debated. Because the borders of the Chinese territory, origin and culture are contingent, the evolving and contested concept of *hua* and *yi* developed to be a central concept of imperial governance across China’s many dynasties. Current scholar Jiang Yin sketches the outline of this longstanding discourse, the invention of “China”, “*hua*”, and “*yi*” and other terms in recent history as below:

⁸⁹ Lacan 2005, p. 4.

⁹⁰ Anderson 2006, p. 22.

⁹¹ Guo Weiseng & Xu Jie 1996, p. 744.

The lines of demarcation between *hua* and *yi* were porous and often shifting. The discourse on their distinctions is diverse and often reflects China's socio-political conditions. If a worrying or threatening situation or event is looming, ethnic consciousness is even a stronger identification with one ethnic group. It has been shown that once the existing delicate balance of power between *huaxia* and barbarians breaks out, thoughts on clash of identities emerge in the course of the violent meetings between center and periphery in China's ethnic politics.⁹²

The distinction between *hua* and *yi* does not only encompass the collision of sovereign rights, existing biological attributes or competing cultural interests. It is also subjected to the balance of power between *hua* and *yi*. Jiang's stance generates a meaningful extension of power dynamics between the Ming and Qing. This discourse could take cultural, ethnic or racist overtones, especially in times of war.

The first half of the 17th century saw the Ming Dynasty conquered by the Manchus and southern China eventually incorporated into the Qing Dynasty in 1650s. The Ming remnants wrote a good deal of literary works in imitation of Yu's "FLS", which contributed significantly towards understanding the complexity of change and continuity of discourse on *hua* and *yi* over the span of time leading up to and resulting from the tumult of the mid-1600s.

Drawing on comparative analyses of this series of works and Yu's "FLS", I have explored the influence of the rhetoric of discourse on *hua* and *yi*, in the shaping of the later works. It is Yu who provides the earliest composition in the *fu* genre on this subject, making it a conventional form as well as the vehicle for intensely personal expression and historical testimony. Considered as the model of this form by posterity, the "FLS" thus constituted the one of the most dominant motif in the well-established history of Chinese literature. As time went on, nearly each piece of this whole series represented each author's deliberate attempt to incorporate everything his predecessors has written in the subject, which to a certain extent helped formulate the canon of "Lament for the South." Understandably, the late works in poetry and *fu* forms produced during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition were written with a long tradition behind them. In comparison with poetry, *fu* is the one which most typifies the motif. The stylistic affinities are clear enough: the works owing much of its thematic conventions to Yu's "*Fu* on Lament for the South" depicting the fall of the author's own country and the rise of an alien country both objectively, from a historical perspective, and subjectively, from a personal perspective with the role they played during the dynastic transition. On the face of it, this series, with rich ornamentation but little technical versatility, are essentially alike.⁹³ Likewise, the motif becomes the

⁹² Jiang Yin 2011, pp. 19-31 (translation mine).

⁹³ Stephen Owen said: "The Chin-ling of poetry emerged over the course of several centuries, its image added and embellished, until at last it was dominated by a few powerful poems.

main outlet to channel the Ming remnants' impulse. Howbeit, loyalism and homesickness is just one facet of the subject. The later works were not the simple repetitions of the "FLS", but always the addition of some new elements.

As "a master of elegant, restrained expression",⁹⁴ Yu's voices over the differentiation between *hua* and *yi*, by contrast, were not homogeneous. Yu's *fu* openly displays his contempt for Hou Jing's barbarian origin, but only contains opaque ethnical commentary on the Western Wei and, at their fall, Northern Zhou. His unique experience had put him in a very awkward position, which afforded no place for identity.⁹⁵ Conversely, Ming remnants often seek alternative paths to explicate an exclusive boundary of identity. Their intended messages to themselves and potential audience are obvious: what is mainly embodied in the works, then, is less a thing than an individual mode of perception of identity.

The distinction between *hua* and *yi* remains deeply projected in these works, where the Ming remnants firmly defend their refusal to consider any justification for Manchu rule. On the territorial level, insulting words occur many times in reference to Manchu peripheral position. On the biological level, traces of sarcastic racism can also be found in the metaphorical expressions about animals and evils of Manchus. The sharpest distinction was drawn by the cultural dimension. The adherence to Ming (Chinese) culture (i.e. customs, rituals and lifestyles) became increasingly recognized as a barometer of civilization, a meter for sophistication and cultural refinement.

In the history of Chinese poetry, there is no lack of precedents for the elements of identity entering into literature. Yet, the inconsistency between the given work by Yu and derivative works reflects subsequent writers' changing moods and shifting attitudes towards those considered non-Chinese. Their criticism of Manchus as a creature of savage terrain and origin reached its apogee during the Ming-Qing transition. The cultural dimension eventually came to be the most important criterion in distinguishing them. The underlying motive for reinforcing distinction between Chinese and non-Chinese is fundamentally associated with the issue of power between them. It would appear that this is a pivotal transition point in the course of development on the motif of "Lament for the South."

Once the Chin-ling of poetry had acquired its full complement of images, once it became replete (in Chinese *pei* 備), it achieved a kind of stasis, a fixed and virtually inescapable legacy for later generations. Later writers were doomed to speak of Chin-ling through the received images of Chin-ling—not because they were slavish imitators without originality, but because whenever they looked at Chin-ling or even thought of Chin-ling, the perfect lines of those old texts came crowding into their minds." See Owen 1990, pp. 417-457.

⁹⁴ Xiaofei Tian 2008, p. 152.

⁹⁵ Donald Holzman said: "His [Yu's] life explains his poetry, which, in turn, is an explanation of, or an apology for, his life." See Holzman 1982, pp. 255-258.

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PICTURING *GUQIN* MUSIC: MIN QIJI'S AND OTHER'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF "YINGYING LISTENS TO *QIN*" FOR *XIXIANG JI*

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How was *qin* 琴 (zither) music pictorialized in traditional China? This is the core question of this paper, which is part of a bigger project to investigate how Chinese paintings and illustrations suggest the presence of *qin* music. In our technically advanced age, the visualization of music is a branch of science that attempts to map the notes, the tempo, and the acoustic dynamics of music through graphics. Western music notation is first and foremost a visualization of music, and a MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) is a modern device to further capture the nuances of music in visual terms (Fig. 1). However, in traditional China, music was not perceived as a science, and both the music notations of *jianzipu* 減字譜 or 'partial-character tablatures' for *qin*, and of *gongchipu* 工尺譜 or 're-mi score' for other instruments make no attempt to visualize the music (Fig. 2).¹ The tablatures for *qin* show neither the pitch nor the tempo of the notes but the methods and the positions of the fingerings on the instrument. The tablatures show little concern about the essential musical elements of 'time' (the duration of each note) and 'sound' (the dynamic of music), notating neither 'beat' nor 'volume.'

Traditional Chinese music notation rejects any attempt to turn it into a science, insisting that music is essentially an expression of human-oriented subjectivity as musicians must interpret the notation based on their own experience and emotion. The notation of music was complemented by the attempt to visualize the music in pictures, and it was Chinese painting and illustration that assumed the burden of capturing and expressing in visual terms the essence of the musical idea.

¹ The *gongchi* music notation began in the Tang Dynasty. It uses Chinese characters to indicate the names of the notes. The characters and their corresponding Western names of the notes are: *he* 合 (low sol), *si* 四 (low la), *yi* 一 (low ti), *shang* 上 (do), *chi* 尺 (re), *gong* 工 (mi), *fan* 凡 (fa), *liu* 六 (sol), *wu* 五 (la), and *yi* 乙 (ti). The earliest extant score in the form of *gongchipu* notation dates from 933 and was discovered in Dunhuang. See Yang Yinliu 1986, vol. 2, p. 70.

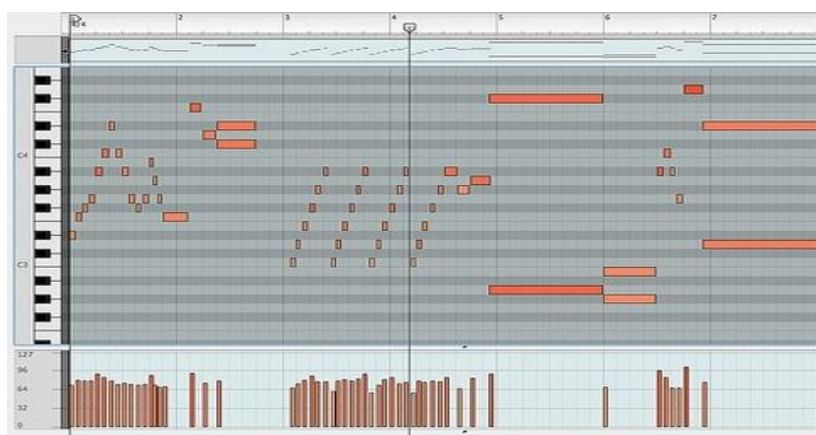


Fig. 1. MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)

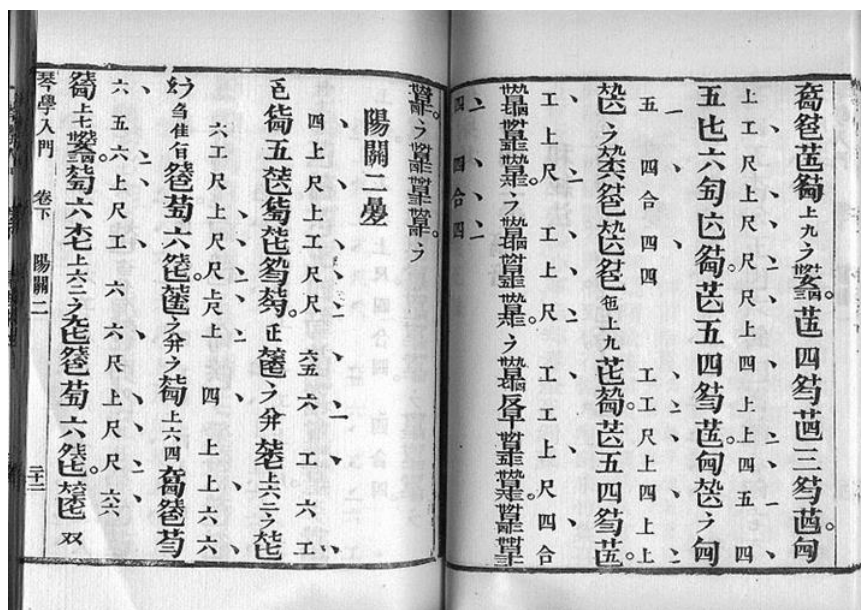


Fig. 2. "Partial-characters tablature" (*jianzi pu* 減字譜) for *qin*,
notated by the "Rei-me shore" (*gongchi pu* 工尺譜).

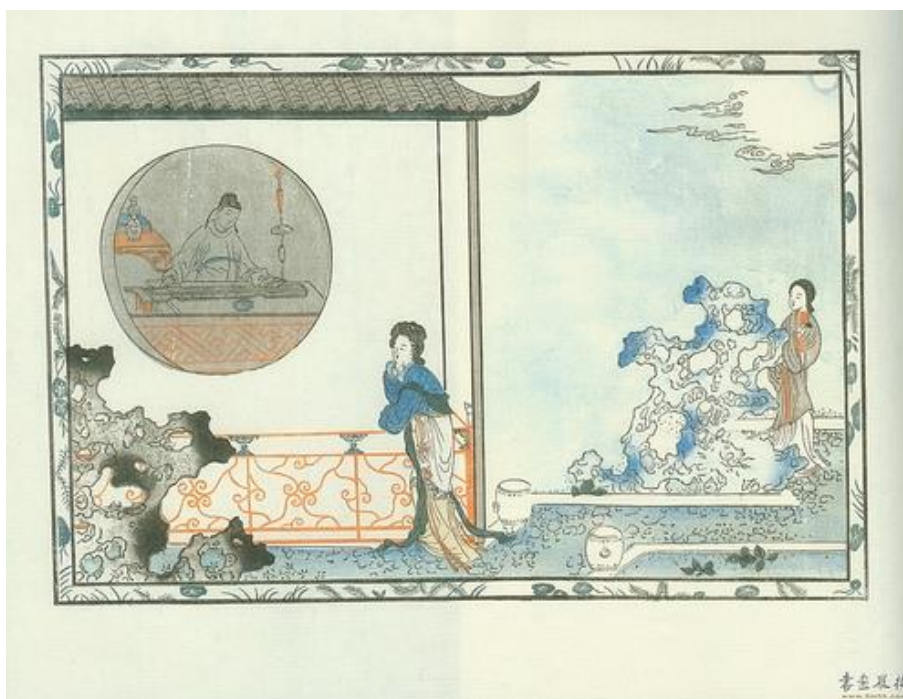


Fig. 3. Min Qiji, “Yingying Listens to *Qin*”, the ninth illustration of the twenty-one color illustrations of *Xixiang Ji*, Cologne.

This paper explores just such aspects in the visualization of music through the illustrations of “Yingying Listens to *Qin*” (Yingying Tingqin 鶯鶯聽琴) produced by Min Qiji 閔齊伋 (b. 1580) and other late Ming illustrators for Wang Shifu's 王實甫 (fl. 14th century) famous play *The Story of the Western Wing* (*Xixiang Ji* 西廂記, Fig. 3).² This paper explores these illustrators' methods as exemplifications of how music was pictorialized in traditional China. In her article “Picturing Listening: The Sight of Sounds in Chinese Painting”, art historian Susan Nelson engages in the same effort, exploring how abstract sound is captured in visual terms.³ She proposes that the tensed and attentive gestures of the depicted figures suggest the presence of sounds. This effect is clearly featured in many famous

² Many scholars have attempted to understand Min's twenty-one color illustrations as a whole. See Purtle 2010, pp. 54-73; Xu Wenqin 2010, pp. 63-160; Ma Meng-ching 2006, pp. 181-191; Wu Hung 1996, pp. 243-259; Kobayashi 1988, pp. 32-50; and Delbanco 1983, pp. 12-23. My Chinese article titled “Embedded Realities in Wang Heng's Play *Zhen Kuilei* and Min Qiji's Illustration of a Puppet Performance” was the first study to focus on the nineteenth of Min's twenty-one illustrations. See Hsiao Li-ling 2007c.

³ Nelson 1998/1999, pp. 30-55.

paintings in China. One of the most famous examples is *Quietly Listening to the Pine Wind* (*Jingting Songfeng* 靜聽松風) a painting dated before 1246 (Fig. 4) and attributed to the Southern Song artist Ma Lin's 馬麟 (dates unknown). Following Nelson's example of examining the presence of sound as suggested by bodily gesture, this paper further aims to explore how the individual pictorial motifs, the colors, the arrangements of these motifs, and the composition depict the presence of music on the silent page.

"Yingyin Listens to *Qin*" (Fig. 3) illustrates the female protagonist Cui Yingying 崔鶯鶯 as she listens to the male protagonist Zhang Gong 張拱 perform on the *qin*. According to the text, the deep feeling of his music reveals his love. The illustration to be considered here is a bit unusual. Most late Ming illustrations of this scene, like the one from a 1614 edition of *Xixiang Ji* (Fig. 7), lack any formal decorative border. The *dramatis personae* appear in the environment of daily life. Min Qiji presents this dramatic scene as a painting inside a decorative border ornamented with motifs of grass, bindweed flowers (i.e. morning glory), and wheat stalks. Min further embeds the scene, the music, and the *dramatis personae* in multiple framing devices. This is a clear example of what the Chinese art historian Wu Hung calls a 'metapicture', in which a picture is embedded within another picture.⁴ I would add that this 'metapicture' not only embeds a picture within a picture, but embeds a chain of pictures in a chain of frames. The multiple framing devices highlight the *qin* music, which is the dominant theme, while multiple contrasts and echoes of pictorial motifs are created within and across the multiple frames. This paper aspires to unravel the meanings of these complicated multilayered framings, and to investigate how *qin* music is present and accentuated in an essentially silent medium—illustration—through the subtle contrasts and echoes of pictorial motifs.

The idea of contrast and echo is perfectly exemplified by a unique *qin*-playing technique called *yinghe* 應合, which literally means 'to answer' and 'to match.' *Yinghe* technique consists of the simultaneous contrast and echo between a sliding movement (lit. glissando) up to a specific note and the simultaneously plucking of the same note. The glissando note is produced by the remnant of the previous note by moving the left finger up and down a string after the sound is made, and it is echoed and matched by the same note created simultaneously by plucking a different string. The sound effect of the *yinghe* is the echo of the two identical notes and the contrast between a "solid" (*shi* 實) and a "virtual" (*xu* 虛) note. This paper thus adopts the term *yinghe* to connote the idea of simultaneously contrasting and echoing. The following section will discuss how *qin* music relies on the principle of *yinghe*.

⁴ Wu Hung 1996, p. 237.



Fig. 4. Ma Lin 馬麟, *Quietly Listening to the Pine Wind* (*Jingting Songfeng* 靜聽松風), dated before 1246. In the collection of National Palace Museum, Taipei.

1. Man in the Cosmos: The *Qin* as Physical Instrument

Contrast and echo are the essential principles used to create the *qin* instrument. The body of the instrument is designed to contrast and echo nature itself (Fig. 5). The length of the instrument is set at 3 *chi* 尺 9 *cun* 寸 1 *fen* 分, which begins with the number 3, culminates in the number 9, and returns to the number 1. The width is 6 *cun*, which symbolizes “the cosmos” as represented by the proverbial term “Six Directions” (*liuhe* 六合), i.e. north, south, east, west, up, and down. The width of the tail is 2 *cun* 4 *fen*, which symbolizes the twenty-four solar phases of the Chinese calendar. The width of the head is 4 *cun*, which represents the four seasons. The “yueshan” 岳山, the wooden bridge that supports the seven strings at the head of the instrument, symbolizes the mountains, while its width of 3 *fen* the “three compendia” (*sancai* 三才), i.e. sky, earth, and people.



Fig. 5. *Qin*, in the style of “phoenix wing.”

The string length has the traditional measurement of 3 *chi* 尺 6 *cun* 寸 6 *fen* 分, which echoes the approximate number of days in a year. Its curved top mirrors the dome of the sky (*tianyuan* 天圓), and its flat bottom reflects the flat land (*defang* 地方), which together embodies the Chinese traditional cosmology encapsulated in the dictum “the sky is round and the earth is square” (*tianyuan difang*). The two sound holes on the bottom side epitomize water—the larger middle hole is called “dragon pond” (*longchi* 龍池) and the square hole at the end is called “phoenix swamp” (*fengzhao* 鳳沼). The thirteen dots (*hui* 徽) marking where the “harmonics” are on each string echo the twelve months and the leap month, while the original

five strings—King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty allegedly invented the seven-stringed *qin* instrument at a later date—symbolize the five elements (gold, wood, water, fire, and soil) that comprise nature.⁵ The shape of the instrument further corresponds to the shape of a human body: head (*shou* 首), neck (*xiang* 項), shoulder (*jian* 肩), waist (*yao* 腰), bottom (*wei* 尾), and feet (*zu* 足). The body of *qin* thus ingeniously metaphorizes the human amidst the natural world or what I term “man in the cosmos.”

The *qin*'s tones likewise embody the concept of *yinghe*. The tones belong to three basic sound types: the ‘natural tone’ (*sanyin* 散音) of the strings when plucked or strummed; the ‘pressed tone’ (*anyin* 按音) produced by a left finger pressing on a string while a right finger plucks or strums the pressed string; and ‘harmonics’ (*fanyin* 泛音) produced by the left fingers lightly touching one or two spots indicated by the thirteen dotted markers while the right fingers pluck or strum the strings to form partials of the fundamental tones. The three tonal qualities stand respectively for the sky (*tian* 天), the earth (*di* 地), and the human (*ren* 人).⁶ The ‘harmonics’ are light and floating like the sky, the ‘natural tones’ are low and deep like the solid earth, and the ‘pressed tones’ are mild and tender like ‘the murmurings of boys and girls’ (*nini ernü yu* 呢呢兒女語).⁷ These three tonal qualities contrast and echo each other to enrich the monophonic character of *qin* music. An important echoing feature of *qin* music is the dominance of the ‘harmonics’, and especially the contrasts between the ‘harmonic’ and the ‘natural tone’ or the ‘pressed tone.’ The compositional principle of *qin* music is to create contrast and echo—the *yinghe*—of musical motifs played in high and low pitches and in different octaves, as well as contrast and echo of two plucked notes, of a plucked and a *glissando* note, and of two *glissando* notes.

The most unique aspect of playing *qin* is to oscillate the left fingers along the strings once a ‘pressed tone’ is produced. Different ways, ranges, speeds, and duration of oscillations create different effects of vibrato—which ethnomusicologist Joseph Lam refers to as ‘melodic tones’⁸—to echo, elongate, and enrich the sound of a pressed tone. Traditionally, these vibratos form the most important aspect of Chinese music ‘*yun*’ 韻, in which the essence, spirit,

⁵ The cosmological correspondences discussed in this paragraph are from *Taigu Yiyin*, 1: 4a-b.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 8a-b.

⁷ This phrase derives from the opening line of a poem titled “Listening to Master Ying Play Qin” 聽穎師彈琴 by the famous Tang poet Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824). In *Quan Tangshi*, 340: 3813.

⁸ Joseph Lam, in his analyses of the *qin* tune “The Lament of the Changmen Palace” (Changmen Yuan 長門怨), employs the concepts of “structural tones” (referring to notes produced by “natural” and “pressed tones”), “melodic tones” (notes that slide toward or away from a structural note), and “percussion tones” (hammering on the strings by the left thumb or left fourth finger). See Lam 1993, pp. 353-385.

and aesthetic of Chinese music lies.⁹ When the finger tips oscillate to create vibrato, moreover, friction between the left-hand fingers and the strings occurs. The sounds produced by this friction are considered part of the essence of *qin* music rather than as an unwarranted noise. These traces of the oscillations echo and contrast the vibrato even when these traces are too faint to be detected. Ethnomusicologist Frank Kouwenhoven describes them as ‘silences’ featuring “not only pauses and interruptions but also the dying away of audible sounds, supported by hand and finger movements that may continue for a while after any audible pitch has disappeared.”¹⁰ An illustrative example of this is the beginning section of the most popular *qin* tune: “Geese Descend on Flat Sand” (Pingsha Yanluo 平沙雁落).

The structure of a *qin* tune, likewise, hinges primarily on contrast and echo, with the same motifs rendered in different pitches and octaves. For example, a music motif might be played in lower octaves and then in higher octaves, and then again in lower octaves, as demonstrated by tunes like “Three Variations on the Plum Blossoms” (Meihua Sannong 梅花三弄) and “The Drunkard” (Jiukuang 酒狂). Another form of contrast and echo involves a motif played on the fifth, sixth, and seventh strings reiterated on the first, second, third, and fourth strings. An excellent example is the third section of “Water Flowing on Rocks” (Jishi Liuquan 激石流泉).¹¹ A final instance of contrast and echo is a recurrent, unifying motif, as demonstrated by “The Mantra of Monk Pu’an” (Pu’an Zhou 普庵咒)—also titled “The Monk Danzhang” (Shi Danzhang 釋但章)—in which the same music motif ends each of the ten sections (excluding the introduction and the coda).

2. The Conflicted yet Harmonious Image: The Pictorial Music of Contrast and Echo

Understanding the essence of *qin*, Min Qiji utilizes the same principles of *yinghe* in his visualization of music. Min’s illustration is divided into two contrasting but echoing parts. On the right is a pebbled terrace with a thrice-bended foot-rail marking both sides of a walk, with the moon and clouds floating high above in the upper left-hand corner. A Taihu rockery protrudes beyond the rail of the terrace, with a decorated stone stool anchoring the rail and Yingying’s maid

⁹ Edward Ho discusses three traditional aspects in musical aesthetics prized by *literati*: the idea of *qiyun* 氣韻, the structure of *qi chen zhuan he* 起承轉合, and the musicality defined by *yijing* 意境. See Ho 1997, pp. 35-49.

¹⁰ Kouwenhoven 2001, p. 42.

¹¹ A wonderful performance of the tune by the late *guqin* musician Wu Zhaoji 吳兆基 (1908-1997) is available on Youtube at the link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCepyN6pRuM> (accessed on October 26, 2012).

Hongniang 紅娘 standing immediately behind the rockery. The walk is flanked by an empty chasm on the one side and by a pond in which float a few leaves on the other side. The parallel rails, with their mirror-image stools, contrast and echo each other. This terrace and chasm is framed by the edge of the house and the border of the picture, giving an impression of an independent picture in a frame. On the left is a house partially visible with a roof, a wall featuring a circular window. The window frames musician Zhang Gong, who is seemingly performing in an inner room, as if he is an image painted on a fan. The wall frames both Cui Yingying, who listens to the music, and the round image of Zhang Gong. This left half of the illustration is structured as if a fan painting is embedded inside a rectangular painting. The performance in the round frame is embedded within the frame of the listener. The wall further divides the indoor space occupied by musician Zhang from the outdoor space occupied by the listener Cui and the peeping Hongniang, thereby separating the outdoor sphere into two parts: it frames Yingying within and Hongniang beyond the sphere of the wall, and introduces a sense that the two outdoor characters are situated in different frames rather than in a continuous space. The right and left sides eventually join to form a picture that is further framed by a decorative floral border, which is in turn framed within the page border. Indeed, Min has created a complicated layering of embedded frames.

These multiple framings create contrast and echo. The floral border seems to affirm the whole dramatic scene as a picture rather than a stage performance. However, Min's decision to place Zhang on an elevated plane and Yingying behind a railing invokes the stage. The musician, the audience, and the Taihu rockery form a triangle with the performance symbolically at the vertex, highlighting the main theme of the illustration—the *qin*. The illustration thus creates tensions between its status as a picture and its status as a stage performance, between the stationary and the kinetic, which further recalls the musical contrasts between the sound *sheng* 聲 (the plucked note) and the *yun* (the kinetic glissando note). These tensions show that Min was acutely aware of the complexity involved in creating a musical performance on the silent page. The intrinsic irreconcilability of these opposing media clearly occupies his mind.

The irresolute tensions created by these multiple frames correspond to the principle of *qin* music. These tensions are enhanced by the degree of brightness and openness within each frame. The performance frame is least open and the environment that contains the music playing is darker than the rest of the scene. The attempt to constrict or circumscribe the scene of performance is obvious: the circular window is emphatically enclosing and distancing. It does not invite spectatorship, suggesting that what matters is hearing the music rather than witnessing the musician. The tension created by these peculiar pictorial designs is clearly intentional. It dominates the composition, implying the simultaneous presence of echo and contrast which, in itself, is the very principle of *qin* music.

Tensions likewise arise in the seemingly complete yet divided designs of the picture. Although the illustration is to be viewed as a whole, the right part of the

house and the left part of the terrace seem to be independent of each other. This impression is strengthened by the fact that these two spaces are in perspectival conflict. The terrace progresses diagonally toward the right, while the house sits diagonally to the left. The two spaces form the shape of a 'V', again echoing and contrasting each other. This 'V' shape is reiterated by the 'V' shape formed by the three figures—Zhang Gong at the upper left, Yingying at the bottom front, and Hongniang at the upper right. The 'V' composition is further accentuated by the 'V' shapes formed by the bending edge of the terrace rail. However, the illustration's distinct halves are unified by the continuity of the ground, the sightlines of the two female figures, the bluish tone that dominates the illustration, and the many echoing pictorial motifs. The bifurcated yet coherent image thus embodies an impossible tension of simultaneous conflict and harmony. This tension recalls the 'noises' or 'silences' caused by the friction when fingers oscillate on the strings, creating vibrato. These 'noises' and 'silences' intrude and conflict with the music, yet forming an important part of the essence of musical harmony. The inevitable tension between the human fingers and the instrument is perfectly echoed and captured by the structural tension of the illustration. The 'V' shape of the pictorial structure further echoes the human body as the right hand plucks or strums the strings on the rightmost part of the instrument while the left hand stretches to the left part of the instrument to press the strings. The two stretching arms form a 'V' shape above the instrument just like the house and the terrace stretching diagonally in different directions. The illustration is thus a metaphor of the *qin* instrument.

Many *yinghe* motifs define the compositional principle of this picture, and these *yinghe* motifs further resemble the structure of *qin* music. The two Taihu rockeries not only echo each other in shape, color, and texture, but also recall the musical structure as the same motif repeats on both parts of the instrument—first on the left (lower pitch) and then on the right (higher pitch) or vice versa. The darker rockery on the left corresponds to the heavier tone of the lower pitch, while the lighter blue rockery on the right corresponds to the lighter tone of the higher pitch. The *yinghe* of the two rockeries recalls a *qin* tune titled "Happy Harmony between the Divine and the Human" (Shenren Chang 神人暢), in which the long beginning harmonic motif played at the rightmost side of the instrument is mirrored at the leftmost side. The hollow bright moon echoes the circular window of the house and perfectly captures the Shenren Chang's harmonic motifs which are repeated on different sections of the instrument. The echoing gestures and positions of Yingying and Hongniang likewise invoke the same association with the musical structure. Here an additional musical element is suggested, as musical dynamics (i.e. expressive shifts in volume) are metaphorized by the different sizes of the two depicted figures. The stone stool by the bending edge of the terrace echoes the analogous stool by the pond-like structure. The absolute parallel of the same stools and the same bends evokes the parallelism of music motifs played in different keys and octaves. This echoing recalls the musical structure of the same motif repeated respectively on the

lower-pitched and higher-pitched strings on the same section of the instrument as demonstrated by the tune "Water Flowing on Rocks." Equally parallel are the railing of the house and the railing-like hanging cloth affixed to the table where Zhang Gong plays *qin*, which elicit the same musical association.

The alternations between rocks and figures suggests an alternation between the natural tone and pressed tone constituting a rhythmic pattern that recalls the tonal and the rhythmic quality of a *qin* technique called '*dayuan*' 打圓 (lit. 'play circles', indicated by the 圓 notation); this technique consists of seven sounds of the same note produced by repeating a 'natural tone' and a 'pressed tone', hence following a fixed rhythmic pattern of ♩ (natural) ♩ (press) ♩ (natural, press) ♩ (natural) ♩ (press) ♩ (natural). The alternation changes if the pattern begins with a pressed tone. The circle of the window placed right above the rockery echoes the circle of the moon, which likewise is placed right above the rockery standing on the terrace. The circular motifs and the textural quality of this pairing also evoke the '*dayuan*' technique which involves an alternation between a 'harmonic' and a 'natural tone.' Besides this, other two techniques specific to *qin* are involved: these are the so-called '*ruyi*' 如一 (lit. 'as one', indicated by the 一 notation), and '*shuangtan*' 雙彈 ('double strumming', indicated by 雙). '*Ruyi*' is produced by the right index or middle finger strumming on two adjacent strings with one note of 'natural tone' on one string and the same note of 'pressed tone' by pushing a left finger on the next string above it. The two notes sound as if one, thus the name 'as one.' '*Shuangtan*', instead, is created by strumming consecutively the same note with the right index and middle fingers. The alternate name for '*shuangtan*' is 'to drum' (*gu* 鼓) which resembles the juxtaposition of the two stone stools with the shape of traditional Chinese drums. In this case, the intended association of pictorial motifs with music is clear. The echo of the pairings of the circular window/rockery and the circular moon/rockery certainly produces the association of '*shuangtan ruyi*', a playing technique that combines the '*shuangtan*' and '*ruyi*' in which the right index and middle fingers produce '*ruyi*' twice consecutively.

3. The Picture as the Instrument

The pictorial designs further evoke the tonal qualities of the *qin* instrument. The Taihu rockeries echo the clouds in shape and in the convoluted contours, while the circles inside the rockeries represent the moon inside the clouds. Both images recall the ripple effect created by a drop of water, perfectly capturing the vibrations that propagate through the air after a sound is made. The progressively lighter colors, looser textures, and higher positions of the rockeries, together with the moon and clouds, further recall the distinction between 'natural' and 'pressed' tones, as well as the 'harmonics' that define the tonal qualities of *qin* music. On the left, the contours of the rockery echo the twisted

contour of the railing, while on the right the twisted lines of the pebbled ground mimic the rockery. These echoes parallel each other and suggest a musical motif repeated in different sections of a tune and on different parts of the instrument as demonstrated by “The Drunkard.” The convoluted contours and twisted lines inevitably give the impression of a vibrato as the one created by the oscillations of the left finger when playing a pressed note. The lines of the clouds, the ground, the railing, and the rocks help visualize this vibrato.

The *yinghe* motifs of the ground, the rockery, the moon and clouds invoke associations with the earth, the human, and the sky. The analogous couplings of one rockery with Yingying and the other with Hongniang strengthen this association which invokes the three tonal qualities of *qin* with the ground, the human, and the sky. The images of the ground, the rockery, and the moon and clouds hence become symbols of musical sound. The moon and the clouds embody the tonal quality of ‘harmonics’, as the lighter, airier sound seems to echo the fundamental tone. The white rim of the moon resembles the origin of the sound, while the vibratory lines extending from this rim recalls the vibration of “sound” rippling through the air. The solid and heavy sound of the natural tone is conveyed by the solidness and heaviness of the rockery, while the holes and the contorted lines of the rockery create a rhythmic impression and an echoing effect. The echoing effect generated by the instrument’s long strings is captured by the unique pattern and the tonal gradations of the blue of the rockeries. Both rockeries are rendered with many small areas of more concentrated and heavier blues which spread against washes of light blue. The heavy blue circle represents the solid natural tone, while the light blue wash suggests the way the sound propagates through the air. The rockeries’ different shades also convey variations in musical volume.

Similarly, the rhythm of colors and shapes featured in the illustration recalls the rhythm of music. The rockery in the foreground, the rockery in the middle ground, and the moon and clouds together suggest a waltz-like rhythm, which consists of a stressed, an unstressed, and a softer sound. This waltz-like rhythm recalls that of the beginning section of “The Drunkard.” In this tune, the waltz-rhythm consists of the loud sound of a natural note, the medium sound of a pressed note, and the light sound of a ‘*daiqi*’ 帶起 note produced by the pressed finger releasing while simultaneously plucking the pressed string.¹² This music-like pictorial rhythm also introduces the element of time into the picture, allowing the painting medium defined by space to approximate the music medium defined by time. The Chinese music expresses space in time through the idea of *yun*, and the resonance occurring in the space created between a note and the next note, while the painter captures time in space through the rhythm of the pictorial motifs. Min uses this waltz-like rhythm to present the musical time in the pictorial space. The rhythm starts at the lower left corner, courses to the center, and then gradually progresses to the upper right. Moreover, this rhythm

¹² This technique is also called *zhuaqi* 抓起.

is concluded at the moon that is the symbol of time as the moon moves across the sky while time progresses. Min's moon is particularly time sensitive as the partially visible moon waxes or wanes as time marches. We can thus conclude that Min's pictorial medium of space perfectly reflects the musical medium of time.

The composition of the illustration likewise invokes the *qin* instrument. The house's circular window in the middle of the square wall recalls the 'dragon pond' in the middle section of *qin*. The circle frames Zhang Gong playing *qin* inside the house, which is literally an echo chamber resonating with the music. The dark shadowing within the circle also resembles the 'dragon pond.' The square pond can be associated with the 'phoenix swamp', which is located at the end section of the instrument. The circular window and the square pond thus symbolize the instrument's two echo chambers. By implication, the roof of the house, the main hall and the terrace symbolize respectively the head, middle, and end sections of the instrument. The rockery which in traditional Chinese garden design is associated with the mountains serves here to represent the 'yueshan' (mountain) that supports the *qin* strings. The combination of "mountains and water" plays upon the Chinese term '*shanshui*' (lit. mountains and water) which denotes nature itself. The pattern of circles and squares—window, moon, and house wall—alludes to the phrase "round-sky and square-earth", which, as we've seen, is an idiom indicating both *qin*'s round top and flat bottom and the world in general. The two terrace stools invoke the two feet at the bottom of *qin* to which the seven strings are fastened. In addition, the Chinese word that stands for drum- or *gu*-shaped stools is also a homophone of the verb *gu* 鼓 (to play [the *qin*]). All these symbolisms are not random but represent a concerted effort to associate the picture with the *qin*. Through the symbolism of the world, the instrument and the picture become versions of each another. The picture symbolizes the *qin*, while the *qin* symbolizes the world. The picture, the instrument, and the sound symbolically merge as one.

Min Qiji's illustration is essentially a music of silence. The picture functions as a 'stringless *qin*' (*wuxianqin* 無弦琴), which is an important concept in *qin* aesthetics initiated by the famous hermit Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (ca. 365-427). His silent music influenced the essence, the spirit, and the aesthetic of *qin* music and has been featured also in numerous poems and paintings.¹³ This illustration therefore metaphorically becomes the 'stringless *qin*' through its analogous ability to produce silent music. Although it is silent, it is essentially musical and filled with 'sounds.'

¹³ In *Biography of Tao Yuanming*, Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531) notes that "Yuanming does not know about the rules of music, but he had a stringless *qin*. Whenever he drank, he would play it to express his mind." In *Tao Yuanming Ji Jianzhu*, p. 612. *History of the Jin Dynasty (Jinshu 晉書)* also records that "Yuanming does not know about music, but kept a *qin*, which had neither strings nor harmonic markings. Whenever he drank with friends, he would play it to harmonize with the drinking." *Jinshu*, 94: 2463.



Fig. 6. Min Qiji, “Puppet Theater”, the nineteenth illustration of the twenty-one color illustrations of *Xixiang Ji*, Cologne.

4. Chains of Embedded Realities

As discussed above, the separation of the music performance from the audience by a railing invokes an association with the stage. The two railings in front of the indoor table and in front of the house give an impression of an indoor theater, where the musician plays, being embedded in a larger theater. Here Yingying, who acts as the audience, is in turn embedded in another theater, where Hongniang serves as another audience. A chain of embedded performances is thus created: there is the performance of musician Zhang which is embedded in that of Yingying as the audience, the performance of Hongniang as another audience, and a third one comprised within the picture frame with the readers being engaged as the ultimate audience. This chain of embedded performance recalls Min’s picture of the puppet show, the nineteenth of the set of color illustrations of *Xixiang Ji* (Fig. 6). As the puppets are framed by the boundaries of the screen, so are the puppeteers who are enmeshed within the larger stage structure. Placing the musician on a platform beyond the stage emphasizes that the puppeteers’ reality, no less than that of the puppets, is itself part of a larger frame beyond it. What’s more, the puppeteer’s performance is controlled by the

tempo and the rhythm of the music, just as the puppets are controlled by the puppeteers.¹⁴

The gradually enlarged frames recall the invisible rippling effect of the sound: when a sound is made, the waves of the sound ripple outward through the air. The multiple embeddedness—the circular frame of the window embedded inside the rectangular wall, and the wall embedded in the picture frame—create a rippling effect. The rippling of this chained embeddedness resembles the rippling structure of ‘sound.’ In so doing, it further recalls a tune titled “Three Variations on the Yangguan Tune” (Yangguan Sandie 陽關三疊), in which the variations of a music motif are nested one within another.

The illustrations in Fig. 3 and Fig. 6 share not only the same structural embeddedness, but also the complexity of communication and penetration among multiple frames. In the puppet illustration, for example, the offstage puppets hang from the left rafter of the stage roof and the puppeteers’ hands bridge the front stage and the back stage, hence establishing a clear interpenetration and communication between the puppets’ and puppeteers’ realities. In the *qin* illustration, instead, the room where Zhang Gong plays the *qin* is the acoustic box which resonates the sound, while the circular window is the open channel that allows music to be transmitted to the outside where Yingying is listening. The twisting and bending lines that define the contours of the ground and the natural objects outside the house give the idea of musical resonance. The natural world then becomes another acoustic box which recalls Zong Bing’s 宗炳 (375-443) motivation to draw mountains on his wall in order to “empty his mind and contemplate the Way, and to recline and wander among them.”¹⁵ Zong perceives that the painted landscape would resonate with the music he plays, or in the words of ethnomusicologist Frank Kouwenhoven, he perceives “the *qin* as a tool for ‘sounding nature.’”¹⁶ The reality of music awakens the reality of nature, and the two realities perfectly conflate with each other. Music is the mechanism that links all these different frames or realities together.

Music permeates both illustrations but with opposite designs. The music in the *qin* illustration is inscribed in the innermost frame and gradually resonates outward to reach its listeners, while the music in the puppet illustration is placed in the outermost frame that embeds both the puppets’ and puppeteers’ worlds. In the former illustration, the music ripples outward and eventually permeates the whole picture, while in the latter the music controls both the tempo and the rhythm of the puppet performance. The former emphasizes the musical resonance that characterizes *qin* music, while the latter emphasizes the musical domination that characterizes drum music. The musical domination reflects the

¹⁴ For a more detailed discussion of this illustration and the theme of “embedded realities”, see Hsiao Li-ling 2007b, pp. 215-220.

¹⁵ *Lidai Minghua Ji*, 6: 78.

¹⁶ Kouwenhoven 2001, p. 42.

dependency and insufficiency of life, while the musical resonance emphasizes the spiritual resonance between two individuals as exemplified by Yingying and Zhang Gong in this scene where they reach a mutual understanding through musical expressions.¹⁷ In the story, the lovers come to an understanding of each other's love, which they are forbidden to express under the watchful eyes of others, in this case the peeking Hongniang. This illustration depicts the control of tempo and rhythm of life not by music but by the omnipresence of watchful eyes which turn private moments into public spectacles. The music allows autonomous, self-sufficient communication between the two like minds, but those who do not know the music become an impediment that limits musical resonance.

5. Other Pictorial Representation of the Same Scene

As previously highlighted, Min Qiji's *yinghe* pictorial motifs symbolize the presence of music on the silent page. His method is unique in comparison to other illustrations of "Yingying Listens to *Qin*" published during the late Ming period. While Min's illustration is a pictorial symbol of music, the illustrations of his peers are pictorial narratives of the dramatic scene being described. As the text indicates, many illustrations, such as the 1614 edition published by Xiangxue Ju 香雪居 (Fig. 7) and its later adaptations—i.e. the Qifeng Guan 起鳳館 (Fig. 8), the Wenxiu Tang 文秀堂 (Fig. 9), the Luo Maodeng 羅懋登 (Fig. 10), the Cuncheng Tang 存誠堂 (Fig. 11), the Ling Mengchu 凌濛初 (Fig. 12), as well as the Sun Kuang 孫鑛 (Fig. 13), the Wei Zhongxue 魏仲雪 (Fig. 14), and the Xu Wei 徐渭 commentarial editions (Fig. 15)—all place Zhang Gong's *qin* playing inside his study. For example, the Xiangxue Ju edition depicts Zhang Gong playing *qin* in a four-sided open pavilion. Zhang is seen playing *qin* either through the door or window in these illustrations. The illustrations in the Wenxiu Tang and Wei Zhongxue editions place the room on the second floor, while the Luo Maodeng illustration places it on a raised platform. In the Ling Mengchu and Sun Kuang editions, instead, the room is by a pond. Some editions place the *qin* playing outdoors in the setting of a garden, such as the Xu Wei commentarial edition, which depicts Zhang playing *qin* on a stone table inside a garden, but leaves Yingying out altogether. Excepting the Xu Wei illustration,

¹⁷ The idea of music connecting lovers' emotions and minds is likewise upheld in many scholars' interpretations of this scene. They propose that Zhang and Yingying successfully communicate their love through the music despite their physical separation. For example, Suiquan Zhang proposes that the *qin* and its music represent an invisible connection between Zhang and Yingying. He argues that Yingying discerns Zhang's despondency and deep love in his music. See Zhang Suiquan 2009, pp. 95-97. Dai Deng has a similar view. She agrees that Yingying listens to the *qin* and simultaneously feels the love that Zhang conveys through his music. See Deng Dai 2001, pp. 31-34.

all of the above portray Hongniang's presence, while the text stipulates her absence. Moreover, in these illustrations Hongniang is not the peeping observer that Min Qiji outlines, but a sanctioned listener like Yingying. The outdoor scenery presents a garden that serves as a backdrop of the scene's narrative, rather than a metaphor for music. However, some does include one or two pictorial motifs that traditionally relate to music.



Fig. 7. "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", 1614, Xiangxue Ju edition.

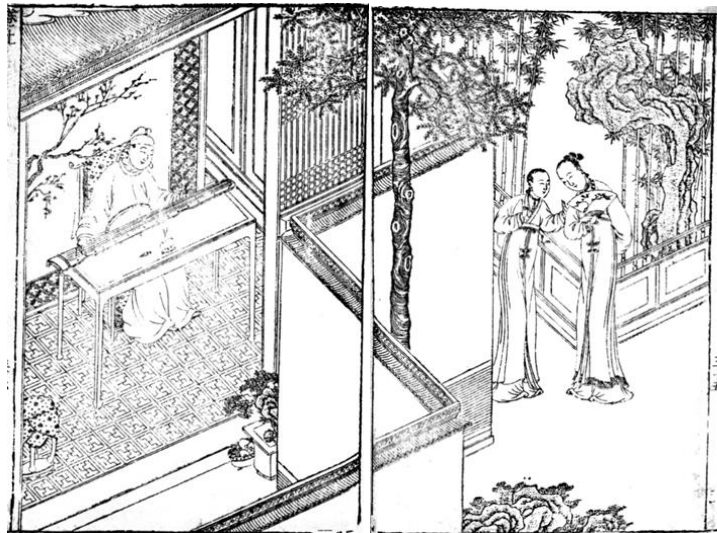


Fig. 8. "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", Qifeng Guan edition.

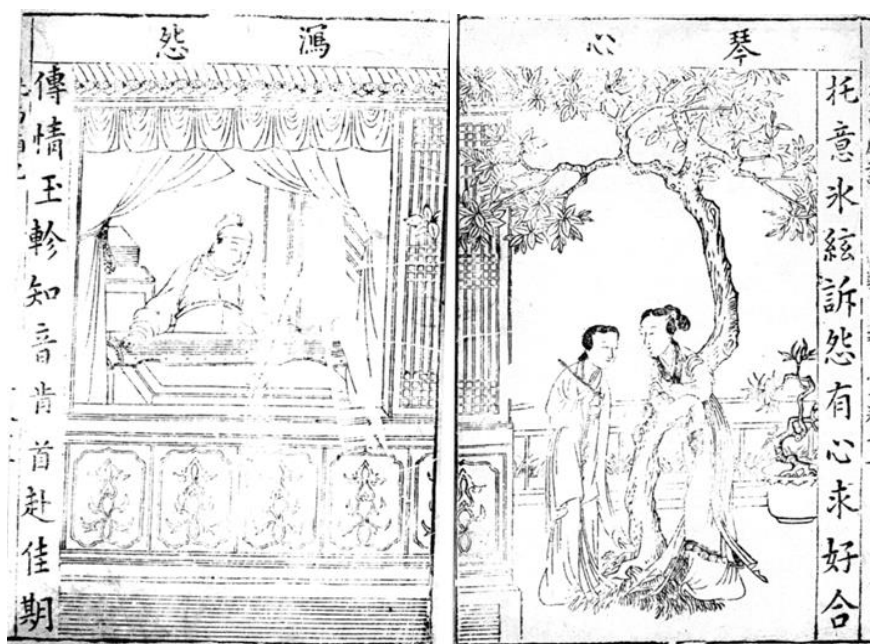


Fig. 9. "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", Wenxiu Tang edition.

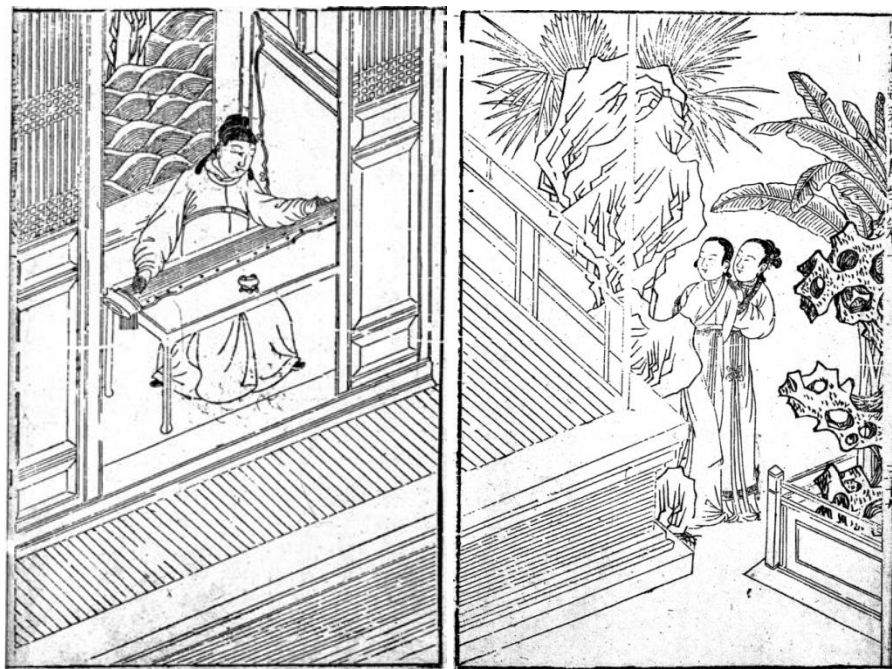


Fig. 10. "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", Luo Maodeng edition.

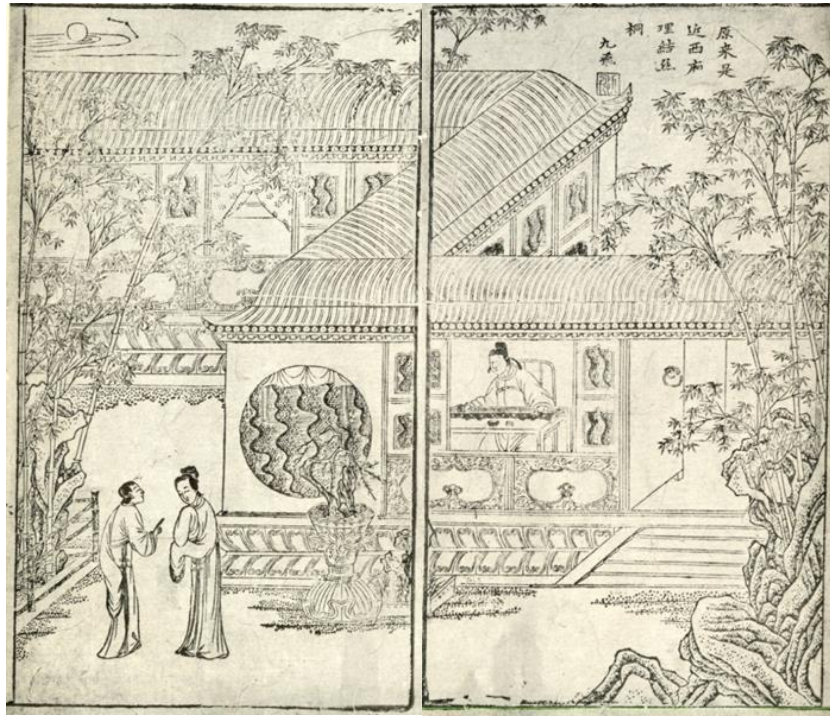


Fig. 11. “Yingying Listens to *Qin*”, Cuncheng Tang edition.

For example, the illustrations of the Cuncheng Tang, Ling Mengchun, Sun Kuang, and Wei Zhongxue editions contain a classic pairing of bamboo, moon, and *qin*, recalling the famous Tang poet Wang Wei's 王維 (701-761) poem “Hall Within the Bamboo Groves” (Zhuli Guan 竹裏館), which reads:

獨坐幽篁裏，
彈琴復長嘯。
深林人不知，
明月來相照。

Sitting alone in the dark bamboo groves,
I play the *qin* and sing.
In the deep woods no one knows,
Only the bright moon shines on me.¹⁸

In the poem, the play of light and shadow in the bamboo grove metaphorizes the performance.¹⁹ The association of bamboo with music

¹⁸ *Quan Tangshi*, 128: 1301.

was first broached by Zhuangzi in his essay “Equalizing Discourses on Things” (Qiwulun 齊物論), in which he distinguishes between ‘Heavenly music’ (*tianlai* 天籟), ‘Earthly music’ (*dilai* 地籟), and ‘human music’ (*renlai* 人籟). In his account, humans use bamboo to create music.²⁰ By alluding to bamboo, Wang suggest a harmony between human music and nature. The illustrations below incorporate the bamboo metaphor but go no farther; here music does not resonate through other pictorial motifs featured in the illustrations. As there are no complementary musical metaphors, we can infer that the adoption of bamboo is not intended to symbolize music, but, like the other pictorial motifs, is a realistic detail of the daily garden scene.

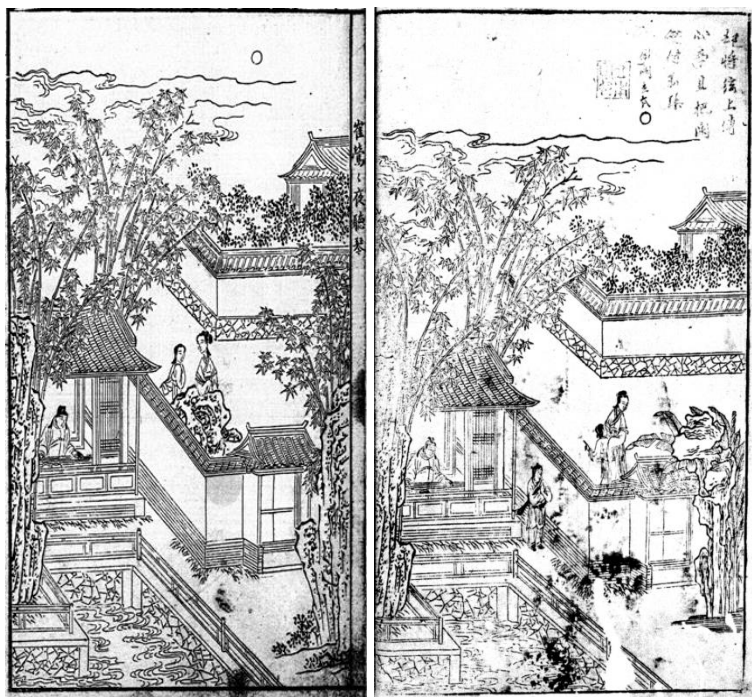


Fig. 12. (on the left) “Yingying Listens to *Qin*”, Ling Mengchu edition, and Fig. 13. (on the right) “Yingying Listens to *Qin*”, Sun Kuang commented edition.

¹⁹ The interplay of lightness and darkness to metaphorize *qin* music is also discernible in another Wang Wei’s poem titled “Appreciating the Moon at the East River” (Dongxi Wanyue 東溪玩月). See *Quan Tangshi*, 127: 1293.

²⁰ Graham 1981, p. 49.



Fig. 14. "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", Wei Zhongxue commented edition.

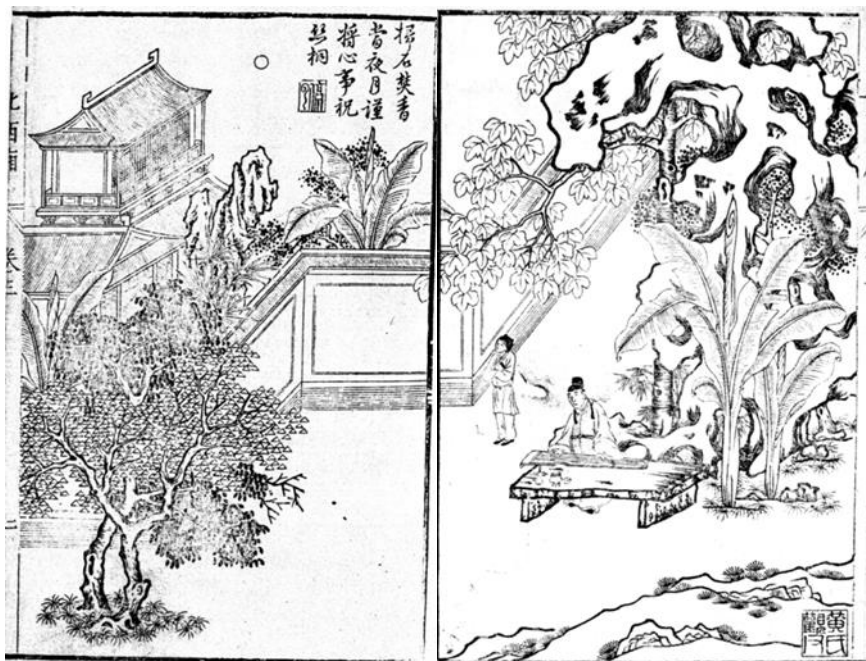


Fig. 15. "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", Xu Wei commented edition.

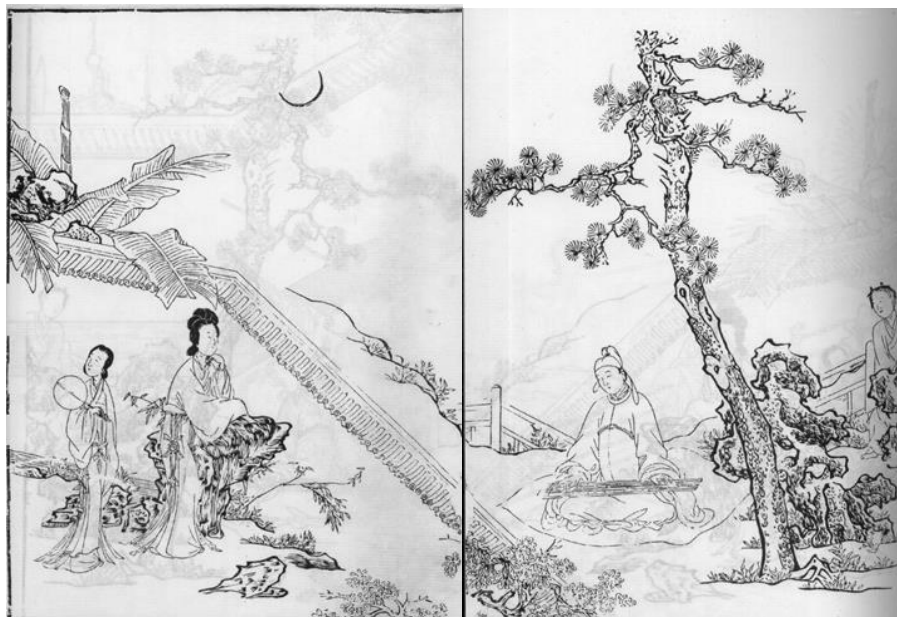


Fig. 16. Anonymous, 1616, “Yingying Listens to *Qin*.” In Wang Shifu 王實甫, 2005, *Ming Min Qiji Huike Xixiang Ji Caitu/Ming He Be Jianke Xixiang Ji* 明閔齊伋繪刻西廂記彩圖/明何璧校刻西廂記 [The Color Illustration of the Story of the Western Wing Painted and Printed by Min Qiji in the Ming Dynasty / The Story of the Western Wing Edited and Printed by He B of the Ming Dynasty]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.

6. Music and the Union of Love in He Bi's 1616 Illustration

Among the illustrations of the various editions that feature the garden as the setting of “Yingying Listens to *Qin*”, the 1616 edition of *Xixiang Ji* published by He Bi represents the most interesting attempt to expound music on the silent page (Fig. 16). It differs from Min Qiji's illustration by rejecting the framing devices that reflect the illustration's status as a medium, but at the same time it resembles Min's by utilizing pictorial motifs and arrangements to showcase the representation of music in a silent medium. This section will investigate the crucial pictorial elements that He Bi employs to present music, while a more detailed discussion of He's illustration can be found in the article “Music and the Union of Love: Illustrating ‘Yingying Listens to Zither’ in the 1616 He Bi Edition of *Xixiang Ji*” that I co-authored with Yihui Sheng.²¹

²¹ See Hsiao & Sheng 2015, pp. 20-32.

6.1. The Visible and the Metaphorical *Qin*

He Bi's version of "Yingying Listens to *Qin*" portrays the moment when the lovers realize their love and exemplifies how the illustrator echoes the editor's perspective. The illustration shows Zhang with a *qin* on his lap. He sits on a mat next to a pine tree and a Taihu rock in a walled garden. Yingying stands on the other side of the wall, listening. Zhang plays the instrument with his right hand plucking or strumming and his left hand pressing on a string. In addition to the actual instrument, the illustrator includes numerous metaphorical allusions to the *qin*, the most obvious of which is the Taihu rocks, a dominant feature in Chinese gardens sometimes called 'fake mountains' (*jiashan* 假山).²² The rocks appear on both sides of the wall, near Zhang and Yingying. On an actual *qin*, the seven strings stretch from the 'mountain' (*yueshan*) on the right at the head of the instrument to the 'dragon's gum' (*longyin* 龍齦) flanked by two 'crown's horns' (*guanjiao* 冠角) on the left at the tail of the *qin* (Fig. 17). The Taihu rock near Zhang is not coincidentally shaped like a rocky mountain. Through nominal and formal analogies, this rock inevitably evokes an association with the 'mountain' of the *qin*. The formal analogy is again detected in the rock against which Yingying leans. This unusual rock is shaped like a dragon's head. This unique shape suggests an intentional design which creates an association with the *qin*'s 'dragon's gum.' Furthermore, the small rocks behind and next to the dragon-head rock jointly form a 'V' shape that recalls the placements of the 'crown's horns' that flank the 'dragon's gum.' In keeping the structure of an actual *qin*, the mountain-shaped rock is taller than the 'dragon-head' rock. The purpose of these nominal and formal analogies is to suggest the presence of an invisible *qin* that connects the musician and his listener no less than the actual *qin*.

This invisible *qin* focuses on the contrast between the lovers' physical separation and their emotional union. In the text, the playwright utilizes the penetrating feature of the music to emphasize that no concrete boundary, in this case the garden wall, can prohibit the lovers' communication. The boundary of separation is thus blurred, and the emotional union is consummated. Similarly, the illustration further redefines the relationship between visible and invisible by suggesting an invisible *qin* that is slightly different from the one on Zhang's lap. On an actual *qin*, the two strings under the 'crown's horns'—which are called 'dragon's feelers' (*longxu* 龍鬚)—are hidden inside. In the illustration, however, the two bamboo stalks between the 'dragon's gum' and the 'crown's horns' which recall the 'dragon's feelers' are actually visible, extending in opposite directions. The illustrator's invisible *qin* is hence attached with two visible feelers, while the real *qin* has invisible ones. On the contrary, when the visible *qin* becomes invisible, the invisible feelers acquire materiality. The play of visibility and invisibility of course cuts to the essential challenge of visualizing

²² Credit goes to Yihui Sheng, who first perceived the invisible *qin* suggested by these pictorial motifs.

music. Music is by nature invisible, but its metaphors are not. This intertwined play conveys the presence of Zhang's music.

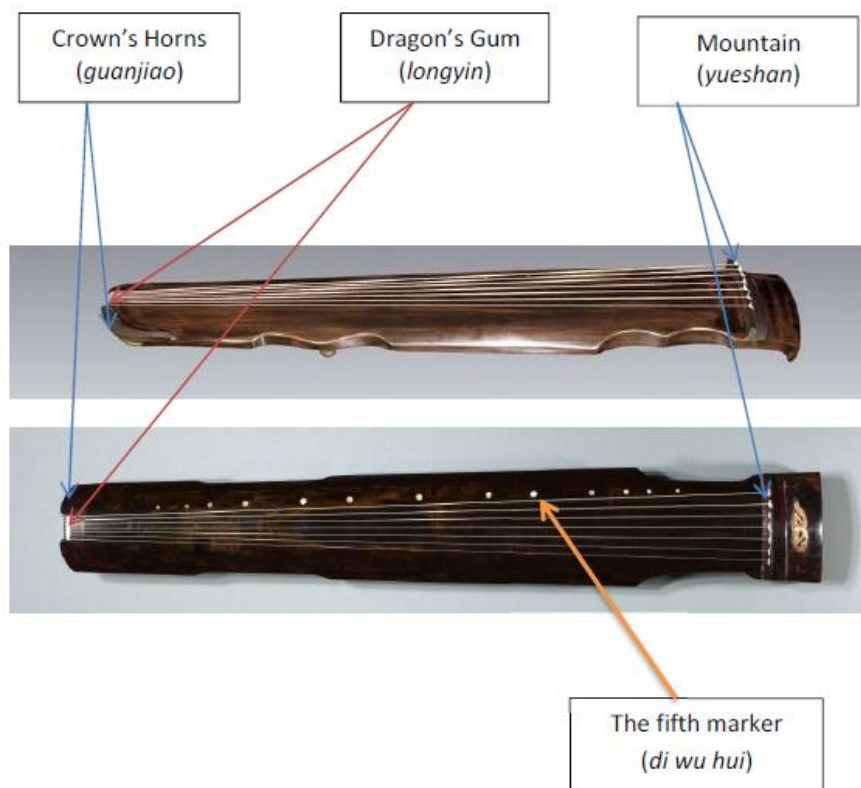


Fig. 17. Name of the Guqin Parts

The visibility of the music, in turn, suggests invisible emotions, in this case, Zhang and Yingying's love. To imply that the music penetrates the wall and connects the lovers, the illustrator puts Zhang and Yingying within the circumference of the metaphorical *qin*. As mentioned above, the *qin*'s seven strings are strung from the 'mountain' to the 'dragon's gum', and in-between the two there are the thirteen fret markers. The musician always sits before the fifth marker (*di wu hui* 第五徽), counting from the head of *qin* instrument, about one third of the string length away from the 'mountain.' It is worth noting that Zhang sits in the space between the two rocks, at about one third of the distance away from the rock representing the 'mountain'—a placement analogous to the fifth marker. This placement implies that Zhang simultaneously plays the *qin* on his lap and the invisible *qin* that connects him and Yingying. In addition, it is meaningful that the listener Yingying leans against a rock shaped like a dragon

head. The seven strings strung from the 'mountain' to the 'dragon's gum' resemble water flowing from the mountain down to the dragon's mouth, as dragons are always associated with water. Yingying is clearly in position to receive the water-like music flowing from the musician. Therefore, the two lovers, though separated by the wall, are implicit in the same instrument and connected in the same music. Yingying's placement to the rear of the rock resembling the dragon-head suggests not only that the metaphorical instrument and its music stop with her, but also that such music is shared only by the two lovers. Neither Yingying's maid nor Student Zhang's servant share the emotional union of the music, which explains why they stand at the perimeter of the metaphorical *qin*. Yingying's maid Hongniang stands close to this perimeter, but she turns her head away, as if to respect the privacy of the music exclusive to the lovers.

To demonstrate that Yingying understands the love that Zhang expresses through his music, the illustrator depicts water running around the Taihu rock on which Yingying leans. The combination of water and the Taihu rockery—including the abovementioned mountain associations—alludes to the legend of 'mountains and streams' (*gaoshan liushui* 高山流水) that defines the aesthetics and connoisseurship of music in China. Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (ca. 290-235 BCE) records this legend in *Lü's Annals* (*Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋):

Boya played the *qin*, and Zhong Ziqi listened. He was thinking about Mountain Tai while playing the *qin*. Zhong Ziqi commented: "How good you are at the *qin*! The majestic quality [of your music] is like the Mountain Tai." Later on, he was thinking about [freshwater] streams while he continued playing. Zhong Ziqi commented: "How good you are at the *qin*! The flowing quality [of your music] is like the streams." After Zhong Ziqi died, Boya broke the strings and discarded his *qin*, and never played again for the rest of his life as he thought that there was no one left in the world to play the music for.²³

Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期 understands the *qin* musician Yu Boya's 俞伯牙 thoughts through his music. As Zhong perceived, Yu's mind dwelled on mountains and streams.²⁴ This story coined the phrase 'knowing the music' (*zhiyin* 知音) as a term for true friendship, while the phrase 'mountains and streams' came to symbolize emotional union in music. The highest achievement in the aesthetics of Chinese *qin* music is the perfect conflation between art and nature, as discussed by Mitchell Clark in an article titled "The Wind Enters the Strings: Poetry and Poetics of Aeolian Qin."²⁵ The nature conceived by the musician and expressed through the music is understood by the listener's mind as being perfectly in sync with the musician's mind. The perfect conflation of nature and music is shared by those who truly know the music. By invoking this tale, the

²³ *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 14: 6a.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14: 4.

²⁵ Clark 1995, pp. 16-19.

illustrator analogizes Yingying as Zhong Ziqi and Zhang as Yu Boya. Just like their predecessors, they reach an emotional union through *qin* music.



Fig. 18. Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty 宋徽宗. *Picture of Listening to Qin* (*Tingqin Tu* 聽琴圖). Colors on silk, 147.2 x 51.3 cm.
In the Collection of Palace Museum, Beijing.

6.2. Music in the Pines

The legend of 'mountains and streams' shows that Chinese tend to employ natural imagery to metaphorize music. This tendency has been popular since the beginning of artistic, musical, and poetic traditions. Nurtured by this cultural milieu, the illustrator retains such a habit. The plants that He associates with Yingying and Zhang derive their meanings from these traditions. The most notable natural imagery in the illustration is the pine tree, under which Zhang plays his *qin*. This is not the first depiction of the musician playing his *qin* under a pine tree. The celebrated Northern Song emperor Huizong's famous painting *Picture of Listening to the Qin* (*Tingqin Tu* 聽琴圖) presents just such a pictorial example (Fig. 18). The association of the pine tree with *qin* music is long established in the field of literature. The illustrious *qin* musician of the Jin Dynasty Ji Kang 嵇康 (ca. 224-263) composed a song titled "Wind Enters the Pines" (Fengrusong 風入松) that establishes the analogy between the sound of the wind entering the pines and *qin* music.²⁶ The sound of the pine wind became one of the essential metaphors for *qin* music. Similarly, the famous poem "Song of Wind Entering the Pines" (Fengrusong Ge 風入松歌) penned by the Tang Dynasty monk and poet Jiao Ran 皎然 (ca. 720-804) demonstrates this metaphorical usage. The poem reads:

西嶺松聲落日秋，
千枝萬葉風颼颼。
美人援琴弄成曲，
寫得松間聲斷續。
聲斷續，清我魂，
流波壞陵安足論。
美人夜坐月明裏，
含少商兮照清微。
風何淒兮颼颼，
攬寒松兮又夜起。
夜未央，曲何長，
金徽更促聲泱泱。
何人此時不得意？
意苦弦悲聞客堂。

The west hill's pines under the setting autumn sun reverberate,
In thousands of branches and millions of leaves the wind sibilates.
The beauty takes a *qin* and an air she plays
Inscribing in the pines the sound of staccatos and legatos.
The staccato and legato sounds clear my soul.
How could the flowing waves eroding the hills compare?

²⁶ *Quan Tangshi*, 23: 9267.

The beauty sits at night amidst the moonlight
 That embraces the *gugin*-playing thumb and shines on the pure-souled *qin*.
 How sad the wind is when it blows.
 Stirring the cold pine, she rises again at night.
 The night is still young and what a lengthy tune.
 The metal strings again rush and the sounds are magnificent.
 Who is depressed at this hour?
 We could hear the bitter mind and the sad strings in the guest hall.²⁷

In the poem, Jiao Ran compares the two most common natural metaphors for *qin* music: the windy pine and the flowing water of the mountains. Jiao more highly values the sound of the windy pine than that of the flowing stream as the former registers different durations while the latter scores only one enduring sound. He affirms the pine wind by emphasizing its ability to capture in each note the effect of staccato (*duan* 斷) or legato (*xu* 續), and emphasizes that the sounds resonate in the spaces between the branches and pine needles. It is the hollows that produce the sound of wind, which evokes the aesthetic that governs *qin* music as well as all traditional Chinese music: the ‘resonance’ (*yun*) of music that lies in the space in-between sounded notes. The words *duan* and *xu* in the fourth line show that the poet understands the aesthetics of *qin* music. It is not the sounds per se, but their length (i.e. the space between sounds) that is most important. By so doing, Jiao’s poem establishes the sound of wind entering the pines as the most appropriate metaphor to describe *qin* music.

The idea of music created by the wind derives from the Daoist canon *Zhuangzi* 莊子. In “Equalizing Discourses on Things”, *Zhuangzi* describes the natural rhythm or the music of nature as ‘Heavenly’ and ‘Earthly music.’ Through a conversation between Ziqi 子綦 and Ziyu 子遊, *Zhuangzi* further elaborates his idea of the ‘Earthly music’:

夫大塊噫氣，其名為風，是唯無作，作則萬竅怒呿，而獨不聞之蓼蓼乎？
 山林之畏佳，大木百圍之竅穴，似鼻似口，似耳似枅，似圈似臼，似洼者，
 似污者。激者謫者，叱者吸者，叫者，譟者，突者，咬者；前者唱于，而
 隨者唱喁。泠風則小和，飄風則大和，厲風濟則眾竅為虛，而獨不見之調
 調之刁刁乎？²⁸

That hugest of clumps of soil blows out breath, by name the ‘wind.’ Better if
 it were never to start up, for whenever it does ten thousand hollow places
 burst out howling, and don’t tell me you have never heard how the hubbub
 swells! The recesses in mountain forests, the hollows that pit great trees a
 hundred spans round, are like nostrils, like mouths, like ears, like sockets,
 like bowls, like mortars, like pools, like puddles. Hotting, hissing, sniffing,
 sucking, mumbling, moaning, whistling, wailing, the winds ahead sing out

²⁷ *Quan Tangshi*, 821: 9267.

²⁸ *Zhuangzi Jishi*, pp. 45-46.

AAAH, the winds behind answer EEEH, breezes strike up a tiny chorus, the whirlwind a mighty chorus. When the gale has passed, all the hollows empty, and don't tell me you have never seen how the quivering slows and settles!²⁹

Zhuangzi insists that the wind blowing through the concaves of the natural landscape and through the spaces between leaves and trees is rhythmic and musical. Wind is nature's musician, while the hollows and plants are the nature's instruments.

In this association of music with the wind, the landscape, and the pines, the illustrator naturally places his pine tree and the musician against a background of a ravine that recalls Zhuangzi's words: "the hollows that pit great trees a hundred spans round [...]. When the gale has passed, all the hollows empty [...]." The illustrator further places the *qin* musician at the vertex of the 'V'-shaped ravine, hence suggesting that nature's and *qin* musicians converge with each other. The *qin* music seems to ripple from this vertex into an endless space. The illustrator's hollowed ravine and the pine tree that frame and surround the *qin* musician accentuate and best metaphorize *qin* music.

6.3. The "Banana Leaf *Qin*"



Fig. 19. Banana Leaf *Qin*. Ming Dynasty.
In the collection of Chinese National Academy of Arts.

²⁹ Graham 1981, pp. 48-49.

One of the illustration's most interesting details is the banana leaf straddling the wall and almost touching Yingying's head. It is crucial to note that this conspicuous leaf stems from the banana tree that grows on the side of the garden where Zhang plays, but like the invisible *qin* its leaf crosses over the wall and reaches the listening Yingying. Most particularly, the tips of the leaf reach toward her head as if Zhang's music wafts toward her mind. The design is not accidental and the banana leaf must be seen as another traditional metaphor for music.

The banana leaf is notably associated with *qin* in the manufacturing history of the instrument. In "Differentiating Old and New *qins*" (Guqin Xinqin zhi Bian 古琴新琴之辨), an entry contained in the collection of miscellaneous notes about daily life *Eight Notes on Respecting Life* (*Zunsheng Bajian* 遵生八牋), Gao Lian (高濂 ca. 1573-1620), a famous Wanli playwright, remarks that the *qin* was first shaped like a 'banana leaf' (*jiaoye shi* 蕉葉式) by Zhu Gongwang 祝公望 (ca. 1477-1570), one of the best *qin* makers of the Ming Dynasty.³⁰ Gao further explains that "after he obtained one, he so cherished it that he could not put it down and played it every day."³¹ Zhu Gongwang's 'banana-leaf *qin*' (*jiaoye qin* 蕉葉琴) was admired by Ming scholars and intellectuals, and the popularity of his creation has continued to this day (Fig. 19). The renowned contemporary *qin* maker Wang Peng 王鵬, the founder and owner of Juntian Fang 鈞天坊, a famous *qin* manufacturing company in Beijing, continues to make *qins* in the banana leaf style. Connoisseurs acknowledge that this style is the most difficult to manufacture. A good *qin* of this kind is thus particularly treasured. The banana leaf here recalls exactly such a *qin*, and thereby metaphorizes the music that defeats the wall and joins the lovers. Zhang's music reaches both Yingying's heart through the invisible *qin*, and her mind through this 'banana-leaf *qin*.'

While the banana leaf symbolizes the *qin* music reaching Yingying, the apricot branches that cross the wall in the opposite direction represents her love for him. The image of the apricot tree surmounting the wall invokes the well-known dictum "a red apricot protrudes over the wall" (*hongxing chuqiang* 紅杏出牆) which typifies a married woman engaged in an illicit affair. The illustrator employs this image to indicate that Yingying is engaged to her cousin Zheng Heng 鄭恒, while her heart yearns toward Zhang like the apricot branch. The dictum is notoriously immoral, but the illustrator cleverly appropriates it to showcase the forbidden love of Student Zhang and Yingying.

The banana leaf and apricot branch not only unveil the two characters' love and union, but also subvert the wall as a physical obstacle. The wall

³⁰ *Zunsheng Bajian*, p. 634.

³¹ *Ibidem*. Thanks to Yihui Sheng for this reference.

represents prohibition against the lovers' union, and, in the play, they are recurrently separated by a plethora of walls. The famous image of Zhang climbing over the wall represents the struggle against the impediments of a forbidden love. By showing the banana leaf and apricot branch crossing over the wall in opposite directions, the illustrator questions the wall's ability to prohibit love, as its communicues advance right under its guard. The wall can separate physically but not emotionally or spiritually.

6.3. The Union of Love in Music

Inspired by the aesthetics of music, the illustrator defines the spaces on both sides of the wall in terms of 'sound' and 'resonance.' On the right side where the music is made, the banana tree, the Taihu rock formation, the pine, the ravine, the *qin*, Zhang himself, and even Zhang's servant Quintong 琴童, whose name literally means '*qin*-boy', are all in one way or another figuring the music that emanates from the instrument. Together they mark the right side of the wall as a music-making space. The illustrator's inclusion of Quintong is peculiar insofar as the text does not mention his presence in the garden, and illustrations of the scene in most other editions naturally omit him. The illustrator clearly wanted to invoke the connotations of Quintong's name in an effort to define the garden space as musical. Zhang occupies the center of his half-garden. Rocks, pine tree, servant, ravine, and the banana tree surround him. His music resonates through the surrounding elements in all directions. While the right side of the wall is a music-making space, the left side is a space of music connoisseurship. The banana leaf, dragon-head rock, flowing stream, and Yingying all represent the receiving end of the music. Yingying stands at the centripetal focus-point toward which the banana leaf gravitates and the stream flows. Zhang's music spreads through the natural elements and concentrates again on these elements to finally reach its listener. Nature embodies both the centrifugal and centripetal forces by which the music is emitted and absorbed. Inspired by the legend of Yu Boya and Zhong Ziqi, the illustrator attributes 'music-knowing' (*zhiyin*) connoisseurship to nature.

Superficially the lovers seem to be separated by an unconquerable wall, but the symbolic images of music and love form a circle that encapsulates their union and renders the wall's prohibition futile. In the illustration, the Taihu rocks and the pine tree rise from the ground on the right side and tilt leftward. The parallel movements of the pine and rock emphasize the upward and leftward directions. The viewer's eye is drawn to the top of the pine tree. Its biggest and darkest branch continues to draw the sight to the left, reaching toward a banana leaf rising above the wall and extending further to the right. The pine branch and the banana leaf seem to yearn toward each other and connect by an invisible line. The pine tree and banana leaf form a

half-circle that encloses Zhang. Another banana leaf, occupying the center of the illustration, reaches over the wall toward the listening Yingying. The leaf, Yingying's body, and the dragon-head shaped Taihu rock forms part of another half circle. The line continues in two directions: first, from the mouth of the dragon rock to the tiny 'dragon feeler'-like bamboo tree that tilts right to reach the left-leaning branch of the apricot tree; second, from Yingying's feet to the small 'crown's horn'-like rocks and toward the apricot tree's left-leaning branch. Both eventually join to connect with the apricot branch. The circular line follows the apricot tree over the wall and joins the root of the pine tree. This circle encapsulates not only Zhang and Yingying but also the *qin* music. Hongniang and Qintong stand close, but are both outside of the circle and excluded from this musical encapsulation. They hear the music, but they do not participate in the emotional union shared by the lovers, as this is a private moment. The final element to round and perfect the circle is the apricot, the emblem of love. Love in turn defines this circle of music, which breaks the obstacle and prohibition imposed by the wall, and thereby enfolds the lovers' union.

7. *The Allusions of Music in Yan Ge's 1630 Illustration*

Like Min's illustration, Li Tingmo's 1630 illustrations of the same scene feature multiple frames. The scene is first framed by a circle, then by the rectangular half-folio page. Li designs two illustrations for the scene. The first one depicts a bended wall that separates Zhang Gong from Yingying and Hongniang (Fig. 20). Zhang's study is located right outside the wall, and contains a table with a *qin* on it. But this illustration does not portray Zhang playing the instrument, and music is not its primary concern. The image narrates the plot of the lovers' verbal exchange after the music playing when Hongniang returns to summon Yingying. Li adds another illustration that is empty of human figures (Fig. 21); it depicts a pine forest on the edge of a cliff as water flows down the high mountain, while the moon is surrounded by clouds. The water recalls the structure of the *qin* instrument: the seven strings flow from the '*yueshan*' (mountain) down across the body and are traditionally called the 'flowing stream.' So the sounds produced by these strings remind those of a flowing stream. The clouds not only echo the flowing water, but also suggest the presence of the wind. The combination of moon, pine forests, and flowing water recalls one of Wang Wei's poems titled "An Autumn Night of the Mountain Dwelling" (Shanju Qiuming 山居秋暝), which includes the pertinent lines: "The bright moons shines in the pines / The clear spring flows on the rocks" (明月松間照, 清泉石上流).³² The poem presents the rhythm of nature,

³² *Quan Tangshi*, 126: 1276.

and characterizes human activities as part of the natural rhythm. The pine, wind, and mountain moon further recalls another Wang's poem, namely "A Response to Vice Prefect Zhang" (Chou Zhang Shaofu 酬張少府), which reads: "Pine wind blows the loosened belt / The mountain moon shines on the *qin* playing" (松風吹解帶, 山月照彈琴).³³ Li's illustration utilizes this combination of pictorial motifs to metaphorize *qin* music. While Li's first illustration rejects the presence of music, his second one is completely devoted to visualizing it.

Li's second illustration depicts both sounds of the windy pine and of the flowing stream pouring down the mountain. The flowing stream pouring down from the mountain of course gives an image of 'mountains and streams', which as discussed above, came to define the *qin* aesthetic through the legends of Yu Boya and his friend Zhong Ziqi. The allusion to Yu and Zhong also figures in He Bi's illustration of "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", and appears quite frequently in Chinese paintings. For example, the famous Ming painter Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470-1523) in his *Picture of the Qin Musician* (*Qinshi Tu* 琴士圖) employs the image of mountain and stream as the setting of Yang Jijing 楊季靜 (ca. 1477-1530) playing the *qin* (Fig. 22). Tang clearly alludes to Yang as Boya and, by implication, alludes to himself as the 'music-knowing' friend Ziqi. The same formal arrangement governs the renowned *Spring Saunter on a Mountain Path* (*Shanjin Chunxing* 山徑春行, Fig. 23) by the Southern Song court painter Ma Yuan, in which the musician scholar is placed between a distant mountain and the near stream, while his servant carries a *qin* following behind.³⁴ This arrangement gives a hint about Zong Bing, who plays music to animate or actualize the painted mountain, and the legend of Boya and Ziqi. In these two paintings, the theme of mountain and stream not only metaphorizes music, but is used also to praise musicians and painters as true connoisseurs.

In addition to the allusion to the legend of 'mountain and stream', Li alludes to the pine and wind, which become a symbol of *qin* music. As discussed in detail above, the poet Jiao Ran celebrates the pine wind's ability to capture the dynamics of music, while Li utilizes both the water and pine wind to capture both the sustained and staccato sounds of *qin* music. Rather than distinguish them, Li combines the two metaphors to present the music with the fullest benefit given by both. A landscape of river and pine woods on a mountain thus is not a landscape painting but a pictorial metaphor of *qin* music. The image of pines likewise occupies the essential part of Tang Yin's picture of Yang Jijing. In addition to the surrounding 'mountain and stream', Tang depicts two big pine trees looming over the musician, while the pine branches extend over the

³³ *Ibid.*, 126: 1267.

³⁴ For a discussion on Ma Yuan's painting in Chinese see Hsiao Li-ling 2007a.

musician's head. Yang is literally surrounded by music-metaphorizing images on all sides.

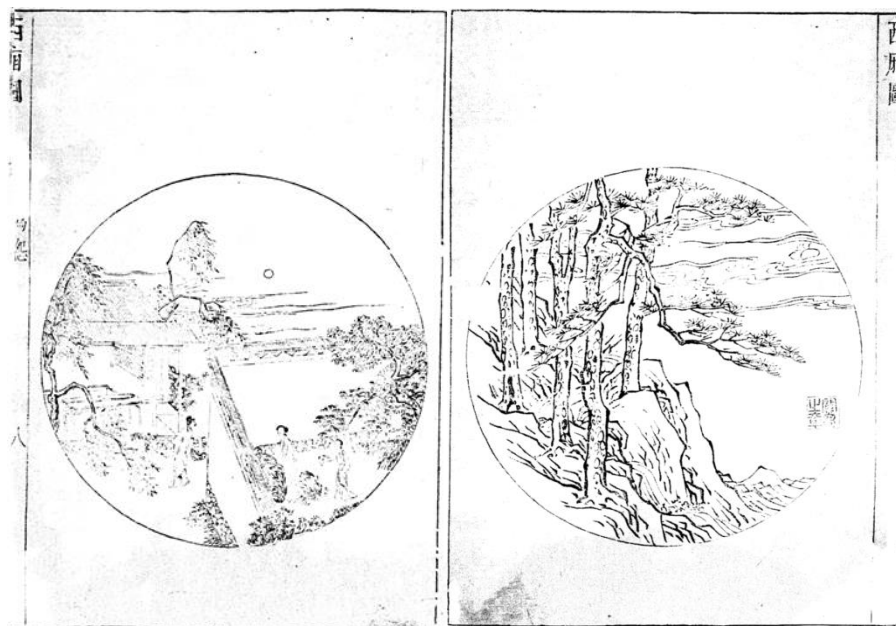


Fig. 20. (on the left) “Yingying Listens to *Qin*-1”, Yan Ge 延閣
1630 edition, published by Li Tingmo 李廷謨.

Fig. 21. (on the right) “Yingying Listens to *Qin*-2”, Yan Ge
1630 edition, published by Li Tingmo.

Li adopts images with musical connotations from literary and historical sources, but also utilize these allusive images to pictorialize music. The combination of mountain/stream and pine/wind in Li's illustration establishes a parallel between the solid and flowing: the solid elements are the mountain and the pine trees, while the flowing ones are the stream and the wind. The flowing of wind in the space between pine trees and that of the water from one mountain rock to another bear resemblance to Joseph Lam's 'melodic tones', which connect one solid 'structural note' to the next. Or to understand this in Chinese musical aesthetic terms, the *qi* 氣 flows in the space between the strings and, by extension, the notes. The contrast between the solid and flowing constitutes the essential musicality of *qin* music. In Li's illustration, the water pours down from the mountain left to right, the clouds run alongside, and the wind blows backward into

the pine trees. These alternate directions resemble the music flowing from the left hand as it moves left and right on the strings.



Fig. 22. Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470-1524), detail of
Picture of the Musician (Qinshi Tu 琴士圖). Colors on paper,
29.2 x 197.5 cm. In the collection of National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Fig. 23. Ma Yuan 馬遠 (active 1180-1224), *Shanjing Chunxing 山徑春行*
(*Spring Saunter on a Mountain Path*). Color on silk, 27.4 x 43.1 cm.
National Palace Museum, Taipei.

The association of the windy pine and flowing stream with *qin* is abundant in literature and art. The poetic amalgamation of *qin*, windy pine, and stream provides the best pictorial allusions to visualize music in a silent media. Li Tingmo's second illustration of the mountain stream amidst the windy pine forest must be understood in the context of these musical and poetic traditions. Although it is silent, Li's illustration is filled with the 'sound' of music.

8. Illustration as Commentary in Xu Wenchang Commentarial Edition

The Xu Wenchang commentarial edition also features multiple frames. The scene is built within a circle in which the musician and the audience are separated not only by a wall but by vantage points: Zhang Gong plays *qin* in front of a wide-open window on the upper floor, while Yingying and Hongniang stand in a garden amid flora and Taihu rocks listening from under a window (Fig. 24). Like Min's series of framings, the musician is placed in the innermost frame of the window overlooking the garden. This scene is further encased within a square border decorated with twigs of flowers at the four corners and a window-like circular cut-out that reveals the scene. The border resembles a painting matte and presents the scene as a work of self-conscious artistry. An upper frame is inscribed with a poem titled "Open Stream" (Kaiqu 開渠) that summarizes the content of the act and provides a commentary on the scene. The poem reads:

晚逐嬌紅倚曲闌，	哀似離鸞求別鳳，
絳紗籠燭半燒殘。	清如流水瀉高山。
始排香案風前拜，	暗疑多是張君瑞，
忽聽絲桐月下彈。	訴盡幽情宛轉間。

Night marches, the beauty leans on the bended balustrade
 In the crimson silk lantern, the candle is half burnt.
 She arranges the incense table and worships before the wind.
 Suddenly she hears the silk-corded *qin* playing under the moon.
 The sadness sounds like the departed phoenix seeking his estranged mate,
 And the pureness sounds like water pouring down from the high mountain.
 She suspects that it is Zhang Junrui
 Who pours all his secret love into the delicate music.³⁵

³⁵ Pudong Cui Zhan Zhuyi Shiji, 1: 16b-17a.



Fig. 24. "Yingying Listens to *Qin*", Xu Wenchang 徐文長 commented edition.

This poem is from an anthology of 141 poems by Zhang Kai 張楷 (1399-1460) titled *Poetry Anthology of Pearls and Jade of Cui and Zhang of Pudong* (*Pudong Cui Zhang Zhuyu Shiji* 蒲東崔張珠玉詩集) on the subject of *Xixiang Ji*. In the anthology, “Open Stream” appears under the different title of “Yingying Listens to the Qin” (Yingying Ting Caoqin 鶯鶯聞操琴). The illustration depicts Yingying leaning against a pergola under the moon and constellations, which interprets the first line of the poem “night marches, the beauty leans on the bended balustrade.” Behind the pergola, a partially visible table alludes to the burning incense described in the third line. Zhang Gong’s *qin* playing and the moon portrayed in the screen present the fourth line, which tells about how the music is suddenly heard. The repetition of the moon image suggests that the illustrator’s designs are informed by the poem.

If on the one hand the image narrates the first part of the poem quite clearly, on the other it demonstrates no attempt to visually interpret the music described in the second part of the poem. One might argue that the water depicted on the screen behind the musician represents the water mentioned in the sixth line. But the sixth line—“And the pureness sounds like water pouring down from the high mountain”—emphasizes the sound created by the water that pours like a waterfall, while the water on the screen seems to flow smoothly and quietly. Thus, although the illustration is a representation of music-playing, it does not carry any acoustic connotations that indicate the music itself. The picture is essentially a soundless representation of musical activity. Through concrete images, its aim is to interpret the scene narrated in the poem instead of the visual implication of the abstract music.

The device of multiple frames emphasizes the materiality of the illustration. It recalls the typical manner in which Chinese painting and its related poetry are mounted, as exemplified in Qi Baishi’s 齊白石 (1864-1957) painting of “Butterfly and Grasshopper”, which is placed below Chen Banding’s 陳半丁 (1876-1970) transcription of a few lines written by the Yuan era calligrapher Zhang Yu 張雨 (1277-1348) (Fig. 25). These frames echo the configuration of the illustrated books popular during the late Ming, which often included text, commentaries, and illustrations. The illustration is thus a meta-illustration that emphasizes the materiality and visuality of the image and the association of poetry, image, and commentary through the device of juxtaposition.

The illustration’s emphasis on the material and visual aspects of the scene rather than on the abstract music is affirmed by the commentary displayed above the image next to the poem. The comments, attributed to Xu Wei (1521-1593), read:

一不得於心而應於手，
一不喝于心而入於耳。
別恨離愁，
看張一弄。
奈何！奈何！

One could not answer through his hands with what obtained in the heart
 One could not enter her ears with what matched in the heart
 The regrets of estrangement and the sorrows of separation
 Look at Zhang's playing.
 Alas! Alas!



Fig. 25. Qi Baishi 齊白石 (1864-1957), "Butterfly and Grasshopper",
 with calligraphy by Chen Banding 陳半丁 (1876-1970). Private collection, NC.

Rather than laying stress on the resonance of music and the synchronized hearts of the musician and the listener, the commentary stresses the discordance of the two. The words 'bie' 別 (estrangle) and 'li' 離 (separation or departure) being used in the phrase "The regrets of estrangement and the sorrows of separation" echo the poetic line "The sadness sounds like the departed phoenix seeking his estranged mate." The emphasis lies on the sorrow caused by the physical isolation of the two individuals. Yet the commentator does not think the music will solve the problem of separation and estrangement. He prefers to highlight the verb 'look at' (*kan* 看) rather than 'listen to' (*ting* 聽). While accentuating the sadness as the focus of the scene, the commentary privileges the visual over the aural (i.e. the picture over the music) as the expressive medium. Not music,

but word and image are the media of the commentator and the illustrator, and by extension the publisher. Thus, it is not surprising that the illustration emphasizes the commentarial function of the image and establishes an analogy between commentary and illustration.³⁶

Conclusion: How Qin Music is Pictured?

The above discussions allow us to conclude that *qin* music was pictured through rhetorical devices similar to those used in poetry, in other words through symbols and metaphors. Min Qiji, He Bi, and Li Tingmo all adopt pictorial symbols and metaphors to present music on silent pages, but their ways of utilizing them is quite different. Min and He create images to symbolize the *qin* instrument and its music, while Li borrows famous literary and historical allusions to metaphorize *qin* music. Relying on the long-standing traditions of literature and music, Li employs images of the objects connoting music to present the sound in pictorial terms. He Bi focuses on how the sound and its remnants resonate through space to reach the desired audience. On the one hand, like Li, he borrows the natural image—namely that of pines—to allude to *qin* music; on the other hand, he deftly organizes his natural imagery to create new symbolic meanings. He niftily metaphorizes the presence of an invisible *qin* instrument through the natural landscape of the garden. He Bi excels not only in connoting the presence of music in his natural imagery, but also in presenting the resonance of the music throughout the illustration. In his creation, it is in this resonance that the two lovers' minds are united.

Borrowing terms and ideas from rhetoric to understand the differences of their respective methods, Li Tingmo's pictorial allusions can be said of functioning as a 'simile' whereby popular symbolic images are used to suggest the presence of music, as in the Western equation between rose and love. Some of He Bi's images, of course, function either as a 'simile'—such is the case of the pine—or as a 'synecdoche'—for example, the two Taihu rocks that symbolize the head and the tail of *qin* that in turn metaphorizes the invisible *qin* instrument. If Li Tingmo and He Bi rely on the literary and artistic allusions to visualize the 'sound' of music, Min Qiji, however, consciously rejects this allusive effect. Min disassociates his image with any of these obvious pictorial metaphors of music. Thus, we can say that Min completely relies on the rhetoric of 'metaphor' to illustrate his music. For instance, Min metaphorizes the *qin* instrument in the ingeniously organized images of house, round window, ground, and square pond. Through the lines and shapes, the light and dark tones of colors, the sizes and alignments, the echoes and contrasts of each pictorial motif, Min creates an image that is permeated with music.

³⁶ For a study of illustration as commentary, see Hsiao Li-ling 2004.

Min's silent picture is an excellent example of the music of the 'stringless qin.' The brush and paper are his instruments; the colors, lines, and shapes are his notes; the illustration is his music. This pictorial music is his alone. He derives no inspiration from others, and no one else can play his pictorial music.

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CARTOONING ANXIETIES OF EMPIRE: THE FIRST SINO-JAPANESE WAR AND IMPERIAL RIVALRIES IN *PUNCH*

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In November 1894, *Punch*, a popular British satirical magazine, published a full page, or Large Cut, image entitled “A Touching Appeal” depicting an overgrown childlike Chinese man named Younghy-Bung-Boo-Hoo who starts a fight but then loses to a much smaller Japanese man (Fig. 1). The image was created during the First Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, an event triggered from a conflict between China and Japan over supremacy in Korea.

It was a short but decisive war and the consequences were paramount in shifting the balance of world power; China’s weakness was revealed and Japan emerged as a new imperial player on the international arena. The war between the two Asian nations generated a great deal of interest and news media from around the globe reported on events as they unfolded. *Punch*’s images capture the sense of astonishment at China’s rapid defeat, a sentiment that quickly dispelled into condescension for China and admiration, albeit with misgivings, for Japan. This article examines how *Punch* magazine translated events during and just after the First Sino-Japanese war into visual and textual satire.

The importance of the magazine has been well documented; however, attention to *Punch*’s representation of events in the Far East has been largely neglected. An examination of the magazine’s series of cartoons reveals how *Punch* interacted with new developments of imperialism and the ways it used its popular full-page cartoons to persuade readers that British foreign policies in China were justified. The images were also significant in contributing to particular notions and ideas of China and Japan in the British imagination.

During the course of events, *Punch*’s initial merry-making became serious and this shift in tone reflected anxieties over imperial rivals in China. By investigating the series of images *Punch* created, we are offered a fascinating glimpse into how a section of Victorian Britain understood and discussed China and Japan as well as Britain’s global status in the last decade of the 19th century.

1. *Punch's Large Cut Cartoons*

The British satirical magazine, *Punch* has been called a Victorian national institution¹ and its popularity and influence is well known. Domestically, the magazine was quoted in *The Times* as well as the House of Commons, and found its way into personal letters from notable figures such as Robert Browning, C.S. Lewis, Henry James, Charlotte Brontë, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.² Internationally, the German Kaiser and members of the Royal Family were subscribers, and *Punch* political cartoons were brought to the attention of the Russian Tsar.³ More recent scholarship continues to take an interest in the magazine and use it as source material to research multifarious issues ranging from the threat of Catholicism to slavery in America.⁴ The importance of the magazine is frequently acknowledged and its cartoons continue to be attractive to both contemporary scholars and laypeople alike. The weekly full-page cartoons, also known as the “Large Cut” or “Big Cut,” were almost always political and referred to the hot topics in the daily press. The subject of these cartoons was carefully selected each week at the famous *Punch* dinners when the theme was decided upon based on headlines in leading newspapers. The cartoons needed to be comprehensible to a wide audience and therefore the topic had to have generated enough interest to be at the forefront of public consciousness. By examining the Large Cut images, we get a glimpse into what, how, and who were being discussed at a given moment in the past.

These visuals were created to elicit an emotive response in order to persuade readers to align their political attitudes and opinions with *Punch*. The use of familiar and much-loved nursery rhymes, legends, and folklore to convey a political message was an ingenious way for the cartoons to be evocative as well as easily and quickly understood. On one level, the Large Cuts simplified complex events and had a reductive quality in their caricatures; on the other, these cartoons challenged readers to decode the image, which were at times accompanied by text or caption to assist in clarification. During the first few years, *Punch* was used as a platform to criticise a variety of British social and political ills but by the 1860s, the magazine aligned its satire to coincide with its primarily conservative middle class readers. *Punch* historian M.H. Spielmann notes, “[f]rom first to last *Punch* has always been an Imperialist.”⁵ This patriotic view translated into the images that depicted encounters with nations abroad; they firmly sided with British foreign policies and posed no threat to the imperialist agenda. In the

¹ Huggett 1978, p. 7; Leary 2010, p. 1; Banta 2003, p. 2; Appelbaum & Kelly 1981, p. ix.

² Altick 1997, Introduction, pp. xvii-xxiv.

³ *The History of 'Punch'*, pp. 192-195.

⁴ Maurer 1957; Chaney 2010; McNees 2004; Maidment 2013.

⁵ *The History of 'Punch'*, p. 120.

case of China, the message in the Large Cuts was designed to convince readers that Britain's policies and presence in China were justified. The visual nature of the cartoons increased its power of persuasion; while a reader can easily dismiss the columns of text within the magazine, it is impossible to ignore the highly attractive full-page cartoons.

Punch's representations of the Chinese or Japanese in a Large Cut cartoon from the inaugural issue in 1841 to 1890 were negligible and remained in the single digits until the First Sino-Japanese war, when *Punch* dramatically increased cartoons of China and Japan. The Chinese were represented as a Large Cut as early as 1842 in "The Presentation of the Chinese Ambassador." By comparison, representations of Japan did not feature in a Large Cut until thirty years later, and like China, the depictions were of Japanese Ambassadors in Britain. What explains this sudden interest? Staff members remained largely unchanged and the editor, Sir Francis Burnand, had been in his position since 1880. The first decade of his editorship resulted in what appears to be little, if any, interest in the Far East. A possible explanation reaffirms how the war between the two Asian nations caught the interest of the international community, including Britain. *Punch's* Large Cuts famously satirised major issues and thus the magazine could not avoid visualising an event that generated a great degree of discussion. The series of cartoons depicting events before and just after the Sino-Japanese war demonstrate how *Punch* used its popular images to convince readers that Britain's presence in China was not only justified, but required in order to maintain the global balance of power.

2. Japan the Giant Killer

In 1894, with war between China and Japan over supremacy in Korea becoming imminent, Sir Robert Hart, Inspector-General of China's Imperial Maritime Custom declared, "999 out of every 1000 Chinese are sure big China can thrash little Japan."⁶ The general consensus within the global community agreed with this assessment and turned their attention to the unfolding of events in the Far East. During hostilities, it was soon apparent that Japan was in the stronger position and indeed, Japan quickly emerged victorious and the subsequent terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki were ruinous for China. Western powers were astounded by the result and Japan's rapid industrialization fixed the standards and expectations. The Western media marvelled at Japan's ability to quickly modernise its nation and theorised on reasons for China's defeat. The humiliating loss was attributed to the combination of extensive corruption, stubborn resistance to Western technology, and the nation's backwardness.

⁶ Hart to Campbell, 27 July 1894, The I.G. in Peking, Vol. 2, 979, cited in Paine 2003, p. 127.



Fig. 1. "A Touching Appeal".
Punch, 17 November 1894, p. 235.



Fig. 2. Coverart for 1894.
Punch, n.p.



Fig. 3. "Jap the Giant-Killer".
Punch, 29 September 1894, p. 151.

The cartoons that *Punch* created representing the battle between the two Asian nations reduced the war into a series of amusing events. The recurring theme was to depict a boisterous, pint-sized Japan giving China a good wallop; for example, the representations in "A Touching Appeal" (Fig. 1). The image depicts Japan, standing strong and ready for action; both hands are clenched into fists, and he leans forward and above the defeated Younghy-Bung-Boo-Hoo who sits on the ground, with his nose red as a result from the fight. In case readers were puzzled by the depiction, the accompanying poem makes clear that the Chinese, like China, may be great in size but they are not great in strength. The Japanese, on the other hand, are depicted as people with a "plucky" spirit, a characteristic trait that the British could identify with as the emblematic John Bull embodied pugnacity, independence, and courage.⁷ *Punch* also distinguished the two nations linguistically: Younghy-Bung-Boo-Hoo speaks in broken pidgin English, while the Japanese figure communicates in standard, grammatically correct English. By refraining from depicting the Japanese figure 'speaking' in broken English or using Yokohama Pidgin, *Punch* suggests that the Japanese were able to enter the 'civilised' world as the proper use of the English language was essential in order to attain bourgeois respectability.⁸

⁷ Taylor 1992, p. 100.

⁸ Altick 1997, p. 82.

Punch's frequent use of familiar children stories is exemplified in the magazine's commentaries surrounding events of the war. In one cartoon, Japan is depicted as David in his monumental fight against China, represented by the giant Goliath. In the front cover of volume CVII (Fig. 2), Mr. Punch, the representative of the magazine, watches an exuberant, and tiny, Japanese man bravely approaching a Chinese giant. The story continues in a second cartoon entitled "Jap the Giant Killer" (Fig. 3), which depicts a tiny Japanese soldier standing on top of a bewildered looking Chinese giant, laying on his back with legs kicking in an unsuccessful attempt to pick himself up. The accompanying story references the belief that China's defeat can be attributed to the country's apparent resistance to modernise. The text has Japan saying that China "has been 'in a state of abstraction' for nine centuries [...] and has lost the use of his head, as well as his legs! He hates and scorns my tutelary goddess, Pro-Gress."⁹



Fig. 4. "Little Ah Sid and the Butterfly-Bee".
Punch, 20 October 1894, p. 182.

⁹ "Jap the Giant-Killer", *Punch*, 29 September 1894, p. 150.

In another cartoon entitled “Little Ah Sid; Or, the Chinese Boy and the Japanese Butterfly Bumblebee” (Fig. 4), China is represented as a boy fleeing a Japanese bumblebee. Ah Sid has thrown his bow and arrow to the ground as he runs from a determined little bee, holding a baton or sword high up in the air, ever ready to physically chastise the boy. The text explains that Ah Sid “was fond of his fun” and while he “was at play, / A big bumblebee flew in the spring. “Jap butterfly!” / Cried he, winking his eye; / Me catchee and pull off um wing!” Ah Sid’s cruel intentions is denoted by his name, which sounds like ‘acid’, and he proceeds to “chase [the bumblebee] in malice secure” while crying out “Buzzy-wuzzy no win! / Me mashee um buttelfly, sure!” However, to his great surprise, the bumblebee fights back and the poem finishes with Ah Sid getting his comeuppance when the bee “stung him hard in a sensitive spot.”¹⁰

Reminiscent of Aesop’s fable, *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, Ah Sid prefers to idle away the time in “fun” and “frolics” and his “pig-headed” ways resulted in an industrious Japanese bumblebee entering Ah Sid’s territory and stinging him where it hurts most and indeed, China lost both regional and international status and power.

Punch’s depictions were significant in constructing and circulating ideas and notions of China and Japan in the British imagination. The images stereotyped features and characteristic traits of the Chinese and the Japanese as well as reduced the horrors of war into a series of comical, non-threatening events. The use of much-loved stories only added to the sense of harmlessness and joviality. However, even though *Punch* poked fun at a nation the size of Japan defeating an enormous China, the cartoons reflected the shift not only in the dynamics of power in the Far East, but also Japan’s elevated international status. For China, the notion of a backward country resisting modernity and progress would continue for decades thereafter with the Boxer Uprising accentuating the negation of China. Japan, on the other hand, continued to strive for recognition as an equal power to Western nations and in 1902, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed, the first between a European and an Asiatic country. While *Punch* offered a new perspective in depicting an Asian nation as powerful, its interest in the war appeared to be limited to ridicule. After Japan’s surprising victory and emergence as a formidable force in the Far East, the magazine took events more seriously. Competition among the Western powers for territorial and financial gain in China intensified and the next series of cartoons revealed anxieties over Britain’s international status.

3. Visualising Imperial Rivalries

Arthur Diósy, founder of the Japan Society of the United Kingdom, explained the new global balance of power:

¹⁰ “Little Ah Sid; Or the Chinese Boy and the Japanese Butterfly Bumblebee”, *Punch*, 20 October 1894, p. 183.

Governments that had, in the past, treated Japan with scant courtesy, now seriously considered the question of an alliance with her. Other great Powers paid her the almost equally great compliment of looking upon her as a dangerous rival [...]. Friends and foes alike had begun to grasp the changed situation. The New Far East was born.¹¹

While Japan received praise for its rapid modernisation, there were concerns over the threat Japan posed as a new imperialist power. In April 1895, *Punch* published “Jap in the China Shop” (Fig. 5) depicting a small Japanese man grabbing a rotund Chinese man by his queue. The cartoon used many of the same themes found in “Jap the Giant Killer” and “Little Ah Sid”: the Chinese figure is twice the size of the Japanese figure but proves to be no match for the exuberant Japanese man. China, it appears, doesn’t put up much of a fight as represented by a sword, abandoned on the ground. While the visual representations of the two nations replicate previous cartoons, the accompanying text presents something new. The Japanese man tells China to “Throw open your markets, and leave it to *Me!*” and to “Take down all your shutters, and hand *me* the key!” The text ends with Japan stating,

Excuse me this wink – but what do *you* think?
Do you hold “Outside Devils” will suffer
The Flowery Land to be locked by my hand,
Any more than by yours, in their faces?¹²



Fig. 5. “The Jap in the China Shop”.
Punch, 27 April 1895, p. 194.

¹¹ *The New Japan*, p. 363.

¹² “Jap in the China Shop”, *Punch*, 27 April 1895, p. 195.



Fig. 6. "The Infant Phenomenon".
Punch, 22 December 1894, p. 290.



Fig. 7. "A Thin Disguise".
Punch, 2 November 1895, p. 206.



Fig. 8. "Seaside Lodgings".
Punch, 19 December 1896, p. 295.

Punch was aware of Japan's recognition that Western powers will not treat the Japanese as equals. Japan may have won the war against China and proven the success of its modernisation, but this did not grant Japan egalitarian status with Western powers. Indeed, by the end of the war, admiration quickly dispelled into anxiety and *Punch* viewed Japan with suspicion over its interests in China.

In "The Infant Phenomenon" (Fig. 6), *Punch* comments on the significance of having a powerful rival in the Far East. Japan is represented as a confident youngster lecturing on the art of war to a room full of Europeans. The text reads, "If a kid, he's not a fool!" and ends with a warning that John Bull "Thinks the infant Jap a chap to keep *his* eye on!"¹³ With increased anxiety over the new threat, Western rivals scrambled to seize increasingly more territory from the weakened Qing government.

The Russians in particular were a source of suspicion; their interest in obtaining Port Arthur as a much needed warm water port as well as their hope to build a Siberian railway across Manchuria was a direct threat to British interests in north China.

¹³ "The Infant Phenomenon", *Punch*, 22 December 1894, p. 291.



Fig. 9. "Sentinels".
Punch, 16 April 1898, p. 175.



Fig. 10. "The Fight for the Foot-Plate".
Punch, 15 March 1899, p. 127.

Russian bear dressed in Chinese clothing clutching a secret treaty in his paw as he stealthily crosses into Manchuria and "Seaside Lodgings" (Fig. 8) depicts the Russian bear as a not-so innocent tourist, looking at lodgings around Port Arthur and telling a Chinese man, "Just what I wanted! Think I'll take 'em!"¹⁴ *Punch*

¹⁴ "Seaside Lodgings", *Punch*, 19 December 1896, p. 295.

was not wrong in their prediction; a year after “Seaside Lodgings” was published, the port of Dalian and Port Arthur came into Russian possession.¹⁵ The power struggle between Britain and Russia was not limited to territory; the two nations also competed over control of infrastructure. Visualising these tensions, *Punch* published “Sentinels” (Fig. 9) and “The Fight for the Foot-Plate” (Fig. 10).

In the former, the British lion and the Russian bear have a stare-down on Chinese soil as each figure protect their territorial interests. “The Fight for the Foot-Plate” depicts the competition for control over infrastructure, and depicts Britain and Russia arguing over who is allowed to operate the train while a Chinese man stands passively to the side with no interest in joining the discussion.

Punch also depicted German ambitions in China. Germany, a recently formed unified nation, arrived late in the colonial game and had its own global aspirations. In 1897, two German missionaries were killed in Shandong province, and Germany used this incident as an opportunity to expand their imperial ambitions. They seized the port of Jiaozhou Bay on the southern coast of Shandong province as their new colony, to be run by the German navy.¹⁶ In “Compensation”, a list of demands is recorded should any Germans fall into misfortune on Chinese soil:

To 1 Missionary, killed	200,000 taels.
Ditto ditto	1 Cathedral, complete
Ditto ditto	50 square miles of territory.
To 1 Sailor, killed	1 Railway concession
1 Colonel, insulted	1,000 square miles of territory
2 Colonels, wounded	1 Province
1 General, killed	The Chinese Empire ¹⁷

In case readers were left with any doubt of *Punch*’s satirical commentary regarding German ambitions in China, the magazine published a Large Cut image of Kaiser Wilhelm dressed in Chinese clothing, pulling up his moustache while admiring himself in a mirror (Fig. 11). The caption has him thinking out loud, “Um-ha!” he muses, “With just a few additional touches here and there, I shall make a first-rate Emperor of China!”¹⁸ *Punch* used the popularity of its Large Cuts to convince readers that British presence in China was justified in order to maintain the balance of power. Russia was represented as a scheming and untrustworthy bear whereas Germany was depicted as a zealous imperialist. The series of cartoons expound the idea that Britain was needed in China to ensure stability and fair treatment.

¹⁵ Tenniel 1901, p. xii.

¹⁶ Bickers 2011, p. 327; Cohen 1997, p. 21; Esherick 1987, pp. 128-129.

¹⁷ “Compensation”, *Punch*, 12 February 1898, p. 69.

¹⁸ “A New Rôle”, *Punch*, 15 January 1898, p. 14.



Fig. 11. "A New Role".
Punch, 15 January 1898, p. 14.



Fig. 12. "Untitled".
Punch, 16 August 1899, p. 74 (above).

Japan did not feature in as many cartoons during this period. One Large Cut representing Japan as an imperial rival appeared in 1899. This untitled cartoon depicts a Russian bear coming across a Japanese man wooing a Chinese woman (Fig. 12). Both Russia and Japan are represented as rivals for China's affections but only Russia demonstrates a jealous territorial tendency. The cartoon is unique among *Punch*'s representations during the 1890s in its approach to imperial discourse through a gendered dimension. China is feminised; depicted as the female object of affection by two male rivals' desire for control couched under the disguise of protection.

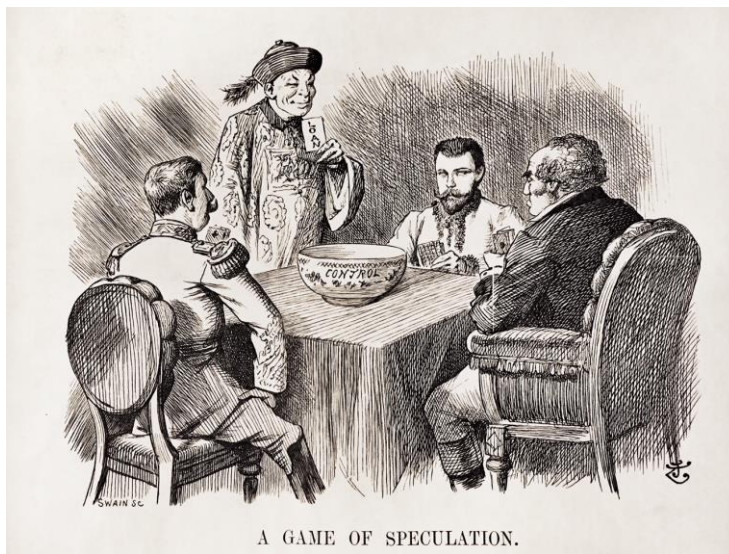


Fig. 13. "A Game of Speculation".
Punch, 15 January 1898, p. 19 (above).

With Germany and Russia pleased with their acquisition, other powers followed suit in seizing Chinese territory. France grabbed coastal Guangzhouwan and Britain seized Weihaiwei as well as secured a 99-year lease on Kowloon. In reality, China had little choice but to acquiesce to European demands and the country was divided amongst the European rivals without consultation from the Chinese. Bit by bit, the country was carved into various spheres of influence. Some of *Punch*'s depictions of Britain as one of the imperial players pulling China apart could suggest that the magazine held Britain as equally culpable in exacerbating China's apparent demise. "A Game of Speculation", for example, depicts Britain sitting alongside rival powers in a poker-game for control over China (Fig. 13). Britain was therefore represented as being in a paradoxical position; on the one hand, it was participating in the division of China while on the other, *Punch* justified Britain's action by claiming that its role to ensure justice and fair treatment for China as well as maintain the global balance of power.



Fig. 14. "Hold On, John!" *Punch*, 2 April 1898, p. 151.



Fig. 15. "Giving Him a Lift" *Punch*, 12 March 1898, p. 115.

Two cartoons depict Britain's paradoxical position. "Hold on, John!" (Fig. 14) depicts the tug-of-war between European powers as they seize territory and infrastructure from Chinese control. China is represented as an unhappy rag-doll being pulled, almost to bursting point, from all sides by Britain, France, Germany, and Russia. By contrast, "Giving Him a Lift" (Fig. 15) represents a protective John Bull reassuring China that with Britain's assistance, other imperial powers would not be able to easily take advantage of its weakened state.

The series of cartoons created in *Punch* depicting rival imperial powers scrambling for concessions marks a change in tone from the representations of

the Sino-Japanese war. There was less trivialising and more gravitas. While the cartoons may have dispelled anxieties of empire with humour and good-natured witticism, the illustrations also reveal apprehensions over territorial and financial acquisitions in China. With British interest under threat from rival powers, *Punch* used the popularity of its Large Cuts in order to convince and persuade readers that Britain's role in China was not only justified, but necessary in order to maintain the balance of power. The magazine repeatedly represented Britain as the necessary and rational player against rivals with ulterior and questionable motives.

Conclusion

With the Boxer Uprising brewing at the end of the 19th century, *Punch* continued its depictions of events in the Far East. Negative portrayals of China and the Chinese continued to spiral downward, and although the magazine was not entirely unsympathetic to China, it did not offer an alternative perspective to the stereotypes already familiar to Britons. However, *Punch* did put forward the notion that Japan, an Asian nation, could be powerful and a formidable rival to Europeans. Despite the significance of the First Sino-Japanese war, the Large Cut images ignored the brutalities of war, and instead, offered its readers a humorous, light-hearted commentary with references to familiar legends and children stories. It would not be until British interests were under threat that *Punch* changed its playful tone to a more serious consideration of events. The series of cartoons that the magazine created depicting the scramble for Chinese concessions did more than simply reflect imperial rivalries in China. By representing Russia as a sneaky bear and Germany as an ambitious and opportunistic imperialist, *Punch* used the popularity and power of its cartoons to convince readers that Britain's presence in China was vital in order to maintain the balance of world power.

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**FROM A BEE-EYED VILLAIN
TO A DIM-WITTED BUFFOON:
WEI ZHONGXIAN AND LITERARY DISCOURSES
ON EVIL IN THE LATE MING AND EARLY QING**

MEI CHUN
(Independent Scholar)

Query: Can physiognomic readings be verified? Answer: Great virtue comes from nature as does great evil. Among common people, virtue and evil are the result of cultivation, but [...] great evil is inborn. Shangchen, for example, with his bees' eyes and wolf's voice was fated to murder his father and uncles.

或曰：相者有乎哉。曰：上善出於性，大惡亦出於性，中庸之人善惡在其化者也。[...] 大惡亦出於性者，若商臣之蜂目豺聲，必殺其父叔。

Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (ca. 834-883)

“An Analysis of Physiognomy” (*Xiang Jie* 相解).¹

The question of whether human nature (*xing* 性) is good or evil has been at the core of Chinese philosophy since ancient times. Within Confucian thought, Mencius stood for the goodness and perfectability of human nature while Xunzi emphasized the necessity of the rites to restrain the selfish tendencies of an innately evil human nature. In late imperial times, Neo-Confucian scholars steeped in Buddhist concerns continued to debate the origins of evil in the world.² Famous philosophers of the Song, Ming, and early Qing dynasties like Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085), Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536-1618), Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578-1645), and Wang Fuzhi 王夫之

¹ *Xiangshu Jicheng*, pp. 390-391. Shangchen 商臣, posthumously known as King Mu of Chu (r. 625-614 BCE), forced his father and uncles to commit suicide when they tried to enthrone Shangchen's brother as king instead of him. A similar, but better known statement comes from the character Jia Yucun in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. He said, “[t]hose who are born to a destiny that is definitely good or bad, possess a character that may be traced back to what Heaven endowed to them. All others, who have not been endowed at the outset with such a quantity of positive or of negative influence, are nearly identical in their normality or intermediate character.” Quoted in Santangelo 2010, p. 153.

² *Ibid.*, p. 154.

(1619-1692) all argued for or against the division of human nature into “one original and exclusively good nature and another constituted by the real tendencies and characteristics of each individual.”³ Many later philosophers agreed with the Tang scholar-official Pi Rixiu’s argument, quoted in the epigraph, that the greater forms of good and evil were innate while lesser forms were acquired.

Contemporary scholars have written a number of excellent studies concerning Chinese conceptions of human nature, but they have almost universally relied on philosophical texts as their primary material. In many cases, literary texts contain more nuanced, extended explorations of human nature, the origins of evil, and moral selfhood than those philosophical texts. Although disciplinary boundaries today usually separate literature from philosophy, traditional Chinese literature has always been deeply concerned with, and had much to contribute to, philosophical debates about human nature. While scholars of early Chinese literature have engaged with ancient philosophical texts as the earliest examples of a Chinese narrative tradition, it has only been in recent decades that scholars of late imperial fiction have begun to recognize the need to frame the study of fiction within the context of late imperial philosophical debates. Martin Huang, for example, has linked late imperial fictional narratives with the philosophical study of emotions in his *Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China*.⁴

Extending this interdisciplinary trend, I argue that a shift in conceptions of great evil occurred during the Ming-Qing transition, one that we can detect by analyzing literary works on one of the most hated villains in Chinese history, the eunuch Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568-1627). Invaluable evidence of this shift can be found in a unique pair of novels about Wei Zhongxian entitled *Wei Zhongxian Xiaoshuo Chijian Shu* 魏忠賢小說斥奸書 (A Condemnation of Villainy: The Tale of Wei Zhongxian), from 1628, and *Taowu Xianping* 梟虜閒評 (An Idle Commentary on the Monster), from the early Qing. In *Chijian Shu*, the author portrays Wei Zhongxian as having “bee’s eyes”, an unmistakable physiognomic sign of inborn villainy. In the novel, Wei’s rise to power is the direct consequence of his own political machinations and bloody persecutions, which the author intended so as to evoke emotions of indignation and ridicule in the reader. In the early Qing novel *Taowu Xianping*, however, the author portrays Wei Zhongxian as a dim-witted buffoon whose rise to power was the result of happenstance and coincidence. This portrayal of Wei Zhongxian evokes a much wider range of emotions from sympathy, to ridicule, and even to empathy. The late Ming portrayal of Wei Zhongxian in *Chijian Shu* expresses the author’s confidence in the ethical power of fiction and his belief in an overarching Heaven that provides moral order to the world. The second novel points to a profound pessimism and deep suspicion about Heaven’s ordering

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

⁴ Huang Martin 2001.

powers after the Ming-Qing cataclysm. The ultimate cause of this shift between late Ming and early Qing portrayals of Wei Zhongxian must thus be sought in the decline and fall of the glorious Ming and the cataclysm wrought by the Manchu conquest. In the aftermath of this earth-shattering cataclysm, early Qing *literati* questioned Heaven's power and the nature of evil.

1. Writing Wei Zhongxian in the Late Ming and Early Qing

Of all the villains in Chinese history few are more hated than Wei Zhongxian. While serving the illiterate Tianqi Emperor in the 1620s, Wei Zhongxian gradually took control of Court affairs by running the Eastern Depot, an office for spying on officials that Wei used to suppress his enemies in the government. In the early 1620s, Wei impeached several of the most capable Ming generals, allowing the Manchus to encroach deeper into Ming territory, and ordered the execution of numerous members of the moralistic and activist Donglin faction, which was fighting to limit Wei's influence at Court. A few months after the Tianqi Emperor died in 1627, a warrant was sworn out against Wei Zhongxian. Rather than face the inevitable torture, Wei committed suicide. In the decades following his death, Ming loyalists and Manchu aristocrats all laid the responsibility for the Ming fall on Wei Zhongxian either as a symbol of the corruption and inept leadership of the late Ming government or as a primary example of what power-hungry, effeminate eunuchs could do to the Court.

Novels about Wei Zhongxian are among the many works of "fiction on current affairs" (*shishi xiaoshuo* 時事小說), popular both before and after the Qing conquest. The vernacular novel, since its rise at the beginning of the 16th century, had flourished for more than a century by the late Ming. Among vernacular novels, historical fiction held an important place as one of the most popular subgenres. Fiction on current affairs merely adopted the preexisting conventions of the historical novel,⁵ but addressed significant contemporary political events such as the rise and fall of Wei Zhongxian, the Li Zicheng rebellion, and the invasions of the Manchus. As a subject for fiction on current affairs, Wei Zhongxian was particularly popular. There are at least four novels about Wei Zhongxian, the two being studied here as well as Chang'an daoren's 長安道人 *Jingshi Yinyang Meng* 警世陰陽夢 (1628, The Yin and Yang Life of Wei Zhongxian) and *Huangming Zhongxing Shenglie Zhuan* 皇明中興聖烈傳 (Tales of the Sagely and Virtuous during the Restoration of the August Ming).

⁵ Robert E. Hegel describes fiction on current affairs as endorsing the master narrative of traditional Chinese fiction in focusing on dynastic decline and the restoration of harmony. Hegel 2005, p. 537. David Wang reads *Taowu Xianping* as an example of a "renewed concept of fiction as a way of registering the intelligibility of history." Wang David 2004, p. 201.

The most important features of fiction on current affairs are its “contemporaneity” and “historical immediacy.”⁶ The reading public during the Ming-Qing transition highly valued contemporaneity; publishers rushed some texts into print so quickly that they appeared with a year or two of the recorded events, as in the case of *Jingshi Yinyang Meng* and *Chijian Shu*. Authors were also aware of the power of historical immediacy, and often used this claim to assert the value of this genre of fiction.⁷ Existing scholarship on novels about Wei Zhongxian has taken little notice of *Taowu Xianping* as a rewrite of *Chijian Shu*,⁸ nor has their intricate relationship and what they have to say about ethical understandings of human nature and the source of villainy been addressed fully. In *Taowu Xianping*, David Wang found a disturbing “naturalization of evil” that informed the 20th-century Chinese novel, but Wang’s insight forces us to wonder: did the authors of other Wei Zhongxian novels naturalize evil or was this a unique phenomenon in *Taowu Xianping*? If it was unique, what was the degree of naturalization of evil and what led to it?

Wei Zhongxian forever clinched a place in the Chinese literary imagination as a prime example of a villain of great evil because fiction writers saw him as a way to explore key philosophical questions about human nature. Approaching these novels as contemporary explorations of ethics and evil not only gives us a better understanding of the Wei Zhongxian story cycle, but also highlights the 17th-century relationship between ethics and literature. In many ways, fiction writers were in a better position to explore questions of evil than philosophers because of the former’s command of a wide variety of texts, their proximity to the book market, and their ability to mix texts and registers of knowledge, both elite and popular, that ultimately brought to the novel “a dizzying degree of intertextuality.”⁹

In this article, I am focusing on *Chijian Shu* and *Taowu Xianping* because of the intimate intertextual relationship between them, but I will also touch upon the other two novels where comparison is relevant. Entire sections from *Chijian Shu* appear near verbatim in *Taowu Xianping*, including fifty-four poems copied from the entire 97 poems in *Chijian Shu*,¹⁰ rendering the late Ming work a source text for the early Qing novel.¹¹ This intertextuality gives us a vantage point from which to examine the later author’s reception of the ethical claims/orientations in the earlier work and how he affirmed or contested them.¹²

⁶ Han Li has given us the most thorough understanding of the genre and its overarching features. Han Li 2011, and 2014. McMahon’s work on the Wei Zhongxian novels contributes to our understanding of the agency of eunuchs.

⁷ Han Li 2009, p. 13.

⁸ For the range of rewriting in late imperial literature, see Huang Martin 2004.

⁹ Schonebaum 2016, p. 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹¹ Sha Rina 2000, pp. 207, 209.

¹² As the latest novel on Wei Zhongxian, *Taowu Xianping* adapts from *Yinyang Meng*, but this adaptation is relatively slight and hence not the focus of this study.

Before we move on to analyzing the two novels, an introduction of their authors, plots, and intertextual relationship is necessary. Lu Yunlong 陸雲龍 (ca. 1586-1644), a writer on whom much is known, authored *Chijian Shu*. Along with his brother Renlong 人龍, Lu Yunlong ran the Zhengxiaoguan 崢霄館 (House of lofty mountains in the clouds), a commercial publishing house in Hangzhou.¹³ They were particularly known for the publication of three novels, the short story collection *Xingshi Yan* 型世言 (Words to Structure the World), and influential anthologies of essays, including the best-seller *Huang Ming Shiliu Mingjia Xiaopin* 皇明十六名家小品 (Informal Essays by Sixteen Eminent Authors of the August Ming). Although Lu's ambitions for an official career were repeatedly frustrated by his continued failures in the civil service examinations, he remained very much a typical scholar of his time who paid close attention to national affairs. Lu Yunlong's experience as a commercial publisher had a significant impact on the presentation of *Chijian Shu*. Written and published in 1628, immediately after Wei Zhongxian's suicide, the work has high-quality illustrations, prefaces in different fonts imitating different voices of preface writers, a statement on general principles (*fanli* 凡例), and interlineal commentaries, all explicating the significance of this work and guiding its potential reading.

The original novel was forty short and fast-paced chapters in length, but only 25 chapters, 1-12, 22-34, are extant. The extant twenty-five chapters of *Chijian Shu* can be divided into three parts. Chapters 1 and 2, about Wei Zhongxian's early life, is a tale of poverty and poor luck. Born into a destitute family, Wei's parents could not afford to educate him. In his early teenage years, he married a young girl from a similar socioeconomic background, which gave him some nicer clothes and the opportunity to participate in the social life of his town. His short happy life comes to an end, however, when a drought kills his parents and leaves Wei and his wife penniless and starving. At the end of Chapter 2, Wei decides to cut off his penis and become a eunuch, which also allows him to pay off some gambling debts. Chapters 3-12 and 22-33 concern Wei Zhongxian's rise to power and his persecution of Wang An, the chief eunuch, and various other high officials. Chapter 34 begins with the Chongzhen Emperor's ascension to the throne and Wei Zhongxian's precipitous fall.

Unlike *Chijian Shu*, whose author is well known, much mystery surrounds *Taowu Xianping*. There exist only a handful of copies. Some existing copies have the imprint, "from blocks stored in the capital", which gives us no hint about a possible publishing house. The novel is prefaced by a short essay titled "A General Discussion" that flaunts both the aesthetic appeal of the work and its ethical function to decry villainy. Illustrations of the sixteen main characters follow the preface, each with an accompanying poem as commentaries on the pictured characters. Although the late Ming official Li Qing 李清, a good friend

¹³ See Sibau 2011, pp. 8-11.

of Lu Yunlong, is sometimes identified as the author of this novel, the attribution seems unlikely given the content of the work.¹⁴ Until better evidence is found, the novel is best described as anonymous.

Although we are uncertain of the exact publication date of *Taowu Xianping*, the text itself suggests an early Qing composition. In Chapter 2, the Ming Dynasty is referred to as Mingchao 明朝.¹⁵ In the last chapter the Chongzhen Emperor is referred to as Huaizong 懷宗, which was the name early Qing *literati* used after Chongzhen hung himself. The avoidance of using *xuan* 玄, part of the Kangxi Emperor's personal name, in the printed text also suggests that the book was published in the Kangxi period. A problematic reference of the Ming Dynasty as "this dynasty" in Chapter 33 led scholar Liu Wenzhong to suggest that the work might have been started in the late Ming.¹⁶ However, since Chapter 33 is a copy of parts of *Chijian Shu*'s Chapter 12 and now extant Chapter 13—judging from its title, which survived—this phrase was very likely copied as well.

Taowu Xianping opens by introducing a young Wei Zhongxian as a recluse surnamed Zhe, who helps an official with the surname of Zhu to build a dam, which solves a local problem with flooding. As a reward, the official offers protection for Zhe's home and lineage. Zhe gives the official Zhu additional advice, but Zhu accidentally destroys a colony of snakes without realizing that Recluse Zhe is a red snake spirit. Chapters Two through Seven are a flashback to the tragic story of Wei Zhongxian's mother, who was a female acrobat trapped in an ill-suited marriage. Her forbidden love for a handsome fellow actor, who becomes Wei Zhongxian's father, is sincere and touching; she is shown as dedicated to saving and bringing up her bastard son despite the hard times that follow his birth.

In Chapter Eight, Wei Zhongxian embarks on his own adventures. When the chapter begins, Wei Zhongxian is a catamite to a corrupt official and then to a merchant. During a trip to Jizhou to sell bolts of cloth, he is reunited with Ke Yinyue, with whom he had grown up but who later became the emperor's wet nurse and his most powerful political ally. When Wei's affair with Yinyue is discovered, the two part in tears. Thereafter, he experiences a series of misfortunes—he is cheated by an alchemist, robbed by a prostitute, and finally reduced to begging. Not being an aggressive beggar, he is often bullied and can barely feed himself. Homesick, he sells his only valuable possession, a pearl that Yinyue gave to him, for ten taels of travel money to return home. His fellow beggars, learning about his money, throw a farewell party for him, get him drunk, rob him, and throw him into an icy river. When the current pushes him ashore, a hungry wild dog chews off his genitals.

¹⁴ Gu Keyong refutes the attribution of the author to Li Qing in his monograph on Lu Yunlong. See Gu Keyong 2010, pp. 58-66.

¹⁵ *Taowu Xianping*, p. 19.

¹⁶ Liu Wenzhong, "Postface", in *Taowu Xianping*, p. 570.

Wei Zhongxian's luck begins to turn after a chance meeting with Zhang Xiaoshan, a physiognomist who predicts, from reading Wei's face, that his hard life will soon be over and his prosperous life will soon begin. With his genitals gone, Wei naturally decides to become a eunuch. Through a series of fortunate circumstances, Wei gradually climbs up the eunuch hierarchy, particularly with the assistance of his former lover, Yinyue, who has become the emperor's entrusted wet nurse. Chapters 29 through 44 concern Wei's abuse of power, similar in content to *Chijian Shu*, and are where entire sections from the former appear verbatim. This section ends with Wei's suicide followed by a Daoist goddess explaining karmic retribution.

Despite the verbatim insertion of texts from *Chijian Shu*, the author of *Taowu Xianping* strove to differentiate his novel from the earlier work. The title points to a departure in portrayals of Wei Zhongxian. Rather than "condemning" as the main act in the late Ming novel *Chijian Shu*, the anonymous author of the early Qing idly commentates (*xianping*) on Wei Zhongxian in a lengthy novel of fifty chapters, each significantly longer than any chapter in the *Chijian Shu*. The result is an extensive novel of 566 pages in its modern edition.

In the "General Statements", the author highlights two aspects of *Taowu Xianping* as a rewrite of *Chijian Shu*. First, all constituent elements [of the novel] are oddly-cut (*lingcai* 零裁 and *suijian* 碎剪) pieces or fragmentary patches. Although the author does not credit *Chijian Shu*, and in fact makes no reference to that work in either the prefatory materials or the main text, one might deduce that he meant the trunks of texts from *Chijian Shu* to be fragmentary "patches" as well. This intentional fragmentation can lead to "jarred incongruity", which Keith McMahon finds between the lofty image of drinking under moonlight portrayed in *Taowu Xianping* with the reality of the illiterate eunuch and his companion.¹⁷ The fragmentary patches that challenge structural coherence have led scholar Qi Yukun to comment that the novel embodies a "convergence" of two subgenres in the vernacular novel—fiction on human affairs and historical fiction.¹⁸ But "convergence" is a misleading term for the intentionally oddly-cut patches in *Taowu Xianping*. Examples of "jarred incongruity" appear throughout the novel, which have tremendous ethical connotations, as I illustrate below.

Secondly, the "General Statements" advertises the "literariness" of the novel. "[Words sound like] *ding-dang*, the beating of jade and knocking on gold, [and look like] a carved pattern of a twining dragon and an embroidered phoenix" 丁當擊玉敲金字，剔透蟠龍繡鳳紋.¹⁹ *Taowu Xianping*'s flaunting of its literary values is distinct from the point Lu Yunlong makes in his preface to *Chijian Shu*: "This book is all about government affairs and half of the book is composed of official memorials. Therefore, it will not imitate *Water Margin* in

¹⁷ McMahon 2014, p. 12.

¹⁸ Qi Yukun 1997, p. 320. Quoted in Han Li 2009, p. 69.

¹⁹ *Taowu Xianping*, p. 1.

depicting society, nor the *Journey to the West* in creating illusive scenes, nor *Plum in the Golden Vase* in describing domestic lives, nor the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in portraying schemes.”²⁰ The novel’s attention to aesthetics is why critics all consider *Taowu Xianping* as the “best written” of the novels about Wei Zhongxian, though by “best written” most critics mean the Wei Zhongxian novel with the most embellished language.

A good example to illustrate the full realization of these two aspects highlighted in the “General Statements” is the copying, expanding, and modifying in *Taowu Xianping* of a scene in *Chijian Shu* concerning the brutal beating to death of Imperial Gentleman Wan Jing.²¹ The author of *Taowu Xianping* copied much from *Chijian Shu* that the transcription is easily detectable. *Chijian Shu* already included a visceral description of the torture of a corpse, a scene that most strongly testifies to Wei Zhongxian’s brutality: we learn that after fifty strokes, Wan Jing is dead, but the beating continues for fifty more strokes. Sound—yelling—accompanies the beating to help establish the mood as a gruesome persecution. The order to give Wan Jing a royal beating, “*zhuoshi da*” (著實打), is verbatim. The scene ends with an almost identical poem praising Imperial Gentleman Wan Jing’s bravery.²²

Taowu Xianping’s elaboration and modification further theatricalizes the torture scene. Wei Zhongxian’s crony Tian Ergeng raises the imperial edict high and reads it out aloud before he orders punishment. To add to the spectacle, the number of army officers—both the torturers and spectators of the beating—is increased from a single to several groups. The most prominent expansion, the new tableau after “one sees on both sides”, centers on the setting, the torturers and their implements:

只見兩邊的：刀槍密佈，朵杖齊排。刀槍密佈，是羽林軍、錦衣軍、御林軍，個個威風凜凜；朵杖齊排，都是叉刀手、圍子手、緝捕手，人人殺氣猙獰。堂簷前立著狐群狗黨，紅袍烏帽掌刑官；丹墀下擺著虎體狼形，藤帽宣牌刑杖吏。縛身的麻繩鐵索，追魂的漆棍鋼條。假饒鐵漢也寒心，就是石人須落膽。

One sees on both sides—swords and spears densely arrayed, canes and staffs evenly displayed. The swords and spears belonged to the Imperial Guards, the Embroidered-Uniform Guards, and the Royal Guards. Every soldier looked imposing and penetrating. The canes and staffs belonged to spear and swordsmen, the Escort Guardsmen, and the bailiffs. Everyone had on a murderous and ferocious face. Along the edge of the hall stood a gallery of rogues; they were officials in charge of punishment, wearing their red robes and charcoal colored hats. Down the courtyard were tiger bodies and wolf physiques, strongmen implying beating with their cane hats and proclamation tablets. Hemp ropes and

²⁰ *Chijian Shu*, p. 4. Translation from Han Li 2009, p. 45.

²¹ *Taowu Xianping*, p. 367.

²² *Chijian Shu*, pp. 134-135.

iron chains bound the body, lacquered staffs and steel rods went after the soul. Even a man of iron would be chilled and a man of stone petrified.

The author of *Taowu Xianping* thus gives a particularly perceptual aspect to the torturers and their implements, their privileged link to the otherwise invisible pain.²³

Combining the old and new texts in this case, however, create a jarring effect. Both wounds and weapons are agents of otherwise inexpressible pain. The description of Wan Jing's wounds copied from *Chijian Shu* is succinct and bare. "[Imperial Gentleman Wan's] skin burst open, blood and flesh flew and splattered all over" 皮開骨折，血肉齊飛. When Wan was dead, those who carried out the punishment continued to beat the corpse, "there was but a stiff set of bones in a puddle of blood and feces" 一團血肉中直挺挺一把骸骨. The succinctness and bareness of this description better conveys the brutality of torture. The added description about the setting and weapons, however, works in the opposite way: as a patch of literary "embroidery" it slows down the narrative by asking the reader to enjoy "[words that sound like] *ding-dang*, the beating of jade and knocking on gold, [and look like] a carved pattern of a twining dragon and an embroidered phoenix." These "beautiful" words conjure a courtyard full of stuff—hats, ropes, chains, and staves—in contrastive colors and made from different materials: cane, hemp, iron, lacquer. The neat parallelism in prose, an intentional change from the earlier novel, creates a jarring effect between the reality of torture and the new descriptive paragraph that evokes the lyrical. Weapons, for the author of *Taowu Xianping*, are both material objects—things described through parallel prose—and also agents of pain. Through the unevenness of new and old texts, the author asks us to reflect upon the possibility of reading a scene of torture for aesthetic appreciation.

Similarly, the theatricalization of the scene paradoxically creates a distancing effect. As Robert Hegel observes, in the portrayal of violence, fiction differs from legal cases in its emphasis on the setting. The new tableau in *Taowu Xianping*, the setting for violence, thus aligns the novel more with fiction and becomes less "real."²⁴ Moreover, the inclusion of Tian Ergeng as the one who orders Wan Jing to be beaten shifts the blame away from Wei Zhongxian.²⁵ Lastly, the *Taowu Xianping* scene pans out more than the one in *Chijian Shu*, which creates a more panoramic view, one that shows the scene to have been influenced by Wanli era illustrations.²⁶

²³ As Elaine Scarry writes, "[a]s an actual physical fact, a weapon is an object that goes into the body and produces pain; as a perceptual fact, it can lift pain and its attributes out of the body and make them visible. The mental habit of *recognizing* pain in the weapon (despite the fact that an inanimate object cannot 'have pain' or any other sentient experience) is both an ancient and an enduring one." Scarry 1985, p. 16. Discussed in Wu Laura 2009, p. 47.

²⁴ Hegel 2004, p. 68.

²⁵ Wu Laura 2009, p. 50.

²⁶ Mei Chun 2011, pp. 50-53.

When facticity and literariness are the two categories used to approach fiction on current affairs, scholars consider these two novels as standing on two extremes of the literary spectrum: *Chijian Shu* is considered fact-based, almost journalistic storytelling, while *Taowu Xianping* is the best-written, or most literary, of the Wei Zhongxian novels.²⁷ But this approach precludes an understanding that these are effects achieved within their authors' respective discourses on human nature and ethics. The questions we might ask to get around the existing categories for understanding these two novels are: How has a work with outrageously fictional details, like Wei Zhongxian's bee's eyes, garnered a reputation as being journalistic and factual? How does the inclusion of such fictionalized details signify the author's ascription of an ethical function to the novel? How is ethical significance linked to emotions? What is an "idle commentary on a villain" when written in beautiful language, especially when read against a source text that emphasizes ethical urgency? How does the author of *Taowu Xianping* rewrite the earlier novel to produce an early Qing rumination on villainy?

2. *Bee's Eyes: The Great Evil Doomed*

In the essay "Analysis of Physiognomy", Pi Rixiu argued "bee's eyes" were a visible and unmistakable sign of inborn villainy. Pi's work points us to a crucial source of ideas used in late imperial literature to explore human nature, the practice of physiognomy. Designed to interpret a person's character and future prospects through facial or other bodily characteristics, physiognomy was particularly significant to traditional Chinese culture because it was believed to allow the viewer to read messages from Heaven imprinted on the body. Physiognomy brings to literature a set of body semiotics shaping the author and reader's ethical judgments.

To ensure readers understood the novel was a rumination on the source of Wei Zhongxian's villainy, Lu Yunlong incorporated a fictional physiognomic reading of Wei Zhongxian in Chapter 1, which distinctly echoed Pi Rixiu's connection between physical features and inborn great evil. In this scene, a young Wei Zhongxian is playing outside when a Daoist monk happens by and offers the child a physiognomic reading. The Daoist's physiognomic act, presented as coincidental, describes Wei Zhongxian's physical features in great detail:

他山根低陷，少年坎坷。所喜地角豐隆，中年榮貴。熊腰虎背，他時蟒玉圍身，燕頤鳳眉，異日威權獨把。只是豺聲蜂目，必好殺貪財，先主食人，後必自食。若能慈祥正直，可保令終。

²⁷ Sha Rina 2000, pp. 212-215. Wu 2009, p. 45.

The bridge of his nose is low, his youth will be bumpy. Fortunately, he has a wide and protruding chin, which means he'll have a prosperous middle life. He has a bear's waist and a tiger's back; he'll someday wear python robes and jade belts. He has a swallow's chin and the eyebrows of a phoenix, indicating that he will command prestige and power. He has a wolf's voice and bee's eyes, however, and will love killing and hunger for wealth. He will victimize others, but then become a victim himself. If he can be kind and righteous, however, he will have a good end.²⁸

Even though *Chijian Shu* is a short, fast-paced novel, this is a detailed, meticulous description that creates an impression of accuracy because it reads like a physiognomic manual.

Late imperial writers used physiognomy as a recurrent framing device to characterize the individuals who appeared in their novels. *Sanguo Yanyi* 三國演義 (Romance of the Three Kingdoms), the first full-length vernacular novel, introduces and describes its characters through physiognomic language.²⁹ The early Qing critic Zhang Zhupo, the commentator of *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅, describes an early physiognomic reading of all the major characters in the novel as serving to illustrate the entire novel's plot structure.³⁰ Physiognomic readings are found in all manner of late Ming and early Qing novels describing a variety of different types of characters such as Han Xiangzi, one of the Eight Immortals of Daoism, Wang Yangming, the Neo-Confucian philosopher, and Zhao Kuangyin, the Song Dynasty founder.³¹ These physiognomic incidents turn this type of late imperial novel into an example of what literary scholar Lisa Raphals calls "mantic narratives", narratives about sagely prescience.³² Physiognomy was thus one of the main cultural texts drawn from everyday life and incorporated into the vernacular novel to form this new hybrid genre.³³

The description of Wei Zhongxian as having bee's eyes and a wolf's voice was not based on any other historical or fictional description of the eunuch, but was Lu Yunlong's own invention as he attempted to link Wei's physiognomic features with broader late Ming discourses on the origins of evil. To almost any late imperial reader, a character described as having slightly protruding eyes, known as bee's eyes, was evidence of his or her ferocious nature.³⁴ One of the earliest extant physiognomic works dating from the Tang period, discovered at Dunhuang, says "a person with bee's eyes is bound to be a villainous minister" (為人蜂目者，奸臣也).³⁵ Wu Chuhou 吳處厚 (fl. 1053-ca. 1093), the author of

²⁸ *Chijian Shu*, pp. 6-7.

²⁹ *Sanguo Yanyi*, pp. 3-8.

³⁰ *Jin Ping Mei*, Chapter 29, 441.

³¹ See Yang Erzeng, *Han Xiangzi Quanzhuan*, pp. 34-35. Feng Menglong, *Sanjiao Ounian*; *Feilong Quanzhuan*, pp. 4-9.

³² Raphals 2013, pp. 279-315.

³³ Shang Wei 2005.

³⁴ *Shenxiang Quanbian*, p. 121.

³⁵ Zheng Binglin & Wang Jingbo 2004, p. 41.

Qingxiang Zaji 青箱雜記 (Miscellanies from a Green Box of Knowledge, 1087), records seeing a prisoner who killed his own mother. The prisoner's eyes "were small and yellow, his stare unrestrained, like a bee." Wu concluded that it was possible to discover villainy and disobedience among those with bees' eyes.³⁶

In the late Ming, what bees' eyes connoted was common knowledge thanks to the spread of popular physiognomic manuals. In the section entitled "Shenyi Fu" 神異賦 (Rhapsody on the Strange and Supernatural) in the mid-Ming textbook of physiognomy, *A Compendium for the Expert Physiognomist*, the author defines bee's eyes as a type of steady and protruding eyes that indicate a lowly and cruel nature.³⁷ Another entry, "Physiognomizing Evil", cautions against befriending someone with bee's eyes and a wolf's voice.³⁸ In *Guiyou Yuan Chentan* 歸有園塵談 (Dusty Talks from the Guiyou Garden), Xu Xuemo 徐學謨 (1522-1593) uses a person with bee's eyes as an example of someone with a ferocious nature. "Judging from the bees' eyes and wolf's voice", he wrote, "one knows a ferocious person. Human nature follows and is generated by the form. Who says that all are good?"³⁹ It was no wonder that Wang Jia 汪价 (1611-ca. 1683), a Suzhou native, lamented the protruding shape and large frame (*kuang da er jing lu* 眶大而睛露) of his own eyes. He wrote, "some say that my bees' eyes are inauspicious and that my eagle's nose indicates that I'm an atrocious person. Alas, such confusion among the common run of mankind!" (賤目眶大而睛露，有議其蜂目不祥、鷹目為暴者，此世俗之惑也).⁴⁰ In other words, the "common run" clearly understood the relationship between bees' eyes and villainy in the late Ming, which is precisely the reason Lu Yunlong opened his novel with a physiognomic description of Wei Zhongxian.

The notion that bee's eyes were an external sign of innate great villainy had a great impact upon how Lu Yunlong shaped characterization, plot development, and emotionality in the text. In characterizing Wei Zhongxian, Lu Yunlong expanded on the association between bee's eyes and great evil by portraying Wei as ambitious and resourceful, a scheming "treacherous hero" (*jianxiong* 奸雄) whose machinations and fierce determination played an important role in his rise to wealth and power. Befitting the title as a condemnation of treacherousness, Lu Yunlong enumerates Wei's villainous deeds in his preface:

置乳媼為耳目之奸，招忠勇為肘腋之奸，增鎮守為拊背之奸，差河儲為扼吭之奸，責乾子為喉舌之奸，太阿倒持，元首虛擁，徒扼腕於奸之成而國事幾莫可為。

³⁶ Wu Chuhou, *Qingxiang Zaji*, juan 4.

³⁷ For a study of the organizational method and linguistic registers in the *Compendium*, see Mei Chun 2016.

³⁸ *Shenxiang Quanbian*, p. 91.

³⁹ Xu Xuemo, *Guiyou Yuan Chentan*, pp. 11b.

⁴⁰ *Yu Chu Xinzhi*, juan 20, p. 339. Wang Jia's dates from Barr 2006, p. 286.

The treacherousness (*jian*) of placing the wet nurse as his eyes and ears, the treacherousness of recruiting the brave and the loyal as his elbows and armpits, the treacherousness of adding guards to garrisons to watch his back, the treacherousness of sending river managers to grip the throat for him, the treacherousness of ordering his adopted sons to be his mouthpiece [...]. His factions wring their hands and revel in accomplishing treacherousness. Almost no national affairs could be accomplished.⁴¹

While Lu Yunlong's use of "body politics" is interesting, it is the succession of verbs in describing Wei Zhongxian's acts that is most significant. Lu not only enumerates Wei's villainous acts, but also highlights Wei's agency in carrying out his villainous deeds.

Lu Yunlong emphasizes Wei's agency most clearly in a central incident of the novel, his self-castration. Lu's focus on Wei's momentous decision offers us an example of vivid psychological realism in late imperial vernacular fiction. Facing both starvation and gambling debts, the young Wei Zhongxian remembers the physiognomist's reading and decides to turn himself into a eunuch.⁴² Wei takes a walk, sits down, thinks it over, and mumbles to himself about the pros and cons of self-castration. That night, he has sex with his wife several times "as if there was no tomorrow." Wei's healthy penis—in other novels his penis is deformed or diseased—and his good relationship with his wife,⁴³ raises the stakes of his decision to castrate himself, which serves to remind readers of his agency. Lu Yunlong also provides a detailed description of Wei's violent act of self-mutilation: he sharpens the kitchen knife, goes to a dark corner of his room, cuts it off with a flick of the wrist, faints from the excruciating pain, and spurts blood all over himself and his shocked wife. Afterwards, Wei tearfully divorces his wife. The marginal commentary, believed to have been written by Lu Yunlong himself, observes that the extremity of the act is indicative of Wei's far-sighted calculations and the action of an unscrupulous hero.⁴⁴

Throughout the rest of the novel, Wei's post-castration rise to power is the result of his own successful political machinations. Rarely does Heaven intervene or anything happen that is beyond human control. After an auspicious start as a eunuch, winning the favor of the head of his division with his gambling ability, Wei actively seeks out the prince and caters to his every whim. And, as stated in the preface, Wei cozies up to the wet nurse Ke Yinyue because he senses that she possesses the new emperor's confidence. Eventually, both have the ear of the emperor. Wei's machinations in gaining control over the military

⁴¹ *Chijian Shu*, pp. 6-8.

⁴² The story of Wei castrating himself to cover gambling debts appears in the historical record, but Han Li believes that *The History of the Ming* copied it from this novel. Han Li 2009, p. 44.

⁴³ In *Huangming Zhongxing Shenglie Zhuan*, Wei's wife has an affair while he habitually goes to a brothel (pp. 1568-1578).

⁴⁴ *Chijian Shu*, p. 34.

gives him tremendous power. The narrator compares Wei's control of the military to a tiger with its teeth and claws. The commentator explicates, this "truly represents the marvelous use of his treacherous talent. If our military strategists were like him, who would worry about unrest anywhere" (如此著數, 的是奸雄妙用。若使帷幄運籌, 皆如此輩, 何患東西不平?).⁴⁵ A marginal commentary defines Wei's military talent as a distinctive feature of his treacherous heroism: "If he was not capable of using these [the military and discipline], he would not be worthy of being called a treacherous man" (若不能用此兩件, 亦不足稱奸人).⁴⁶

Wei Zhongxian's bee's eyes, as an indication of inborn cruelty, places him in a group of literary characters known for their treachery. Prince Shangchen, whose story is included in the *Zuozhuan* from the 4th century B.C.E., is passed over as the heir to the throne when a chief minister advises against him because of the prince's bees' eyes. The minister's reading of Shangchen's face is used to explain the entry in *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which states, "[i]n winter, in the tenth month, on *dingwei*, Shangchen, heir-son of Chu, murdered his ruler, Jun", thus showing that Shangchen's ferocious nature was inborn.⁴⁷ More conspicuously, there are explicit comparisons of Wei Zhongxian with Cao Cao, the famous warlord known for his scheming and strategizing in *The Romance of Three Kingdoms*. In Chapter 5, the narrator describes Wei Zhongxian as corrupted by military power, like Cao Cao. In Chapter 6, Wei persecutes several righteous imperial consorts who try to advise the emperor to focus on his duties. Wei's slaughter of the consorts is compared to Cao Cao's murder of the imperial wives in the Latter Han. The narrator asks the reader to sympathize with the victims—how "pitiable" that not even the emperor can protect them from "the usurping thief Cao Cao" (曹操那篡賊).

The pace of Lu Yunlong's novel is also related to the relationship between Wei Zhongxian's treachery and inborn great evil. Between chapters 3 and 33, Lu Yunlong describes Wei's persecution of a variety of other eunuchs and bureaucratic officials. Lu Yunlong devotes most of his narrative attention, relative to other Wei Zhongxian novels, to the brutality of Wei's acts (there are one or two cases of torture per chapter). These core chapters centering on Wei's persecutions of others are both gruesome and relentless. They are linked by a transitional line at the end of each chapter that tells the reader whose persecution lies ahead in the next chapter. For example, "please listen to the next chapter to see how Wei Zhongxian persecutes Deputy Censor-in-Chief Yang" (魏忠賢如

⁴⁵ *Chijian Shu*, p. 80. Similar comment on Chapter 5, pp. 77-78. Here the narrator calls Wei Zhongxian "a treacherous villain who steals the country" (盜國的奸人) and compares him to Cao Cao and Dong Zhuo. Cao Cao is famous for his unscrupulous talent. These lines are dotted, for emphasis.

⁴⁶ *Chijian Shu*, p. 77.

⁴⁷ *Zuo Zhuan Zhushu*, pp. 513-515; Legge, transl., *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, pp. 229-230.

何害[楊副都]，且聽下回分解) and “please listen to the next chapter to see how Wei persecutes Censor-in-Chief of the Left Gao” ([魏]如何陷害高左都，且聽下回分解).⁴⁸

Endowing Wei Zhongxian with innate great villainy allowed Lu Yulong to demand strong emotional responses from his readers. For Lu Yunlong, creating those strong emotional responses from his readers is what bound the implied author and reader together and expressed his ethical goal in writing the story. In his preface, Lu advertises his propensity for strong emotions, apparently soliciting the same kind of intense emotional involvement from his readers:

予少負勁骨，棱棱不受折抑。更有腸若火，一鬱勃殊不可以水沃。故每覽古今事，遇忠孝圖於讒，輒淫淫淚落。有隻言片語，必記之以存其人。

Since I was young, I have had a stiff backbone and a forbidding manner; I refuse to be restrained. When my fiery heart is excited, it cannot be dampened by water. I read about affairs, past and present, and when I encounter the loyal, filial, or slanderous, my tears come pouring down. I must write about them, even if only for a few sentences.⁴⁹

In this paragraph, as elsewhere in the prefatory material of the novel, Lu presents a highly coherent narrative of his life as a writer. He reads and feels the need to transmit what has touched him greatly. He is claiming that his writing is an ethical act of commemorating the loyal and filial; or for condemning the slanderous and treacherous. Lu Yunlong's self-identity as an emotional writer fits perfectly within the cult of emotionality and authenticity in the late Ming and early Qing, when most fiction writers and critics put emotion at the center of their work. More importantly, however, Lu's deep investment in his subject matter implies the kind of reader he wants. His preface is a plea for the reader to be emotional too.

Chijian Shu abounds in asides to the reader asking him or her to feel indignant about Wei Zhongxian. Lu wants all of his readers to be emotionally immersed in the condemnation of villainy. Wei's persecution of officials testifies to his ruthless nature and triggers the reader's indignation (*nu* 怒, or *hen* 恨). The causative term “detestable” (*kehen* 可恨) serves as an emotional prompt and is scattered throughout the novel.⁵⁰ To give a few examples: the narrator laments, “pointing fingers at the treacherous villain raises one's indignation: how dare he use pretense and stolen imperial prestige” (屈指奸雄怒欲生，敢憑寵渥盜聲靈).⁵¹ “This is truly too venomous” (這便忒毒了).⁵² In

⁴⁸ *Chijian Shu*, pp. 136, 150.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵⁰ For a list of causative terms used in late imperial China, see Santangelo 2013, p. 1245.

⁵¹ *Chijian Shu*, p. 77.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Chapter 26, the narrator comments, “it is detestable that Wei Zhongxian wanted to have his own merits praised, but trapped others in death without regard for their lives or families” (所可恨魏忠賢自己要頌功德，卻陷人在死亡，不顧人破家亡身).⁵³

What makes Lu Yunlong’s portrayal of Wei Zhongxian a distinctive account of 1628 is his use of a popular late Ming association between bee’s eyes and great villainy. In late Ming physiognomic tracts, bees’ eyes also foreshadow a miserable death. In the section on physiognomy in the encyclopedia *Ye Hangchuan* 夜航船 (The Night Boat), compiled by the 17th-century writer Zhang Dai, bee’s eyes indicate the ability to persecute others, but also an unnatural death.⁵⁴ “Damo Xiangyan” 達摩相眼 (Physiognomizing the Eyes by Bodhidharma) in the *Compendium for the Expert Physiognomist* describes bee’s eyes as suggestive of a treacherous and lonely death.⁵⁵ Both “Rhapsody on the Strange and Supernatural”, also in the *Compendium*, and the “Comprehensive Rhapsody on Human Relations” by Zhang Xingjian 張行簡 (*jinshi* 1179), linked bee’s eyes to death by violent corporeal punishment.⁵⁶ In Lu Yunlong’s novel, Wei’s efforts to accumulate wealth and power are ridiculous because he is destined to have a miserable death.

This second association between bees’ eyes and villainy allows Lu Yunlong to ask the reader to ridicule Wei Zhongxian for his temerity. Besides “detestable” (*kehen* 可恨), emotional prompts such as “laughable” (*kexiao* 可笑) are also scattered throughout the novel. As the ending of Chapter 31 says, for example, “we laugh at the treacherous hero for vainly attempting and scheming because it will only result in the death of him and his family” (卻笑奸雄妄圖度，止贏身死與家亡).⁵⁷ In Chapter 32, the reader is asked to laugh at Wei’s unrealistic ambitions and egomania (*kexiao chu* 可笑處).⁵⁸ When Wei’s sycophants build temples in Hangzhou in his honor, the narrator invites the reader to laugh at the ridiculousness of the situation, of a conniving sycophant comparing Wei to Confucius and his temple to the imperial palace, “wouldn’t you say that this is ridiculous?” (你道好笑也不?)⁵⁹ Such ridicule comes from a specific vantage point, the futility of Wei’s ambitions. This vantage point certainly derives from the fact that Lu Yunlong wrote after Wei’s downfall, but in the novel he presents it from a physiognomic vantage point, which evokes the authority of an order-generating Heaven.

With two connotations of bee’s eyes—an innate great villainy and a miserable death—combined, the physiognomic prediction crosses over two sets

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁵⁴ Zhang Dai, comp., *Ye Hangchuan*, p. 724.

⁵⁵ *Shenxiang Quanbian*, p. 69.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 142.

⁵⁷ *Chijian Shu*, p. 358.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

of reciprocal systems.⁶⁰ On the one hand, it shows that the ‘Great Abacus of the Heavenly Lord’ (*tiangong da suanpan* 天公大算盤) reliably metes out the proper amount of punishment to wrongdoers. On the other hand, and less conspicuously, the physiognomic reading stresses the role of human agency. Although the causal relationship is not as clear, the connection between bee’s eyes and a miserable death indicates that Wei only became a victim after he victimized others. This association ensures a measure of retribution, like the ledgers of merit and demerit (*gongguo ge* 功過格) circulating widely among all levels of scholars and officials during the late Ming and early Qing periods.⁶¹

It is this bridge between two systems of retribution that Lu Yunlong takes full advantage of in *Chijian Shu*’s plot development. Since people with inborn great villainy are destined to die a miserable death, the last of the extant chapters swiftly portray Wei Zhongxian’s fall as something inevitable. The last chapter is filled with the narrator’s direct comments that Wei’s downfall, like his rise, was of his own making. The narrator comments, “his desire was like an ocean that could not be filled; his evil deeds piled up so high they made Mount Hua appear low” (貪心似海終難滿, 惡壘如山華岳低).⁶² The opening 28-line-long poem in Chapter 31 repeats the claim that Wei brought about his own demise,⁶³ which once again reiterates the causal relationship between villainy and death embodied in his bees’ eyes.

Lu’s confidence in an overarching Heaven to provide moral order to the world had much to do with his perception of political reality at the beginning of the Chongzhen reign. Many officials were relieved that the Tianqi reign was over; some even hoped that the then largely unknown Chongzhen Emperor would restore some of the grandeur of the dynasty.⁶⁴ Though it may appear incredibly naïve in hindsight, Lu Yunlong also believed that 1628 portended a new beginning: the beginning of the Chongzhen Emperor’s reformist reign. For Lu, an all-knowing, powerful, and order-generating Heaven had reestablished order in the empire. Lu’s sense of elation with the arrival of this new era and his high hopes for the Chongzhen Emperor are apparent in both prefaces and the novel; the book almost reads like propaganda for the young emperor. Lu Yunlong’s preface praises the ill-fated Chongzhen Emperor’s brilliance and bravery in eliminating the treacherous (聖天子之英明, 神於除奸).⁶⁵ The opening verse in Chapter 1 says that peace and chaos rotate and are interdependent (治亂遞倚扶), evoking the cyclical sense of history, but clarifies

⁶⁰ For example, Hanan finds at work *renbao* (human requital) alongside with heavenly requital, or moral retribution in Feng Menglong’s “The Pearl Shirt Reencountered” (Hanan 1981, p. 105).

⁶¹ Brokaw 1991, p. 4.

⁶² *Chijian Shu*, p. 346.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

⁶⁴ Atwell 2008, pp. 611-612.

⁶⁵ *Chijian Shu*, p. 11.

that the present is the beginning of the era of peace and prosperity (明良開泰象).⁶⁶ In Chapter 31, the narrator claims that with a foundation laid by the first two emperors of the Ming, supported by Heaven, the Ming Dynasty is not something that Wei Zhongxian could shake.⁶⁷ Indeed, in “Preface to *Chijian Shu*”, after enumerating Wei Zhongxian’s villainy, Lu says, “Heaven has blessed my empire and secretly seized the vigor of the treacherous person” (乃天福我國家，潛奪奸人之魄).⁶⁸ Elsewhere, he comments, “the villainy in the past was all for nothing” (當日之奸，皆為虛設).⁶⁹

In the end, Lu Yunlong’s bee-eyed villain demands a different understanding of veracity. In the preface, Lu Yunlong claims that *Chijian Shu* is a “veracious book of its generation” because it “transmits truthfulness” (*chuanxin* 傳信) and dares not to “transmit misinformation” (*chuan’e* 傳訛). Because of these explicit claims to truthfulness, and because of the length and the narrative pace of the work, many scholars approach Lu as a writer of reportage, but believe that the novel is caught in a paradox between historicity and narrativity.⁷⁰ What I would like to draw attention to is that by 1628, even for what is considered a piece of historical fiction, the self-reflexive use of fiction as a hybrid genre was conspicuous, reflecting a shift “from the text as a repository of historical truth towards the text as an example of the technical aspects of composition” that was instrumental to the development of fiction aesthetics.⁷¹ That is, the novel was a fictional construct compatible with a different understanding of truthfulness. This veracity refers to a definitive correlation between Heaven and humanly affairs, a sanguine relationship between man and Heaven, which constituted a cosmological truth for Lu Yunlong and his contemporary readers. Heaven is indeed all-knowing, powerful, and order-generating when a great villain possesses a bodily feature that unquestionably conveys his villainous nature. In the world of late Ming fiction, Wei’s villainy could only lead to his violent death, a result ordained by an all-powerful and just Heaven.

3. *Minor Evil, Unperfected Goodness*

In creating a treacherous, but doomed villain, Lu Yunlong produced both an imagined and desired clarity. Lu Yunlong’s exhilaration about a possible Chongzhen revival turned out to be short lived; the blind optimism that met the beginning of the reign quickly turned into vocal pessimism. The two decades following the publication of *Chijian Shu* washed away any glory attached to

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Han Li 2009, p. 49.

⁷¹ Epstein 2001, p. 46.

those who had brought down Wei Zhongxian, a change for which there are telling signs throughout the early Qing novel. In *Taowu Xianping*, to give a few examples, Chongzhen is no longer the *sheng tianzi* 聖天子 (saintly emperor) as in *Chijian Shu* but Huaizong, his posthumous title. In the poems that praise Imperial Gentleman Wan's bravery, *Chijian Shu* has Wan's long lasting spirit circle the imperial palace, in *Taowu Xianping* it no longer has anything to do with the Court, but "towers towards the ox and the dipper" (冲牛斗).⁷² Instead of the confident claim that Heaven is in favor of "my empire" (*wo guojia* 我國家) in *Chijian Shu*, *Taowu Xianping* describes this early Chongzhen reign optimism with a much stronger aloofness, "people in the world at this time were exuberant and encouraged" (此時天下人民歡欣鼓舞).⁷³

In a way, *Taowu Xianping* is a representative piece of the early Qing literature. The rampant violence and terrible suffering that accompanied the fall of the Ming in 1644 had a profound impact on early Qing literature.⁷⁴ Writers living through the turbulence of the Ming-Qing cataclysm questioned the justice of Heaven. In "Recording Disorder in the Year Jiashen", Li Yu 李漁 (1610-1680), the famous fiction writer-cum-playwright laments, "who would have thought that Heaven hasn't had enough? The beacon fires burn even more intensely by the day" (豈知天未厭, 烽火日已熾).⁷⁵ Great creativity emerged from this deep doubt about Heaven's justice, a creativity that made the early Qing, in the words of Wai-yee Li, "an extraordinarily creative and vibrant period in Chinese literary history."⁷⁶ The irreverence, both towards earlier literary models as well as the political and cultural values of the past, in the early Qing literary world helped produce outrageous parodies and biting satires.⁷⁷ Early Qing writers were noteworthy contrarians, incorporating into their work ironic inversions of moral paragons and normative values, such as Aina the Layman in his story collection *Doupeng Xianhua* 豆棚閒話 (Idle Talk under the Bean Arbor), or the much studied Li Yu.⁷⁸ It was in this context we can begin to understand the *Taowu Xianping*'s author's daring remake of a villain that fundamentally changed interpretations about the origins of evil and fictional approaches to villainy.

We begin with physiognomy, a narrative element related to Heaven and placed in the foreground in the life of Wei Zhongxian in *Chijian Shu*. There are a few essential changes in *Taowu Xianping*. First, the context of the

⁷² *Taowu Xianping*, p. 367.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 560.

⁷⁴ For the impact of the dynastic fall in early Qing literature, see Idema et al. 2006. In particular, Tina Lu finds that the Ming fall caused early Qing reunion stories to depart drastically from their conventional themes. Lu Tina 2008, pp. 66, 72.

⁷⁵ Cai Zongqi 2008, p. 362.

⁷⁶ Li Wai-yee 2010, p. 154.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201; Hegel 2017, pp. 16-17.

⁷⁸ Hanan 1988, pp. 76-110.

physiognomic reading. Unlike *Chijian Shu* with the body reading in the first chapter, which was typical of contemporary novels, the author of *Taowu Xianping* inserts it in the middle, in Chapter 20. In *Chijian Shu*, the physiognomic diagnosis inspires Wei's decision to castrate himself as a route to upward mobility. *Taowu Xianping*'s late inclusion of the physiognomic act means that the reader has not been guided by the physiognomic prediction, but also that Wei Zhongxian has no awareness of his future prosperity until later in life, after he has already lost his genitals.

The type of physiognomist who reads Wei Zhongxian's face in the two novels is also very different. In *Chijian Shu*, the physiognomist is a peripatetic Daoist shrouded in mystery, which gives him a mystique befitting an interpreter of Heaven. He introduces himself as a master physiognomist, but refuses Wei's mother's offering of grain as remuneration. Lu Yunlong thus leaves it ambiguous whether he is a professional physiognomic practitioner. In *Taowu Xianping*, Zhang Xiaoshan is a professional physiognomic practitioner (*xiangshi* 相士) and an acquaintance of Wei Zhongxian; the two met as fellow inmates in the Eastern Depot. Zhang later joins Wei Zhongxian's crew and is executed. Although Zhang's prediction about Wei's future is correct, his status as a professional physiognomic practitioner immediately lowers his credibility in the eyes of the reader as the valorization of amateurism that penetrated other areas in the Ming also characterized the *literati* attitude towards physiognomy.⁷⁹ Zhang Xiaoshan lacks the necessary detachment appropriate for an interpreter of Heaven's messages.

Most importantly, the wording in the physiognomic reading has changed. The author of *Taowu Xianping* replaces Wei's "bee's eyes and wolf-like voice", bodily markers of great villainy, with: "The eyes are bare and protruding" (眼光而露), and "the voice rushed and small" (聲急而小). The physiognomist warns Wei that his predilection for killing (*shaxin* 殺心) is too strong, which will lead to much death in the future. For a modern reader, attributing murder to a predilection seems to emphasize one's inborn nature, but not compared to the physiognomic signifiers of bee's eyes and wolf's voice, which in the late imperial period was a more obvious sign of great villainy. This physiognomic reading indicates an attempt to avoid the key phrases that point to Wei's inborn great villainy. The change in wording draws our attention to the fact that words and phrases come with extra-linguistic baggage, which Lu Yunlong utilized and the author of *Taowu Xianping* chose to leave out. By removing Wei's bee's eyes, the author of *Taowu Xianping* suggests a more ambivalent origin for Wei's acts.

The elimination of Wei Zhongxian's bee's eyes makes possible a different literary exploration of evil; the subject of *Taowu Xianping* is the origin and meaning of Wei Zhongxian's minor evil. The minor evil is reified as simple buffoonery. Within a single person this minor evil can be mixed with many

⁷⁹ See e.g. Jiang Yingke (1552-1605), "On Distancing Yourself from Divination Arts Masters" (Yuan Shushi 遠術士), in *Xuetao Xiaoshuo*, p. 68.

kinds of unperfected good, which allows Wei to assume the features of protagonists of many literary genres. These identities add to the literary qualities of the work, but also have moral connotations.

3.1 The Lowly Buffoon: A Minor Evil

Rather than the treacherous villain in *Chijian Shu*, Wei Zhongxian in *Taowu Xianping* is a gullible and imperceptive buffoon of mediocre wit, a classic example of a minor evil character. Wei Zhongxian's gullibility is featured in numerous chapters in which he falls for the tricks of various con artists. In Chapter 12, for example, Wei goes on a business trip in the north with a thousand taels' worth of wheat, but by Chapter 17 he has become a beggar who can barely feed himself. The reader's sympathy for Wei Zhongxian is, however, reduced by the extent of his stupidity. Wei falls for a prostitute, believes that he is her first customer, and entrusts her with both his money and baggage. Naturally, the prostitute robs him of everything. Even his sworn brother points out Wei's stupendous mistake in trusting a prostitute with his belongings.⁸⁰ In another chapter, he falls prey to a Daoist who promises to use alchemy to increase Wei's silver. Naturally, the alchemist steals Wei's money. The incident reads like an excerpt from *Du Pian Xinshu* 杜騙新書 (A New Book for Aid in Eliminating Deceptions, 1617),⁸¹ particularly the sections on "Swindling Alchemists" and "Con Women."⁸² Swindling alchemists are also featured in the popular story collection *Chuke Pai'an Jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (Slapping the Table in Amazement, first collection, 1627).⁸³ In texts about con artists, as Daniel M. Youd points out, "events unfold in a world that is indifferent to moral concerns, where justice is uncertain and recompense rare."⁸⁴ Inserting an episode about Wei Zhongxian being conned by an alchemist, the author of *Taowu Xianping* not only transforms Wei into a victim, but also obfuscates the moral order. The alchemist succeeds and the narrative moves on to yet another unfortunate incident in Wei's life.

During the height of his power, when his position seems to demand a series of successful political machinations, Wei is portrayed as an incompetent tragicomic character. In contrast to Wei's military savvy in *Chijian Shu*, his military expedition in *Taowu Xianping* is an act of buffoonery. Chapter 46

⁸⁰ Entrusting a prostitute with his money and later losing it has a precedent in *Yinyang Meng*. While in *Taowu Xianping* the prostitute's name is Su Juan 素娟, in *Yinyang Meng* the prostitute Lansheng 蘭生 has known Wei Zhongxian longer and sincerely wishes to marry him. Wei, however, has a change of heart (*Yinyang Meng*, Chapter 4, pp. 66-67). *Taowu Xianping* deletes the depictions of genuine love to make Wei Zhongxian appear more stupid.

⁸¹ For a discussion of this text, see Youd 2007, pp. 220-225.

⁸² *Du Pian Xinshu*, pp. 361-375.

⁸³ *Chuke Pai'an Jingqi*, pp. 306-323.

⁸⁴ Youd 2007, p. 225.

describes Wei's military expedition to defeat enemy soldiers, but rather than fight his enemies Wei and his underlings spend all their time demanding bribes from the people of the border towns. He mistakes a group of hunters as enemy soldiers and kills approximately sixty of them, proclaiming their bodies as trophies of war. There is a literary precedent for this event. In *Sanguo Yanyi*, Dong Zhuo and his soldiers attack a group of civilians, killing the men and taking the women as battle trophies.⁸⁵ In *Taowu Xianping*, however, Wei truly mistakes the hunters for enemy soldiers. A similarly outrageous example of Wei's imperceptiveness appears in Chapter 46. During a dream, Wei Zhongxian reads a book entitled "Volume 13 of the List of the Loyal and the Virtuous Killed by Wei Zhongxian." Typical of his imperceptiveness, he dismisses it as a bad dream.

Wei's incompetence is more comical than despicable. A good example that illustrates the author's aestheticism and mitigation of condemnation in depicting Wei as an imperceptive, comical figure is from Chapter 46, in which Chen Xuanlang, the Daoist monk who helped the poverty-stricken Wei, reappears to take Wei Zhongxian to a dreamland. The episode describes a celestial land of abundant riches that reads like Jia Baoyu's tour in the Land of Ultimate Disillusionment in *Honglou Meng*. Strikingly, this magnificent garden is described through the perspective of Wei Zhongxian, the target of condemnation in earlier novels.

珍樓貝闕，霧箔雲窗。黃金為屋瓦，白玉作台階。

[...]

又見青衣女童抱著一個花鳥，走到席前向外，那鳥高叫三聲，忽見那大樹上奇花滿樹，如千葉蓮花，其大如盤，香風縹緲。少刻，每花中立一美女，有尺余長，身衣五彩。眾女樂復吹彈起來，那樹上美女便按節而舞，疾徐遲速，毫發無遺。一折已完，眾樂停止。那鳥兒又向樹叫了一聲，樹上的美女皆隨花落，都不見了。

The tower is built of pearls, the gate made of shells.

Mist is the screen and clouds are the windows.

The tiles are made of gold, the stairs of white jade.

[...]

[Wei] also saw a maid in blue carrying a multi-colored bird [...]. The bird chirped three times; suddenly the big tree was covered with strange flowers that looked like thousand-petal lotuses as big as plates. The air was full of fragrance. In an instant, there appeared a beautiful woman in every flower. They were about a foot tall, wearing all five colors. When music was heard, they flawlessly danced to the rhythm. After an act, the music stopped. When a bird chirped in the tree, the beauties fell like flowers and were nowhere to be seen.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ *Sanguo Yanyi*, p. 33.

⁸⁶ *Taowu Xianping*, pp. 514-515. According to Ouyang Jian, this has a literary precedent in the Tang story, "Xu Hanyang" in the collection *Broad Expanse of the Extraordinary* (*Boyi Zhi* 博異志). Ouyang Jian 1986, pp. 244-245.

I quote this paragraph in full to show the “literariness” of the novel, but also to show that Wei is no longer a scheming great villain as in *Chijian Shu*, but a comically imperceptive character. The appearance and disappearance of exotic flowers and beautiful women is meant to reveal to Wei the ephemerality of wealth and power. Wei, however, misses the point and mistakes the sudden appearance and disappearance as innate to the “unusual species” of the plant. When he asks Xuanlang where he can buy these unusual flowers, Xuanlang replies with a speech on the ephemerality of beautiful flowers, riches and prosperity, none of which seems to penetrate Wei’s stupidity. Wei Zhongxian’s limited understanding of the garden as a material object is particularly ridiculed by the author when Xuanlang is called away and Wei stands in the garden pondering how he could confiscate it for himself. His immediate plan is to claim the land in the emperor’s name and bribe Xuanlang by offering him sanctuary elsewhere. Wei’s greed is comical, his scheming petty.⁸⁷

The most incriminating section in the novel, Chapters 29 through 44, concerning Wei’s persecution of many officials, allows the reader to waver between anger, sympathy, and ridicule. Wei is shown as a person with emotional and psychological imbalances. The narrator explains that Wei feels exhilarated after killing virtuous officials. If a single day passes without executing an official, Wei feels displeased.⁸⁸ Because the author casts Wei as a lowly buffoon, comical relief is always at hand, even in this section. Amidst Wei’s vicious persecution of righteous officials, he fusses over his son’s illness without realizing that his son is malingering so that Wei will send him back to his hometown. Doctors swarm to the capital, including illiterate ones who have little knowledge of medicine, who hope to hit the jackpot by curing the son of the second most powerful person in the empire.⁸⁹

The remaking of Wei Zhongxian from a treacherous villain to a comical buffoon represents a fundamentally different portrayal of causality. The treacherous villain rises through his own political machinations; the comical buffoon is essentially a passive character, whose rise is brought about by coincidence. These coincidences often occur in absurd situations that add the flair of dark comedy to the novel. Wei’s assignment to take charge of powerful special investigation agency, the Eastern Depot, is the direct result of a mere partridge fight.⁹⁰ Prior to the incident, Wei is a lowly eunuch, but his victorious partridge attracts the emperor’s attention. Even the partridge seems to have won by mere coincidence: after acting timidly, the partridge suddenly bites the previous winner’s neck and becomes the new champion. The emperor rewards Wei by allowing him to choose his desired post amongst seven open ones. Wang An, the senior eunuch, warns the emperor about making such an important

⁸⁷ *Taowu Xianping*, p. 516.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

decision in this light-hearted manner. The author laments, through a “later poet”, over the casualness with which the emperor deals with important affairs. Wei Zhongxian’s appointment to the Eastern Depot, and thus the beginning of his rise to power, was the result of Wei’s decision, but a decision surrounded by mere coincidence and happenstance.

The key episode in Wei’s life, his castration, which David Wang sees as the turning point of his career, is a rather insignificant scene in *Taowu Xianping* compared to the gruesome self-castration scene in *Chijian Shu*. In *Taowu Xianping*, a much longer novel, Wei’s loss of genitals only occupies two sentences—“Jinzhong [Zhongxian] was drunk and lying in the water. His penis was erect; a stray dog, not knowing what it was, ran up and bit off his genitals” (那進忠是被燒酒醉了的人，又被水一逼，那陽物便直挺挺的豎起來。那狗不知是何物，跑上去一口，連腎囊都咬去了).⁹¹ Read against Wei’s conscious self-castration in *Chijian Shu*, the dog’s castration of an unconscious Wei Zhongxian emphasizes the coincidences that shaped Wei’s life. With his genitals gone, Wei has no other choice but to become a eunuch. The author of *Taowu Xianping*, who copied much from *Chijian Shu*, uses the castration scene to deliberately oppose the characterization of Wei Zhongxian’s as a scheming political manipulator, instead he is a tragi-comic anti-hero.

Coincidence is a familiar element in Chinese narratives. As Karl Kao observes, “a moral order sustained by the ‘inevitability’ of coincidence can give only uneasy assurance at the best” in Chinese short stories.⁹² It is this kind of uneasiness that the anonymous author of *Taowu Xianping* develops: by increasing Wei’s level of passivity, the author not only decreases Wei’s agency, but also draws upon the preexisting notions of the “injustice of Heaven.” In Chinese philosophy, Robert Eno observes, the concept of an unjust Heaven resulted in the elaboration of more sophisticated concepts of Heaven.⁹³ Heaven, in *Taowu Xianping*, is no longer trustworthy, but an abacus with malfunctioning beads.

Read in comparison to *Chijian Shu*, Wei’s early victimhood in *Taowu Xianping* disrupts a karmic-retribution plot—“He will victimize others, but eventually become a victim himself”—and makes it impossible for readers to have the uniform emotional response demanded from the readers of *Chijian Shu*. More disturbingly, it contradicts some of the fundamental questions that Keith McMahon raises in his study of the literary portrayal of the powerful eunuch:

How and why did a man become a eunuch? What were his motives, as far as can be learned from historical cases; and what did storytellers and other writers think his motives were? In the case of powerful and influential eunuchs, the question also became, how, after his act of self-destruction, did the eunuch reconstruct himself? How did he re-create himself as a newly potent man?”⁹⁴

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁹² Kao Karl 1989, p. 135.

⁹³ Discussed in Santangelo 1992, p. 404.

⁹⁴ McMahon 2014, p. 1.

All these questions presume human agency. *Taowu Xianping*, however, portrays Wei Zhongxian as a comical buffoon and a minor evil, whose self-destruction and reconstruction is entirely coincidental.

3.2 *Fragmented Good*

By eliminating Wei's inborn great villainy, the author of *Taowu Xianping* asks the reader to both laugh at and occasionally sympathize with Wei Zhongxian, which lessens the degree of condemnation in the novel. Idleness allows not only a portrayal of Wei Zhongxian's life in a much longer temporal scheme, but also allows the plot to wander and traverse a variety of notable subgenres through Wei Zhongxian's journey, which makes *Taowu Xianping* a much richer novel than *Chijian Shu*. This style of novel is also significant in the literary exploration of evil: Wei Zhongxian assumes the identities of protagonists in many popular genres—chivalry, romance, adventure—literary models of goodness that are intermixed with Wei as a lowly buffoon through the overarching metaphor of thematic “patching”, which, as the “General Statements” describes, draws the reader's attention not simply to the diversity of genres, but to their randomness: all constituent elements [of the novel] are oddly-cut (*lingcai* and *suijian*) pieces or fragmentary patches. The author of *Taowu Xianping* thus uses an entirely different textile-related metaphor. Rather than draw attention to the tight organization of the work, he emphasizes its patchwork quality and thereby portrays minor good as compatible with minor evil.⁹⁵

The biggest “patch” in the novel is romance, the love story between Wei Zhongxian and Ke Yinyue, which makes Wei the protagonist of a romance. Rather than a relationship deliberately pursued out of political consideration, as in *Chijian Shu*, in *Taowu Xianping* their love goes back to their childhood. As a youngster, Wei follows his mother on a journey when, to escape their captors, they take refuge with the Ke family. For a short period of time, Wei and Ke Yinyue grow up together. Wei's mother even makes an informal engagement between the couple. Separation and reunion, however, soon follow. When Wei and Ke part, as Wei's mother continues her own search for her lover, a tearful Ke has to be forcefully carried back into the house.

Throughout their romance there are vivid descriptions of sincere emotional attachments between Wei Zhongxian and Ke Yinyue. In Chapter 12 Wei reunites with Ke, who is then unhappily married to a husband who does not match her talent or beauty. In such circumstances, their affair seems logical and deserves more sympathy than criticism. In Chapter 15 their affair is discovered

⁹⁵ Li Yu's term, “needle and thread” for example, in “Mi Zhenxian” 密針線 (Make the Stitching Fine) (discussed in Rolston 1997, p. 62); Jin Shengtan's concept of *caoshe huixian* 草蛇灰線 (snake in the grass, or [discontinuous] chalk-line) to refer to prefiguration (Rolston 1997, pp. 252-253), for example.

and a gloomy separation follows. Their doomed love culminates in a touching reunion scene after a chance encounter between them at the Court. By then, Wei has become a eunuch and his appearance has changed drastically. Ke does not recognize him at first but, after seeing him, she is haunted by the memories of their happy time together and becomes gravely ill. When Wei reveals his identity, the two wail bitterly and are only stopped by Ke's maid, who is concerned with her mistress' still weak health.⁹⁶ Indeed, as David Wang observes, "odd as it may appear, a domestic ambiance lingers even during the most macabre moments of the Court politics."⁹⁷

These obvious variations from typical romance narratives can only represent the author's deliberate attempt to present their love as an "oddly-cut" patch in the novel. Romance narratives usually include a specific, fetishized object as the thread holding the story together, a thread bestowed, lost, and returned. In *Taowu Xianping*, it is a pearl, which explains the novel's alternative title, *A Tale of a Pearl*. The prominent elements of the romance genre in the novel has led David Wang to conclude that the novel is trying to naturalize evil.⁹⁸ The object-centered romance narrative, however, is quite brief. In most late imperial romances, the fetishized objects are found throughout the novel while the pearl only appears in several chapters of *Taowu Xianping*. In Chapter 13, for example, Ke Yinyue bestows upon Wei, after they had been reunited and had a brief affair, one of her pearls. When Ke's in-laws discover the affair, Wei is forced to run away. Soon after, in Chapter 18, he is forced to pawn the pearl to pay off his gambling debts. The quick and easy retrieval of the fetishized object further strays from the typical romance. When Wei is at the height of his power, he sends his underlings to find the pearl. A *jinshi* degree holder, looking for a way to bribe Wei, coincidentally owns the pawnshop and immediately turns it over to Wei's servants. All this takes place within several paragraphs.⁹⁹ Hints of utility also corrupt the love story. During his rise to power, Wei is in a position to retrieve the pearl—he had returned to the area of the pawnshop, but did not remember the object—clearly, the author is parodying object-centered romance narratives. Only after Yinyue leaves the Court because of a dispute with the empress does Wei Zhongxian promise to recover the pearl.¹⁰⁰

The author of *Taowu Xianping* also has Wei Zhongxian straddle the thin line between moral paragon and its opposite by portraying him like the chivalric hero Zhao Kuangyin in the late Ming vernacular short story, "The Song Founder Escorts Jingniang One Thousand *li*", collected in *Jingshi Tongyan* 警世通言 (Stories to Caution the World). In this vernacular short story, Zhao Kuangyin saves a girl named Jingniang and escorts her to the capital. When offered the girl's hand in marriage, Zhao turns down the father

⁹⁶ *Taowu Xianping*, pp. 273-274.

⁹⁷ Wang David 2004, p. 203.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

⁹⁹ *Taowu Xianping*, pp. 388-389.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 387-388.

to prove his chivalric motives.¹⁰¹ In *Taowu Xianping*, Wei Zhongxian is on a hunting trip in Shandong when he saves a woman who had been abducted by several Daoist monks. After escorting the girl home, Wei refuses the grateful mother's offer of her daughter's hand, because, as the narrator tells us, Wei saved her out of his true sense of justice. When the girl's uncle promises land and wealth, in addition to the girl, Wei starts to waver. The narrator comments, "Indeed, he has the state of mind of a petty man (*xiaoren xinchang* 小人心腸) and is easily tempted."¹⁰² *Taowu Xianping*'s definition of a petty man follows *The Analects*, which states, "the petty person aspires to things base." In the context of *Taowu Xianping*, however, the petty man might be base, but he is not a villain.

Wei also acts like a chivalric hero in other scenes in the novel. Early in the novel, when he is a trusting and friendly merchant, Wei offers to buy cloth from two fellow merchants when they need to return home for a family emergency. In return for his good deed, the two merchants tell Wei that cloth is selling very well in Jizhou. While in Jizhou selling his cloth at a good price, Wei is reunited with Ke Yinyue. In Chapter 19, and for several chapters that follow, Wei Zhongxian assumes the identity of a peripatetic doctor after a friendly monk gifts him some medicine. Although not a doctor by training, Wei performs this identity. Like a hero, he is mild mannered, refuses compensation, and cures his patients merely for their gratitude.

Equally disrupting, Wei Zhongxian bears resemblance to heroes in the transformation/prosperity theme about one's rise in fortune.¹⁰³ At the height of his power, Wei Zhongxian goes back to the temple where he had rubbed elbows with death. Frequently in tales about prosperity and transformation (*faji biantai* 發跡變泰), protagonists return to an earlier place in their lives or re-encounter people who knew them and helped them before they achieved prosperity. The intersection of past and present identities, and old and new places, does not simply show the extent of transformation and the grandeur of the protagonist's success, it also allows the protagonists to generously repay those who had helped them.¹⁰⁴ The repayment of favors is a moral act through which the author shows that the protagonists deserve their good fortune not only because fate favors them, but also because they themselves are righteous.

¹⁰¹ Feng Menglong, *Jingshi Tongyan*, pp. 297-316. Yang Shuhui discusses how the chivalric act is corrupted by Kuangyin's overt concerns with his own reputation. Yang also hypothesizes that many different versions or forms of the same material were current in the late Ming and early Qing periods. See Yang Shuhui 1998, pp. 86-87.

¹⁰² *Taowu Xianping*, p. 126. For Confucius' reference to the petty person, see Froese 2013, pp. 54-55.

¹⁰³ David Wang goes as far to suggest the novel as "a powerful counterexample to the conventions of the heroic saga" (2004, p. 203).

¹⁰⁴ See for example, "Qian Poliu Lin'an Faji" (Qian Poliu Begins His Career in Lin'an) and "Qiong Ma Zhou Zaoji Mai Dui Ao" (Penniless Ma Zhou Gets His Chance through a Pancake-selling Woman) in Feng's *Yushi Mingyan*, pp. 317-347, and 102-110.

In *Taowu Xianping*, Wei revisits the shrine where the Daoist monk Chen Xuanlang had saved him from starvation and homelessness. He intends to reward his benefactor, but Chen is nowhere to be found. The author describes Wei's sense of desolation:

同田爾耕在廟閑步，見昔年光景宛然在目，想道：「我當初在此與死為鄰，若非陳元朗師父，怎有此日？我今富貴了，到此卻不見他，難道他是死了？」睹物傷心，忍不住淒然淚下。又不好哭，又不住淚，只得暗暗拭乾，沒情沒緒的回來。

Wei Zhongxian took a walk with Tian Ergeng in the shrine and saw his circumstances in former years as if they were right in front of him. He thought, "I was near death at that time. Were it not for Master Chen Xuanlang, what would I have today? Now I have riches and honor, and I've come here. But I don't see him. Might it be that he's dead?" He saw remaining things and was heart-broken. Tears flowed down, and he couldn't help them. He couldn't wail, but tears wouldn't stop. He could only wipe them away in secret and returned lugubriously.¹⁰⁵

Wei's sense of the vicissitudes of life is real and vivid, reminding us of the author's own feelings in a period of dynastic change. At times, we feel that the author is endowing Wei with the national pathos that considers the vicissitudes of life unintelligible. This softening of Wei's villainy and the foregrounding of the vicissitudes of life is made especially pungent when we compare a similar episode in *Yinyang Meng*, in which Wei repays a depth of gratitude for Xuanlang as well as seeks revenge against another monk putting him to death.¹⁰⁶ *Taowu Xianping* deletes Wei's revengeful act but elaborates on his desolation for not being able to repay Xuanlang. In *Yinyang Meng*, Xuanlang is dead, but Wei is able to find his burial place and build him an extravagant grave as well as rewarding his surviving mother and brother a large sum of money. In *Taowu Xianping*, not only is Xuanlang nowhere to be found, there are no remaining members in his biological family, which leads Wei Zhongxian to sigh repeatedly (忠賢嘆息不已).

There are striking similarities between Wei Zhongxian's experiences and those of the famous Tang General Qin Shubao, as portrayed in *Suishi Yiwén* 隋史遺文 (The Forgotten Tales of the Sui Dynasty).¹⁰⁷ Throughout the novel, Wei is described as genuinely wanting to reunite with his mother. His intense filial piety, in addition to similar experiences with innkeepers, links him to Qin Shubao. In Chapter 12, urged by his wife Fu Ruyu, he goes on a business trip to the north to sell wheat in Linqing, when he hears that the price is good; his other

¹⁰⁵ *Taowu Xianping*, pp. 344-345.

¹⁰⁶ *Yinyang Meng*, Chapter 24, pp. 394-395, 398.

¹⁰⁷ David Wang discusses the similarity between Wei and Qin, and observes that their different outcomes derive from that "Wei acts out what Qin could have become." Wang David 2004, p. 203.

aim is to reunite with his mother. When he arrives in Linqing, he learns that his mother has gone south to join his biological father. Depressed over the news, and seeking to dispel his loneliness, he hangs around the red light district, where his various troubles begin. The striking similarity between Wei Zhongxian and Qin Shubao would render the novel partially a *bildungsroman*. However, unlike Qin Shubao, Wei does not mature and pass out of his teenage uncertainty; Qin Shubao learns from his role models, but Wei Zhongxian continues to drift, experiences more trouble, and makes friends with morally dubious characters.

The patchwork quality of *Taowu Xianping*, in which parts of many popular themes are sewn together, has serious moral consequences. In Confucian ethics, self-cultivation is a life-long process in which a person seeks to become moral and accumulate “comprehensive wisdom.”¹⁰⁸ Time is of great importance in this process, but *Taowu Xianping*’s “patchwork” nature means that the author chooses not to give enough narrative time to the development of a single identity for Wei Zhongxian. This is where *Taowu Xianping* is different from *Suishi Yiwen*. In *Suishi Yiwen*, Qin Shubao goes through a long and detailed maturation process while the author of *Taowu Xianping* leaves little narrative time to the development of Wei’s identity.¹⁰⁹ While Wei does not engage in moral self-cultivation, he does abandon himself in the latter half of the novel. In this sense, the dalliance with different subgenres of the vernacular novel that presents Wei’s identities as various characters of the good, justified by the claims to “idle commentary” in the title, points to the thin boundary between right and wrong.

Wei Zhongxian’s many identities make it impossible to produce a singular, intense emotional response from the reader. Eventually, the title of the novel becomes an oxymoron: “idleness,” which the narrative subscribes to, contradicts the claim that the novel is about the portrayal of a *taowu* (monster). The remaking of Wei Zhongxian through a variety of genre types reminds us of the troubling base upon which the orderly fictional world of *Chijian Shu* is built: that is, the existence of great villainy is what keeps morality safe. When the nature of such villainy is questioned, the moral universe collapses with it.

Conclusion

The field of traditional Chinese literature has long focused on the relationship between ethics and literature, reflecting an emphasis on its social function in traditional China—literature was seen as a vehicle for the Way (*wen yi zai dao* 文以載道). Similar terms of ethical orientation permeate late imperial fiction criticism: *jiaohua* 教化 (teaching and transforming), *chengquan* 懲勸 (punishing and encouraging), *fuzhi gangchang* 扶植綱常 (sustaining guidelines

¹⁰⁸ Cua 2003, p. 730.

¹⁰⁹ For Qin Shubao’s process of maturation, see Hegel 1981, p. 119.

and constancy).¹¹⁰ This essay, however, follows a new approach that broadens our conceptualization of late imperial ethics by paying attention to the deeply varied and intersecting valences of literature. In this sense, it is influenced by poststructuralist ethical theories, as Dorothy Hale describes them, “with the unfolding of the new century a body of scholarship has burgeoned forth, fueling a debate not over whether ethical questions should be pursued but how this new ethical inquiry might best be conducted.”¹¹¹

Read together, *Chijian Shu* and *Taowu Xianping* shed new light upon the degree of variegation in the ethical claims made and/or contested by authors in their texts. The fictional creation of Wei Zhongxian’s bee’s eyes in *Chijian Shu* has the intellectual and cultural support of a widely accepted system of knowledge—physiognomy—that has its underpinning in Chinese cosmology and evoked the unmediated emotions of indignation and ridicule in the reader. Lu Yunlong’s confidence in the ethical power of fiction is intertwined with his confidence in an overarching Heaven that provides moral order to the world. Lu’s seemingly contradictory claim that his work is both fiction (*xiaoshuo* 小說) and history (*shu* 書) can be explained by understanding these two genres as allies against moral ambivalence and historical coincidence. Like many contemporary writers who engaged with physiognomic knowledge in their works, Lu uses, fairly straightforwardly, this cultural fluency to guide his reader’s understanding of the relationship between Heaven and humans. Ambiguity, of course, remains in the text despite Lu Yunlong’s attempts to banish it. Wei Zhongxian’s bodily features condemn him, but in holding Wei’s inborn nature responsible for his evil acts, the author partially excuses those acts.

In *Chijian Shu*, it makes sense for a political manipulator with inborn, great villainy to climb up the social ladder and bring ruin to the empire. The obvious solution is to be on the lookout for people with bee’s eyes. The sense of a simple resolution is absent from *Taowu Xianping*. Once the power of Heaven to order the world was doubted, it was necessary to reimagine a villain, and the source of evil. In the chaotic and absurd world of the Ming-Qing cataclysm, Wei Zhongxian no longer looked like the chief villain who brought down the dynasty, but just another tragi-comic figure, a petty man, a vainglorious buffoon. As a petty man, Wei Zhongxian possessed only protruding eyes, eyes that did not evoke the reader’s emotional condemnation, but little more than a non-committal sigh (*tan* 嘆). Sighing, though, is a complex act that is frequently aestheticized. It could connote a mixture of emotions, resignation, sadness, or

¹¹⁰ Patrick Hanan, Robert E. Hegel, Ellen Widmer, and Karl Kao’s works, among others, have demonstrated the social, political, and ethical engagement of late imperial fiction writers. As Karl Kao puts it, “moral faith is the source that gives meaning to human endeavors and sustains men in time of trials throughout history” (Kao Karl 2002, p. 96).

¹¹¹ Hale 2007, p. 188. Her other article, “Aesthetics and the New Ethics: Theorizing the Novel in the Twenty-first Century”, is an excellent article explaining the difference between new and old ethical sense of the novel in a post-structuralist, post-Marxist era.

even sympathy. In any case, the sigh does not represent indignation nor ridicule, both of which assumes the moral high ground.

The ethical gestures in *Taowu Xianping* were aesthetic. There is fidelity to nothing, not even literary themes, but the novel does enchant us with its intertextual references, its beautifully embroidered patchwork qualities. The author of *Taowu Xianping* turned a major villain in Chinese history into a petty man with protruding eyes; he invited his readers to indulge in the aesthetics of literature in the midst of a dynastic transition, a world that was increasingly inexplicable and, alas, no longer inhabited by bee-eyed villains that made possible an ordered moral universe.

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REVIEWS

I-Hsien Wu, *Eroticism and Other Literary Conventions in Chinese Literature: Intertextuality in The Story of the Stone*, Amherst: Cambria Press, 2017. ISBN 9781604979770 (hardcover), 240 pp. \$ 109.99

Review by Paolo Santangelo (Sapienza University of Rome)

This volume focuses on the role of intertextuality in the *Honglou meng*,¹ which helps to understand how the novel directly and indirectly references erotic fiction (Chapters 1 and 2), drama (Chapters 3 and 4), the scholar-and-beauty fiction (Chapter 5), as well as the transmission and learning of emotional codes (esp. pp. 47-66). The role and versatility of texts remain the core of the study, so that considering the last chapter, the title of the book could also have been “*The Stone, a Text in Flux*.”

The transposition of the sign of desire from past dramas is evident in Baochai’s hypocritical indignation when she hears young ladies alluding to *Mudan ting* and *Xixiangji* in Chapters 42 and 51 of the novel. Both dramas were often denounced as subversive and immoral, and in the early Qing appeared on lists of books to be burned (pp. 47-64). According to a proverb, “youth should not read the *Water Margin*, old men should avoid the *Three Kingdoms*, males would better keep away from the *Dream of the Red Mansion*, and females should not know about the *Western Chamber*” 少不讀水滸，老不讀三國，男不讀紅樓，女不讀西廂. The outlaws could be bad teachers for young people, while reading the *Three Kingdoms* could drive those who have a long experience of life to lose themselves in memories of ambition; Yingying certainly was not a paragon of morality for girls, while Baoyu was certainly an antihero for male roles and social rules. In all cases the important function of literature in teaching and influencing the habits and mentality of readers is remarked. This corruptive power of reading is often associated with viewing. We can see, for instance, the denunciation of some popular literature and theatre of Fujian in *Xiamen zhi* 廈門志 (1839, 15: 13b) for its “lascivious lyrics and lewd gestures” (淫詞醜態).²

The shared reading of *Xixiang ji* by the young characters is a kind of sentimental education that allows Baoyu and Daiyu to achieve a romantic communication, not only for the vocabulary and quotations, but also in refining their articulations of lover’s feelings: “learning to quote, or not to quote; learning to identify oneself as the dramatic lover, or to live one’s own story; learning to build mutual trust with shared reading, or trust unconditionally” (pp. 60-61).

¹ *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢. The original edition is *Chengjia* 程甲本 (first printed in 1791, repr. Zhonghua shuju, Beijing 1998).

² Cf. Mair Victor (1995) “Anthologizing and Anthropologizing: The Place of Nonelite and Nonstandard Culture in the Chinese Literary Tradition”, in Eugene Eoyang and Lin Yao-fu, eds., *Translating Chinese Literature*, Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana U.P., p. 254.

Worthy of particular mention is the perspective of reading the novel in the relation between human life and storytelling—or as the book puts it, their “intricate symbiosis” (p. 16)—rather than the old consolidated tradition of looking for historical figures.

In chapter 23 of *The Stone* [Dream of the Red Mansion], two legendary plays are introduced into the newly established garden life: *The Story of the Western [Chamber]* (*Xixiang ji* 西廂記) by Wang Shifu 王實甫 (late-13th to early-14th century), and *The Peony Pavilion* (*Mudan ting* 牡丹亭) by Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616). The main function of this introduction is clearly to show how Baoyu and Daiyu’s childlike intimacy transforms into a full-fledged romance. As they learn the two plays, which are often celebrated great love stories, Baoyu and Daiyu inadvertently assume the roles of dramatic hero and heroine. Not only do they quote lines from the plays, they also play their parts as young lovers. Indeed, the implication of *qing* as romantic love is brought to the fore in the novel’s direct engagement with these two dramas. This connection has not gone unobserved. The Red Inkstone Commentary points out that when Baoyu quotes *The Western [Chamber]* to Daiyu, he has “lost himself in feelings” (*wangqing* 忘情),³ and Daiyu’s exposure to *The Peony Pavilion* is because she is a “lady of *qing*” (*qing xiaojie* 情小姐)⁴ and thereupon she should be enlightened by the lyrics or another “lady of *qing*” [like] Bridal Du (Du Li’niang 杜麗娘), *The Peony*’s heroine. [...] Dore Levy calls attention to the novel’s quotations of the plays and concludes that the danger of the lovers’ role playing can be literally death—at least in Daiyu’s case, for she becomes the female protagonist in the plays she reads (pp. 47-48).

This subtle intertwinement between writer and reader is replicated in the character’s metamorphosis from reader to actor and thus to a new personality.

Built around the novel’s interaction with erotic fiction, drama, and scholar-and-beauty fiction, the volume divides Baoyu’s life journey into three periods: the pre-Garden phase, dominated by the adolescent anxiety of eroticism (Chapters 1-2); the Garden phase, centered on his emotional awakenings (Chapters 3-4); the post-Garden phase, when his conversion to orthodoxy presents a wrestle with the scholar-and-beauty ideals and he undergoes a change of feelings from eccentricity to the candidacy of civil examination (Chapter 5). The post-Garden phase emphasizes the overlooked change of Baoyu’s figure in the last 40 chapters. Chapter 6 of the volume applies Bill Brown’s “Thing Theory”, and situates the stone in a lineage of things (i.e. red leaves, fans, etc.) that are dramatized as ‘text carriers.’ The stone is therefore described as “an object that carries text.” It is traced back to the romanticized red leaves, especially to the “poem written on the red leaf” (*hongye ti shi* 紅葉題詩), which bears emotion two times: as sad autumn “fallen leaves”, and as a means

³ Chen Qinghao 陳慶浩 (ed.) (1986) *Xinbian Shitou ji Zhiyan zhai pingyu jijiao zengding ben* 新編石頭記脂硯齋評語集校增訂本, Taipei: Lianjing, p. 457.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

conveying a message of love and poetic exchange (pp. 132-137). In addition, the way these objects animate human lives is also examined throughout this chapter. Chapter 7 surveys the stone's multiple functions as character, observer, narrator, author, text, myth, and material substance that carries the text, by comparing various manuscript versions. Here the ambiguity of the narrator's voice is keenly discussed together with the multiplicity of narrators, as well as the multiplicity of stone-characters. To sum up, the novel can be read either as a metafiction, with different ways of reading, or as a self-epitaph.

The division of Baoyu's life journey into three periods, however, risks to appear as a schematization of a complex and contradictory narrative phenomenon. Do the readers believe in a "maturation" and in the "assumption of responsibility" by Baoyu, even if he finally leaves everything in disappointment? According to Wu, the novel moves from one space to another in the three-dimensional coordinate system of *qing* 情, *yin* 淫, and beyond (pp. 3-4). The three periods are by no means representing a coherent evolution or a projected development. Rather, they are three topics/genres that the novel responds to, and happen to fall largely into certain life stages of the protagonist. As discussed in pp. 39-40, there are various ways to explain Baoyu's moving in and out of the realm of lust. If Baoyu had an evolution to the "scholar-and-beauty" stage, his new identity would bring about a happy ending, with good career and sons. But, as can be observed from the excerpt below, this is not the case.

Indeed, with his newly acquired writing skills, mannerisms, and marriage, Baoyu is successfully transformed from a *mingshi* into a *caizi*, but the new identity does not produce a happy ending as was the case in *Ping shan leng yan*, *Yu jiao li*, and other works about civil-exam *literati*. Instead, after the challenging transition from *mingshi* to *caizi* comes something even more difficult to wrestle with—the sense of disillusionment. Indeed, the novel acknowledges the shortcomings of desire and love, but the failure of the orthodox is the worst. As the last phase in Baoyu's journey through the red dust, the well-designed package for a successful life actually ends in the void. What was considered substantial and reliable for the *literati* of the past thousand years cannot relieve and transcend one individual's anxiety. When Baoyu's ideals cannot be realized in the garden, he still can define himself in the outside world; when the outside world also disappoints him, there is nowhere else for him to turn to. Perfection in orthodoxy stumbles upon the same obstacle as the eccentric does: it cannot stop the greater disorder; it only hastens it. When the garden falls into ruin and the orthodox principles fail, when neither feeling nor 'nonfeeling' (*buqing* 不情) can define his existence, Baoyu has no choice but to renounce both (p. 120).

It seems that the contradictory variations of Baoyu, as well as the sudden changes toward more or less severe moralism can be explained by the fact that the novel rather than following a projected development, has been written by more than an author. The Buddhist solution is the final end, but it looks like a choice of no choice. As mentioned in Chapter 2 of the volume, becoming a

monk or a nun is a conventional and convenient way to end the narrative in erotic fiction. Whether the conversion represents genuine religious enlightenment is often questionable.

In Baoyu's case, becoming a monk signifies his disappointment in the world of human relations: lust, love, and social value all failed, so he has to leave. In any case, renouncing the human world and conversion from attachment to detachment do not make him a religious devotee. I would even consider his refusal of family a radical refusal of social values, more than a disappointed withdrawal. Moreover, the image of Baoyu in the mind of the reader is not that of a converted, but of an unconventional romantic. For instance, Epstein discusses several ethical problems left unsolved in the *Honglou meng*, such as Baoyu's inability to take his social responsibilities, which is confirmed by his final decision to leave his family and his attitude to the female world.⁵ She argues that the *Story of Young Heroes and Heroines* is a kind of response to the *Honglou meng*, which transforms "qing from an asocial and selfish tendency to a catalyst for filiality and ritually-proper marriage."⁶

Emblematic is the distinction the Fairy makes between the vulgarity of the debauched, drowned in all kinds of depravity, and "lust of intent" or "the attitude toward lust" (*yiyin* 意淫) manifested exclusively in the passion of people like Baoyu. Such an attitude, concludes the Fairy, may be intuited but cannot be explained in words. On account of his blind dependency on such desires, Baoyu is portrayed as one having foolish inclinations (*pixing* 癖性).⁷ Baoyu's spontaneous and unrestrained nature is partly responsible for his peculiarity, but this "diversity" also concerns social roles (*anfen shouli* 安分守理). The novel states that "he considers his brothers and sisters all alike, without any distinction between the close and the distant" 視姊妹兄弟皆出一意，並無親疏遠近之別。⁸ "Baoyu is after all a person who cannot be respectful of his social position and rules, but rather blindly follows his own desires, and this is why he expresses his crazy inclinations" 寶玉終是個不能安分守理的人，一味的隨心所欲，因此發了癖性。⁹ His misconduct is the expression of both omissive and active dispositions: he is indifferent about his career and social status as well as about the future of his family, and his Buddhist justification is not convincing enough.¹⁰ Moreover, his extreme sensibility is not necessarily followed by a corresponding sense of responsibility.¹¹

⁵ Epstein Maram (1992) *Beauty is the Beast: The Dual Face of Woman in Four Ch'ing Novels*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 281-319.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁷ *Honglou meng*, 9: 155.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 5: 81.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9: 155.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 36: 428, 435-436. Cfr. Lee Haiyan (1997) "Love or Lust? The Sentimental Self in 'Honglou meng'", *CLEAR*, 19, p. 110.

¹¹ According to Halvor Eifring (see idem, ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, Leiden: Brill, 2004), in the paragraph "Qing and the Lack of Responsibility" of his

All this can be explained by the morbid innate sensitivity of the character. Thus, Baoyu is “endowed with a natural temper, completely foolish and eccentric” 况自天性所稟，一片愚拙偏僻。¹² His sensibility and predisposition for love are a kind of burden that he always carries with him. His sentimentality and attachment to the feminine world are the essence of his “diversity”, and allow him to transcend traditional values and orthodox rules, as well as to follow his own rhythm beyond the morality and economy that guide the choices of men. This “diversity” of Baoyu is well represented by the allegory of the superfluous stone that lies at the “root of passions” and makes him the ideal and most successful heir of the late Ming “fools.” At the same time, he becomes the carrier of new concepts of love. We can therefore partially agree with C.T. Hsia that his love “is ultimately concerned more with agape than with eros, more with sympathy and commiseration than with sexual passion.”¹³ He personifies the “feeling for the non-feeling” (*qing buqing* 情不情), obsessive longing (*chiqing* 痴情), and the state of falling sick for compassion. Yet he is also extremely sensitive to beauty, and depicted as the “most lustful in the world.”¹⁴ This combination of empathy and extension of his individual sphere embodies in some way the ideal of Li Zhi. In this respect, Wai-ye Li notices that “*Ch'ing-pu-ch'ing* [*qing buqing*] embodies empathetic understanding in the traditional aesthetic ideal of “union of self and object”; it is also, paradoxically, both boundless selflessness and boundless expansion of the ego. The boundary between self and other is effaced in moments of self-forgetfulness, as when Pao-yu gleefully becomes his maids’ servant [...]. But the obverse side of this selfless devotion is extreme self-indulgence, the desire that the universal order of things should conform to one’s wishes.”¹⁵

In conclusion, I-Hsien Wu’s volume is very useful as it proposes new arguments and perspectives, and demonstrates how the intertextual approach helps understand the construction of human reality as a product of texts and discourses through the transposition of various sign systems.

The book is circulated by the Cambria Sinophone World Series, a collection of academic research under the leadership of Victor H. Mair. Since 2011, it publishes and promotes interdisciplinary scholarship on Sinitic-language cultures and communities in the fields of literature, history, cultural studies, anthropology, and sociology.

essay, Baoyu’s attitude is everything but commitment: his caring and understanding for the girls is not accompanied by a real sense of responsibility.

¹² *Honglou meng*, 5: 81.

¹³ Hsia C.T. (1963) “Love and Compassion in ‘Dream of the Red Chamber’”, *Criticism*, 5, 3, p. 262.

¹⁴ See Huang Martin (2001) *Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 271-314; Li Wai-ye (1993) *Enchantment and Disenchantment: Love and Illusion in Chinese Literature*, Princeton: Princeton U.P., pp. 202-210.

¹⁵ Li Wai-ye, *op.cit.*, p. 207.

Zheng Xiaoyou, *Nian Gengyao zhi Si* 年羹堯之死 (The Death of Nian Gengyao), Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2018. ISBN 978-7-203-10363-9 (cloth), viii + 192 pp. ¥46.00

Review by Hang Lin (Hangzhou Normal University)

With the broadcast of the popular TV series *Scarlet Heart* (*Bubu Jingxin* 步步驚心) in 2011 and *The Legend of Zhenhuan* (*Zhenhuan Zhuan* 甄嬪傳) in 2012, Nian Gengyao 年羹堯 (1679-1726), who had remained a rather obscure character of the Qing (1644-1911), came suddenly out of the shadow and has since then attracted increasing attention from both the academic field and the general public. To many people, such attention is centred on Nian's remarkable career as the generalissimo who led the Qing troops to pacify Tibet and Sichuan, and as one of the most powerful Han-Chinese in the first years of the Yongzheng emperor's reign (1723-1735). But as Zheng Xiaoyou, who received her Ph.D. from Peking University, has revealed in her recent book *Nian Gengyao zhi Si*, Nian's extreme rapid downfall is also intriguingly displaying how the emperor's suspicion and the subject's scrupulousness served as the dark underside of imperial favour in dynastic China, characterised by interpersonal and factional fighting, sly manoeuvring, and lethal imperial distrust. Taken up with these considerations, Zheng weaves together a well-researched and exceptionally ravishing narrative to explain the complex reasons that led to Nian's tragic and unavoidable end.

Zheng wisely traces the arc of the trajectory of Nian in a broad chronological order, inviting readers to accompany Nian on his rise and fall: his family background and marriage ties (chap. 1-2), his education and entry into the world of government and military (chap. 3-4), his relationship with Yongzheng (chap. 5-7), the apex of his career as the general-governor in the northwestern frontier (chap. 8-10), the rapid turn from favour to distrust (chap. 11-12), Yongzheng's preparation to throw over Nian (chap. 13-14), Nian's steps to demise (chap. 15-18), as well as facts and doubts of Nian's crimes as claimed by Yongzheng (chap. 19-21). The story of how Nian worked his way up to the top position and how he fell into disgrace and reached his end within less than a year is fascinating in itself. Yet the bulk of these chapters illustrates not only a lively picture of Nian, but also provides a string of insights into the workings of imperial China's politics as well as the career of many other once prominent political figures.

First, Nian Gengyao's success and failure are firmly based on several cornerstones, without which his path would have been much more different. The fact that his father, Nian Xialing 年遐齡 (1642-1727), was governor of Hunan and Hubei, ensured the young Nian Gengyao a high quality education—Nian received the *jinshi* degree at the age of twenty and then successfully completed his tenure as Hanlin bachelor *shujishi* 庶吉士. His younger sister, Consort Nian

(d. 1725) was Yongzheng's secondary wife (*ceshi* 側室) well before his succession. Nian's principal wife was the granddaughter of Nara Mingju 納蘭明珠 (1635-1708), one of the most prominent Manchu ministers during the Kangxi emperor's reign (1662-1722), and his second wife was also from the same Nara clan. On the other hand, however, Mingju's clan had direct connections to Yintang 胤禳 (1683-1727), who belonged to the faction of Yinsi 胤禩 (1681-1726) and Yinti 胤禵 (1688-1755), the political rival to Yongzheng. These familial relationships acted as a double-edged sword as they enabled Nian to build close ties with high-ranked Manchu nobilities and the Qing imperial family, but also made him deeply involved in factional fightings, thus bringing Nian "both prolific political resources as well as heavy burden" (p. 14).

Second, for a subject enjoying imperial favour, a balanced relationship with the emperor is of particular importance. Nian Gengyao reached the pinnacle in his fame and influence after the triumphant Qinghai campaign in 1724, when Yongzheng treated Nian with uncommon favour, bestowing a succession of noble titles culminating in a hereditary dukedom. But starting in early 1725, Yongzheng began to undermine Nian's flamboyant position by alienating his colleagues and supporters, and by criticising his trivial mistakes. Within eight months, Nian was stripped off all power and ordered to commit suicide with his son under the accusation of ninety-two crimes. Apparently, Nian misunderstood his relationship with Yongzheng, not realising that he should have changed his attitude after the latter became emperor. Instead, Nian acted arrogantly toward his colleagues at Court and excessively informally toward the emperor. Yongzheng was known for being a mature and meticulous ruler, whereas Nian was of supercilious and overbearing nature, so that "their eventual conflict was somehow destined" (p. 49).

Third, for a political figure, the lack of political sensitivity can be fatal. Before Yongzheng's ascendance to the throne, Nian Gengyao had been close to Yinsi and Yintang, and was "not particularly respectful to the future emperor", though Nian himself came from a family with a bannerment background (p. 36). Nian had worked closely with Yinti, who had been the presumptive heir to the throne because of his success in Tibet in 1720 (pp. 45-47), and maintained active communication with Yintang when Yongzheng put him under Nian's surveillance (pp. 81-85). When Yongzheng asked Nian to establish a better relationship with Yinxiang 胤祥 (1686-1730), his most entrusted brother, Nian ignored the emperor's intention (pp. 73-75). In comparison, Li Weijun 李維鈞 (d. 1727) and Ortei 鄂爾泰 (1677-1745)—both directly recommended to Yongzheng by Nian—immediately turned themselves against Nian after receiving letters from the emperor, even though the emperor only expressed very vaguely that they should keep certain distance to Nian.

Throughout the volume, Zheng has masterfully shown that when Nian Gengyao failed to observe these aspects and underestimated the emperor's determination to establish his authority by eradicating any political menace,

even only perceived, his doom was irrevocable. In addition, Zheng also cogently reminds readers of another point, which has hitherto remained largely unnoticed by historians, that Yongzheng's attitude toward Consort Nian and her son Fuhui 福惠 (1721-1728) also contributed to Nian Gengyao's tragic destiny. Zheng pieces together various information to provide a convincing argument that Fuhui was Yongzheng's most favoured son and enjoyed a high possibility to become heir though he happened to pass away at a very young age (pp. 130-132). Understandably, such a powerful and arrogant maternal uncle as Nian would not benefit the stability of the empire.

To recount the changing relationship between Nian and Yongzheng, Zheng employs a wide range of primary sources, ranging from personal letters, memorials and imperial edicts in both Chinese and Manchu, many of which are for the first time comprehensively consulted. What emerges from these materials is not only a more vivid picture of Nian Gengyao but also that of Yongzheng. For example, when Nian put down the rebellion of the Khoshot Mongols in 1724, Yongzheng wrote a series of letters to Nian, flattering him to be the man with the greatest merit and their relationship to be the most exemplary throughout history (pp. 61-62). Such obsequious wording is seldom seen in writings addressed to subjects, but for Yongzheng, as Zheng aptly argues, it is due to the emperor's "histrionic characteristics" and his inability to restrain himself when praising someone (p. 64). But on the other hand, he also "had an extremely strong sense of pride and was particularly practical in handling political affairs" (p. 147). As a Manchu emperor, he paid enormous attention to his political legitimacy and was unusually confident in his ability to have absolute control over his empire. When someone was in need, Yongzheng would not reserve his compliment and might even butter him up. But once he sensed any threat to his authority, even a very vague one, he would adopt all means to eliminate such challenges without any hesitation. Unfortunately, Nian had experienced all the radical sides of the emperor's temperament.

Many of Zheng's points are persuasive, yet critical readers are left with questions as why Nian Gengyao's death was unavoidable and his demise so quick. All the arguments put forward by Zheng can explain the ultimate destiny that Nian would one day fell into disfavour and would not long enjoy high prestige as one of the most powerful man in Yongzheng's reign. However, disposing someone politically does not necessarily mean that there is also an urgent need to exterminate him physically, which is a point indirectly raised by Peter C. Purdue and Yingcong Dai.¹⁶ From Nian's curriculum vitae appended to the book (pp. 181-184), we can see that he was demoted step-by-step from generalissimo and Duke of First Grade to commoner within five months, and

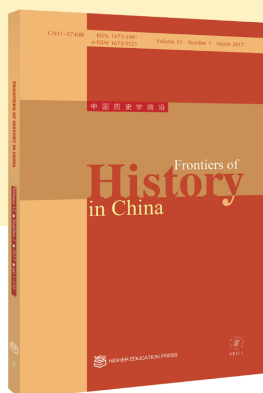
¹⁶ Purdue, Peter C. *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010; Dai, Yingcong. *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011.

another three months later he was ordered to commit suicide. The imperial edicts of demotion followed each other almost every ten days. Considering the speed of communication in imperial China, it seems that the emperor was consecutively issuing the orders one after another, even without waiting for an answer from Nian. But what factors led to Yongzheng's such stringent hatred? If the emperor cared so much about his legitimacy, why would he so pressingly wipe out important officials like Nian during the first years of his reign when his authority had not been firmly consolidated?

Although not very extensive (merely 200 pages), this meticulously studied and minutely detailed volume is the first book-length monograph dedicated to Nian Gengyao and is, without a doubt, the definitive work on the figure. Placing Nian's life and career in the socio-political context from which it is inseparable, *Nian Gengyao zhi Si* is a deeply contextualized account of the life and destiny of many political figures in not only the Qing but also other periods in China's history. Professional academics may wish that detailed references and a complete bibliography might have appended, but this should in no way diminish the impressive scholarly achievement of the book. In particular, Zheng has evidently demonstrated how primary sources in both Chinese and Manchu can help construct a more lively and comprehensive image of Qing personalities, as Wu Shu-hui and Erling von Mende have recently shown.¹⁷ Such a concise and readable book opens up further possibilities in the field of Qing biography and it is bound to be well received by students and scholars of the Qing period, as well as of imperial Chinese history in general.

¹⁷ Wu, Shu-hui. *Die Eroberung von Qinghai unter Berücksichtigung von Tibet und Khams, 1717-1727: anhand der Throneingaben des Grossfeldherrn Nian Gengyao*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995; von Mende, Erling. "In Defence of Nian Gengyao, or: What to Do about Sources on Manchu Language Incompetence?", *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 1-2, 2015, pp. 59-87.





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The Review of Korean Studies

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