Asia Orientale 古今東亞

Comitato Scientifico

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La collana ***Asia Orientale*** 古今東亞 propone testi di elevato livello didattico, scientifico, divulgativo nel campo delle varie discipline relative alla storia e alla cultura dell'Asia Orientale. L'interesse per l'area è certamente cresciuto in seguito all'importanza economica e strategica assunta negli ultimi decenni, come dimostra il fiorire di varie recenti iniziative editoriali in Italia presso piccoli e grandi editori. È ovvio che la prevalenza globale di quest'area ha portato un cambiamento negli orientamenti degli studi di settore, decretando il superamento sia dell'orientalismo 'vecchia maniera' che di quello 'impegnato' a carattere terzomondista. Con il declino dei vari 'orientalismi' è sempre più necessaria una conoscenza che corrisponda alle esigenze presenti, e che non può prescindere tuttavia da una specializzazione che tenga conto delle differenze culturali persistenti, e dal confronto fra civiltà diverse.

La presente collana intende concentrarsi sulla realtà di quest'area, offrendo e sollecitando contributi che coprano non solo la realtà immediata di cui dobbiamo tenere conto, ma vari aspetti delle antiche civiltà che ne costituiscono la base culturale. Perciò la collana intende promuovere varie discipline, oltre ai settori storici, filosofici e letterari, come quello linguistico e politico-economico. La collana si propone, inoltre, di incoraggiare la pubblicazione di monografie etnografiche sulle culture e società dell'Asia Orientale, con particolare riguardo all'antropologia della Cina.

La collana adotta un sistema di valutazione dei testi basato sulla revisione paritaria e anonima (peer review). I criteri di valutazione riguarderanno la qualità scientifica e didattica e la significatività dei temi proposti. Per ogni proposta editoriale, tali requisiti saranno accertati dal comitato scientifico, che si avvarrà di almeno un revisore esperto.

La possibilità di avere edizioni online oltre che a stampa permette l'utilizzo di sistemi multimediali e di comunicazione di particolare interesse per la distribuzione, la didattica e la fruizione su vari supporti.

Il direttore della collana, Paolo Santangelo (paolo.santangelo@uniroma1.it), è coadiuvato da un comitato scientifico composto dal Prof. Guido Samarani (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia), dalla Prof. Stefania Stafutti (Università di Torino) e dal Prof. Alessandro Dell'Orto (Università Urbaniana di Roma).

Ming Qing

Studies 2014

edited by
Paolo Santangelo

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PREFACE

Ming Qing Studies 2014 presents essays that analyse historical, literary and iconographic materials. In this volume two articles face the historical problems and conflicts between branches of the same lineage in different areas of China. **He Yanran's** "Sage Descendants Fight: A History of the Master You Ancestral Hall in Chongming" is a vivid research on the Ancestral Hall belonging to Master You (有子 You Zi), who became to be considered one of the twelve most important disciples of Confucius during Qianlong's reign. The author provides original materials and interprets the clash over the right to worship Master You between the local government and local clans in Chongming (崇明). **Khee Heong Koh** has already published contributions in *Ming Qing Studies*. His "Claiming Authority in Lineage Leadership – A Fujian Case Study" concretely examines the interplay between ideas, family micro-history, social condition, and the larger historical context in southern Fujian. It raises historical questions on the social dynamics of the branches in a lineage, Chinese kinship organization, the economic and political strategies as well as the rhetoric used in order to legitimise the new leaderships. **Francesco Parodi**'s "The Taiping Rebellion in the Letters of the Catholic Fathers in China" focuses on the Roman Catholic missionaries' point of view in regards to the Taiping rebellion and its evolution during the 'Taiping Tianguo' (太平天国) years. The article casts new light on the reaction of the Catholic Fathers to the Taipings, that in the past has been only superficially sketched when not oversimplified as a neat opposition to the pseudo-Christian rebellion.

Li Zhi's thought has been revisited by **Lee Cheuk Yin** in "The Child-heart Mind: Li Zhi (1527-1602) and Intellectual Changes in Late Ming China", in the light of the recent contributions on this writer. The author focuses his reflection on his method of pursuing the truth, and the contrast between *daoxue* (道學) and *xuedao* (學道).

Two other articles deal with the crime fiction, but from different perspectives: translation and evolution of the genre. The Court-case genre is flourishing in Chinese literature, and may interest literary criticism, as well as anthropological history or gender studies. **Olivia Milburn** in "Strange Stories of Judge Shi: Imagining a Manchu Investigator in Early Imperial China", presents a legal case novel, the *Shigong Qiwen* 施公奇聞 (Strange Stories of Judge Shi), which is worth of interest as it deals with a member of the Manchu ruling class protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty in spite of his crippling physical problems. **Lavinia Benedetti,** who has already published an article in *Ming Qing Studies 2013*, presents "Killing *Di Gong*: Rethinking Van Gulik's Translation of Late Qing Dynasty Novel *Wu Zetian*

Si Da Qi'an". Here the comparison between the Qing Dynasty Novel *Wu Zetian Si Da Qi'an* 武则天四大奇案 and its translation by Van Gulik offers some useful reflections on translation problems and achievements.

Bing Wang in "Poetry Anthologies' Strategy in Construction of Literary History: Focused on Contemporary Anthologies of the Early Qing", through the individual subjective choice and the collective selection from several poetry anthologies, points out their contribution to the construction of literary history. In "A Powerful Bond: Male Homosocial Desire in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*", **Liu Feiying** offers her interpretation on two kinds of love relations in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, the homoerotic relations and the love between a man and a supernatural woman. Although the article is strongly engaged ideologically, her critical attitude is present in her attempt to throw new light on the collective perception of love and genre relations of the period. From literary to iconographic symbols **Wang Yizhou** faces the question of "The Origin, Transformation and Representation of the Double Lotus". The symbolic language concerning Lotus and double lotus are not limited to homophony but also to emblems associated with the physical similarities in shape and appearance. The article analyses how the erotic motifs and the lotus was object of 'rebuses' and puns in the intellectual circles.

Gender and poetry are the themes under the focus of **Yuan Xing,** in "Leaving the boudoir for the outside world: travel and travel writings by women from the late Ming to the late Qing periods". The article – finalised after several costructive discussions with the editor – deals with exceptions in women's poetry: breaking through the traditional limits of Boudoir Writing, some women wrote poems and essays on their unusual travels into the broad outside world. The author emphasises how travel experiences mix new and traditional elements in women's literature, contributing to the passage to a new idea of femininity, from cultivating women as "wise wives and good mothers" (賢妻良母) for the family or for their husbands, to educating them as worthy citizens for the nation.

The volume ends with **Hang Lin**'s review: *Yuming He's Home and the World: Editing the "Glorious Ming" in Woodblock-Printed Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. In the reviews section the recent volume by Pauline Lee on Li Zhi is presented.

I am grateful to Maria Paola Culeddu and Tommaso Previato for their commitment to the editorial work that has made the publication of this volume possible, as well as I must sincerely thank all anonymous readers who have dedicated their time towards the improvement of the contributions and enhance the level of this publication. I also wish to express my gratitude to Carmen Casadio for her English revision of some articles and the preface.

Paolo Santangelo

KILLING DI *GONG*: RETHINKING VAN GULIK'S TRANSLATION OF LATE QING DYNASTY NOVEL *WU ZETIAN SI DA QI'AN*

LAVINIA BENEDETTI
(University of Catania)

Introduction

Whether it is East or West, at the mention of Judge Dee, the first name that comes to mind is that of van Gulik. Van Gulik, in fact, by writing his series of Judge Dee novels – based on the figure of the Chinese historical official Di Renjie 狄仁杰 (618-700) and influenced by the Chinese novel *Wu Zetian Si Da Qi'an* 武则天四大奇案 ("Four Great and Strange Cases from the Era of Empress Wu Zetian", 1890, hereinafter also referred to in short as *WZTSDQA*) – did something exceptional. He not only created a new genre of fiction and a charismatic Chinese detective, but he also used his work as a means of spreading his vision of Chinese culture to the West, manipulating, embellishing and re-elaborating it in order to meet the tastes of Western readers. Thanks to the creativeness of his work, the hero of his series of novels became very popular in the West and even in China as soon as it opened up to the outside world. Indeed, at the beginning of the '80s, van Gulik's series was translated into Chinese by Chen Laiyuan 陈来元 and Hu Ming 胡明, and almost immediately the Chinese academic world turned its attention to China's literary tradition of the *gong'an xiaoshuo* 公案小说 (Court-case genre) and towards topics related to East-West comparative literature and culture.[1] In 1986 van Gulik's Judge Dee stories were also adapted for Chinese television and appeared in a very interesting TV Drama series by the title of *Di Renjie Duan'an Chuanqi* 狄仁杰断案传奇 ("The Legend of the Cases Solved by Di Renjie"). Uncountable TV dramas and more recently Tsui Hark's movies have been then dedicated to Di Renjie, staging a peculiar cultural mixture that includes elements of Di Renjie's historical background, of Chinese crime literature and of van Gulik's fictional construction. Moreover, van Gulik's Judge Dee series is being currently continued by French author Frédéric Lenormand who started his own spin-off since 2004, and American Chinese writer Zhu Xiaodi 朱小棣, who tried to relocate Dee in his literary context by writing a short collection of Chinese-style

[1] One of the first was Zhao Yiheng 赵毅衡 who in May 1981 wrote an article about van Gulik's novels for the periodical *Dushu* 读书 and then in the *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报. See Zhao Yiheng 1981.

court-case stories, *Tales of Judge Dee* (2006).

However, van Gulik's creation of the character of Judge Dee did not begin by writing detective novels, but a short time before, during the translation of *WZTSDQA* into English (1949). That is the starting point of this paper, as very few academic studies about van Gulik's translation have been done. One is that of Professor Zhang Ping 张平, who dedicated her PhD dissertation precisely to the Dutch sinologist (2007), and published a few articles on the subject matter. The majority of these contributions concentrated, in descriptive terms, on the analysis of van Gulik's translation strategies, and discussed his attitude towards translation as a major channel to spread Chinese culture, considering van Gulik's translation choices as an 'unintentional' means to transform aesthetic features of the original text. In this paper, taking into careful consideration the peculiarities of van Gulik's life and ideology, translation is not treated as a secondary genre, or a tool in van Gulik's hand for spreading Chinese culture. Translation instead is here considered to be one of the primary literary instruments at van Gulik's disposal to 'manipulate' Chinese culture in order to construct the kind of literature (and type of culture) Western reader required. This is evidenced by the fact that he later brought Judge Dee back to life by composing his own Judge Dee stories (1950-1967). On the other hand, my argument will highlight the features of the original text that have been omitted during van Gulik's manipulation process, in order to shed light on some key elements which characterized the Chinese Qing Dynasty crime novel as a work of social and political criticism.

Van Gulik and China

Robert Hans van Gulik (1910-1967) was a very talented Dutch sinologist, who spent many years in Asia and devoted the majority of his life to the study of Chinese culture and language. Son of a medical officer in the Dutch army, he was born in the Netherlands, but moved with his family to Batavia (modern-day Jakarta), the capital city of what at that time was called the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) when he was still a child. There, young van Gulik began to develop his passion for Chinese language, and studied it from Chinese speakers form overseas. Back to Netherlands he continued to study Chinese at the University of Leiden, but since he did not hold his professor's scholarship in great esteem, he moved to Utrecht University at his first opportunity. His teacher at the Oriental Faculty of Leiden University was Jan Julius Lodewijk Duyvendak (1889-1954), a *sui generis* professor very different from his precursors, mainly because, unlike them, he had no colonial experience.[2]

[2] Duyvendak's predecessors at Leiden University were Gustave Schlegel (1840-1903) and J.J.M. de Groot (1854-1921), both of which had been colonial officials of the Dutch East Indies for many years. See Idema 2013, pp. 39-40.

Duyvendak had opted for transforming Leiden University's Sinology into a philological study of ancient China as had been established in France, and van Gulik disliked this approach.

> As I said, I did not get along very well with my Chinese teacher, J.J.L. Duyvendak, and this is partly my fault because I was a student stubborn as a donkey and very confident about myself. [...] He was especially interested in the philosophy and history of ancient China, when I was rather attracted to the arts and letters of more recent great periods – such as the Tang, Song and Ming dynasties - and by modern China.[3]

Unlike his professor, van Gulik was not very interested in philology and philosophy, and concentred himself in social and cultural topics. Such are the reasons for which he decided to not continue his studies under the guidance of Professor Duyvendak, and moved for his doctorate to the University of Utrecht. There was maybe another reason that led this choice: Oriental Studies at Utrecht University had been established thanks to the fund of various companies that were active in the Dutch East Indies, and as "a boy who grew up in the Dutch East Indies van Gulik may well have felt more at home among these old colonial hands. I am afraid it is difficult to identify a period in his life in which he can be characterized as politically progressive."[4]

The 7 March of 1935 the young van Gulik obtained his PhD *cum laude*, defending a thesis by the title of *The Mantrayanic Aspect of Horse-cult in China and Japan,* which he compiled under the direction of Professor George Uhlenbeck (1900-1988). Since he was a student of Chinese language, van Gulik was educated to fill positions in the colonies; after earning his doctoral degree, in fact, he immediately received his first diplomatic assignment in Asia, precisely in Japan, where he joined the Dutch Foreign Service just two months after his thesis discussion.[5]

But van Gulik's 'first love' was China and Chinese culture, although he also learnt Japanese to a meaningful level. In December of 1941, the episode of Japan's declaration of war on America gave van Gulik the 'opportunity' to leave for China, where he was transferred along with the entire diplomatic staff. Although moving to China was an 'obligatory choice', he was surely very happy to take his position as a representative of the Netherlands government in exile in Chongqing (1943-1946). Besides, diplomatic relations between China and

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[3] Barkman and De Vries-van der Hoeven 1997, p. 37. Barkman and De Vries-van der Hoeven's book was originally in Dutch as *Een man van drie levens: biografie van diplomaat/schrijver/geleerde Robert van Gulik,* Amsterdam: De Boekerij, 1993. The copy used for this article corresponds to the translation into French of Raoul Mengarduque. Unless otherwise indicated, all the translations into English of this paper are by the undersigned author. Recently this work has been also translated into Chinese as *Da Hanxuejia Gao Luopei Zhuan* 大汉学家高罗佩传, Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 2011.

[4] Idema 2013, pp. 40-41.

[5] For further information about van Gulik's biography, see also van de Wetering 1987.

Netherlands had increased significantly, and China had only recently signed political agreements with the United States and Great Britain, yet foreigners had never been so numerous in Chongqing. By the time van Gulik reached China, Chongqing was serving as the wartime capital of the Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi 蒋介石 1887-1975)'s government of Guomindang, and was devastated by the civil war and the Japanese occupation (1937-1945). Upon his arrival, van Gulik wrote in his diary:

> Repeatedly bombed by Japanese aircraft, Chongqing, the Gray, had more shacks and huts than house. But the city was joyful because the danger and discomfort had forged a deep sense of solidarity among the Chinese who came from every region of their country, and even among the numerous foreigners.[6]

Despite the bloody events that surrounded him, van Gulik spent wonderful years in the capital, the beautiful city where he met his future wife Shui Shifang 水世芳 (1912-2005). In Chongqing he cultivated the study of traditional Chinese culture, letters, music and arts; he played the lute, meet Chinese scholars and sometimes he had the time to spend the weekend in the countryside at the residence of some rich friends. Of those years van Gulik remembers:

> From the artistic and scientific point of view, my years in Tchong-king were particularly successful. The most eminent scholars and brightest artists from all major Chinese cities fell into this provisional capital, and, as the city offered few distractions, we spend most of our leisure to discuss endlessly around a cup of tea all conceivable aspects of Chinese culture. […] We also see the local "bourgeoisie", and if the Japanese did not come bomb us, we would spend weekends in her lovely country houses.[7] […] For the first time I was living the real life of Chinese people – and I really enjoyed it.[8]

Thanks to his privileged condition of European man and diplomat in China, van Gulik got to know some of the most prominent men in all cultural fields. As we know from his diary, he liked to stay with intellectuals, talking about Chinese literature and arts, and learning every day more about Chinese culture. Beyond that, he would utterly refuse to deal with the 'new culture' of contemporary China. His vision of Chinese-culture was engaged to reviving its ancient past: he was an avid collector of Chinese antiques and of old editions of Chinese rare works, and he maintained a conservative attitude on matters relating to the

[6] Barkman and De Vries-van der Hoeven 1997, p. 124.
[7] Here van Gulik is particularly referring to the beautiful residence in the country of his friend Yang Shaowu, one of the landlords executed by the Communist Party during the agrarian reform of 1950. For more information on the historical events of those years, cf. Collotti Pischel 1982, pp. 413-443.
[8] Barkman and De Vries-van der Hoeven 1997, p. 125.

China's modernisation.[9] It is said that he lived almost like an old mandarin, cultivating calligraphy, poems and paintings in his private library, which, as was the custom of men of letters, he had also given a name. Conservative and in some way nostalgic, while writing his mystery series (started in 1949) van Gulik used to love to say "Judge Dee, it's me", identifying himself with an imagined *literati persona*, constructed on the figure of Di Renjie. In an interview for the *Waitan Huabao* (外滩画报) in the July of 2013, Pauline van Gulik, daughter of Robert van Gulik and Shui Shifang, said:

> Yes, I have read the novels of my father and what I like most is *Murder on New Year's Eve*. But read this type of novels sometimes gives me a sense of melancholy, because I see in Judge Dee the shadow of my father. So I decided not to read anymore. Judge Dee and my father are very similar, for example, their rightness, their love for drinking tea and they both did research. My father liked to do many things during his days, always full of duties.[10]

And Wilt Idema, during a conference held in 2013 in Shanghai said about van Gulik:

> If Van Gulik had an ambition, it was to become a Chinese mandarin. From his earliest posting to Japan, he not only associated with traditional Japanese sinologists but also with old-style Chinese intellectuals and artists, for whom the arts of traditional China were not dead museum fossils to be studied in the library but living disciplines to be practiced in daily life. His outstanding language abilities allowed him to participate in their circles, and to provide his western readers with an inside view of Chinese pictorial art and Chinese lute music. One may also add the Chinese art of womanizing to his list of skills learned through practice. If his work is still in print, in regular or pirated editions, it is not because they cannot be improved upon—there is progress in research—but because they provide a unique perspective: what now has become only often, one feels, a cultivated folklore then was still a living tradition. The excitement over (and pride in) the initiation into that tradition is still palpable in the pages of Van Gulik' academic works.[11]

Van Gulik's colleague and biographer Carl Barkman (1919-2006) remembers the meeting with the celebrated scholar Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978) in van Gulik's residence:

> I have not forgotten that [van Gulik] since my arrival did not hesitate to introduce myself a number of scholars and artists of his friends. This is how I met Kuo Mo-jo, a well known Marxist author, also historian and archaeologist,

[9] For an overview of the intellectual and cultural life of the period, see Kuang Xinnian 2001 and Bressan 1980, pp. 155-168.
[10] Interview with Pauline van Gulik in *Waitan Huabao* (外滩画报) 2013, No. 549.
[11] Wilt Idema 2013, p. 41.

> who did not fail to tell me, showing me the seals and old books that van Gulik collected with such love, that I should be interested more in contemporary China, and not only that of the past. [...] I must admit that at that time we were especially fascinated by the old China, the China that modernization and Westernization had not touched yet.[12]

On the other hand, Barkman and Helena (Leentje) de Vries-van der Hoeven describe him as a product of Western colonialism; this is quite understandable if one reflects on the fact that van Gulik had been trained as a colonial official, and that now he lived the typical 'Orientalist life' in a changing world where the solidity of the colonies was collapsing, and where the Second World War and the Chinese revolution were threatening the authority of European colonies.[13] Despite his marriage to a Chinese woman, his boundless passion for Chinese culture, and his supposed 'Chinese life', van Gulik surely still felt European[14] and his diplomatic activities in Asia were driven by the main concern of not losing Dutch colonies.

> Blinded by his love for Netherlands East Indies, where he spent a happy childhood, Van Gulik does not see, does not want to see anything that has changed since then. It remains a colonialist in the soul, even if he is colonialist interested primarily in Indonesian, Indonesian history and its culture. But born in a very military family, he developed a passion more for the activities of "colonial" than for the achievements of the civil administration. Man of great contrasts, Van Gulik has not ceased to astonish those who follow his career.[15]

In a letter to the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs J.H. van Roijen (1905-1991) van Gulik wrote:

> What touched us most directly, we Dutch people, it is the plan that we have already prepared to make China, after the war, the leader of all "oppressed" peoples of the Far East. I'm telling you that, because I feel extremely worrying situation, more precisely, the political constellation in which our country apparently will be. If our countrymen do not help each other, if we do not conduct a clear political (especially our various propaganda services) we will never get back our India. [...] We can only rely on ourselves, and that is why I am pleased to learn that in the regions of our country that are already released, we are working to establish an army intended in particular to help release our India. But if we succeed in cutting the lion's share of operations in our colony, we can hope to find what we deserve.[16]

During World War II, apart from his duties in the Dutch Foreign Service, van

[12] Barkman, de Vries-van der Hoeven 1993, p. 154.
[13] See also Furth 2005, pp.71-78.
[14] Barkman, de Vries-van der Hoeven 1993, p. 171.
[15] Barkman, de Vries-van der Hoeven 1993, p. 145.
[16] Barkman, de Vries-van der Hoeven 1993, p. 144.

Gulik dedicated his spare time to Chinese court-case novels. He first translated the anonymous *WZTSDQA* (1890), which appeared in his English translation in 1949. Then, after the war, interested in Chinese justice and in court-case literary culture, he translated a Song period (960-1279) legal casebook, the *Tangyin Bishi* 棠阴比事 (1213),[17] published in 1956 under the title *Tang-yin pi-shih: Parallel Cases from under the Pear-Tree*. Finally, during the fifties and sixties, inspired by Chinese court-case literature, he gave his imagination free rein by writing several novels of his own based on the adventures of Judge Dee, his artistic counterpart of *WZTSDQA*'s protagonist. His series of novels not only created a fascinating legendary hero almost unrecognizable to Chinese readers, but also founded a literary genre that is very different from traditional Chinese court-case novels. Van Gulik's life and works themselves constitute a key to the understanding of his interpretative choices in the translation of *WZTSDQA*, as we will discuss briefly later.

Retelling the Tradition of Chinese Court-Case Novels

China has a long narrative tradition for stories about crime and detection. The so-called *gong'an* genre (*gong'an xiaoshuo* 公案小说) – or 'Court-case Fiction' in English – usually has stories that recount a criminal act, most commonly a homicide, the discovery of the perpetrator by a morally elevated person (often an official), and the legal condemnation of the guilty perpetrator. The genre was probably established as early as the sixth century AD, whereas the most considerable evidence of its tradition is from thirteenth century. Literary historians in fact hold that the dawn of such crime stories may be set around the time of the vernacular literature of the storytellers of the Song Period (960-1279). These storytellers are responsible for the creation of an independent genre of narrative styled as *huaben* 话本 (vernacular written stories).[18] Using the vernacular, this new genre was intended for a semi-literate public, and was automatically excluded from the canon of literary tradition, which instead was based largely upon the classics. This type of narrative developed greatly in the Yuan Period (1271-1368), in which there was a proliferation of theatrical texts written in the vernacular.

But it was mainly during the Ming period (1368-1644) that the court-

[17] The *Tangyin Bishi* is a work of Gui Wanrong 桂万荣 (dates unknown), an obscure *literatus* and official of the Southern Song Dynasty. It was a selection of 144 legal cases, civil and criminal, taken mostly from prior anthologies and covering a period of almost fourteen centuries (from the 4th century BC to the 11th century AD). The translated version of this book was published in 1956 in the series Sinica Leidensia by Brill.

[18] Most of scholars agree that Song storytelling script (*huaben*), although it served to be recited and chanted before an audience, was most likely printed for reading. For a treatment of this topic, see for example Hanan 1981, pp. 29-30.

case stories had developed greatly. On the one hand the *literati* collected an immense number of *huaben* of preceding epochs, and continued to use this genre to catch a larger readership. They collected anthologies of *nihuaben* 拟话本 (lit. Imitation of vernacular written novel), which also included original court-case stories. On the other, the extraordinary development of the publishing market, in particular during the reign of Wanli (1563-1620, r. 1572-1620),[19] and the great demand for court-case stories in the vernacular, stimulated publishers to collect and reprint thousand of texts. The collection of court-case stories (*duanpian gong'an xiaoshuo ji* 短篇公案小说集) included individual short stories of crime and required, invariably, that a district magistrate serve as the protagonist. In the Song and Yuan periods, historical magistrates, transformed by popular tradition into figures of legend,[20] sparked the imagination to recreate the stereotype of the "pure official" (*qingguan* 清官) in fiction. Thanks to Yuan and early Ming dramatists, the character of Judge Bao, based on the Song dynasty official Bao Zheng 包拯 (999-1062), became the most prominent representative of the "pure official" in Chinese popular literature. His legendary counterpart Judge Bao (popularly referred to as Bao Gong 包公) was celebrated as a paradigm of justice in countless dramatic and literary genres. Many collections of court-case stories of Ming period were based on the figure of Bao Gong, as for example the late Ming compendia *Longtu Gong'an* 龙图公案 ("The Court Cases of Dragon-Design" also called *Bao Gong'an,* "The Court Cases of Judge Bao"), published in Suzhou between 1594-1597, which throughout the Qing was one of the most popular collection of court-case stories. [21] Bao Gong himself still occupies a meaningful place even in contemporary Chinese popular culture, especially in TV series.[22]

The *nihuaben* of Ming *literati*, unlike those collected by the publishers,

[19] See Miao Huaiming 2000, pp. 75-76.

[20] A magistrate in reality not only was he the head of the police force and the representative of the Emperor, he was also a delegate responsible for collecting taxes and guarding the welfare of the people in his district. For this reason they were commonly called *fumu guan* 父母官 (parent-officials), mainly because the magistrate took care of all the issues related to the life of the citizens of his district. Traditionally a good official (*qingguan*) loved the people with the same intensity with which one loves his child (*aimin ruzi* 爱民如子). For information on the duties of the magistrate, especially during the Qing period, see Yang Zhong, pp. 18-32 and T'ung-Tsu Ch'u 1969, pp. 14-33.

[21] The edition of 1594-1597 was preserved in Japan and Korea, and it was inaccessible to scholars for many years, see Patrick Hanan 1980, pp. 301-323. Throughout the Qing the most popular edition of *Longtu gong'an* was that of the very beginning of the seventeenth century. See Wilt L. Idema 2010, pp. XV-XVI. An extensive literature exists regarding the historical Bao Zheng and the legendary Judge Bao. For the historical Bao Zheng, see for example Cheng Rufeng 2009, and Ding Zhao-qing 2000, pp. 13-58. For the legendary Judge Bao, see Wolfgang Bauer 1974, pp. 433-449, Susan Blader 1977, Patrick Hanan 1980, pp. 301-323, and Wilt L. Idema 2010.

[22] On the prototypical "pure official" character in Chinese contemporary TV drama, see Zhu Ying, Micheal Keane and Bai Ruoyun, 2008, pp. 47-61.

showed the author's style and one of their characteristics was the inclusion of long moralizing digressions. In the transition phase between Ming and Qing (1644-1911), traditional criminal literature was changing. As often happens during the first decades of a new dynasty, the plan for the consolidation of power included also a heavy-handed ideological control on literature, especially narrative, limiting freedom of expression.[23] The first Manchu sovereigns imposed a repressive cultural policy, and the first consequence of which was the loss of the lively expression characteristic of fictional narratives. Vernacular literature written by *literati* became just an instrument to reinforce the importance of traditional values; as a result, it was the writers of court-case stories that employed the immediacy of the vernacular to instruct the reader and to condemn behaviour contrary to traditional ethical principles, lavishing on the reader all sorts of advice and admonitions.[24]

At the end of the eighteenth century, approximately in the Jiaqing era (1760-1820, r. 1796-1820), several factors fostered revitalization of court-case vernacular literature. There was the loosening of control and censorship of writers, the growth of publishing, the re-affirmation of storyteller, such as the famous Tianjin author and storyteller Shi Yukun 石玉昆 (exact dates are not known, 1810-1871?),[25] as well as a widespread interest in legal topics. From the Jiaqing era, anthologies of short court-case stories were no longer as popular, but were replaced by long novels in which one character (always the magistrate) solved several criminal cases. Said novels were divided into numerous chapters (*zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小说, lit. 'chaptered novels'), and abounded in characters, whose relationships added to the complexity of the case stories. It is precisely during this period that a new court-case genre surfaces in the literary landscape and quickly becomes very popular: the *gong'an xiayi* genre 公案侠义小说 or 'Novel of Adventure and Detection',[26] a sort of fusion of two narrative

[23] Notwithstanding the sovereigns Kangxi (1654-1722, r. 1661-1722), Yongzheng (1678-1735, r. 1723-1735) and Qianlong (1711-1799, r. 1735-1796) were particularly interested in the cultural development of the country; these men exercised a heavy ideological control on the literary production which culminated in the so-called 'literary inquisition' (1772-1788), during which thousands of works were destroyed because they were considered to be dangerous to the security of the institutions and to the public morality. Historians estimate that some 10,231 works were placed on the index and 2,230 consequently destroyed. See Santangelo and Sabattini 2008, pp. XXIII-XXIV. For a discussion of the relationship between intellectuals and power between the two dynasties, see Santangelo 1993, pp. 95-101; Santangelo and Sabattini 2006, pp. 95-101; and Miao Huaiming 2000, pp. 88-90.

[24] For a general discussion of the moral and philosophical problems concerning the Chinese narrative tradition in the Qing period, see Lu Hsun 1976, pp. 269-389.

[25] Shi Yukun's performance in retelling the legends of Bao Gong accompanied by musical instruments gained exceptional fame all over the country and attracted an audience of thousands. At the time his narrative was also reconstructed and transcribed by bookstores that distributed it under the name of "Aural Record of Longtu" (*Longtu Erlu* 龙图耳录). See Shi Yukun 2008, Preface.

[26] See Lu Hsun 1976, p. 336.

traditions: i.e., the 'Novel of Chivalry' (*xiayi xiaoshuo* 侠义小说) and the 'Court-case Novel' (*gong'an xiaoshuo*).[27] This new genre was maybe originally the production of authors and professional storytellers in the big cities, which soon became popular throughout the whole Empire.[28] Meanwhile, many imitators and sequels appeared. The *manifesto* of this type of innovation is *Shi Gong'an* 施公案 ("Cases Solved by Magistrate Shi", 1824), a long novel followed by many other structurally and thematically similar works.[29]

The 19th century was difficult for China. The country had been invaded by foreign armies which weakened it politically and economically, and the government had also to suppress numerous internal revolts. At the turn of the 20th century, the people were all the more disenchanted with their governance, and intellectuals used to express their criticism also in print.[30] Their political sentiments were also expressed in new works of fiction, as observed by Professor Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936): "the trend in fiction was to expose social abuses and lash out at contemporary politics, sometimes at social conventions as well."[31] He identified, in fact, a new category of fiction, the 'Novel of Exposure'. As evidenced also by my research, at the end of the 19th century criticism was also present in the above-cited genre of 'Adventure and Detection'. *Gong'an* genre of novels, in fact, by representing the darkest parts of society, were one of the most effective instruments in criticising society and voicing the profound moral crisis felt by the intellectual class during the last years of Manchu reign.[32] Court-case novels of this period, especially, may express a bitter social and political criticism, adopting a language subtly subversive of the traditional order and political governance. Within the long-lengthed novel *WZTSDQA*, for example, it is possible to identify the signs of an acute and aggressive criticism,

[27] For further information on a variety of topics related to *gong'an xiayi* literature, see Lu Hsun 1976, pp. 336-352, and Cao Yibing 2005.

[28] The most active publication centres were Beijing and Shanghai. Among publishing houses the Wuben Tang 务本堂 in Beijing, or the Shanghai Shuju 上海书局 stand out. The printing technology, however, was different. While in the capital more traditional methods were still in use, such as the stereotype or the movable type system, the publishing houses in Shanghai were already benefitting from lithographic printing, which accounts for the trade's rapid evolution. For further information, see Miao Huaiming 2005, p. 107 and Fu Xianglong 2009, pp. 20-26.

[29] See Lu Hsun 1976, pp. 349-350, Meng Liye 1996, pp. 123-124 and Huang Yanbo 2000, pp. 97-100.

[30] At the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries, intellectuals such as Liang Qichao (1873-1929), as himself expressed many times, devoted themself to the task of popularising ideas, publishing journals and periodicals to expound his ideals and objectives. The *New Citizen Journal*, the *New Fiction* and others all included some Western crime stories translated into Chinese. See Tang Xiaobing 1996, pp. 80-88.

[31] Lu Hsun 1976, p. 352.

[32] On criticism in *gong'an* narrative, see also Benedetti 2013, pp. 17-47.

expressed through tone and other narrative devices,[33] which will explode in its most exasperated form only a few years later.

Wu Zetian Si Da Qi'an: Social and Political Criticism in a Court-case Novel of Late Qing Dynasty Period

WZTSDQA ("Four Great and Strange Cases from the Era of Empress Wu Zetian"), also titled *Di Gong'an* 狄公案 ("Cases Solved by Di Gong"), or *Di Lianggong Quanzhuan* 狄梁公全传 ("The Complete Biography of Di Lianggong"), is an anonymous court-case novel centred upon the legendary Di Gong 狄公, the fictional counterpart of the magistrate and government official Di Renjie who lived during the Tang Dynasty. Di Renjie during his lifetime was already very popular among the people for his skills as investigator and his integrity, and popular tradition turned him into legend. The fictitious Di Gong is another representative of the archetypical "pure official", who puts the defence of justice above everything else. As the abovementioned Bao Gong, Di Gong was transformed throughout the centuries according to the needs of authors, to entertain, charm, admonish, and warn audiences through literature and drama.[34]

WZTSDQA is a novel written in the vernacular probably around the year 1890.[35] It belongs to the so-called 'Novels of Adventure and Detection', that, as we said, are a subtype of the *gong'an* genre. The *gong'an* genre at the end of 19th century was entering its decline and began to lose its hold on the public. This phenomenon was probably due to the fact that *gong'an xiaoshuo* mainly exalted the figure of the imperial officer, stressing the importance of traditional institutions for a recovery of virtue and morality at all levels of society. This made the narrative genre ill-suited to the needs of a population in revolt and in desire of change. Between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, some works of narrative in fact exasperated his polemical tone, adopting a language openly critical of the ruling class, denouncing corruption and abuses of power, attacking the caste of bureaucratic officials and questioning the traditional imperial order. The production of *gong'an xiayi*

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[33] On this topic the present author wrote the article to be published under the title *Representing Women: Political Commentary in Late Qing Crime Fiction. A Critical study of Wu Zetian Si Da Qi'an.*

[34] The literature on the historical and legendary Di Renjie, popularly referred to as Di Gong 狄公 (Lord Di, or Judge Di) is not so voluminous as that on Bao Gong. For an historical and legendary biography, see Du Wenyu 2000 and Lin Yutang 1966, pp. 187-247.

[35] *Wu Zetian Si Da Qi'an*'s oldest edition available today is based on a Qing edition of 1890 published by Shanghai Press in lithographic printing. As the majority of scholars believed that this was the first date of publication, we assume that van Gulik in 1949 mistakenly pointed to the eighteenth century. See Du Wenyu 2000, pp. 283-317. The copy used for this article corresponds to that of 1890.

xiaoshuo diminished drastically, yet Chinese authors started experimenting with the narrative techniques of 'Western Detective Stories'.[36]

From the point-of-view of structure, *WZTSDQA* reproduces the paradigm of the *zhanghui*-style *xiaoshuo*, that is the chaptered novel. Divided into sixty-four chapters, each of these has a chapter heading of more or less two lines. Chapter I opens with a poem in eight verses, each formed by seven characters and written in the vernacular (as is the rest of the book):

> Although all people hanker after a magistrate's office,
> Few realize all that is involved in solving criminal cases:
> Tempering severity by lenience, as laid down by our law makers,
> And avoiding the extremes advocated by crafty philosophers.
> One upright magistrate means the happiness of a thousand families,
> The one word "justice" means the peace of the entire population.
> The exemplary conduct of Judge Dee, magistrate of Chang-ping,
> Is placed here on record, for the edification of the reading public.[37]

Following this, there is a quite long author's introductory sermon (*kaishuo jiaowenzi* 开说教文字), which gives a sort of overview of the contents of the novel and concludes with another short poem. The main part of the story (*zhengwen* 正文) begins immediately after. The narrator opens each chapter with the typical storyteller formulas "the story says" (*hua shuo* 话说) and ends "he who does not know what happened next, continue to read the next chapter" (不知后事如何, 且看下回分解), that are the stock phrases of introduction, connection, and conclusion characteristic of Chinese vernacular short story and other oral-related storytelling genres in written form. The first sentence of the concluding formula will change depending on the content of the chapter, such as: "he who does not know what Di Gong said, continue to read the next chapter", (不知狄公如何说法，且看下回分解, Chapter 5); "Di Gong laughed coldly, if you want to know what he said continue to read the next chapter" (狄公冷笑了一声，不知说出什么，且看下回分解, Chapter 8); "And what the monk said again? Just continue to read the next chapter " (那和尚又说出什么，且看下回分解, Chapter 40), etc.

The narrative of *WZTSDQA* is set in the past (Tang era) and includes several historical figures as major or minor characters. The author describes with

[36] From the mid-period of Guangxu's reign (1871-1908, r. 1875-1908) to the beginning of Republican era (1911-1949) some authors of court-case stories started to experiment with the techniques of the Western detective novel, mixing them with the features of traditional Chinese *gong'an* novel. The best example is the famous *Jiuming Qiyuan* 九命奇冤 ("Nine Lives Mysteriously Wronged") of Wu Jianren 吴趼人 (1867-1910) who was captivated by French literature. See Hanan 2004, pp. 162-197.

[37] Translated by Van Gulik. See Van Gulik 1976, p. 5.

great verisimilitude its historical background,[38] although he commits numerous inaccuracies.[39] In spite of that, the narrated criminal cases are all the fruit of the author's imagination, even if some of them could reflect real historical events. Throughout the novel there are six short crime stories. They follow each other according to a structure planned in a repetitive format: the magistrate finds criminal evidence and opens an investigation. During this time he learns of another crime that forces him to interrupt the previous investigation and begin another in relation to the new case. In this way the solution of every case is delayed and the reader remains engaged.[40]

As suggested by van Gulik, it is possible to subdivide the entire novel in two sections, each having nearly thirty chapters, which embrace a different type of crime and criminals. Part I (from Chapter 1 to Chapter 30) tells about three crime cases. They are all cases of homicide that involve ordinary members of the local communities, and are committed by common people (*putong xingshi an* 普通刑事案, lit. 'ordinary cases'). This is the section that has been translated into English by the sinologist van Gulik, who, likewise, attributed a name to each criminal case: The Double Murder At Dawn; The Strange Corpse; and The Poisoned Bride.

Part II (from Chapter 30 to Chapter 64) concerns three criminal cases as well, though the type of crime and the personality of the criminals are very different from Part I. They are all related to unlawful acts, such as corruption, rape, or murder, committed by officials while holding office in the government (*zhengzhi xing an* 政治性案, lit. 'political cases'). While in Part I historic events take place off-stage and the fictional characters simply inhabit the world where those events happen, in Part II historical events play a role in the narrative and the majority of the characters are fictionalised versions of historical figures. Besides the protagonist, there are: the government official and painter Yan Liben 阎立本 (600-673), Empress Wu Zetian 武则天 (624-705), the esteemed official Yuan Xingchong 元行冲 (653-729), the Empress's beloved brothers Zhang Changzong 张昌宗 (?-705) and Zhang Yizhi 张易之 (?-705), the eccentric abbot Xue Huaiyi 薛怀义 (?-694), et al.[41] Van Gulik did not translate this last part of the novel, so we have given ourselves a name to each of the three

[38] In an article Ma Yau-Woon observed that after the publication of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* 聊斋志异 by Pu Songling 蒲松龄 (1640-1715) which included also numerous stories of legal cases, the authors of *gong'an xiaoshuo* tended to refer more precisely to figures and contexts belonging to actual history. See Ma Yau-Woon 1979, pp. 235-240.

[39] See Du Wenyu 2000, pp. 283-317.

[40] On the narrative modes of Chinese *gong'an* vernacular stories and novels, see also Ding Can, Hu Heping 2007, pp. 91-93.

[41] For the biography of Wu Zetian, see Liu Xu, *Jiu Tangshu*, 1.6, pp. 115-134. For a fictionalized biography largely based on historical documents of Empress Wu, see the famous book *Lady Wu: A True Story* (1957) written in English by Lin Yutang 林语堂 (1895-1976), see Lin Yutang 1966.

cases: The Abduction of the Beautiful Wu; The Crazy Monk; and Di Renjie Fights For the Restoration of the Tang Dynasty.

The two sections of the novel are connected by a scene that takes place in Chapter 31: Di Renjie, having solved the three cases of Part I, is promoted and invited to the capital. On the road to his new office, he accidentally overhears a few men complaining about the behaviour of a local officer who did not protect and serve the citizenry, and talking about some criminal acts committed by people of high social status.

> Di Gong had just arrived in the prefecture, and he was carrying out his personal investigations, when suddenly he saw in a local village many people surrounding an old man in his fifties and arguing passionately. Almost unconsciously he approached the crowd with Ma Rong and heard a man say: "you do not know how terrible he is, last month Wang Xiaosan's son, because of what happened to his wife, was nearly beaten to death by his family![42]

Di Renjie looks for clues to determine whether or not such crimes have taken place, and once he finds out that the criminals are all related with members of the ruling class and very near to Empress Wu, he takes them to court and accuses them as if they were ordinary people. In this way he proves to be as honest, incorruptible, and virtuous as a "pure official" would be. In the next thirty-four chapters (Part II), he finds out about many other cases of abuse of authority, and attempts to reduce the misuse of power and the destructive aspects of bad political activities in the administration.

As van Gulik duly noticed, the two parts of the novel differ in style and contents.[43] In terms of content, if the first three cases focus on the investigation of the magistrate to identify the murderers, the next three cases focus on Di Renjie's effort to fight corruption and restore traditional values. In terms of form, while the three cases of Part I are more similar to the typical short court-case stories, such as those included in *Bao Gong'an*, Part II has been definitely influenced by Ming-Qing fiction on Empress Wu, such as the well-known late Ming *Ruyijun Zhuan* 如意君传 ("The Biography of Lord Complete Satisfaction"), which is considered to be the first Chinese erotic novel.[44] In *WZTSDQA,* the character of Wu Zetian is not always in the foreground, but such as in *Ruyijun Zhuan*, her figure is negatively drawn through the use of her stereotypical image as an oversexed and vicious female tyrant. As *Ruyijun Zhuan*, Part II of *WZTSDQA* tells the story of Wu Zetian's rise to power and her unequal conduct and administration. It contains a description of Wu Zetian's extravagant love affairs with Xue Huaiyi, Zhang Yizhi, Zhang Changzong and Xue Aocao, although it does not centre around the Empress' pursuit of the ideal

[42] *Di Gong'an*, p. 180.
[43] Van Gulik 1976, p. 225.
[44] On this topic, see Sing-Chen Lydia Chiang 2005, pp. 186-188. For a study and a partial translation in English of the *Ruyijun Zhuan*, see Charles R. Stone, 2003.

sexual partner. As *Ruyijun Zhuan*, it describes many of the major political events of Wu Zetian's reign, particularly the polemics surrounding her demotion of the crown prince. As *Ruyijun Zhuan*, *WZTSDQA* seems to contain an important moral and could serve as a deterrent example.[45] And finally, the male protagonist of *Ruyijun Zhuan*, Xue Aocao (the "Lord Complete Satisfaction"), who in the narrative is called to satisfy the voracious sexual appetite of the Empress, has something in common with our Di Gong. Like Xue Aocao, Di Gong helps the Empress resolve the problem concerning the status of the exiled crown prince and persuades her to let him return to the capital, although Di Gong never takes part in lascivious conduct. Shortly after Di Gong receives the merit of having favoured the restoration of the glorious Tang Dynasty.[46]

WZTSDQA, like most *gong'an xiayi xiaoshuo*, included a mixture of elements present in other epochs, genres and novels. It is also probably that the structural and morphological complexity of *WZTSDQA* is in part due to the encounter between the Chinese court-case novel and the new narrative forms coming from the West. As we have seen during the last years of the Manchu domination, there was a massive demand for Western fiction, covering a wide range of genres such as detective stories, science fiction, romances etc. By 1870 several periodical newspapers, tabloids, and magazines that also published translations of Western fiction had also surfaced the literary scene. Historians talk about at least 2000 or more works of fiction circulating in big Chinese cities and at the end of the Qing most of them were detective stories.[47] This trend undoubtedly was giving rise to interesting literary and artistic experimentation. It is not impossible then that the author of *WZTSDQA* could have been influenced also by Western fictional narrative, and this would explain the peculiar structure of the first three cases described in the novel, which, as van Gulik noticed, follow a narrative sequence very similar to that of whodunits.[48] However, one must point out that the *terminus a quo* of the entry in China of the prototype of modern detective stories - Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories - is today considered to be 1896. At that time, Liang Qichao's periodical *Shiwubao* 时务报 (The Chinese Progress), which mostly focused on ideas of political reform, published the Chinese translation of *The Naval Treaty* under the title *Yingbao Tankan Daomi Yue An* 英包探勘盗密约案 ("The English Bao Investigates the Case of the Robbery of a Secret Treaty", today translated as

[45] About this interpretation of the moral contained in *Ruyijun Zhuan*, see Stone 2003, pp. 4-5.
[46] Regarding the involvement of Di Renjie in the historical events that led to the restoration of the Tang Dynasty, see also Lin Yutang 1966, pp. 187-247.
[47] At the end of 19th century, at least 170 publishers printed Western Detective fiction translated into Chinese for a public estimated to be between two and four millions of readers. According to A Ying's catalogue of late Qing fiction, three-fourths of published fiction were translations, only one-fourth were original works, and half of the translations focused on detective theme. See Fan Boqun and Fan Zijiang 1996, p. 2.
[48] For a discussion on Detective stories typologies, see the fundamental work of Todorov 1971, in particular p. 56.

Haijun Xieding 海军协定).[49]

Van Gulik opines that Part I was an original novel itself and Part II a later addition.[50] Although his theory is acceptable, the novel must be read as a whole. If one reads the two parts closely, they will find that Part I and Part II are in some way parallel. The two sections embody, in fact, the dichotomy between two aspects that mirror Chinese society. In Part I, Di Renjie handles common criminal cases, showing us the reality at local level; in Part II he combats political corruption, showing the capital judicial system from inside. Furthermore, because magistracy was traditionally the first step on the way towards high office in the imperial bureaucracy, as a whole the novel would represent two different phases of a magistrate's career. Finally, in both sections a negative female figure stands out from the story: in Part I she is the adulteress and murderer Mrs. Zhou, and in Part II she is the depraved Empress Wu Zetian. While Part I would represent the moral decline of the people, Part II, instead, shows the depravity of the ruling class and demonstrates a lack of institutional models. If we accept this interpretation, also in view of the fact that at the turn of the century "the trend in fiction was to expose social abuses and lash out at contemporary politics", [51] the two female characters could be interpreted symbolically as personifications of social and political disorder and transgression, to indirectly present the author's criticism. It is rather possible to hypothesize that through this work the author intended to express his political dissent and to launch an attack against a female power figure, the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908).[52] In this case, *WZTSDQA* would be one of the most controversial novels of its time, because it not only attacks existing politics so openly, but also exposes social inequities as the result of mismanagement of the Empress herself, inserting itself perfectly into the expressive tendencies of the late Qing period.

Van Gulik Introduces Chinese Detective Novel to the West

During his residence in Japan (1935-1942) van Gulik had his first encounter with *WZTSDQA*. Initially, the novel did not arouse his interest, but in 1948, when he returned to Japan and stayed there for the next three years (1948-1951), he turned his attention to translating it. Finally, he then published privately 1200 numbered copies under the title: *Dee Gong An: Three Murder Cases Solved By*

[49] The first complete collection of Sherlock Holmes stories appeared only in 1916. In the 1920s some Chinese authors tried to reproduce Chinese detective fiction structures and themes, such as Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青 (1893-1976), who wrote a series of novels strongly influenced by the British writer Conan Doyle (1859-1930). On these topics, see also Liu Weimin 2011, pp. 5-7; Der-wei Wang 1997, pp. 1-3; and Wei Shaochang 1966, pp. 127-130.
[50] Van Gulik, 1976, p. 226.
[51] Lu Xun 1976, p. 352.
[52] See also Du Wenyu 2000, pp. 317-328.

Judge Dee. An Old Chinese Detective Novel Translated from the Original Chinese with an Introduction and Notes. On the cover the authoritative name of the Dutch sinologist towered above the title.

In his diary, van Gulik remembers his first encounter with the book:

> I had a ray of my tiny library a small lithographic edition of the anonymous novel of Judge Ti, who had followed me in all my wanderings in Africa. I read it with pleasure, but I forget it soon, because I was absorbed by a lot of literary and artistic activities.[53]

Van Gulik's contribution to the practice of translation is undoubtedly precious. Though the translation of the novel was incomplete (containing only the very first 30 chapters), it had the exclusive merit of making Chinese court-case fiction, seldom translated before, available to the Western world. Furthermore, van Gulik showed a great cultural and linguistic sensibility, one that few others possessed; translating *WZTSDQA* required a secure knowledge of Chinese history, court-case literary tradition, and legal procedures and vocabulary.

Because the novel contains many details characteristic of a specific cultural context, which would require, at least, an introduction to the traditional Chinese legal system, van Gulik thought that Western readers would fail to comprehend them without additional explanations, and feared this would kill their attention. With this in mind, he added a long preface to the beginning of the book, and only a few notes along the text, in order to insert the reader in the 'proper' context and guide him to a fuller and better reading. He soon understood that the Chinese text would be 'impenetrable' if he did not find a counterpart in the target culture which would help the reader to better appreciate the text: he needed to find a similar aesthetic movement in Western literature to make his translation far more appealing. Van Gulik's preface adopts two methods to make *WZTSDQA* palatable and easy to grasp for Western readers: first, he constructs the cultural 'other' by introducing the reader to the story's cultural and literary context; and second, he associates the Chinese *gong'an xiaoshuo* to a genre very familiar to the West (detective fiction), in order to create a homogeneous discourse (the Chinese detective novel) which lets the Western reader recognize himself in a very different literary context.[54]

Just like Western writers of detective stories from the golden age,[55] van

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[53] From van Gulik's diary, see Barkman, De Vries-van der Hoeven 1993, p. 139.

[54] As we have seen, the first Chinese translators of Western detective stories also associated Chinese detective stories to their own literary tradition, naming Sherlock Holmes as the 'English Bao' (*yingbao* 英包). See above. On mutual understanding and representation between cultures, see Pageaux 1981, pp. 169-185.

[55] Examples are the American detective novelist and critic S.S. Van Dine (1888-1939) who wrote the famous article "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories" in 1928 for *The American Magazine*. See also Panek 1987, pp. 123-125. Van Dine's rules are discussed in

Gulik demonstrated the literary distinctiveness of the Chinese detective story by moulding its internal form. While hard at work in establishing the relationship with its Western counterpart, he sought to devise a list of rules that explained exactly how Chinese detective fiction differed from the Western genre:[56]

> Chinese detective stories have five main characteristics that are foreign to us.
> In the first place, the criminal is, as a rule, introduced formally to the reader at the very beginning of the book, with his full name, an account of his past history, and the motive that led him to commit the crime. The Chinese want to derive from the reading of a detective novel the same purely intellectual enjoyment as from watching a game of chess; […] We, on the other hand like to be kept guessing, the identity of the criminal remaining shrouded in mystery till the last page of the book. Thus in most Chinese crime novels the element of suspense is missing. The reader knows the answer to what to us is the basic question of "Who done it?" after the first few pages.
> Second, the Chinese have an innate love for the supernatural. Ghosts and goblins roam about freely in most Chinese detective stories; […] This clashes with our principle that a detective novel should be as realistic as possible.
> Third, the Chinese are a leisurely people, with a passionate interest for detail. […] Therefore, most Chinese detective novels are bulky affairs of a hundred and more chapters, and each of them would, when translated, fill several printed volumes.
> Fourth, the Chinese have a prodigious memory for names and a sixth sense for family relationships. An educated Chinese can reel off without the slightest effort some seventy or eighty relatives, each with his name, surname and title, and the exact grade of relationship, for which, by the way, the Chinese language possesses an amazingly rich special vocabulary. […] Our contemporary crime novels have mostly only a dozen or so main characters, and yet editors have found it necessary of late to add a list of these at the beginning of the book, for the reader's convenience.
> Fifth, the Chinese have quite different ideas as to what should be described in a detective novel, and what may well be left to the reader's imagination. Although we insist on knowing in minute detail how the crime was committed, we are not interested in the details of the punishment finally meted out to the criminal. […] The Chinese, however, expect a faithful account of how the criminal was executed with every gruesome detail. […] Such an ending is necessary to satisfy the Chinese sense of justice, but it offends the Western reader, since it remains him too much of beating a man who is already down.[57]

By observing van Gulik's list, we can tell that by detecting the differences

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detail also in Tzvetan Todorov who identifies various subgenres of detective novel. Todorov affirmed "le roman policier par excellence n'est pas celui qui transgresse les règles du genre, mais celui qui s'y conforme." See Todorov 1971, p. 56.

[56] For a detailed study of the similarities and differences between Chinese court-case stories and Western detective stories, see also Wei Quan 2006, pp. 65-70.

[57] Van Gulik 1976, pp. III-IV.

between the two literary genres, he formulated a set of traits that intended to define and determine the character of the Chinese people as well, that is: the Chinese love for the supernatural, the prodigious memory, the curiosity for macabre details etc. Each of these features can be related and contrasted with the fundamental traits of the self-image built around the Westerner, for example: Chinese superstition *VS* Western scientific aptitude, Chinese illogic *VS* Western logic, Chinese innate love for the supernatural *VS* Western necessity for rationality, Chinese authoritative Justice *VS* Western democratic Justice etc.

On the other hand, van Gulik's translation intended to resist against Western preconceptions of 'Chineseness' in favour of a more positive and flexible understanding of Chinese identity. Among the definite reasons that could have led him to specifically choose *WZTSDQA*, in fact, was its having a traditional setting. *WZTSDQA*'s historic background in Tang China, traditionally regarded as the golden age of Chinese Empire, undoubtedly could have represented a suitable opportunity for van Gulik to purge the negative image that the West had constructed over the last century of contact with China,[58] and to show his nostalgic, aesthetic and artistic portrait of his beloved country. As van Gulik himself explained in his preface, the prospect of his translation was to seize the Western reader's attention in a way that would prompt them to question their beliefs on China.

> For many years, Western writers of detective novels have time and again introduced the Chinese Element in their books. The mysteries of China itself or of the Chinatowns in some foreign cities, were often chosen as a means of lending a weird and exotic atmosphere to the plot. […] As the Chinese have been so often represented - and too often misrepresented! - in our popular crime literature, it seems only just that they themselves be allowed to have their own say for once in this field.[59]

> This novel Dee Goong An is offered here in a complete translation. Possibly it would have had been entirely re-written in a form more familiar to our readers. Then, however, much of the genuine Chinese atmosphere of the original would have disappeared, and in the end both the Chinese author, and the Western reader would have been the losers. Some parts may be less interesting to the Western reader than others, but I am confident that also in this literal translation the novel will be found more satisfactory than the palpable nonsense that is foisted on the long-suffering public by some writers of faked Chinese stories, which describe a China and a Chinese people that exist nowhere except in their fertile imaginations.[60]

[58] On this topic see also Benedetti in press.
[59] Van Gulik 1976, p. I.
[60] Van Gulik 1976, p. IX.

Translating the Untranslatable: Van Gulik's Aesthetic and Ideological Responsibility in the Construction of the Chinese Detective Novel

In the ten-page *Translator's postscript* at the end of the book, van Gulik provides the Western reader with additional explanations on the Chinese text and on the existing literature on it. In the section called *The Translation*, he makes himself 'visible' by giving insight on some of the choices he made in translating and by revealing how he 'domesticated' the linguistic and cultural features of the Chinese text in order to avoid frustration or confusion to the Western reader. Van Gulik himself admits that he removed from the text all proper and place names that were not absolutely necessary, that he cut out the conventional phrases at the beginning and end, and also interpolating explanatory sentences etc.

> The translation is on the whole a literal one, but since this book is intended for the general reader than for the Sinologue, a few exceptions had to be made.[61]

During the manipulative textual process, however, van Gulik decided to not translate the entire novel. As we have seen, his translation covers only the first thirty chapters that correspond to what he called Part I. What criteria regulated his selection? We can find at least four possible criteria for van Gulik's selection of Part I for translation:

First, at the time of van Gulik's translation, there was a thriving interest for detective novels: on the one hand Chinese and Japanese people were consuming a lot of Western mystery novels; on the other hand, Western authors used China's landscapes and Chinese characters for their novel as a means of providing the story with an exotic setting. Therefore, van Gulik decided to prove that detective stories existed in China as well, and they were as interesting as Western stories, and traditionally even older than in the West. Van Gulik's cleverly intuited that Part I of *Di Gong'an* could work as a detective novel, because it observed *grossomodo* the internal rules of Western detective stories. Each of the three Part I stories, in fact, included many of the traditional elements of a standard detective story: the seemingly insolvable crime; the mistakenly accused suspect at which contingent evidence points to; the superior powers of observation and excellent sense of the detective; and finally the conclusion, in which the detective exposes how the identity of the crime perpetrator was discovered. Only the case of "The Poisoned Bride" did not meet the criteria of Western detective stories, because the bride died by unintentionally drinking a

[61] Van Gulik 1976, p. 227.

beverage with snake venom, and accidental death is not one of the recurrent themes in the classical detective story. As one of the Van Dine's rules says: "a crime in a detective story must never turn out to be an accident or a suicide. To end an odyssey of sleuthing with such an anti-climax is to hoodwink the trusting and kind-hearted reader."[62] Furthermore, like the Western whodunit, Part I's plots evoked curiosity and contained many surprises; for example, in the case of "The Strange Corpse", the magistrate performs an autopsy on the corpse of a murdered man, and unexpectedly fails to understand the cause of death.

On the contrary, the corrupt world and the unethical society represented in Part II, if compared to those of Western literary genres, would meet much more the characteristics of the Thriller. The plots of the three cases, in fact, are all associated with political intrigue and the culprits are more or less always formally introduced to the reader at the very beginning of the case story. Because criminals continuously create obstacles that the protagonist must overcome, threatening not only his career as a civil servant but also his own life, the readers' tension and suspense is deeply stimulated, just not their curiosity.

Second, the figure of Di Renjie, who in Part I was so similar to the detective represented in Western detective stories, in Part II is not. In Part I, Di Renjie conducts on-the-road investigations and solves the cases thanks to the collection of evidence, the interrogation of suspects, and the questioning of witnesses. Besides just his own investigation, he may rely on his lieutenants, Ma Rong 马荣 and Qiao Tai 乔泰, who often have connections with people a magistrate would not be able to approach officially. When he has concluded his investigation, having gathered sufficient proof, he plays the role of the Judge and makes a decision on whether to charge the suspect with a criminal offence. He then tries to obtain a confession, sometimes by physically and psychologically stressing the suspect.[63]

In Part II, Di Renjie's methods of operation in conducting his investigations undergo a slight change. He does not need any amount of evidence to identify a potential suspect, as he has already suspects in mind; therefore, he must produce evidence that will stand out before the Empress. His job is aimed at fighting against political and judicial corruption, because government officials abuse of the power bestowed on them to benefit their private interests. Their misconduct (through eliciting bribes, improper sentencing of convicted criminals etc.) leads to the violation of the people's rights. In the narrative, these dark political figures create an authentic clique of

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[62] It is Van Dine's eighteenth rule. See Ghidetti 1989, pp. 115-117.

[63] According to Chinese law, by the end of the interrogatory the magistrate inevitably need to obtain a guilty confession, and if it were not to come, use of various instruments of torture, like bamboo sticks or special contraptions to bend fingers, was legitimate. In Qing period, however, the use of physical and psychological torture, although frequent during trials, was to be strictly regulated according to *The Qing Code* (*Daqing Lüli* 大清律例), see T'ung-Tsu Ch'u 1969. For a discussion on the law punishment in late imperial China see also the research of Brook, Bourgon, Blue 2008, especially pp. 35-68.

power which strengthens itself through consistent solidarity, conferring onto itself a rank superior to that of the rest of the population. People have no way to defend themselves: "The Case of the Kidnapping of the Beautiful Wu" is an good example to why. It tells the story of the daughter-in-law of an honest man kidnapped by the influential Ceng Youcai 曾有才. Ceng Youcai is the son of a servant of Zhang Changzong, who is one of the so-called *nanchong* 男宠 (Empress Wu favourites) and enjoys the complete protection exerted by the Empress. The man reported the abduction to the *yamen,* but the magistrate did not pursue the kidnapper because Ceng Youcai is his very good friend. Although those involved are very influential, Di Renjie decides to investigate the case. His main purpose is to encourage a culture of ethical conduct in society, with the authorities setting the good example in order to restore public morality.

Third, besides Di Renjie, Yan Liben, and few others, the characters of the three cases of Part I are all fictional, while Part II showed historical figures. Nineteenth and Twentieth-century Chinese reading audiences were already familiar with the characters involved in Part II, but for the Western reader they would have seemed quite foreign and unfamiliar. Moreover, these historical characters, drawing from Chinese historical heritage, maintained a strong symbolic value, which was essential to engage the reader in the story.

Fourth, WZTSDQA was too long. As Professor Idema remarks, van Gulik detested very long novels like *Sanxia Wuyi* 三侠五义 ("Three Heroes and Five Gallants"), 施公案 ("Cases of Judge Shi"), or *Peng Gong'an* 彭公案 ("Cases of Judge Peng"):

> But he had learned from Chinese scholarship on Dream of the Red Chamber (*Honglou Meng*) that you can dismiss those parts of a novel you don't like as "a later addition", so he only translated the first thirty chapters on Judge Dee's activities as a county magistrate during which time Judge Dee solves three mysterious crimes, and ignored the later thirty four chapters that deal with the four great weird cases at the court of Wu Zetian, when Judge Dee manipulates the law to engineer the abdication of Empress Wu and ensure the restoration of the Tang.[64]

After cutting off the second part of the novel, van Gulik structurally manipulated Part I in order to adapt it to the parameters of the Western detective story. Among his manipulations, there are:

First, as van Gulik remarked, he omitted the conventional phrases at the beginning and at the end of each chapter that were representative of Chinese storytelling tradition. Besides that, he cut all the phrases used by the author to take up the subject, such as *queshuo* 却说 (so we said), *shei zhi* 谁知 (who could imagine that), *qieshuo* 且说 (thus) etc.

[64] Idema 2013, p. 43.

Second, as van Gulik remarked, he abbreviated Chapter XXVIII because it included a scene in which Di Renjie, unable to obtain a confession from the accused (indispensable for Chinese imperial justice),[65] uses a trick, and that "would make a comical impression on the Western reader." Judge Dee enters in the jail of the murderer disguised as Yama (the Judge of the Underworld) and pretends to communicate with the spirit of the murder victim, in order to scare the woman and get her to confess her crime.

> Fourth, I have abbreviated considerably Chapter XXVIII. The original introduces into the jail the entire Infernal Tribunal, the constables acting the part of the minor devils. This is quite interesting to the Chinese reader, who is thoroughly familiar with these details […]. Since, however, a complete rendering of this scene would make a comical impression on the Western reader, I thought it would spoil the effect.[66]

In this episode, the method used by Di Renjie to interrogate the prisoner is quite different from the method usually used by investigators in a detective novel. The detective of a classical detective story, who is somehow able to deduce that a man is a murderer, usually traps the criminal using reason, allowing logic to dominate the scene. According to the rules of detective stories, in fact, "there can be no substantial difference between the methods of research put in place by the police and those adopted by the physicist or chemist."[67]
Moreover, at the very end of the Chapter, van Gulik added the sentence "so that was how the murder was committed!" [68] so as to ensure that Chapter 28 represents the climax of the case story, where all the details of the crime and the perpetrator are revealed. In this way the case story format appeared much more similar to the typical whodunit.

Third, van Gulik reshapes also Chapter 29. In the original, this chapter terminated with a long digression about the life and political career of the Empress Wu, which, according to the techniques mentioned above of interrelation of cases, introduced to the facts of Part II. In van Gulik's translation, on the contrary, there is no trace of this digression, and Chapter 29 ends with Censor Yen (Yan Liben) giving as a gift one of his paintings to Di Renjie.

Fourth, using the same technique used in Chapter 29, van Gulik shortens Chapter 30. The original text of the chapter terminates with an episode that takes place in Yan Liben's office, Di Renjie and Yan Liben are talking about the political issues of the country. Yan Liben tells Di Renjie about the immoral conduct of the Empress Wu and of how she and her 'favourites' are putting at risk the survival of the Tang Dynasty.

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[65] On this topic see T'ung Tsu-Ch'u 1969, pp. 116-128.
[66] Van Gulik 1976, p. 229.
[67] Narcejac 1984, p. 31.
[68] Van Gulik 1976, p. 203.

> [Yan Liben] during his speech could not hold back the tears. Di Renjie waited for him to finish and said: Your Excellence, for now be patient, as the old saying goes: "when the prince is put to shame, the minister dies." Now empress Wu hold the throne, Zhongzong has been banished from the court and the ministers have been downgraded, and right now I will faithfully devote myself to save the country. If that will not remove the effects of mismanagement of Wu Chengsi, Zhang Changzong and the others, I can no longer serve the Sky and the Earth. Once he had finished his speech, his face had changed colour and he felt very sad.[69]

Van Gulik's translated text, on the other hand, had totally omits this part, and Chapter 30 ends with Di Renjie in his private office, putting files in order for his successor.

Fifth, van Gulik modifies some of the chapter headings of the original text. These short headings were a real problem, as they not only described briefly the contents of the chapter, but sometimes they also provided the reader with some information on the identity of the culprit before Di Renjie found it out himself. Usually, in a typical detective novel, it is expected that the clues (from which a logical resolution to the case can be reached) are equally presented to the reader and at precisely the same moment that the detective receives them (and not before); as a result, the reader can deduce the solution to the puzzle from a logical interpretation of these clues. Van Gulik, although, retained the chapter headings to two lines, but he transformed or omitted some details about the circumstances surrounding the homicide, such as the name of the murderer, adding words such as 'weird', 'secret', 'mystery', etc. in order to rouse the reader's curiosity, as in the following examples:

> Chapter 19
> Original text: "邵礼怀认供结案　华国祥投县呼冤" (Shao Lihuai [the murderer] confesses and the case is closed; Hua Guoxiang rushes to the court and reports an injustice).
> Van Gulik's translation: "Judge Dee closes the case of Six Mile Village; Mr. Hua rushes to the court and reports a murder."

> Chapter 23
> Original text: "见毒蛇开释无辜" (The sight of the snake venom suggests the absence of a guilty).
> Van Gulik's translation: "In the Hua Mansion, he reveals the bride secret."

[69] *Di Gong'an*, p. 178.

> Chapter 28
> Original text: "真县令扮作阎王　假阴官审明奸妇" (The true magistrate pretends to be the king of hell, the false hell officer makes confess the adulteress).
> Van Gulik's translation: "A weird interrogation is conducted in the jail, a confession is obtained, and the mystery solved."

Moreover, van Gulik modified some chapter headings in order to facilitate reader comprehension, as follow:

> Chapter 11
> Chinese text: "求灵签隐隐相合" (Interrogate the spirits through inscribed bamboo stick proves applicable to the case).
> Van Gulik's translation: "A hint in a book proves applicable to the case."

Van Gulik also modified some chapter headings, so as to ensure that they match the contents of his translation, as follow:

> Chapter 29
> Original text: "狄梁公审明奸案　阎立本保奏贤臣" (Di Lianggong closes the case of the adulterous woman; Yan Liben issued an imperial edict to praise the good officer).
> Van Gulik's translation: "Judge Dee closes the case of the strange corpse; an imperial censor drinks tea in the water pavilion."

Sixth, van Gulik suggests an alternative way of using language to avoid hostile sexist ideas that were part of the meanings of the original text. He, in fact, removes most of the gender-specific pejorative terms used by Judge Dee to intimidate Mrs. Zhou. In the original, Mrs. Zhou 周氏, who murdered her husband Bi Shun 毕顺 because she was in love with her younger lover, is often verbally abused. Di Renjie speaks to her in a harsh and offensive manner, using phrases such as "you, prostitute" (*ru zhe yinfu* 汝这淫妇), and "you, cheap prostitute" (*ru zhe jian yinfu* 汝这贱淫妇). Mrs. Zhou, on her part, always responds in an outrageous tone, "you, dog of a magistrate" (*ru zhe gouguan* 汝这狗官), demonstrating that she harbours no respect for the institutions. In van Gulik's translation, Judge Dee most of the time simply addresses her simply by her name "Mrs. Zhou".[70]

[70] In Chinese society, especially in the aristocratic families where there are several wives to distinguish, a woman is called by her maiden name. In Chinese is used the suffix 氏 *shi* after

Van Gulik also removes the sexist descriptions of Mrs. Zhou from the text headings:

> Chapter 10
> Original text: "恶淫妇阻拦收棺" (The odious and vulgar adulteress refuses to let [her husband] be buried).
> Van Gulik's translation: "Mrs. Djou refuses to let her husband be buried."
>
> Chapter 15
> Original text: "狄梁公故意释奸女" (Di Lianggong intentionally releases the adulteress).
> Van Gulik's translation: "Judge Dee allows Mrs. Djou to return to her home."
>
> Chapter 27
> Original text: "淫泼妇忍辱熬刑" (The odious and obstinate adulteress resists heavy torture).
> Van Gulik's translation: "An adulterous woman persists in her innocence."[71]

As we have seen, van Gulik lessens the rude and aggressive attitude of Di Renjie (which is constituted authority) toward Mrs. Zhou, and for the most part decides to erase all the offensive epithets with which the narrator, the Judge and the other characters address the accused. This choice has two obvious reasons: on the one hand, by changing Di Renjie's attitude toward the culprit, van Gulik intended to dismiss the myth of the enlightened despot of a severe legal system, and instead re-constructed a much more modern idea of the 'pure official' who surely can gain the sympathy of the reader; on the other hand, because in the West the issue of gender equality was very present in political debates, it was inconceivable that a novel that wanted to rouse the reader's sympathy should address women with words that could offend them. This was compounded by the fact that women usually are the primary audience for detective fiction.

Some final considerations

By reference to Chinese source text *WZTSDQA* and van Gulik's English translation, this essay discussed van Gulik's attitude towards translation, the translation strategies in terms of 'domestication' and 'translator visibility', and

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the family name, for example 周氏 *Zhoushi* should be in English Mrs. Bi, because she is the wife of Mr. Bi Shun.

[71] See also Zhang Ping 2013, pp. 123-131.

the role that translator subjectivity and ideology have played in the practice of translation.[72] As we have seen, apart from the 'visibility' of the translator in the ultimate product, by choosing to put the name on the title page, to add a preface, a postscript and few notes, van Gulik's translated text was perceived in the West as equivalent to the original text. Nevertheless, van Gulik worked hard in manipulating the source text and constructing a final product that could fulfil Western detective story patterns and, at the same time, spread his knowledge and understanding of China and Chineseness.

On this basis, the present paper has tried to investigate how van Gulik's translation process could have certainly been affected by ideology. Both the individual ideology, related to his life experience and his academic formation, and the dominant ideology, forged by European colonialism, have impinged on the translation process. As we discussed briefly, in performing translation van Gulik consciously or subconsciously brings to the final text his own postulations, inclinations, and worldview based upon the dichotomised distinction between East and West as characteristic to the *genesis* of theories about Chineseness. Through meaningful selections, lexical choices, text organisation, text structure, character re-construction etc., van Gulik's translation gave rise to a perception of Chinese court-case literature and of the Chinese official-detective that is rather dissimilar from that of the readers of the original text.

On the other hand, this paper assumes that during van Gulik's manipulation process some of the characteristics of the original text have been overshadowed, and that they were in some way representative of late Qing Dynasty fiction and of court-case fiction of that period. As we have seen, during the last decades of Manchu domination, the narrative adopted a language openly critic, denouncing corruption and abuses of power, attacking the cast of functionaries, and questioning the traditional imperial order. In *WZTSDQA* this criticism was expressed through various narrative devices (such as the negative characterisation of two important female characters) and by the author's polemical language against Wu Zetian's government in both Part I and Part II, which in Part II was even more evident because the character of Wu Zetian lead immediately to that of Cixi. At that time, in fact, it was common to criticise Empress Dowager Cixi by comparing her to Empress Wu by drawing a comparison between Cixi's reclaiming the regency and influencing Guangxu's actions, and Wu Zetian's dethroning of her son Emperor Zhongzong. It is demonstrated, for example, by the political novel entitled *Wu Zetian* (also by an anonymous author), which A Ying 阿英 cites in his *Wanqing Xiaoshuomu* 晚清小说目 ("Catalogue of Late Qing Novels"). Even later, in the 1930s for example, Zhang Bozhen 张伯桢 (1877-1946), a follower and great admirer of Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858-1927), in his *Nanhai Kang Xiansheng Zhuan* 南海

[72] For a general discussion related to the strategies that prevailed in English translation, see Venuti 1995. See also Lefevere 1992.

康先生传 ("The Biography of Mr. Kang of Nanhai"), talks of Cixi by referring to her with the name of Zetian:

> [Kang Youwei] wrote a request for help, speaking of the situation in the country, denouncing the ten greatest crimes committed by the Empress, comparing them to the crimes committed by Feiyan against the imperial lineage and to the damages caused by Zetian to the imperial family.[73]

The criticism against the imperial regency, which the novel *WZTSDQA* seemingly wishes to propose, not only would insert itself perfectly in the expressive tendencies of the late Qing Period, but would also explain why the author decided to not to sign his work, concealing his political message at the limits of the subversive, behind the label of court-case fiction, which traditionally celebrated institutional figures.

We should conclude that: due to the translation process, the source text and the target text seem to have two distinct ideologies, particularly because van Gulik final text failed to express the Chinese author's criticism. Apart from that, van Gulik's translation had the great merit of attracting the attention of readers to Chinese court-case literature all around the world. Without van Gulik's translation and his subsequent fictional series, the Western world would have probably never known the charismatic Judge Dee, though the hero Westerners know is the embellished brother of Di Gong. Maybe even contemporary Chinese readers would have nearly forgotten Di Gong (as happened with other court-case protagonists barring Bao Gong): even if he has been the subject of dramas and

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[73] Literally "飞燕之啄皇孙, 则天之祸宗室" (Imperial descendants in the beak of Feiyan and the imperial family damaged by Zetian). See Su Xing 2006, p. 41. Both Wu Zetian and Zhao Feiyan 赵飞燕 (32-1 BC) are remembered by official historiography and fiction for their palace intrigue, and they are often denigrated by historians and novelists. While the life of Empress Wu is very famous, the story of Empress Zhao is less known. The story goes that the Emperor Cheng (51-7 BC) of Han Dynasty was visiting the residence of the Princess Yang'a 阳阿公主 (unknown dates) who entertained the sovereign with a ballet. Zhao Feiyan was one of the dancing girls. At the sight of Feiyan, the Emperor fell in love and decided to take her and her inseparable sister Zhao Hede 赵合德 to the palace as his concubines. The two sisters soon became his favourites, and shortly after Emperor Cheng deposed his wife and proclaimed Feiyan as Empress with the title Empress Xiaocheng 孝成皇后 (16 BC). Unfortunately both sisters were not able to give birth to an imperial descendant. In 7 BC Emperor Cheng died suddenly without having shown any signs of illness and the two sisters were suspected of murder. Moreover, after her son's death, the Empress Dowager Wang Zhengjun 王政君 (71-13 BC) authored an investigation that reported that Feiyan's sister Hede murdered two children born from the union of the Emperor with two other concubines. "飞燕之啄皇孙" refers to the expression "燕飞来，啄皇孙" (the swallow came flying and pecked the descendants of the Emperor), reported in the section dedicated to Zhao Feiyan (*Xiaocheng Zhao Huanghou* 孝成赵皇后) in the ninety-seventh *juan* 卷 (*xia* 下) of the Book of Han Dynasty (*Han Shu* 汉书). The swallow flying is obviously referred to Zhao Feiyan (Feiyan means "swallow flying").

novel during many centuries all the same, it is quite safe to affirm that Di Gong, without van Gulik, would have never become the popular hero of contemporary dramas, television series and movies, as we know him today.

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SAGE DESCENDANTS FIGHT: A HISTORY OF THE MASTER YOU ANCESTRAL HALL IN CHONGMING

HE YANRAN 賀晏然
(National University of Singapore)

Introduction

Extensive academic research on Confucian temples and Ancestral Halls of Confucian scholars has been undertaken, but scholars have tended to focus mainly on temples belonging to Confucius or the local elites.[1] The lack of attention given to temples of the disciples of Confucius may have been the result of the scarcity of local materials. The case of the Ancestral Hall belonging to Master You (有子 You Zi) is an example. Master You became one of the twelve most important disciples of Confucius (also known as Philosophers) during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty (1736-1795). His elevation resulted in the reestablishment of the Master You Ancestral Hall in Chongming 崇明, and caused a battle between the You clans in Chongming, Jiangsu province and Feicheng 肥城, Shandong province for the right to worship Master You because this would gain for them valuable land and official title from the central government.

Both clans claimed they were the real descendants of Master You. The You clan in Chongming used plaques and local history records as evidence to claim their right to worship Master You, while the You families in Feicheng used political power by eliciting support from the local government and the Confucius family. This made it difficult to determine the real descendant. This paper thus aims to document how the local government and local clans quickly reacted to the fight between the Chongming You clan and the Feicheng officials over the right to worship Master You. It will show how their quick reactions reflected their sensitivity and responsiveness to the national culture policy. The relationship between local society and the central government is however not a new phenomenon; it being raised before in the history of late imperial China, will be shown in this paper and further discussed in the conclusion. It is

[1] Diachronic studies by Huang Chin-shing outlined the whole formation and development process of Confucian temples. Then, studies by Chu Hung-lam revealed the complexities of worship in Confucian temples. Huang Chin-shing 2010; Chu Hung-lam 1988, pp. 47-70; Koh Khee Heong 2011. For studies on local elite temples, please refer to the paper by Lin, Li-yueh 2009, pp. 327-372.

significant because of the multi-layered and active interaction between the local clans and authorities.

The main sources of information used to discuss this case are the two recently discovered plaques in the Chongming Ancestral Hall of Master You. These plaques are significant because they are the most important artifices remaining to support the Chongming You clan's right to worship Master You. One is the *Inscription for Rebuilding the Pantheon* 重建先賢祠碑記, erected in 1738 (the third year of the Qianlong period). The other is the *Documentary Plaque regarding the Sacrificial Properties for Sage You Zi* 憲給先賢有子祀產判帖, erected in 1776 (the forty-first year of the Qianlong period).[2] Given the significance of the data found on the plaques and the context they provide, this paper opens by presenting these two plaques before telling the story of the fight between the You clans in Chongming and Feicheng.

1. Plaques preserved in Chongming

The two aforementioned plaques flanked the Minglun Hall of Xue Palace in Chongming. The content of the plaques indicates they were moved from the Master You Ancestral Hall in Wujiasha Panlong Town (吳家沙盤龍鎮 today's Panlong Village) of Chongming. While the original hall was destroyed, the plaques have remain. The first plaque claims that the You (有 or Yu 郁) family in Chongming as the descendants of Master You, followed by a description of some simple ritual rules:

> Inscription for Rebuilding the Pantheon 重建先賢祠碑記
>
> The "Pantheon for Sage You Zi" was rebuilt in the third year of Qianlong's reign (1738). As You Zi's 71st generation grandson, I am respectfully writing this inscription to record the origin of the family.
>
> My ancestor was titled Duke Pingyin, whose given name was Ruo with a style name of Ziyu. His ancestral home was located at Yulang, bordering Wucheng. He followed Grand Master Confucius as student and lived in Youfang Village in Northern Lu. The 20th generation grandson named Cha changed his surname to Yu to commemorate their homeland Yulang when seeking shelter. During Jianyan Years in Song Dynasty, the 49th generation grandson named Lin brought the ancestors' tablets to Jurong in Jiangnan due to the invasion of Jin. With the decline of the Yuan Dynasty, social unrest occurred in Jiangnan and the residents in Jurong fleed away, the 61th generation grandson named Junsheng, holding the ancestors' tablets, moved to Chongming with his younger brother Junyu. Their descendants are still worshiping the ancestors now. My grandfather named Ying firstly built an multi-roomed ancestral hall on the left side of his house in Yuhuangzhuang and

[2] They are stored in the Minglun Hall of Xue Palace in Chongming.

conducted the sacrificial rituals independently. Later, due to bankerosion, the ancestral hall was abandoned. My father named Congxian placed the ancestors' portraits respectfully in his bedroom. He suggested to rebuild the ancestral hall and invited Wu Meicun in Taicang to write the horizontal inscribed board. Two plaques were also wrote for the two rooms: one is "Nourishing The Roots", the other is "Approaching the Harmony"; the middle of the doorframe said "Insisting on Benevolence", with "Complying with Ritual"on the left and "Complying with righteousness"on the right respectively. The construction ceased however due to the scarcity of materials. Now an auspicious location in eastern Wujiasha Panlong Village was chosen to build five ancestral halls, six winged-rooms, three gate halls, and four large rooms on the right and left. The old names of all the plaques and doorframe were kept. According to my father's willingness, I put up the plaque on which engraved the provisions of the ancestral hall:

First, at the second month in spring and autumn every year, all the worshippers must attend the ritual in the ancestral hall. He who does not attend once would get fined; he who does not attend twice would get public punishment.

Second, the persons in charge of the ritual must gather in the ancestral hall and salute in the first month of the four seasons. He who does not come would be punished according to the last provision.

Third, he who guards the ancestral hall should visit the halls on the first and 15th days each month.

The three provisions mentioned above must be strictly enforced without any negligence.

乾隆歲戊午重建先賢有子祠，七十一世孫瑚敬製碑文一道以紀源本。

先賢平陰侯諱若，字子育，祖居郁郎地方，與武城接壤，因師事先聖，宅魯北，號有房村。廿傳祖諱察，避難加邑，誌郁郎之舊也。宋建炎時，四十九世祖, 諱麟, 值金厄，播遷江南句容縣，先賢神位負以南來。元祚衰，江南繹騷，句人星散，六十一世祖, 諱君盛, 同弟君玉抱主徙崇，子孫至今守祀焉。再傳祖諱霙，於郁黃狀宅左始立祠宇數椽，祀事勿替。厥後海齧祠廢，父諱從先敬奉先賢像於寢堂，倡議重建專祠，請顏額於婁東梅村吳君。顏兩堂，一曰務本，一曰用和；額門中曰本仁，左曰近禮，右曰近義。方庀厥材，未克終搆。今卜吉於吳家沙盤龍鎮之東，建有正祠五間，東西廂六間，門祠三間，左右堂四間，門額、堂顏悉遵舊名。爰繼父志，刊石勒規：

一、二仲丁祭，襄祀者俱入與祭。一不至罰，再不至懲。

一、四孟時祭，執事者畢集行禮，不至，如初。

一、每月朔望，守祠者□謁。以上三條，皆宜恪守成規毋忽。[3]

The second plaque provides details of the rebuilding the Master You Ancestral Hall, including the appointment of the You family members as Sacrificial

[3] This stele is stored in the Minglun Hall of Xue Palace in Chongming, please see plaque I.

Attendant 奉祀生, and the allocation of the land to the Chongming You descendants:

> Documentary Plaque regarding the Sacrificial Properties for Sage You Zi 憲給先賢有子祀產判帖
>
> Notice No. 63 issued by Suzhou Government
>
> Reply of the Chief Secretary of Suzhou County, Jiangnan Executive Province to "Request for Instruction on the Formulation of the Laws and Regulations on Procurement of Sacrificial Assets and Public Land to Maintain Morals". Anfeng (A style used for replying to the notice issued by superior sectors)
>
> The Governor of Suzhou announced strictly that after official discussion and emperor's approval, the Ministry of Penalty approved that for the property (land) used for worshiping ancestors, any villains who took over 50 Chinese mu of land and bribed to the dignitaries or impawned or sold it with forged documents and any rich people in the family who bought it as private property would be regarded as criminal and be banished. Their land (property) would be taken back and money confiscated. The person who took less than 50 mu land would be punished according to the regulation on "stealing and selling official land". If the person stole and sold the official land for a long period of time, the rooms of the ancestral hall would also be included for punishment. The person who stole and sold the righteous land would be beaten with 100 lashes and imprisoned for three years. The person who bought the land would be punished as an accomplice. The family was required to document it as the evidence, engrave on steles and report to the government.
>
> Imperial notice
>
> According to emperor's will, all the ministries and provincial governments must implement this. In order to check the sacrificial land in Jiangnan Province, the Ministry of Revenue was required to conduct investigation. After circulating a notice, the Ministry was asked to record the results in detail which would be included in the code. As approved by the Ministry of Penalty, Henan Province was exempted from the taxes. It was still under investigation whether the sacrificial land of the ancestral halls in Jiangnan Province be exempted from the taxes or not. According to the descendants' report with detailed evidence in Changzhou and Yuanhe Counties, schematic diagram should be drawn to illustrate the sacrificial land and righteous land as required by the old regulation. The taxes should be paid together with the land for education from October when rice was harvested. People would be exempted from military service after submitting application and relevant documents. The results of the investigation showed that the sacrifice property was extremely important for the ancestral hall. The property either provided by the government or created by the descendants should be protected by each generation to manifest the national law which advocated for moral incentives. The righteous land should be used to help for the poor in the family according to the regulation created by Fan Zhongyan (posthumous Wenzheng, he invented righteous land as a form of charity within families). The regulation should be abided by and never be changed. So there would always be tributes for the sacrifice in autumn and winter (i.e. "Zhengchang") and the brotherhood and friendship within families

would be carried forward. However, without a supervisory mechanism, there were always some villains who sold and bought righteous land, causing the ancestral hall and grave yard abandoned and sacrifice discarded every year. Therefore the regulation was laid down strictly according to the requirement of the Governor and the emperor's approval. As described earlier, after reporting in detail to the Governor General and the Governor, the regulation must be strictly abided by. Those abiding by the regulation as required would be provided with a license. Through the provision of the license, it was hoped that the descendants would engrave the regulation on the stele and comply with it by forever. With the schematics of license, the person would get preferential treatment when paying taxes after harvest in autumn and be exempted from military service. The harvested grain was used for sacrifice. If any villains cheated or sold the righteous land or any rich people bought it for private property, people were allowed to sue this with the license. The land that was not covered by the license was not allowed to be occupied to cause disputes. The provisions listed (mentioned above) in the license must not be violated on purpose.

As listed

Sage You Zi had the given name of Ruo whose ancestral home was in Yulang in northern Lucheng. During Jianyan Years in Song Dynasty, the 49th generation grandson whose given name was Lin brought the ancestors' ritual objects to Jurong in Jiangnan due to war. In late Yuan Dynasty, the 61th generation grandson Junsheng moved to Chongming with his younger brother Junyu. They built the ancestral hall to worship the ancestors which was recorded in the local records.

Development history

In the current dynasty (Qing Dynasty), according to emperor's will, a doctoral discipline (Erudite of the Five Classics) was established in the imperial examinations as emperor's grace in the second year of Yongzheng to investigate the Confucian descendants who inherited sacrifice. In the third year of Qianlong, the investigation was done.

The emperor decreed to promote You Zi as one of the eleven philosophers which was recorded into the code. Then after approval by Duke Yansheng and review by the Ministry of Rites, You Hu, the student in Jiangnan was You Zi's grandson of the 71th generation who should hold the sacrifice. He was then provided with the license. After You Hu died of an illness, his eldest son You Shang inherited it.

After You Shang died, the document of the Ministry of Rites said that there was no person to inherit You Zi's sacrifice in Shandong Province, so an official title was established in Chongming and the license was offered for sacrifice. According to the tradition, You Shang's son You Tingmo should inherit it but he passed the provincial civil service examination. His son You Zhaoxiong was provided by the local government with the license. In the 40th year of Qianlong, You Zhaoxiong was accused for punishment because he did not repair the ancestral hall. According to the reply of Taicang, he should be punished.

Sage You Zi's ancestral hall was the place for the residence of ancestor's soul, which should be respected. It is not allowed to be abandoned. According

to the precedent of provision of sacrificial land to Sage Yan Zi's ancestral hall, the newly formed beach land of 817.81 Chinese mu (1ha=100 Chinese mu) with a total area of 196275 bu without an owner was provided to You Zi's ancestral hall to pay the costs of sacrifice and repair. This practice was started from the 41th year of Qianlong. The land separated with stakes was provided to the ancestral hall guard for farming or renting with the exemption from taxes. This ensured that the tributes were abundant and clean and the hall was cleaned often.

Detailed notice

The cabinet Viceroy approves that

Sage You Zi's descendants moved to Jiangnan in Song Dynasty and then moved to Chongming where they built the ancestral hall to worship You Zi, which was recorded in the local record. However, the sacrificial land had not been provided, so the tributes were not abundant and clean and the hall was likely to collapse. According to the precedent of provision of land to Sage Yan Zi 's ancestral hall, You Zi's ancestral hall guard was provided with more than 8ha of beach land for farming or renting to pay the costs of sacrifice and repair. This was appropriate. It was hoped to review it and provide the license and engrave it on the stele to be abided by forever. The inscription needed to be copied for later reference."

Second notice

Jiangsu Governor Yang stated that "I have been informed of the provision". It was then reported to the Ministry of Revenue for consultation and reference. According to the tradition, a schematic diagram was drawn, and there was an exemption from military service to show respect. License was provided and the provisions were engraved on the stele to be abided by to promote sacrifice.

The detailed land documentations and tax regulations were submitted to the provincial government for reference.

The right post (with license on its back) was provided to the ancestral hall guard You Zhaoxiong and the above request was approved.

July, 41th Year of Qianlong

Administrative commission

Engraved by Mu Dazhan, a student in Suzhou

蘇撫部院掛發藩字第　陸拾叁　號

江南江蘇等處承宣布政使司為請定盜賣盜買祀產義田之例以厚風俗事。案奉

蘇撫部院莊憲行開，准刑部議覆條奏，祖宗祀產，倘有不肖子孫投獻勢要，私捏典賣，及富室強宗謀吞受買，各至五十畝以上者，悉依投獻捏賣祖墳山地原例，問發充軍，田產收回，賣價入官。不及前數者，即照盜賣官田律治罪。其盜賣歷久，宗祠產亦計間數，一體辦理。若盜賣義田，應仍照例罪止杖一百，徒三年。謀買之人，各與同罪。仍令立有確據，分別勒石，報官存案等因。奏奉

俞旨欽遵，咨院行司奉此。為查江省各項祭田，先奉戶部咨查，業經通飭造冊，詳咨載入會典，并奉部覆，河南省銀米係屬豁除。江省各祠祭田是否免課，抑仍徵收，現在查詳咨覆外，今據長、元等縣詳據各裔呈稱，祭、義田畝，舊例編立畐後，應辦賦稅，秋成，同學田十月啓徵，優免差徭，請賜給帖昭垂等情前來。覆查祀產之設，往哲祠墓攸賴，或官為撥給，或

後裔自置，均應世守，以昭崇德報功之典。至義田為贍給同族貧乏，則效文正遺規，亦宜垂久勿替，庶得蒸嘗永薦，惇睦成風。每有不肖之徒，恃無稽察，盜賣盜買，以致祠墓頹蕪，歲祀陵替，故奉撫憲摺奏，申嚴定例，茲據前情，除經呈詳督、撫二憲，批飭遵行在案，合准給帖。為此帖仰該裔遵照帖開緣由，勒石永遵，循例編立畾後，秋成輸賦，優免差徭，餘耔以供俎豆闕給，倘有奸徒捏冒詭寄，及不肖子孫私行盜賣，富室強宗謀吞受買，許即執帖首告，按律懲治。如非帖內田產，亦不得藉端控爭，毋得故違。須至帖者。

計開

先賢有子諱若，祖居魯城之北郁郎地方。至宋建炎間，四十九代孫名麟，值南渡播遷，抱神主祭器居於江南之句容。元末，六十一代孫名君盛同弟君玉轉徙崇明，建祠崇祀，載入志乘。沿歷

國朝，雍正二年欽奉

恩綸，增設博士，訪查嫡裔承襲。乾隆三年，復奉

恩旨，升有子於十一哲之內，纂入會典。嗣蒙衍聖公咨准，

禮部咨開，江南監生有瑚係有子七十一代孫，應主蒸嘗，取給給照奉祀。有瑚病故，長子有上承攝。有上故後，又奉

部行，有子祀生，山東無人承充，准於崇明另設一缺，給照奉祀。有上之子有廷模例應承襲，緣庚辰科已中式舉人，將伊子有昭熊取結給照承襲。乾隆四十年，奉祀生有昭熊因祭祀修葺，毫無抵辦，呈奉陞撫部院薩批司查議行。據太倉州飭議詳覆，當查

先賢有子專祠為靈爽式憑之所，祭祀不可不虔，棟宇難容頹廢。援照先賢言子祠疊撥祭田成例，查有崇明縣永福沙東北新漲灘塗捌頃拾柒畝捌分壹厘，計積拾玖萬陸千貳百柒拾伍步，係無主充公之

產，即經循例詳請就近撥充有子祠，以供祭祀修葺之需，自四十一年為始。查

照原大号口圖冊釘界，撥給該祀生自行墾種辦賦，免繳過投，俾粢盛豐潔，廟貌常新，洒掃無缺。詳奉

閣督部堂高批開：

“先賢有子裔孫自宋時遷居江南，轉徙崇邑，建祠崇祀，載入志乘，但向無祭田，恐粢盛未能豐潔，廟貌易致傾頹。今請照

先賢言子祠田之例，將永福沙新漲泥灘捌頃零撥給該祀生，自行耕種辦賦，以供祭祀修葺之用，甚屬妥協。仰即如詳核明給帖，勒石遵守，以垂永久。取碑摹送，查仍彙冊詳咨”等因。又奉

蘇撫部院楊批開：“如詳撥給，餘已悉”等因。又經彙案詳咨

戶部，照例另立畾後，免差以昭崇敬。給帖勒石遵守，以光祀典。

區畾号口斗則細冊備造存司

右帖給奉祀生有昭熊准此

乾隆肆拾壹年柒月　　日

布政使司　　吳門太學生穆大展鐫[4]

[4] This stele is stored in the Minglun Hall of Xue Palace in Chongming, please see plaque II.

2. Background information about Master You

The You families in Chongming used the plaques as evidence to claim their right to worship Master You. Master You (518B.C.—?), whose given name was Ruo 若, was a disciple of Confucius. After Confucius' death, he was revered by many other disciples, such as Zi Xia 子夏, Zi Zhang 子張 and Zi You 子游 as their teacher because he resembled Confucius. However, his inability to answer questions soon led to his removal from the pulpit.[5] Nevertheless, many of Master You's remarks were recorded in *The Analects* 論語; for example, the gentleman cares for the fundamental, where the 'Way' can be derived. Or, for all courteous behavior, harmony is to be prized. Or, when the people have enough, how can the king be insufficient; when the people do not have enough, how can the king be satiated?[6]

From his place of birth, Yulang 郁郎, Master You moved to the northeast of Lu 魯, today's Shandong province, as a disciple of Confucius, near where his Ancestral Halls had been built. There were Master You Ancestral Halls in Feicheng, Qufu 曲阜, and Pingyin 平陰 built by You clans in these locations.[7] The two plaques mentioned in Part. 1, however, inform us that there was a Master You Ancestral Hall in Chongming, which is rarely mentioned in the literature. Having provided all necessary contextual information, this paper will move on to discuss the point of contention itself, which is, whether the You clan in Chongming had the right to worship Master You as descendants--an issue which has also been the subject of much argument among local historians and governors in Feicheng since the Qianlong period.

3. The promotion of Master You's rank

Scholars may wonder why the conflict between the two protagonists ensued during the Qianlong period, as Master You is an historical figure who lived more than two-thousand years ago. The answer can be found in the promotion of Master You's official rank during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty. Emperor Qianlong fulfilled his cultural policy through promoting historical figures posthumously, among them Master You, which prompted the fight between the two sides of the You descendants.

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[5] Zhongni Dizi Liezhuan (Biography of Disciples of Zhong Ni in Historical Records), in *Shiji*, 67: 2215-2216.

[6] *Shiji*, 67: 2215-2216. In Chinese: "君子務本，本立而道生"、"禮之用，和為貴"、"百姓足，君孰与不足？百姓不足，君孰与足？"

[7] Feng Yunyuan 1998, pp. 841-843.

Master You was elevated to the rank of Confucian Philosophers in 1738, bringing the total number of Philosophers to twelve. Ten Confucian Philosophers were worshipped in rituals conducted in Confucian temples from 720 (the eighth year of the Kaiyuan period) in the Tang Dynasty, as stated in *The Analects*:

> Distinguished for their virtuous principles and practice, there were Yan Yuan, Min Ziqian, Ran Boniu, Zhong Gong; for their ability in speech, Zai Wo, Zi Gong; for their administrative talents, Ran You, Ji Lu; for their literary accomplishments, Zi You, Zi Xia.
> 從我于陳、蔡者，皆不及門也。德行：顏淵、閔子騫、冉伯牛、仲弓。言語：宰我、子貢。政事：冉有、季路。文學：子游、子夏。[8]

In the Song Dynasty, Yan Yuan, one of the Philosophers, was promoted to be one of the Four Correlates 四聖, and his Philosopher position was then taken by Zhuansun Shi 顓孫師. Subsequently, in the Kangxi 康熙 period, the famous Confucian scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 was promoted to be the Eleventh Philosopher. In 1738, Xu Yuanmeng 徐元夢 *et al*. proposed to the Ministry of Rites to nominate Master You to be a Philosopher. They argued that *The Analects* corroborated Master You's resemblance to Confucius in terms of appearance and disposition. This provided sufficient justification to promote Master You to the rank of Philosopher in the Confucian temples,[9] and this was approved by the Emperor Qianlong.

Though unsupported by historical data, it can be speculated that the rebuilding of the Master You Ancestral Hall in Chongming by the Yu family in 1738 (or 1739, the third or fourth year of the Qianlong period, according to the local chronicles) was related to the promotion of Master You as the Twelfth Philosopher. The status of the Chongming You descendants as the Sacrificial Attendant was of course acquired from the promotion of Master You in the Confucian temple since only the descendants of the Four Correlates and Twelve Philosophers were qualified to serve the hereditary position of Erudite of the Five Classics 五經博士 or the Sacrificial Attendant. While the Master You Ancestral Hall in Chongming would normally be regarded as merely a family temple in nature, but because of the status of the Master of Rites, and the officially allocated land to perform sacrifices, it also became a product of national cultural policy at the same time. All these various events are a reflection of great impact of the national cultural policy on local society. The You clan in

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[8] *Lunyu Jiyi*, p. 742.

[9] *Gaozong Chunhuangdi Shilu* (*Qing Emperor Gaozong Record*), 65: 58-59. In Chinese: 考魯《論》次章，即載有子之說，其言行氣象，皆與聖人相似。則有子若宜得升堂配享，確然無疑。

Chongming quickly reacted to the national cultural policy by rebuilding the Ancestral Hall and obtaining official titles.

4. The story of the clan in Chongming

According to the two plaques, the Chongming You clan were Master You's rightful descendants. The plaques report that they changed their surname from You 有 to Yu 郁 and moved to Jurong 句容 in southeast China during the Song Dynasty, and arrived in Chongming only during the Yuan Dynasty. These were the ones who built the Master You Ancestral Hall in Chongming, but it was rebuilt during the reign of Emperor Kangxi because it was eroded by the sea. That they considered the Hall as very important could be seen in their invitation to the renowned Wu Meicun 吳梅村 (1609-1672) to write the plaque for the Hall. When the building was finally completed by the seventy-first generation descendant You Hu 有瑚 in 1738, the first stone plaque was installed in the Hall and on it were inscribed simple rules for conducting rituals of worshipping Master You.

From 1738, the government acknowledged Chongming You clan's right to worship Master You by appointing You Hu as the Sacrificial Attendant and allocating the land to them. This appointment was made by the Ministry of Rites and Duke Yansheng 衍聖公. You Hu was thus responsible for the worship of Master You. Yu Hu's work was carried on by his son, You Shang 有上. In turn, You Shang's son, You Tingmo 有廷模 should have inherited the title, but since he had already obtained a higher title, Juren 舉人, Tingmo's son You Zhaoxiong 有昭熊 continued the work. In 1775 (the fortieth year of the Qianlong period), You Zhaoxiong petitioned the government to allocate lands for the worship due to his own inability to provide funding for the rituals of worshipping Master You. Approved by the Governor-General of Jiangnan and Jiangxi, the Inspector of Jiangsu and the Jiangsu administrative commissioner and recorded by the Ministry of Revenue, land of more than eight units in Chongming Island was allocated to the You clan as the land for performing sacrifice.

Relevant local historical records provide evidence of this process. For example, the Gazetteer which was compiled in the Jiaqing 嘉慶 period mentioned Master You Ancestral Hall was in Wujiasha Panlong Town, built by You Hu's descendants in 1739.[10] Another gazetteer which was compiled sometime during the time of Republic of China reads:

[10] *(Jiaqing) Zhili Taicangzhou Zhi* [*Gazetteer of Taicang*], in *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu*, 698: 86. In Chinese: 有子祠在吳家沙盤龍鎮，國朝乾隆四年裔孫瑚建。

> Master You Ancestral Hall was in the east of Panlong Town and built in 1739. Descendent Hu petitioned Duke Yansheng and local officials to build the Ancestral Hall. You Hu was thereby ordered to serve as the Sacrificial Attendant.
> 有子祠在蟠龍鎮東，乾隆四年建。裔孫瑚呈請衍聖公□□撫學政咨部飭並□□□奉祀生，四十一年撥祀田八頃十七畝八分一釐，嘉慶十□□增撥祀田八頃八十二畝八釐八毫。（□stands for missing words in the gazetteer）[11]

Except for the slight discrepancies in construction time, all facts can be corroborated by the inscription records, which indicate that after the allocation of land in 1776, another piece of massive land was allocated during the Jiaqing period.

Along with the two plaques, the gazetteers also gave their support to the Chongming You clan, who gradually developed their identity as the descendants of Master You during the Qianlong period. By gaining the title as the Sacrificial Attendant and obtaining the land from the government, the You clan in Chongming officially owned the right and honor to provide sacrifice to Master You. However, as the next section will outline, quite a few historians argued that the Chongming You clan's identity as Master You's descendants was dubious.

5. Doubts from historian Wang Mingsheng

One such scholar who cast doubt on this account was the famous Qianlong-Jiaqing scholar Wang Mingsheng 王鳴盛 (1722-1797). He commented on Chongming You Clan's change in their surname, which was also mentioned in the first plaque, as follows:

> In Taicang Chongming County, the genealogical record of the Yu Family affirmed You as the surname for their own lineage, after the disciple of Confucius Master You. When seeking shelter during the time of the Wei Kingdom (220-266), the family changed their surname to Yu, and petitioned the administration to establish Master You Ancestral Hall.
> 太倉州崇明縣郁氏家譜稱本係有氏，孔子弟子有子之後。曹魏時避亂改爲郁，請于當事將立有子祠。[12]

He also pointed out that there were many descendants of Master You residing in Yidu 益都 and Pingyin in Shandong province, none of whom claimed

[11] *(Republican China) Chongming Xianzhi* [*Gazetteer of Chongming*], p. 114.
[12] *Yi Shu Bian*, 54: 14.

descendant status, while in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang areas, quite a few descendants surnamed Yu did try to change their surname from Yu to You.

Wang Mingsheng's argument deserves attention because he was from Jiading 嘉定, adjacent to Chongming and wrote in the late Qianlong period, almost the same time as the date on the second plaque. According to him, the so-called descendants of Master You in Chongming were actually surnamed Yu, which they changed to You in order to gain the right to worship the Master as his descendants. Hence, Wang Mingsheng's testimony leaves the readers with questions about the Ancestral Hall of Master You in Chongming, foremost among them was whether the Chongming You clan was the real descendant.

In support of Wang Mingsheng's critical comments, there are clues on the second of the two stone plaques that casted doubt on the identity of the You family in Chongming as descendants of Master You. The plaque bears the following inscription:

> When You Hu died, his eldest son You Shang took on the order. After You Shang's death, the Ministry approved the opening of the temple in Chongming in order to honor Master You due to the lack of inherent possibilities in Shandong.
> 有瑚病故，長子有上承攝。有上故後，又奉部行，有子祀生，山東無人承充，准於崇明另設一缺，給照奉祀。

You Shang is "ordered to serve" 承攝 but not "inherit" 承襲 the position, which implies that his status as the Sacrificial Attendant was doubtful. The plaque further asserts that another temple was set up after You Shang's death in Chongming because of the lack of descendants of Master You in Shandong. As scholars began to express uncertainty, officials in Feicheng, Shandong province were ready for a fight against Chongming over the status as Master You's real descendants.

6. The reaction of the officials in Feicheng

Zhao You 趙佑 (1727-1800) was an official in the sage descendant fight. He wrote an article in 1786 (the fifty-first year of the Qianlong period) to document the state of Master You Ancestral Hall in Feicheng, Shandong province.[13] Zhao You's narrative relates that he served as the examiner for the Shandong Provincial Examination in 1781 (the forty-sixth year of the Qianlong period).

[13] Chongxiu Xianxian Youzi Cimu Shili Wujingboshi Xu [Preface to the Academician of Five Classics commenced by the rebuilding of the ancestral hall and tomb for the Late Master You] 重修先賢有子祠墓始立五經博士序 in *Qingxiantang Wenji*, in Qingdai Shiwenji Huibian, 360: 640-643.

When paying homage to the relics of Confucius in Qufu, Zhao You visited all descendants of Confucius disciples, but found that the whereabouts of Master You's descendants were unknown. However, Zhao You was able to visit a village called You Village, where thirteen remaining inhabitants of Master You's lineage resided. He decided to support these thirteen descendants to gain the right to worship Master You. He consulted the Inspector of Shandong, Duke Yansheng and local administrators on the rebuilding of Master You Ancestral Hall in Feicheng County and obtained his permission to send the seventy-second generation descendent of Master You, You Shouye 有守業 to school. Duke Yansheng donated land of ninety acres for the sacrifice and the officially allocated academic land for the ritual was more than three units.

The Chongming You clan was also mentioned twice in Zhao You's article. The first account narrates Zhao You's astonishment at his colleague, Niu Sining 牛思凝's reaction toward the You descendants in Shandong. Niu was the magistrate of Feicheng County in 1746 or 1747 (the eleventh or twelfth years of the Qianlong period). After Master You's promotion to the rank of a Philosopher in 1738, the Court required the magistrate to visit the Master You descendants. Niu Sining obviously knew these descendants in his governing area as he wrote the preface for their genealogy, but he did not report the fact to the government. Zhao You expressed his anger to Niu by demanding evidence that the Ancestral Hall existed; he also demand explanation why Niu did not report to the higher official that there were direct descendants who had not moved. It seemed unreasonable to Zhao that the descendants of Master You had to be found in faraway Qin Zhou, even in Jiangnan, instead of nearby places.[14]

The second account narrates an event after the completion of Master You Ancestral Hall in Feicheng. Where local officials reported to the Ministry of Rites, which designated the Feicheng You family as a large eminent family and appointed them as Academicians of Five Classics. In Zhao You's article, he concluded:

> The completion of Master You Ancestral Hall is reported. The family is designated a large eminent family as approved by the imperial order. The lineage is inheritable. Its genealogy is required to be ascertained for appropriate ancestral hall and tomb, and to annul the request made by Chongming.
> 以合祠聞於上，奉旨勅部議行，定為大宗，應襲，並飭取宗圖，詳核重葺祠墓如儀，而罷江南崇明之請。[15]

[14] *Qingxiantang Wenji*, in *Qingdai Shiwenji Huibian*, 360: 640. In Chinese: 其祠方存，其人其譜之世嫡相承，不離地著，並確有可據，方親為之攝祭制敘，以冀附傳，而不以明告之上司，達之部，彼何為者，豈別有所疑沮而不果耶？其時位其上者又何為者耶？孔氏則世公而諸博士之總也，方且舍近而遠求之青州，甚又求之江南，迷離輾轉，幾何其不失之冒且濫！

[15] *Qingxiantang Wenji*, in *Qingdai Shiwenji Huibian*, 360: 643.

These two accounts clearly revealed Zhao You's attitude as an official in Shandong toward the whole event. He was extremely dissatisfied with the evidence provided by the Chongming You clan in support of their position as descendants of Master You. But he was even more dissatisfied with the tepid responses by Shandong magistrates. The only remaining thirteen descendants of the You family were people at the lower level of the labor force, without official assistance, they could not fight against the You clan in Chongming. From this it is clear that the designation of Feicheng You family as a large eminent family had to be due to the active efforts of Zhao You and other local officials in Shandong.

As a result of the efforts, the You family in the You Village were ascertained to be the descendants of Master You. The seventy-second generation grandson You Shouye was ordered to serve as Erudite of the Five Classics in order to honor the sacrifice.[16] According to the *Qing Emperor Gaozong Record* 高宗純皇帝實錄, in 1788 (the fifty-third year of the Qianlong period), the Ministry of Rites discussed the proposal made by the former Inspector of Shandong Ming Xing 明興, and the Academic Administrator Zhao You. The final triumph of Shandong has been frequently cited in historical records, while the story of the Chongming clan has rarely been mentioned. Without the two plaques preserved in the Xue Palace on Chongming Island, the story of the fight between the two You clans would not be known by posterity.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the power of the Yu clan, as the central force behind the building of the Chongming Master You Ancestral Hall and the dispute for the status as the descendants of Master You. The role of the local governments is not evident in existing historical records. Although the Jiangsu Administration allocated land for performing the sacrifice and gave support to the Ancestral Hall, it did not launch a counterclaim when Shandong attempted to reinstate the local You family as the large eminent family descended from Master You. In contrast, it was through the active efforts of local Shandong officials that the only remaining thirteen descendants of the Shandong You family, who were at the bottom of the labor force, were recognized as the direct descendants of Master You. You Shouye, son of hired laborers, leaped to the position of Erudite of the Five Classics in just two years, and thus became an important instrument for the state to show its emphasis on culture and to its concern with peace. Therefore, the fight over the status of Master You's descendants is not so much

[16] *Gaozong Chunhuangdi Shilu* (*Qing Emperor Gaozong Record*), 1297: 457. In Chinese: 禮部議准，前任山東巡撫明興、學政趙佑奏稱，肥城縣屬西北七十裡之有莊有氏，查系先賢有子後裔，其七十二代嫡孫有守業，請令承襲五經博士，以奉祠祀[…]從之。

a dispute between Feicheng and Chongming, but a struggle between a Chongming local clan and Shandong officials.

As revealed earlier, the promotion of Master You to the twelfth Philosopher in the early years of the Qianlong reign was part of the reconstruction of the ritual system in Confucian temples in the early Qing Dynasty. This action of ideological transformation at the national level could cause socio-economic consequences initially at local levels. Such changes in the Confucian temples were generally been considered as a signal of academic changes by the *literati*. Re-examining Yu's case as an instance of multi-layered and active interaction between the local clans and authorities, regarding the previously mentioned events such as the allocation of the land for performing sacrifice, ancestral hall construction, the fight over the status as Erudite of the Five Classics or Sacrificial Attendant, as well as the designation of large eminent families, they are issues concerning "identity" and "interest" rather than "thought" or "politics". In other words, the same policy may cause completely different reactions at the national and local levels.

The account has also showed that Chongming is a small remote county, and the Yu family is not a prominent family out of a strong clan. However, it can be seen from the two stone plaques preserved in the Xue Palace in Chongming that the Yu family was quite sensitive to the Court's policy, and good at seizing the opportunity to expand their own interests. Feicheng is located in the hinterland of Shandong, and several officials there were keen to glorify local affairs such as honoring sage descendants. They bonded in the process of the fight with other provinces. On the two plaques, there is rich history told by the inscriptions, which can also deepen our understanding of the complexity of local history.

Appendix 1: relevant historical events in chronological order

1	1738	In the third year of Qianlong's reign	Master You was promoted to be the twelfth sage. The court ordered visits to the descendants of Master You.
			Duke Yansheng searched for the descendants of Master You unsuccessfully in Qingzhou.
			The Chongming Yu family completed the Master You Ancestral Hall, and changed their family name into You. You Hu was thereby ordered by the Ministry of Rites and Duke Yansheng to serve as the Sacrificial Attendant , in charge of the sacrifice to Master You
2	1746	In the eleventh year of Qianlong's reign	The Feicheng County magistrate Niu Sining wrote the preface to the genealogical record of the You family in his county.
3	1755-1775	In between the twentieth and the fortieth year of Qianlong's reign	Because Shandong was bypassed in the official search for Master You's descendants, another temple was set up in Chongming. The great grandson of You Hu, You Zhaoxiong, became officially recognized as Master You's descendant.
4	1775	In the fortieth year of Qianlong's reign	You Zhaoxiong petitioned the government for allocating lands for performing the sacrifice due to his inability to afford the sacrifices.
5	1776	In the forty-first year of Qianlong's reign	The Inspector of Jiangsu approved to allocate the land of more than eight qing to You family in Chongming, who inscribed the approval on the plaque.
6	1782	In the forty-seventh year of Qianlong's reign	Shandong Academic Administrator Zhao You visited the descendants of Master You in Feicheng.
7	1786	In the fifty-first year of Qianlong's reign	Master You Ancestral Hall in Feicheng, Shandong was completed. The Ministry of Rites designated Feicheng You family as a large eminent family descended from Master You and appointed the family member as Erudites of the Five Classics. At the same time, the request made by Chongming was annulled.
8	1788	In the fifty third year of Qianlong's reign	Feicheng You Shouye formally inherited the position as Erudite of the Five Classics. The fight over who were the descendants of Master You was thus ended.

Plaque I: Inscription for Rebuilding the Pantheon

Plaque II: Documentary Tablet regarding the Sacrificial Properties for Sage You Zi

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CLAIMING AUTHORITY IN LINEAGE LEADERSHIP: A FUJIAN CASE STUDY

KHEE HEONG KOH
(National University of Singapore)

The dominance and importance of lineages in Chinese local society is already a well-researched theme. Pioneering works have paid close attention to the strategies employed by various descent groups or lineages in maintaining their prestige and power over time. The details of the strategies may differ, but the act to maintain the prestige and power cuts throughout time and space. It is common throughout the Southern Song and beyond, as well as present in groups across north and south China with varying degrees. The connectedness between collective wealth and strong organization, and constant production and renewal of a nucleus of educated men, is a main reason why Tongcheng 桐城 lineages had survived for centuries.[1] But the means to survive need not be focused only on one's agnates, since marriage networks were also a major component of a localist's strategy. This is convincingly argued in the cases from Song and Yuan Fuzhou 撫州.[2] Other than marriage, adoption was also an important tool to maintain a patriline, and to provide for widows.[3] In north China, different groups in a prefecture pursued different strategies to promote their influence, not necessarily focused in producing educated men, but also in grooming sectarian leaders.[4]

Although survival strategies to maintain a group's prestige and power can be seen in different regions and times, it is also clear that the strength of the groups differs through time and space.[5] In particular, Fujian 福建 and Guangdong 廣東 were well known for their "unusually powerful lineages" by the eighteenth century. These were lineages that "owned common property, tried to dominate villages and even market areas, and were the vehicles by which local elites competed with one another for power and status."[6] Such social organizations in these provinces have a long history of evolution and adaptation. These provinces were relatively new frontiers that were effectively incorporated into the Chinese state late in history, especially when compared to north China

[1] Beattie 1979, pp. 88-126.
[2] Hymes 1986, pp. 95-136.
[3] Dennerline 1986, pp. 137-209.
[4] Naquin 1986, pp. 210-244.
[5] See for example, a comparative study from a southern Shanxi case and other known cases from south China during the early Ming. Koh Khee Heong 2011, pp. 62-96.
[6] Naquin and Rawski 1987, p. 172.

and the lower Changjiang 長江 region commonly referred to as Jiangnan 江南. Taking Guangdong's Pearl River Delta and Fujian's Fuzhou 福州 prefecture as case studies, scholars have demonstrated how the regions' social, economic, and religious fabrics, especially the founding and development of lineages, were affected by state policies.[7]

The literature so far has focused on the strategies and histories of the descent groups and lineages, and the partnership or rivalry between different groups, or the negotiations between state policies and the groups' response. In a sense, the descent group and lineage were taken as the units of study.[8] Little attention has been paid to the subgroups, which are the various levels of branches within the lineage, especially the leadership roles members from each branch may play. It is basically an understandable void, since "even though certain branches in a lineage might prosper as others declined, there is no doubt of the essential continuity of the elite core."[9] However, meaningful questions on the power structure within the lineage ought to be raised too. Who were the leaders? How were they chosen? Was there a change in the background of the leaders over generations? Was a new principle invoked to justify the changes and thus legitimize the new leaders? Was the old power relation simply replaced? If not, how did it affect the new structure?

Generally, it can be said that "Lineages were often highly differentiated internally and dominated by the wealthier, better-educated males."[10] However, the mechanism that defines the leadership is probably much more complex and extremely varied. Being an intellectual historian, I am particularly interested in the reasons proposed by the lineage leaders to legitimize their authority, and I would also like to understand the social reasons backing or even demanding such a proposal.

In his study of Fuzhou lineages, Michael Szonyi saw a development from exclusive ancestral halls that he referred to as "official halls", built by the gentry-officials during the early to mid-Ming, to "popular halls" built in a spirit of inclusiveness in the late Ming and early Qing.[11] Szonyi is right that ancestral "Halls were built for different reasons at different times",[12] for the case study of this article does not fit the Fuzhou model.

My case study is centered on Li Guangdi (李光地, 1642-1718), a famous Neo-Confucian and major advisor to the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1662-

[7] See Faure 2007, especially pp. 67-122. Also see Szonyi 2002, especially pp. 56-89.
[8] The common theme in the following articles is how the elite families have secured their continuation, although the emphasis of the strategies in each article differs: Brook 1990; Rowe 1990; Zelin 1990; pp. 27-50, 51-81, 82-109 respectively.
[9] Beattie 1979, p. 126.
[10] Naquin and Rawski 1987, p. 172.
[11] Szonyi 2002, pp. 96-97, 122.
[12] Ibid., p. 92.

1722).[13] Li Guangdi was from Ganhuali 感化里 of Anxi 安溪 county. His family was from one of the most powerful lineages in the larger southern Fujian (Minnan 閩南) region. The lineage had been prosperous since the mid-Ming. I argue that devastation from the wars and banditries during the Ming-Qing transition had a great negative impact on the Li lineage, and the rebuilding period provided the opportunities for Li Guangdi and his extended family to take up leadership positions. Li Guangdi's proposal of a tripodic representation of power within the lineage should also be understood against this background.

A brief history of the Li Lineage

The most important figure in the development of the Li lineage was Li Sen (李森, 1398-1463). He was a powerful landlord that owned large areas of farmland, mountains that produced timber, and thousands of servants. His sphere of influence was not limited to his county, but was extended to a larger southern Fujian region. He had sponsored the rebuilding of the government offices and government schools of Quanzhou 泉州 prefecture as well as Anxi county. Other than government institutions, he had also built bridges and roads, as well as many temples in both the prefecture and county. During the Tianshun 天順 reign (r. 1457-1464), he was honored with an official insignia "promoting righteousness" 尚義 for his effort in a famine relief. Li Sen also had control over the local militia, and the government made him the police chief for Jiulongling 九龍嶺. He had even once been entrusted with the administrations of Yongchun 永春, Dehua 德化, and Anxi counties.[14] Since then, members of the Li lineage had been recorded in the county gazetteer for a variety of reasons such as their charity, righteous acts, official status, and outstanding performance in public office. All these mark the continued affluence of the lineage and their influence in the region.[15]

Evidence also suggests that the Li lineage has achieved a certain degree of organization internally. For example, from the seventh to the fifteenth generations, the generation indicators for the male agnates were systematically applied.[16] This powerful Li lineage had also built or controlled three different

[13] For Li Guangdi's official biography, refer to Zhao Er-xun, *Qingshigao,* 262: 9895-9899. Szonyi briefly mentioned Li Guangdi's plan for ritual leadership, but he did not provide any analysis. See Szonyi 2002, p. 164.
[14] *Anxi Xianzhi*, pp. 171-172.
[15] Ibid., pp. 234-236, 243, 250, 265.
[16] This is seen from the many sub-branch genealogies collected locally, for example *Longxi Hutou Lishi Zongpu: Jingyi Zhangfang Shangdong Jingxintang Jiapu*, *Longxi Hutou Lishi*

locations where they carried out their common ancestral worship during the Ming. I will touch further on this topic in the next section.

The Ming-Qing transition had devastated the Fujian economy and society, and the Li lineage was not spared. Li Guangdi lamented that in the four decades around the time of dynastic change, the great families had withered, and ancestral worship as well as the compilation of genealogies had been disrupted and destroyed by wars.[17] Despite the hard times, the Li lineage still commanded a certain degree of economic and social capital. With these, Li Guangdi's mother still managed to feed refugees, and his father Li Zhaoqing (李兆慶, 1611-1677) was also able to organize some form of local defense that had deterred the disturbances from bandits.[18] It was probably these resources that ironically made them a target for bandits. During a raid in 1655, Li Guangdi was captured together with some other relatives. Li Guangdi's grandfather, Li Xianchun (李先春, 1615-1655), died of grief as a result. But later, upon his return for mourning, his uncle Li Rijing (李日暻, *engong* 恩貢 1654) mobilized a local force and rescued them.[19]

Generally, there is no evidence to suggest that the Li lineage managed to operate as a collective unit in the devastation of dynastic change. However, certain branches, such as that of Li Guangdi, fared better than others. The destruction from the wars had actually provided a good opportunity for Li Guangdi and his extended family to take up leadership positions within the lineage. They were the ones who effectively led and sponsored the rebuilding and reorganizing efforts during the turbulent decades and beyond.

Reorganizing the Lineage

Rebuilding the space for ancestral worship

The Li lineage had built and controlled three locations that were used to perform ancestral worship. These were the Family Temple (*Lishi jiamiao* 李氏家廟) in the township of modern-day Hutou 湖頭, the Ancestral Hall in the western part of the prefecture city (*junxi zuci* 郡西祖祠), and the Eastern Peak Temple of Quanzhou prefecture (*jun dongyue ci* 郡東岳祠).

Li Guangdi's grandfather, Li Xianchun, initiated a renovation effort of the Family Temple as early as 1636. He did so after seeking the support of the

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Zongpu: Huli Meixi Luoyuan Chunyuangong zhixi, and *Longxi Hutou Lishi Zongpu: Sifang Xinya Zhixi Jiapu*.

[17] "Jiapu Xu" 家譜序, in *Rongcun Quanji*, 11: 19b.

[18] "Mutai Furen Qishi Zhengyan Yin" 母太夫人七十徵言引, in *Rongcun Quanji*, 13: 19a-b.

[19] *Wenzhengong Nianpu* 文貞公年譜, in *Rongchun Quanji*, 1: 3b-6a.

most senior major branch.[20] In the autumn of 1646, the temple was once again destroyed by bandits. Li Guangdi's father, Li Zhaoqing, took it upon himself to lead his kinsmen in the rebuilding effort.[21] The project was not completed until 1665. It is also recorded that after his father's demise, Li Zhaoqing "Gathered the kinsmen, built the Hall for the major branch (Family Temple), and audited the landholdings accumulated through the years and generations that were meant to support sacrificial rituals. He had also renovated the Eastern Peak Temple of Quanzhou as well as the Ancestral Hall under the flora tent located in the western part of the prefecture city. All these were to accomplish what his father had aspired to complete but could not."[22]

Being a powerful and affluent lineage with numerous successful kinsmen, many of its members who held official positions were living in the prefecture city of Quanzhou during the Ming. This group of elites grew large enough to warrant the building of an Ancestral Hall in the western part of the prefecture city for their communal ancestral worship. The man who built the hall, Li Maogui (李懋檜, d. 1624), was not only an official but was also from the most senior major branch. The hall was abandoned around 1647, and was further destroyed in the wars of 1674-1675. Restoration was not completed until 1684 after Li Guangdi's youngest brother Li Guangpo (李光坡, 1651-1725) took over the effort.[23]

The Eastern Peak Temple was a religious site that had received the patronage of Li Sen. The rebuilding of the temple in the Ming was one of the many religious projects that Li Sen had sponsored. His contribution was recognized by the temple when it honored him as an immortalized patron. The Daoist priests erected both the statues of Li Sen and his wife in the side halls, and thereafter the kinsmen of the Li lineage would gather and perform sacrificial rituals during the first day of the New Year and on his death anniversary. The location remained a center of the Li lineage's communal activities until the late Qing because they continued to sponsor the temple until then.[24]

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[20] *Rongcun Pulu Hekao*, 1: 8a; *Longxi Hutou Lishi Zongpu: Jingyi Zhangfang Shangdong Jingxintang Jiapu*, p. 13.
[21] *Rongcun Pulu Hekao*, 1: 8a.
[22] *Anxi Hutou Lishi Benzhi Fenpai Puxi*, p.25.
[23] *Rongcun Pulu Hekao*, 1: 20b-21a.
[24] "Quanzhou Dongyue Lizhangzhe Ciji" 泉州東嶽李長者祠記, in *Zuohai Wenji*, pp. 330-331.

Revising the genealogy

The Li lineage had published two editions of genealogy during the Ming, but none survived the destruction of the dynastic transition. But the period between 1660s and 1680s also saw a series of rebuilding and reorganizing efforts. The genealogy itself was revised around 1679. Li Guangdi was 38 *sui* and was mourning for his deceased father at home when he wrote the preface for the new edition in the summer of 1679.[25] Before leaving for home, the last official appointment he held was as academician of the Grand Secretariat and vice minister of the Ministry of Rites.[26]

According to Li Guangdi, the tradition of revising the genealogy was what kept the lineage from falling apart for over two hundred years. To him, it was the lineage's deep-rootedness that allowed it to gather the kinsmen after they had scattered, and to revive the scholarly tradition after it had eased. Li Guangdi also recounts how his father, Li Zhaoqing, had therefore engaged in the rebuilding of the Family Temple even before he had rebuilt his own house, and that once the temple was rebuilt, he started to revise the genealogy. When the primary data were collected, Li Zhaoqing sought the assistance of his older brother, Li Rijing, to edit them. The genealogy was basically revised by the winter of 1673 but they could not print it because of the rebellions by the three feudal lords, which had also involved Fujian province. Li Zhaoqing soon passed away and did not see the completion of the project. Two years later, Li Rijing finally had it further revised and published.[27]

The turbulent decades of the dynastic transition in mid-seventeenth century had resulted in the destruction of ritual space, documents, and social organizations in Fujian. However, it had also created a power gap and new opportunities. While the old power structure was disintegrating, a lesser branch with the necessary ambition, adequate resources, and shared determination by members of the extended family, would be able to rise to the occasion of restoring the lineage and establishing their authority. It is clear that the major reconstruction efforts were made by the extended family of Li Guangdi, including his grandfather, father, uncles, and siblings.

What was the exact position of this lesser branch in the entire lineage? Were members from the branch the natural leaders of the lineage by virtue of a ritualistic principle? As mentioned, the Li lineage prospered after Li Sen, they honored him as the sixth-generation ancestor, and he was the last common ancestor for them. Besides one of Li Sen's sons who left the lineage, the

[25] *Sui* is used here to represent the age by Chinese count.
[26] *Wenzhengong Nianpu*, in *Beijing Tushuguan Cang Zhenben Nianpu Congkan,* pp. 187-189.
[27] "Jiapu Xu", in *Rongcun Quanji*, 11: 19b-20a.

remaining five were the ancestors of the five major branches (seventh generation). Within the fourth major branch, there were four sons during the eighth generation. In turn, the fourth son among them had five sons (ninth generation). The eldest of these five men had three sons (tenth generation), and the youngest of the trio also had three sons (eleventh generation). The eldest was named Kejian 克建, also known as Xianchun, and was Li Guangdi's grandfather. Li Xianchun had six sons (twelfth generation), and Li Zhaoqing was the third son. Li Zhaoqing had four sons (thirteenth generation) and the eldest was Li Guangdi (refer to Figure 1).[28]

In short, Li Guangdi was not from the most senior major branch of the Li lineage. In fact, even within the fourth major branch, Li Guangdi did not belong to the main sub-branch either. And since Li Guangdi's father was the third son, Li Guangdi could not even claim leadership of his direct sub-line if ritualistic propriety was the only valid organizing principle. Li Guangdi must therefore invoke another principle should he wish to legitimize his authority or the leadership roles of many officials in similar situations.

Li Guangdi's proposal on ritual propriety

In an abstract discussion on the Family Temple, Li Guangdi mentions that his family had inherited four ancient rites. Among them, he speaks of three different principles in the propriety of ancestral worship. According to him:

> He who mastered the ceremony [was decided] by the branch [he belonged to], by the official status [he had], by the age and virtue [he possessed]. The eldest son of the most senior branch should offer the sacrificial eulogies first. This is because such a procedure is almost like an expedient of the *zongfa* 宗法 (system of classical descent groups). When there is one who has gained officialdom, arrange for the sacrifices according to his rank; when there is no such person, perform the rituals fit for a scholar using the income of the ancestral land. This is because such a procedure is almost like a transformation of the *shilu* 世祿 (hereditary nobility). The Temple honored the distant ancestor, and did not include kinsmen of the recent past. However, as for the high achievers [in office], the virtuous, and those who have made contributions to the ancestors, they were to be elevated into the Temple to enjoy the sacrifices. This is because such a procedure is almost like the principle of "illuminating the way of the virtuous" (*zong youdezhe zhidao* 宗有德者之道).[29]

[28] *Longxi Hutou Lishi Zongpu: Sifang Xinya Zhixi Jiapu*, pp. 1-3.
[29] "Jiapu Xu", in *Rongcun Quanji* 11: 18b-19a.

The principles of *zongfa* and *shilu* are the core pillars in his discussion of lineage leadership, especially for office-holding elites like himself. We will discuss them in greater detail later. The talk about illuminating the way of the virtuous is practically missing in his other thesis on the topic. The fourth ancient rite he later mentions is about the appropriate dates to carry out the relevant sacrificial rituals, about which we will not go into detail.[30]

Ordering the great descent line

Li Guangdi understood that the abandonment of the ancient rites had its reasons and history. Despite the efforts of past worthies to discuss and implement them, the rites were not sustainable. He admits that it was difficult to restore the ancient way and not easy to change the conventional practices. This is especially true if what remained were merely imaginary re-creations of the worthy gentlemen to preserve the ancient rites, and not what they had actually implemented. Li Guangdi rightfully felt that it was therefore unrealistic to expect others to follow.[31]

What really mattered to Li Guangdi was the *ji* 祭 (sacrifice) to one's ancestors. More importantly, he laments that the systems of the *dazong* 大宗 (great descent line) and the *xiaozong* 小宗 (minor descent line) had not been practiced for a few thousand years. Li Guangdi felt that when the systems were in disarray, there would be no way to unite the kinsmen as time passed, and furthermore, their feelings towards each other would wane should their relation be left undefined. Li Guangdi then asks, "How do we apply the ceremonies even if (the steps) are detailed" under such circumstances? He then points out that this was the reason why different regions have their own versions of customs and different families have their own systems. It was even more unacceptable to Li Guangdi when members of the gentry class (*lei* 類) were misguided and guilty of misbehaving unknowingly. It is therefore inappropriate to follow customs, Li Guangdi argues.[32]

Li Guangdi reminds his kinsmen that the Family Temple his father rebuilt was meant to reestablish the great descent line. He also claims that elders of the Li lineage had studied the past system and established the *zongzi* 宗子 (heir of the great descent line) since the Ming Dynasty. However, there were a few difficulties.[33] The following discussions will show that the solutions

[30] Ibid., 11: 19a.
[31] "Jiamiao Jixiang Lilüe" 家廟祭享禮略, in *Rongcun Quanji*, 21: 4a-4b.
[32] Ibid., 21: 4b.
[33] Ibid., 21 5a.

proposed by Li Guangdi all pointed towards a common goal: legitimizing the leadership role of officeholders within the lineage.

The first difficulty, according to Li, was that:

> During the ancient past, there would be no sacrifice when there was no *lu* 祿 (income from office holding or stipend from one's noble status). Thus the commoners merely perform a simple ceremony, *jian* 薦. This was the meaning of "the rites do not apply to the commoners." The families of the office holders (*qingdafu* 卿大夫) at that time were either hereditary officials or hereditary nobles; both were bestowed by the court. And when the *zongzi* led the sacrifice, he could offer the sacrifices by virtue of his *lu*. None existed today. If the *zongzi* has no *lu*, how could he offer sacrifice in accordance with the rite of a *dafu* 大夫? When the father was a *dafu* and the son was merely a *shi* 士, he, let alone a commoner, would not have dared to apply the rite of a *dafu*. Such was the first difficulty.[34]

It was thought that in the feudal past of China during the Western Zhou period (1045-771 BC), the office positions and noble titles of the aristocratic lineages were hereditary and inheritable rightfully by the first son of the primary wife.[35] Under the ancient system, the *zongzi* was both the head of the lineage as well as the new office holder or nobleman. Because the sacrificial *ji* in the *Classics* was ascribed to such families, then if one were to obey the *Classics* strictly, no sacrificial *ji* could have been performed at all in later days. Li Guangdi goes on to discuss the irrelevance of the *zongzi* in his contemporary context:

> In the past, the heir, *zongzi*, was established by the court. Therefore as the head of the lineage, he would definitely be familiar with the ceremonies and laws. But the *zongzi* of today include woodcutters and petty hawkers; if they were made to rise and prostrate, they would be lost and puzzled. Then how do we prepare a grand ceremony and let them lead? Such was the second difficulty.[36]

For most families after the Western Zhou, there was less and less correlation between one's order in birth and one's political fortune. The end of the old aristocratic system had, in a sense, leveled the playing ground, and each individual had the chance to achieve power and fame, and in turn, elevate the standing of one's extended family or branch. It was also implied that there was no longer any guarantee for authority and prestige for the senior branch and the

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Li Feng 2006, pp. 110-13.
[36] "Jiamiao Jixiang Lilüe", in *Rongcun Quanji*, 21: 5a-5b.

zongzi. Once again, Li Guangdi was emphasizing the importance of state authority in granting the rights to the *zongzi*. The role of the *zongzi* was, in theory, important both to the sacrificial rites to the ancestors and to the everyday life of the kinsmen. Li Guangdi continues:

> Because he who was the *zongzi* was respected by his kinsmen, he would be officiating at all the capping, wedding, funeral, and sacrificial ceremonies. Therefore the spirits of the ancestors were also relying on him. Now that he is extremely low in status and poor, once he put on the ceremonial clothing and faced the ancestors, the people's sentiments would not find it agreeable, and the ancestors' spirits would not respond. Such was the third difficulty.[37]

Compared to the embarrassed ancestors, the hostile response of the kinsmen was a more serious issue in reality. What Li Guangdi states here is a simple fact: a *zongzi* without any political capital or wealth would not be able to command respect and lead the lineage. This predicament basically calls into question the adequacy of the *zongfa* system in deciding lineage leadership. Is there a solution to solve this predicament? Of course Li Guangdi had an idea: he advocates that because "Times have changed and customs evolved, propriety should be created based on rightfulness." Elaborating, he suggests that:

> Now, when there is a descendent of a certain family who had achieved officialdom, we should disregard the concern of whether is he from the great line or minor branch. Thus we should not be restricted by the regulation that forbade a minor branch descendent from leading the sacrifice, and rely only on the law that stipulated that there would be no sacrifice if the lead descendent has no *lu*.[38]

Li Guangdi shifts the criterion of the lead descendant leading the lineage from the ancient *zongfa* that stressed the priority of birth order, to another aspect of the archaic system, the presence of state-endorsed prestige. In the Qing, this state-endorsed prestige refers to a position in the bureaucracy or a degree from the civil service examination. He further strengthens his argument by invoking the contemporary bestowment system. According to him:

> […] the system of bestowing one's ancestors with official titles in our times is not dependent on [whether the descendent is from] the great line or minor branch. The extent of the bestowment is equivalent to that of [eligibility in

[37] Ibid., 21: 5b.
[38] Ibid.

> leading] the sacrificial rituals. There is no doubt [of its legitimacy] when we consider it against both the law of the state and the sentiment of the people.[39]

It is now apparent that while Li Guangdi had used the ancient principle of *shilu* in his argument for office holders to lead the lineage, the real authority that he was invoking was the power of the state. In this argument, the state's system of honoring officials' ancestors superseded the ancient *zongfa*, and was used as the authority to legitimize the leadership of officials over the commoner *zongzi*. With the backing of state power, Li Guangdi was also confident that such an arrangement would be accepted by all. However, this does not imply that the ancient *zongfa* was totally discarded; it was to be modified and weakened in its importance. On the necessity to continue the *zongfa* system, Li Guangdi asserts that:

> The ancient sage kings used the system of the *zongzi* to honor one's ancestors and respect one's forefathers. Although the profound intention of connecting all under heaven with kinship is now lost, how do one not know that it will be revived in the future?[40]

After combining both principles, the new and modified system in Li Guangdi's vision was to:

> Let him who is receiving a stipend from the Court (i.e. an official) hold the sacrificial cup and offer the sacrifices. Meanwhile, reserve a place for the *zongzi* to take part standing beside him. The announcement should mention "the lead descendant in the sacrificial ritual (*zhujisun* 主祭孫) so-and-so, and the descendent from the great descent line (*zongsun* 宗孫) so-and-so." This expediency took into considerations the rightfulness of the past and present. It is inevitable that this is devised.[41]

However, the new system did not end here. Although Li Guangdi complains of scholars following contemporary customs and acting against the ancient rites, he is unable to ignore the force of contemporary customs. He proposes that:

> The kinsmen of a commoner lineage are numerous. And if they have a temple for their first ancestor, then they would equally divide [and rotate] the burden of preparing for the sacrificial rituals among the entire lineage, so as to

[39] Ibid., 21: 5b-6a.
[40] Ibid., 21: 6a.
[41] Ibid.

> demonstrate their respect. Therefore there is someone who would be the on-duty descendent (*zhijisun* 值祭孫) administering the sacrifice. He would stand behind both the lead descendent and the descendent from the great descent line, and the sacrificial announcement should mention that.[42]

After incorporating the practice of contemporary customs, this new system is a tripodic relation that "is the rite currently practiced by my Family Temple", explains Li Guangdi.[43] The real-life situation of other lineages might not be as neat as one might have wished. Li Guangdi imagines a rhetorical question: "What do we do if the descendent from the great descent line is also an official, but of lower rank than the descendent from the minor branch?" To this, he answers that:

> If their ranks are close to one other, then the descendent from the great descent line shall lead; [but] if the difference is great, then the descendent from the minor branch will still lead.[44]

Prestige from state power prevailed, even in the case when the lineage did not produce any official. Li Guangdi puts forward the question of "What to do if the family has no official?" Wealth played a positive role albeit a lesser one, for Li Guangdi proposes that:

> If there is no official, and thus there is no state stipend, then a sacrificial ritual should not be prepared. Even if the family owns sacrificial land, it is not *shilu*. One must reduce the amount of offerings, and simplify the ceremonies, as if it is the [lesser] *shi* 士 rite of the past. This rite is only slightly grander than that of a commoner. Maybe one can then be excused from the offense of transgression and ignorance?[45]

Even if such a lineage has already toned down their sacrificial ceremonies, the issue of who should preside remains. Li Guangdi's answer to this question returns to the power of the state. To him, priority should be given to anyone who has other state-bestowed honor, usually referring to degree holders and government students. The criterion to consider when there is more than one descendent with such standing is the seniority of the person in the lineage. Only when no such person exists should the *zongzi* be presiding.[46]

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 21: 6a-6b.
[44] Ibid., 21: 6b.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

Reinventing the rites of the minor descent line

The great descent line and the family temple theoretically involved all the kinsmen of the lineage. Once that has been sorted out, Li Guangdi turns his attention to the discussion of the minor descent line, which to him is an issue that has the most tedious difficulties. This is because since the principle of the minor descent line is about paying respect to one's four generations of direct forefathers, then it certainly must take the most senior line of one's great-great-grandfather as the *xiaozong*. In this case, all the shortcomings of this principle are no different from the faults of the *dazong* system that Li Guangdi discussed earlier. On the other hand, there are a few more complications for the *xiaozong*. Li Guangdi points out that under the *dazong*, the tablet of the first ancestor of the entire lineage will never be removed from the temple. On the other hand, because there is a restriction on the number of generations to receive sacrifices under the *xiaozong*, the oldest of the four generations of direct forefathers would be removed in turn whenever a new generation was added. This is the first difference between the two. He also feels that nowadays, most gentry's families have a temple for their first ancestor, but not for the four generations of direct forefathers. Most of the time, they are worshipped at home. This is the second difference.[47] Therefore, the worship of the four generations of direct forefathers is very complex. Li Guangdi elaborates that:

> For the families to worship the four generations of direct forefathers, it is either that they share the common great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather, grandfather, but different fathers; or the common great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather, but different grandfathers and fathers; or the common great-great-grandfather, but different great-grandfathers, grandfathers, and fathers. It is extremely complicated and varied, and is no longer the *xiaozong* system of the past.[48]

He admits that this is regrettably a messy situation that Li Guangdi's lineage had been unable to remedy but in which it could only follow the customs. Nevertheless, they would still offer their respect under the lead of the great-great-grandfather's *zongzi* on the great-great-grandfather's death anniversary. Likewise, they would worship their great-grandfather under the lead of his *zongzi* on his death anniversary. The key to sustaining an order was to establish the *dazong*, argues Li Guangdi; if not, the *xiaozong* would have nothing to rely

[47] Ibid., 21: 6b-7a.
[48] Ibid., 21: 7a.

on and to take as a reference point. Other than the complexity, the fact that none of the great Song Neo-Confucian masters had discussed this in detail did not help him either.[49]

The basic principle set by the great Song Neo-Confucian masters is, however, very inspiring to Li Guangdi. He lauds Cheng Yi's (程頤, 1033-1107) propositions that every man can offer his respect to the first ancestor, and since the mourning grades extend up to one's great-great-grandfather, one should also honor the four generations of direct forefathers. These two propositions form the basic principle for Neo-Confucian scholars such as Li Guangdi when discussing the *dazong* and *xiaozong* systems in post-Song China.[50] But the ideas of the great Song Neo-Confucian masters were not without debates in later ages. Li Guangdi found it necessary to set his discussion in a Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130-1200) framework so as to enhance the authority of his argument. Thus Li Guangdi explains the seemingly contradictory action of Zhu Xi when the latter did not offer sacrifices to his first ancestor. According to his explanation, Zhu Xi was sojourning in Fujian and the rest of his kinsmen were back in Wuzhou; therefore Zhu Xi did not honor his first ancestor. Li Guangdi is confident that had Zhu Xi been living with his kinsmen and had there been an Ancestor Temple for their lineage, Zhu Xi would definitely have taken part in the sacrifice. As for Cheng Yi's notion on "taking over the descent line" (*duozong* 奪宗), Li Guangdi argues that since the Tang Dynasty, only officials were allowed to build ancestral temples legally; and if the temple had been built by Cheng Yi, he himself would have presided over the sacrificial rituals, thus redefining the descent line. And although Cheng Yi did not state it explicitly, Li Guangdi is confident that Cheng Yi was referring to the *xiaozong*.[51]

Li Guangdi's thesis on the legitimacy of the ancestral temples and the leaders of the lineages has clearly invoked the authority of state power. This is through his emphasis that the patrons for the temples and lineage leaders must be office holders. Moreover, Li Guangdi also felt that there was something novel about the condition of the *xiaozong* temple. Since one is only worshipping four generations of direct forefathers in the *xiaozong* system, the earliest generation would be removed as a later generation of ancestors joined in. The legitimacy of the temple as well as the uses of the sacrificial ceremonies would be valid when an official built the temple, and remain so until the official's tablet was removed from the temple as a distant generation of ancestor.[52]

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[49] Ibid., 21: 7a-7b.
[50] "Jiamiao Jixiang Lilüe", in *Rongcun Quanji*, 21: 7b; Li Guangdi, "Xiaozong Jiaji Lilüe" 小宗家祭禮略, in *Rongcun Quanji*, 21: 9b.
[51] "Jiamiao Jixiang Lilüe", in *Rongcun Quanji*, 21: 7b-8a.
[52] Ibid., 21: 8a-8b.

Li Guangdi's thesis is now well supported by his elaboration of the classical *shilu* principle and adherence to a Cheng-Zhu framework he himself had defined. After underscoring the importance of having the legitimacy to build the temples and lead the lineages by office holders again, he also mentions that in the *xiaozong* system, the dual leadership of the official and the *zongzi* can be allowed.[53]

Li Guangdi reminds us that in theory, the worship of the four generations of direct forefathers should be restricted to the *zongzi* of the particular branch. All kinsmen within the five mourning grades should gather at the *zongzi*'s residence, and not each build a temple for worship. By repeating the argument on the criterion of *shilu* and how insignificant a social status *zongzi* may have deteriorated to, he once again highlights the role of officialdom. If this principle were not followed, "the rites of Cheng-Zhu would be exhausted again." It is important to bear in mind that:

> The times of the ancient sagely kings were different and they did not inherit each other's rituals. The rituals of today are in a complete chaos. Latter-day sages have invented and revived [the rituals], and it is natural that they have evolved according to the times.[54]

However, Li Guangdi allows himself a certain degree of flexibility. He shares with us his own personal experience:

> When it comes to the four generations of direct forefathers, I am the *zongzi* of my late father, but not so for my grandfather's generation and above. According to the law, I can worship only my parents. However, the *xiaozong* system is not implemented today. What my lineage practiced in the past was a system based on annual rotation and ignored the positions of the branches. My status, however, allows me to offer sacrifices up to my great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather, but I am also afraid that once I return to office, I will not be able to participate in leading the sacrifice regularly.[55]

Still, Li Guangdi was grateful that his kinsmen were now living in the ancestral hometown, and that his uncles would involve him when they were rotating their turn to conduct the annual sacrifice to his great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather.

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[53] Ibid., 21: 8b-9a
[54] "Xiaozong Jiaji Lilüe", 21: 9b-10a.
[55] Ibid., 21: 10a-10b.

But Li Guangdi also admits that when he withdrew from these events and practiced the rites of the four seasons, he would definitely set up the tablets for his great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather, grandfather, and father together, and offer sacrifices. An apologetic Li Guangdi claims that he is not being disrespectful but is driven by emotions.[56] This act clearly contradicts his earlier claim that the *xiaozong* system is not about every individual building a temple of worship to one's four generations of direct forefathers. Although he left it unsaid, Li Guangdi would have felt that he was entitled to do so because of his high official rank.

Although he was invoking the authority of classical principle and the great Song Neo-Confucian masters, Li Guangdi had to compromise and allowed local customs to co-exist with his new plan. The rotation of duties in matters related to the sacrificial rituals to one's ancestors ought to be addressed. He concludes in his thesis that:

> Rotation in administering the sacrificial rituals is not found in ancient time, but the purpose today is to divide the burden equally. Furthermore, this would allow all the various sons, as well as the young ones and women, of the same ancestors, to understand the meaning of the ceremonies. If all were carried out in the residence of the *zongzi*, then it is not considered a mistake.[57]

Finding no other available rhetoric from the rich written tradition, Li Guangdi had to explain the existence of the system with presumably real-life experiences. But his very last sentence that attempted to offer precedence to the *zongzi* was a weak veil to cover the tripodic nature of his scheme.

Conclusion

Branches in a lineage rise and fall. When one of them rises, how did it exert its authority? What was the rhetoric to legitimize the new leadership based on? What is the relation between the ideas proposed and the historical situation of the people involved? These are some of the questions this article intends to answer with a case study from southern Fujian.

The original power structure that saw heavy involvement of the most senior major branch during the Ming had collapsed during the Ming-Qing dynastic change under decades of unrest in the region. However, one cannot simply force one's kinsmen to accept one's authority by virtue of one's political

[56] Ibid., 21: 10b.
[57] Ibid., 21: 13a.

standing. We see that the rebuilding efforts during the period were basically led by members from Li Guangdi's extended family, starting with his grandfather. But it took the effort of three generation of kinsmen to accomplish the revival, with Li Guangdi's father, uncle, and siblings heavily involved. When the rebuilding was complete, members from this minor branch of the fourth major branch had no doubt become the *de facto* leaders of the lineage. They attained such authority because of Li Guangdi's high political position, as well as their leadership in the rebuilding efforts.

This new leadership in the lineage needs to be explained. The ancient *dazong* system could not be used directly since they did not belong to the *dazong*. A convincing way to undermine the core importance of the *zongzi* was to emphasize the fact that he no longer commanded prestige, resources, and respect by virtue of his birth order. The relevance of the *shilu* was highlighted. But the Li lineage did not have hereditary nobility or official positions like those of the aristocrats in the Western Zhou. Therefore, Li Guangdi invoked state power to establish their leadership positions, equating officialdom to the archaic *shilu*. In addition to citing the classical principle, Li Guangdi also added weight to his plan by discussing it under the Cheng-Zhu framework.

Without a complete understanding of the historical context, one could be misled into thinking that this is just common rhetoric used by an official and discounting the significance of Li Guangdi's thesis. Since it was still quite unthinkable to totally disregard the *zongzi*, Li Guangdi reserved a spot for him. But it is already demonstrated that to him, state-bestowed status took precedence over *zongfa*. However, local customs are always strong and more difficult to ignore. Therefore, even without being able to find any classical or Neo-Confucian support for the rotation of sacrificial duties, Li Guangdi had to compromise and accept a tripodic arrangement. This case study by no means reflects any universal truth about Chinese kinship organization, but its complexity should remind us to pay more attention to the interplay between ideas, family history, social condition, and the larger historical context.

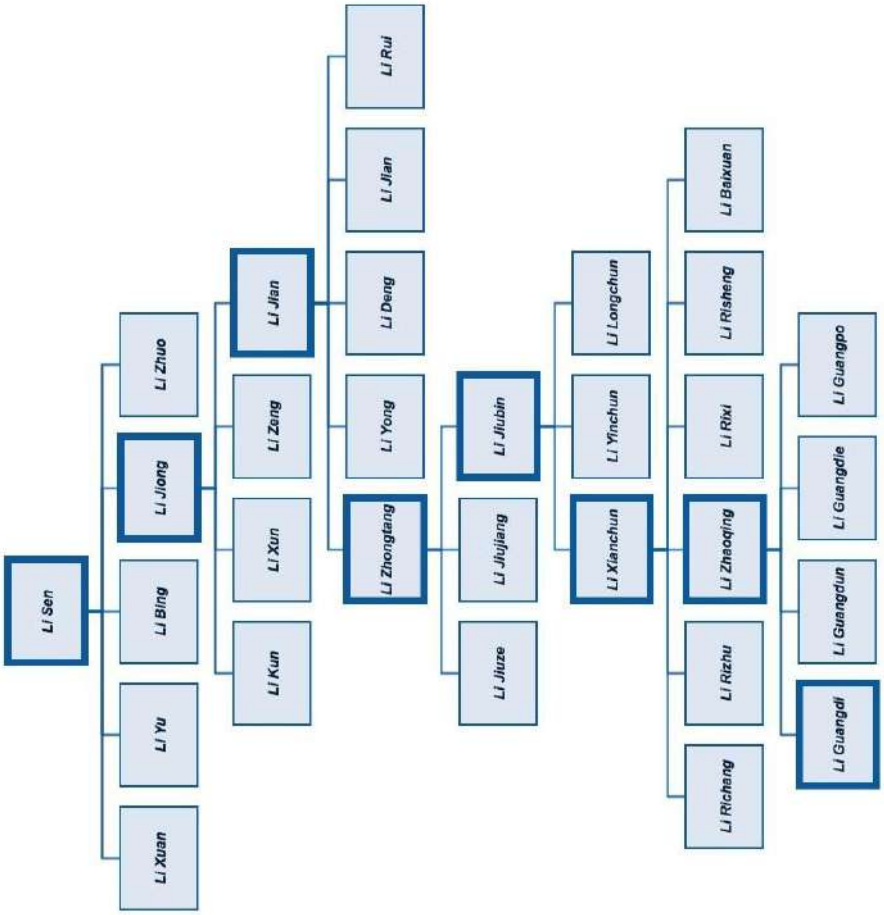

Figure 1: Li Guangdi's position in the lineage.

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THE CHILD-HEART MIND: LI ZHI (1527-1602) AND INTELLECTUAL CHANGES IN LATE MING CHINA

LEE CHEUK YIN 李焯然
(National University of Singapore)

Introduction

Li Zhi 李贄 is one of the more insightful thinkers of sixteenth-century China after the emergence of Wang Yangming and the development of the Taizhou 泰州 School, one who had retained the ideas of individualism and freedom. Although his ideas had never been accepted by mainstream society, Li Zhi had challenged late Ming thought. He enjoyed an unambiguous standing in the history of the Ming Dynasty, because he sought to trek a new path in thought and pursue the truth in learning. Li Zhi's quest for knowledge reflected the trends and realities of Ming intellectual development, as well as uncovered the reason behind the gradual ossification of late Ming thought. On the other hand, Li Zhi's tragedy illustrated the price that *literati* had to pay in their pursuit of independence. Although Li Zhi had failed to make an immense impact during his times, his process of pursuing the truth had become a form of reality, and based on this it is sufficient to claim his significance and status in Ming intellectual history.

Official Confucianism and Intellectual Background

After the founding of the Ming Dynasty in 1368, the restoration of Chinese culture was considered to be a priority. In the Hongwu era, Song Lian 宋濂 (1310-1381) and Wang Yi 王禕 (1321-1372), were acknowledged to be the most learned men and leading intellectuals of the time, exemplifying the transition of Confucian learning from the Yuan Dynasty to the early Ming. The contribution of both men, especially that of Song Lian, to the restoration of cultural institutions in early Ming period was highly praised both by scholars of Ming and later times. The *Official History of Ming* recorded that "most cultural institutions of the new age were established by the hands of Song Lian",[1] and

[1] *Mingshi*, 128: 3787-3788.

described him as the leader of the scholar-officials who had contributed to the founding of the new dynasty.

Song Lian and Wang Yi were practical scholars of the Cheng Zhu School, their intellectual inclination tended towards "extensive study" (*boxue* 博學) and the "extension of knowledge" (*zhizhi* 致知), a main theme in Zhu Xi's learning. Perhaps due to the lack of strict control of the Yuan government over the intellectual circle and the absence of cultural policies like those of the early Ming period, the belief systems of Song Lian and Wang Yi left some room for both independent thinking and self-realisation. After Song Lian and Wang Yi, the Zhu Xi School of learning and intellectual trends gradually deteriorated and ossified, something that was closely related to the cultural policies of the Ming government.

It was obvious that the government propaganda in favour of the Cheng Zhu school of thought was a major factor behind its domination of Chinese thought at the beginning of the Ming period. In 1384, when the civil examinations were revived, the commentaries of the Cheng Zhu School were again prescribed as the authoritative textbooks. Just as was the case under the Yuan system, questions were set from the *Four Books* and the Five Classics. However, a rather peculiar answer format was introduced, probably through the planning of Liu Ji 劉基 (1311-1375), a thinker of note and a gifted organiser at the Court of Emperor Taizu. The format was known as the "eight-legged essay" (*bagu wen* 八股文). Under this format, candidates were required to answer the questions in a particular type of parallel prose and imitate the writing manner of the ancients. As a result of such a proscribed essay style requirement, candidates did not bother to study anything other than this, thus stifling independent and critical thinking. In actual fact, the intention of this policy was to bring intellectuals under control. Closely integrated with the examination system was the government schools, whose expansion was made a pressing matter in Hongwu reign. In 1369, prefectures and districts throughout the empire were ordered to establish government schools. Each was to be under an instructor and a few assistant instructors. The function of the government schools was to educate and control the government-salaried students, who were locally selected by examinations.

The official canonisation of the Cheng Zhu philosophy occurred in 1415 when Hu Guang 胡廣 (1370-1418) and others compiled the *Comprehensive Collection of Discussions on Nature and Principle* 性理大全, in 70 *juan*, and the *Comprehensive Collection of Commentaries on the Four Books and Five Classics* 四書五經大全. These two *Comprehensive Collections* were in fact compiled for examination purposes. Nevertheless, as they were designated by the government as textbooks for civil examinations, no one dared to openly question their academic value.

The resultant intellectual monopoly however, also brought about an ossification of the "Learning of the Way". Consequently, whilst most scholars

subscribed to its rigid standards, those who sought independence and freedom in moral cultivation were naturally attracted to its main rival, the "Learning of the Mind". The domination of Cheng Zhu philosophy ended in the mid Ming period, when Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428-1500) and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529) successfully challenged its orthodox status and consequently deprived it of its commanding position. The introductory remarks in the "Biographies of Confucian Scholars" in the *Mingshi* 明史 give a thumbnail sketch of the intellectual trends in Ming times:

> In the beginning, the Confucian scholars of the early part of the Ming Dynasty all belonged to various groups stemming from the various disciples of Master Zhu [Xi]. The transmission of doctrines from their teachers could be clearly traced and their patterns were in perfect order. Cao Duan 曹端 and Hu Juren 胡居仁 toed the line respectfully and followed carefully earlier prescriptions. They held on to the true teachings handed down to them by earlier Confucian scholars and dared not make any changes. The division of learning began with Chen Xianzhang and Wang Shouren 王守仁. The school, which sprang from Xianzhang, was called the 'Jiangmen teaching'. It was a solitary and isolated movement, so that its transmission did not continue for long. The school, which sprang from Shouren, was called the 'Yaojiang 姚江 teaching'. They established principles of their own and turned their backs on Master Zhu. Its followers filled the world, and it continued to be transmitted for over a century. But as its teachings spread, its abuses ever became more extreme. From Jiajing 嘉靖 (1552-1566) and Longqing 隆慶 (1567-1572) times, those who still ardently believed in the Cheng Zhu tradition and were not detracted by heretical doctrines were few in number.[2]

Although the above passage perhaps illustrates to some extent the bias of the compilers of the *Mingshi* towards the Cheng Zhu School, it brings out the fact that the intellectual world of the early Ming was dominated by Cheng Zhu learning, whereas in the late Ming, it was dominated by the teachings of Wang Yangming, the remote but illustrious follower of Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 who brought the "Learning of the Mind" to its culmination.

When discussing the different stages of intellectual development of the Ming Dynasty, the compilers of the *Catalogue of the Imperial Manuscript Library* made the following observation:

> The separation of [the learning of] Zhu [Xi] and Lu [Jiuyuan] into two schools had taken place early in the [Southern] Song Dynasty. In the Ming Dynasty, before the Hongzhi 弘治 reign, (1488-1505), the Zhu [Xi] School dominated over that of Lu. After a period of time, [scholars] became concerned over the limitations of Zhu Xi's learning. After the Zhengde 正德 reign (1505-1521), the

[2] *Mingshi*, 282: 7222.

> Zhu and Lu schools engaged in struggle and dispute. After the Longqing reign, however, the Lu [Jiuyuan] School dominated over that of Zhu. Still later, [scholars] grew weary of the indulgence of the Lu [Jiuyuan] School, and they therefore, promoted Zhu [Xi's] learning and relegated Lu [Jiuyuan's] learning.[3]

These remarks indicate the competition that existed between the Zhu Xi and Lu Jiuyuan Schools and their domination of the Ming intellectual world at different times. The rise and fall of the two schools occurred in the Hongzhi and Zhengde reigns, both of which were transitional periods of great change in Ming thought. The rise of the Wang Yangming School of the Mind marked a new epoch in the history of Ming thought through its monopolisation of the intellectual circles of the latter half of the Ming Dynasty. However, it must be acknowledged that intellectual developments often are underway long before they become readily discernible. What is more, the treatment of the development of Ming intellectual thought solely in terms of the competition between the two schools grossly oversimplifies the situation, and fails to do justice to the complexity of intellectual trends in mid and late Ming eras.

Wang Shouren, a native of Yuyao, Zhejiang, was the most important thinker in the Ming Dynasty. He advocated that "there is no object, no word, no reason, no righteousness and no benevolence beyond the mind". The original mind manifests itself through "innate knowledge" (*liangzhi* 良知), or the "good knowledge", which is the activity of the mind in its natural purity and perfection. His famous philosophy also includes the doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action, that "knowledge is the beginning of action; action is the completion of knowledge".[4] Wang Yangming's theory of the mind stressed man's nature and respected individual thinking, which was the beginning of a recalcitrant trend of thought that people should pursue the liberation of individual personality in late Ming period. One central character among Wang Yangming's successive scholars is Li Zhi, a member of the Taizhou School.

Li Zhi was one of the leading thinkers in Ming intellectual history, known in particular for his criticism of Confucian orthodoxy and his re-evaluations of famous historical figures. In Li Zhi's eyes, scholars of Confucianism during his time were hypocrites and sycophants who did not demonstrate the true qualities of Confucian learning. He was a controversial figure during his lifetime who received both scorn and adulation from his contemporaries among the scholar-elite. He was eventually arrested as a heretic, and his tragic suicide in prison in 1602 reflects the difference between reality and the ideal for a Chinese intellectual of the times.

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[3] *Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiyao*, p. 2006.
[4] De Bary 1960, pp. 569-581.

Li Zhi: Life and Career

Li Zhi (original name Zaizhi 載贄; *zi* Hongfu 宏父, Zhuowu 卓吾; *hao* Wenling Jushi 溫陵居士) was a native of Jinjiang 晉江, Fujian province. Born in the 6th Year of Jiajing 嘉靖 (1527), he received the *juren* title in 1552 and was unable to pursuit higher degree due to financial difficulties. In 1555, he assumed the post of Education Director of Kongcheng 共城 in Henan province. In 1560, he was promoted to Erudite of the National University in Nanjing but had to return home to observe the mourning rites a few months later because of the dead of his father. In 1561, he brought his family to the northern capital Beijing and waited two years for his new posting at the National University. However, his career at the capital was short-lived. His grandfather passed away, he had to relinquish his job to observe the mourning rites at home. He returned to Beijing in 1566 to assume the post of Office Manager at the Ministry of Rites. From 1571 to 1576, Li Zhi was transferred to Nanjing and appointed Vice Director in the Ministry of Justice. During his stay in Nanjing, he met the Geng 耿 brothers and Jiao Hong 焦竑, who later became his close friends and soul-mates.

Li Zhi's last official career was the Prefect of Yao An 姚安 in Yunnan province in 1578. He resigned after serving the three-year term and devoted himself completely to intellectual pursuit. Later, he moved to Huang An 黃安 to stay with the Geng brothers and help to teach their sons. However, he had intellectual disputes with Geng Dingxiang 耿定向 and decided to leave. In 1585, he sent his wife and daughter back to Fujian and moved to Hubei Ma Cheng 麻城, a neighboring district southeast of Huang An, where he found shelter in a Buddhist temple on the shores of the Longtan 龍潭 (Dragon Lake) with his son and younger brother. Misfortunate happened shortly after. His only son was drowned at the Lake, an incident which was a great grief for him and influenced his attitude towards life.[5]

In 1588 he shaved his head to show his determination to leave his family and the materialistic world, devoting most of his time in writing and teaching. In 1590, he published his first collected work *Fenshu* 焚書 in Ma Cheng. His second work the *Cangshu* 藏書, a personal evaluation of historical figures and episodes from the Warring States to the Yuan Dynasty, was published nine years later in Nanjing. A supplement to both books was published in 1618 and 1602 respectively. His writings soon become very popular among the intellectuals but also antagonized and upset many of the conservative Confucians and officials. In 1600, a mob of locals chased him out and demolished the temple he stayed. To his rescue, Ma Jinglun 馬經綸 took him in and provided him with the shelter. However, in 1602 Zhang Wenda 張問

[5] For discussions, refer to Chan Kam-chiew 1974; Hsiao Kung-ch'uan 1938.

達 (d. 1625), a supervisor censor in Tongzhou 通州, impeached Li Zhi and requested that he be arrested and his writings destroyed. Li eventually slashed his throat with a razor in the prison and ended his life. His last words before his death were, "what more could an old man of seventy ask for?"

The True Confucian with a Child-Heart Mind

Recent scholars have regarded Li Zhi as a "non-Confucian, anti-Confucianism",[6] or a "staunch anti-Confucian against the conventional trend."[7] These statements are too much of an exaggeration that does not reflect historical realities. Although Li Zhi's ideas have been seen as heresy, Li Zhi was certainly not seeking a clean break with Confucianism. Reading the text on Li Zhi's *Cangshu* would land us with a phrase that Cheng Yi's 程頤 teachings were "axioms that hold true for millennia",[8] or a statement that eulogizes Yang Shi's 楊時 sayings as "great talent and sagacity, practical *daoxue* 道學 (Learning of the Way)."[9] Hence Li Zhi's critique of Confucianism was not unequivocally a negative one. Moreover, Li Zhi's *Chutan Ji* 初潭集 followed the Confucian writing format by dividing its text into the four parts of virtue, speech, affairs, and literature, of which virtue is the most important. Li Zhi had also mentioned that "writing Confucian books prioritizes the writing of virtue, but the person who could both write a Confucian book and practice Confucian virtues is me."[10] This demonstrates that Li Zhi was a self-professed Confucian, and his thinking was endowed with strong Confucian tendencies. Ma Jinglun made the following analysis:

> Relish in the Way, interpret the sayings of the sages; Li Zhi's *Yiyin* 易因 and *Daogu Lu* 道古錄 have their origins in the teachings of Fuxi, King Wen of Zhou, Confucius, and Mencius, and they match the intellectual standards of Zhou (Dunyi 周敦頤, 1017-1073), Shao (Yong 邵雍, 1011-1077), Chen (Xianzhang 陳獻章, 1428-1500), and Wang (Yangming 陽明, 1472-1528), among other great Neo-Confucian scholars.[11]

Therefore, Li Zhi was not anti-Confucian, as he had a strong Confucian upbringing on the basis of Confucian thought. What Li Zhi had vehemently opposed were distorted or false *daoxue* and their bearers, the alleged Confucians

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[6] See *Xu Cangshu*, Introduction: 1-3.
[7] Department of Chinese, Nanjing University 1974.
[8] *Cangshu*, 32: 533.
[9] *Cangshu*, 32: 536.
[10] *Chutang Ji*, *Xu*: 1.
[11] Ma Jinglun, "Yudang Daoshu", in *Li Wenling Waiji*, 4: 18a-18b.

who did not practice what they preached. Li Zhi once said, "If a *daoxue* scholar asks if I can eulogize Confucianism, he would not get it regardless of whether I can do so."[12] He also criticized these false Confucians:

> They usually do nothing but adulate one another, sit a whole day like sculptures, and liken themselves to great sages if their distractions and temptations do not act up. If a crisis arises, they would look at one another in bewilderment and shirk their responsibility to protect themselves from harm.[13]

Under Li Zhi's castigation, these false scholars performed Confucianism only in theory and never in practice, and their teachings were false *daoxue*. In Li Zhi's eyes, students of Confucianism during his time were hypocrites and sycophants who did not demonstrate the qualities of Confucian learning. In the context of Ming intellectual *milieu*, the ossification of Confucian thought was a product of the state promulgation of the Cheng-Zhu school of thought, but Li Zhi regarded instead the Yangming School as the orthodox *daoxue*.

In the *Chutan Ji*, Li Zhi offered a more incisive analysis of the grandiloquent *daoxue* scholars, making a distinction between *xuedao* 學道 and *daoxue* 道學. On *xuedao* scholars, he said: "The learning of the Way lies in its essence"; on *daoxue* scholars, he said: "*Daoxue* lies in its name. Men who pursue fame would definitely discuss *daoxue* and depend on *daoxue* to make their name. Mediocre men would surely talk about *daoxue* so as to use *daoxue* for their purpose. Those who deceive the world would certainly speak of *daoxue*, for *daoxue* serves their aim of deceiving the world."[14] This analysis shows Li Zhi's attitude towards the *daoxue* scholars. Li Zhi was unbiased against the Cheng-Zhu School; what he did was to argue that the *literati* of his time acquired the rhetoric of the sages but not the sages' actions and deeds.

Citing the ancient sages as an example, Li Zhi stated that:

> The words of the sages can definitely be acted upon, and the actions would definitely match the words. The words may be different, but there has been no instance where actions are taken without the words.[15]

Li Zhi did not revile scholars whose actions match their words; he revered them, and these great men included Cheng Yi, Yang Shi, and Wang Yangming. As for the false Confucians whose practices deviated from what they had been preaching, he berated them. This shows that Li Zhi opposed false Confucians and Confucianism, not Confucians or Confucianism in general. He demarcated

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[12] *Chutang Ji*, 20: 346.
[13] *Fenshu*, 4: 156.
[14] *Chutang Ji*, 20: 345.
[15] *Mozi Pixuan,* Introduction.

the "true" Confucianism from the "false" Confucianism, but current scholars have either deliberately misinterpreted his original intentions or unwittingly misunderstood these intentions. Accused as a "traitor of Confucianism", Li Zhi received much condemnation in history. Zhang Nai 張鼐 once wrote:

> As a self-professed Confucian, Zhuowu discusses ethics and sets high walls around him, and his numerous sayings please the senses, form the origins of denying the source of life, leave the trace of detaching from the world, and create the practice of breaking the façade of the world. We can reprove Zhuowu for his ideas but not for his intentions. He is a warm-hearted person without a care for his worldly reputation and physical life. Not concerned with the scholarly appraisals of himself in history, he continued to do what he had believed in. In sum, he wants people to discard the rhetoric and see the true heart of themselves and others: loyal as an official, filial as a son, devoted as a friend, and resilient as a warrior. This is the principle that the best men should accept and believe in. An extraordinary man is one well versed in Zhuowu's books and knows how to distinguish the right from the wrong.[16]

On the other hand, did Li Zhi bear anti-Confucian intentions in *Cangshu*, where he proposed "not to regard Confucius's distinction of right and wrong as a universal one"?[17] In all fairness, Li Zhi was not anti-Confucian; in fact, he recognized the contributions and status of Confucius in the context of the latter's own time. Li Zhi explains in *Leke Lun* 樂克論 that "if the world does not have Confucius, it would not know what is right and what is wrong."[18] This explains that the main thrust of Li Zhi's writings was to chastise the misappropriation and distortion of Confucius by post-Han Confucians. Li Zhi thinks that Confucius is correct in pointing out *shifei* 是非, or the right and wrong, in his own context. However, later generations had made Confucius's teachings as a rigid set of doctrines, and they yearn to promulgate them as universal doctrines for the world and posterity. This was "dogmatic", and "dogma harms the Way". Li Zhi incisively criticizes *daoxue* scholars for "deciding on rewards and punishments on the principle of Confucius's teachings." [19] His intention was to point out the

[16] Zhang Nai 1976, p. 126.
[17] For arguments that Li Zhi was anti-Confucian based on his right-wrong view, see Qingsi 1974; Ye Xianen 1974.
[18] *Cangshu*, 32: 522.
[19] Li Zhi pointed out that the *shifei* (right-wrong) of his time was not derived from a true understanding of the term; it was a blind adherence to mainstream opinion, akin to short men watching a performance from behind (and could not see a thing) and agreeing with whatever that is said about it. Li Zhi believed that it was only if the images of sages were removed that a real distinction between right and wrong could be made. In the first chapter of *Cangshu*, Li Zhi began by hitting at the misconception of his time, saying, "I have no comments on the first three dynasties; I comment on the later three dynasties of the Han, the Tang, and the Song. For thousands of years, only *shifei* has not existed; is there no *shifei*? This is because people take Confucius' *shifei* standards to measure things, so no new *shifei* standard has

temporality of *shifei*, and that ethical standards change with time, such that *shifei* of yesterday does not equate with that of today. Therefore, Li Zhi did not criticize Confucius; what he criticized was the misappropriation of Confucian teachings for selfish purposes. It is thus groundless to say that Li Zhi was anti-Confucius.[20]

Inspired by He Xinyin 何心隱's view that man's nature is originally pure and one should follow wherever it spontaneously leads, Li Zhi developed the theory of the Child-heart Mind 童心. According to Li Zhi, the Child-heart Mind is originally pure, but it can be lost if received opinions come in through the senses and are allowed to dominate it. The greatest harm results when moral doctrines are imposed upon it, and the mind loses its capacity to judge for itself. He said:

> The child-heart mind is the genuine mind 真心. If one denies the child-heart mind, then he denies the genuine mind. As for the child-heart mind, it is free of all falsehood and entirely genuine, it is the original mind at the very beginning of the first thought. Losing the child-heart mind is losing the genuine mind. Losing the genuine mind is losing the genuine self. A person who is not genuine will never again regain that with which he began.[21]

Li insisted that once people's minds have been given over to received opinions and moral principles, what they have to say is all about these things and not what would naturally come from their child-heart minds. Thus he believed that the best literary works came from the child-heart mind, and if the child-heart mind continued to exist in this way, moral principles would not be practiced, received impressions would not stand up, and the writing of any ages, any man,

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arisen. But how can we have *shifei* in men without disturbing the peace? The conflict between right and wrong is different from time to time. *Shifei* of yesterday does not equate with that of today. If Confucius comes back to life now, he would not know how to decide on *shifei*, let alone use his *shifei* to decide on rewards and punishments!" (*Cangshu*, 1: 1)

[20] Past scholars had used the text in *Sishu Ping* 四書評 to explain Li Zhi's "anti-Confucius" stance. Whether *Sishu Ping* is Li Zhi's work has been a contentious topic. *Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiyao* writes, "word has it that the *Sishu Diyiping* 四書第一評 and the *Dierping* 第二評 are ghostwritten by Ye Buye 葉不夜." Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 of the Qing Dynasty also wrote in *Yinshu Shuwu Shuying* 因樹書屋樹影 that "Ye Wentong, sobriquet Hua, Wuxi native, read widely and was talented. Devoting himself to Buddhism and Taoism, he had strange antics; if we examine his life, he seemed to resemble He Xinyin. He called himself Jinweng 錦翁, Ye Wuye 葉五葉, and Ye Buye before settling on the name Liang Wuzhi, which means no one knows him in Liang Xi. When Wenling's *Fenshu, Cangshu* was in vogue, many works bearing the name Wenling emerged, such as *Sishu Diyiping*, *Dierping*, *Shuihuzhuan*, *Pipa*, and *Baiyue*, which Wentong had written." (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957, p. 7). Recent scholars have also researched on *Sishu Ping* and proven that it was not Li Zhi's work, so if we are to base our argument that Li Zhi was "anti-Confucius" on the basis of *Sishu Ping*, it would not be reliable. See Cui Wenyin 1979 and 1980.

[21] *Fenshu*, 3: 98.

any form, any style, and any language would all be accepted as literature. Li Zhi's notion of the child-heart mind and genuine mind played an important role in formulating the cult of *Qing* 情, or feeling, in late Ming China. Pauline Lee's study indicates that Li Zhi's ethics of genuine feelings grows out of a vibrant discourse that developed in his time and place. The Yuan 袁 brothers insisted on unfettered, spontaneous expression; Wang Gen 王艮 argued for naturalness and the feeling for joy and self, and the great late-Ming dramatist Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 was familiar with Li's work and admired him.[22]

Although Li Zhi bore no "anti-Confucius, non-Confucian" intention, it is distinctive that he highly valued results and recognized the existence of egoism and desire. The praises that he had lavished in *Cangshu* and *Xu Cangshu* 續藏書 on accomplished rulers and officials testify to this. He pointed out clearly that:

> It is natural that men harbor selfish hearts. Men must have selfishness before they have a heart for things, so if there is no selfishness, there is no heart. Farmers desire a copious harvest in autumn, so they strive to toil in the fields. Householders desire wealth in their family, so they strive to manage the household. Scholars desire progress in their studies, so they strive to make a name for themselves. This is why if no fortune exists in officialdom, no man would come forward to become officials. Without official titles, men would not come forward to serve.[23]

Men are inherently selfish, and they have desire, so when *lixue* 理學 scholars argue that a gentleman does not discuss rewards and results, their rhetoric does not stand. On the premises of stressing industry and recognizing human desire, the doctrines and teachings that the Neo-Confucians had enacted seem meaningless. Li Zhi's thought stood in opposition to Neo-Confucian doctrines and teachings, so *daoxue* scholars had branded it as a "corruption of the norm" (*baihuai mingjiao* 敗壞名教).[24]

Ideal and Reality

Li Zhi was a man of ideals, as well as a tragic thinker. In the present context, it is nothing if Li Zhi was condemned by *daoxue* scholars as a "heterodox" figure, but in Li Zhi's own context—the traditional sixteenth-century Chinese society, his ideas could never gain wide acceptance and currency. Li Zhi sought a breakthrough in intellectual development on the basis of Confucian thought,

[22] See Pauline Lee 2013.
[23] *Cangshu*, 32: 544.
[24] See Lee Cheuk Yin 1987, p. 163.

searching for new knowledge based on the ancient works of sages, but he was destined to fail in his endeavor. The pressures of old society had drifted him away from his ideals. Although Li Zhi was a practitioner of "negative individualism",[25] he did not attempt to enforce his ideas onto others or intervene in the affairs of others. He only hoped to ascertain the existence of "self", but he still failed to gain the acceptance of others. The reason behind this outcome, in Zhou Zuoren's 周作人 words, is that "the most dangerous act to perform in the world is to offer unconventional arguments, and many confinements and censorship of thought and words have arisen as a result. In the first place, it is not difficult to agree with conventions, and when an unconventional figure interferes in the norms, danger befalls the person."[26] In the end, in the thirtieth year of the Wanli 萬曆 reign (1602), Li Zhi committed suicide in prison, embodying eternal freedom and emancipation. Li Zhi was utterly disappointed with his time, but he did not feel any regret. It probably confirms with what he had said, "a great man does not fear consequences, and so he succeeds in whatever he does." [27]

Li Zhi was one of the more insightful thinkers of sixteenth-century China after the emergence of the Wang Yangming and the development of the Taizhou 泰州 School, one who had retained the ideas of individualism and freedom. Although his thought had never been accepted by mainstream society, Li Zhi had challenged late Ming thought. Li Zhi enjoyed an unambiguous standing in the history of Ming thought, because he sought to trek a new path in thought and pursue the truth in learning. Li Zhi's quest for knowledge reflected the trends and realities of Ming intellectual development, as well as uncovered the reason behind the gradual ossification of late Ming thought. On the other hand, Li Zhi's tragedy illustrated the price that *literati* had to pay in their pursuit of independence of thought. Although Li Zhi had failed to make an immense impact during his times, his process of pursuing the truth had become a form of reality, and based on this it is sufficient to claim his significance and status in Ming intellectual history.

[25] See W.T. de Bary 1970, p. 147.
[26] Zhou Zuoren 1944, p. 124.
[27] See *Li Zhi Yanjiu Cankao Ziliao*, Vol. 2, p. 138.

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POWERFUL BONDS: MALE HOMOSOCIAL DESIRE IN PU SONGLING'S *LIAOZHAI ZHIYI*

LIU FEIYING 刘菲英
(King's College London)

Despite the fact that many metamorphosis stories in *Liaozhai Zhiyi* represent an intention to isolate the self from social or male bonds out of an unpleasant experience in that order, the degree of frustration and disappointment at such experiences is not intense enough to persuade the male to forgo the patriarchal privilege altogether and embrace an alternative value system. As will be discussed in detail, men's relationship with supernatural women, a motif normally interpreted as a gesture of breaking away from the male bonds,[1] eventually becomes a territory newly occupied by the ideology that is continually applauding and affirming male (social) bonds.

In Pu's metamorphosis narrative, the heterosexual relationship between human male and supernatural female is not only some private fantasy, but also a collective fantasy that carries significant political meanings. For the male protagonist, the pleasure derived from this relationship can be two-fold; on one level, the exclusive possession of supernatural women's favor is in itself enjoyable, however, on another level, and it is my contention that a greater pleasure comes from a sense of superiority to other men, the rivals who are excluded from this possession. In this sense, for a man to be associated with supernatural agents is not for him to be detached from the male bonds in reality, but rather serves as buttressing the validity and power of these bonds. This collective mentality can be viewed as one of the fundamental mechanisms by which some of those beautiful supernatural females are created in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, and I will illustrate this point in detail by looking at some telling examples in Pu's text.

In saying so, my intention is not to reinforce "the myth of an omnipotent patriarchy", nor do I intend to claim that male bonds determine every single detail going on in the male-female relationship. The reality is much more ambiguous and complex than what can be analyzed (and generalized) here, and to cite Dorothy Ko, no single word such as "domination" or "subjugation" can adequately describe the nature of relationships between men and women.[2] What I aim to achieve in this article is to add another perspective to examine the

[1] Most of the romance stories in *Liaozhai Zhiyi* are interpreted as a subversive posture, the special form of love between a human male and a supernatural female is read as anti-feudalism. See Ma Ruifang 2000, p. 73.
[2] Dorothy Ko 1994, p. 14.

vitality of gender relation by taking into account the dimension of male bonds, to gain a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of gender relation through its interaction with Chinese traditional values, to explore how traditional values function in this interaction. After all, gender relation does not exist in vacuum, thus it cannot be isolated from the particular social environment it resides in.

Rivalry entangled with cohesion

Desire (or libido) has been identified as playing a fundamental role in Pu Songling's metamorphosis narrative. Although closely related to sexual drive, the term libido is more generally interpreted as a universal drive that functions in nearly all psychic and social activities of all human beings. Desire as a universal drive is so powerful that when it fails to be satisfied in reality, it is sublimated into fantasies, metamorphoses and miracles. It is believed that under these circumstances, desire is unencumbered by the constraints of Confucian convention. Thus, both male and female characters are allowed to "indulge in explorations of their sexuality and to experiment with performances that embodied persons can only dream about."[3] However, even in these fictional contexts, desire still needs to negotiate with cultural censorship with great care; therefore it is by no means detached from culture, but deeply influenced or even shaped by culture.

From this perspective, the supernatural female in Pu Songling's romance can be read as a very complex cultural product that combines multiple desires and compromises within one image. On the one hand, the ethereality of supernatural female makes her a perfect object of desire, the ownership of which brings great pleasure and satisfaction; on the other hand, the eager attempt to involve another rival in this relationship indicates a deeper desire to come to terms with the patriarchal order in which male bonds in the form of cohesion and rivalry function as a key mechanism. In this sense, the great power of male bonds over male-female relationship can be interpreted as a compromise to the dominant cultural phenomenon, thus it becomes one of the cultural expressions of libido.

The vast majority of Pu Songling's romances between human male and supernatural female demonstrate the mediation of male bonds in different ways. However it mainly takes the form of rivalry entangled with cohesion. In some cases, the power of rivalry is underscored, in which the beautiful and talented supernatural female is reserved for some chosen man, and thus not accessible to other men. In the story Meinü 梅女, the exclusive possession of the female ghost by a man is achieved through her (disguised) mental illness which repels all the other potential suitors but can be miraculously cured by the man she

[3] Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng 2001, p. 7.

chooses. A more frequently used strategy to secure this exclusive possession is through the invisibility of the supernatural female to other rivals, as showed in stories Axia 阿霞, Huxie 狐谐, Yingning 婴宁, Huabi 画壁, Ainu 爱奴, Scholar from Jiaping 嘉平公子, The Fourteenth Sister Xin 辛十四娘, Liansuo 连锁 and Huqie 狐妾, Huaguzi 花姑子 etc. All of these supernatural females privilege their lovers by refusing to manifest themselves in front of other males physically or psychologically. In some other cases, male cohesion is depicted as a more dominant mode, as showed in The Third Sister of Lotus 荷花三娘子, Yun Cuixian 云翠仙, the male protagonist are either ready or easily persuaded by other men to sacrifice his love affair for a more favorable male bond; in stories Changting 长亭, Princess Lotus 莲花公主, the female are exchanged as gifts to cement male bonds. In what follows, I will analyze how the power of male rivalry entangled with cohesion is exerted on male-female relationship through a close reading of two telling examples in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*.

The story of Suqiu 素秋[4] in *Liaozhai Zhiyi* may serve as a good example of how the male bonds regulate men's attitudes in male-female bonds. In this story, male bonds manifest in the form of rivalry entangled with cohesion. Yu Shen, a scholar from a noble family, overwhelmingly impressed by Yu Xunjiu's beauty and refined manner at the first sight of him, feels compelled to be intimate with him, and later on they become friends as close as blood brothers. Yu Shen is so attracted to Xunjiu's suave comportment that their friendship is not at all jeopardized by the exposure of Xunjiu's supernatural nature. However, the closeness of their relationship is to be more intensively exhibited through the transaction of Xunjiu's sister Suqiu.

In a poignant scene, knowing that his death is approaching, Xunjiu is seized with a strong frustration when he realizes he has not yet repaid Yu Shen's kindness to him. Thus his last wish is to repay Yu Shen by marrying Suqiu to him as his concubine (without consulting with Suqiu in advance). Apparently in this offer, Suqiu is deprived of her subjectivity as a female (albeit supernatural female) with independent thoughts and feelings, and is materialized as private property which can be disposed of when necessary to materialize and cement male bonds. Yu Shen rejects Xunjiu's proposal, saying that it might be an insult to their friendship if he accepts this offer. In this conversation, the heterosexual relationship Xunjiu intends to initiate between Yu Shen and Suqiu is predicated on the premise of male homosocial relationship and is intended to further consolidate this homosocial bonds; but, Suqiu herself matters but little in the whole transaction.

After Xunjiu's death, Yu Shen is eager to marry Suqiu out, since keeping a woman of marriageable age in house would damage his reputation in his community. Again, in the whole situation, Suqiu is not an independent subject, but an extension of her brother's life, an emblem of the two men's

[4] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 3: 1345.

friendship. As she has been passed on to Yu Shen, she now becomes an extension of Yu Shen's existence, or his possession, an appropriate disposition of her does not have anything to do with herself, but has everything to do with her owner. Thus, Yu Shen feels no obligation to respect Suqiu's personal intention, and delivers her to a man he personally thinks of as of his own kind. The transaction of Suqiu does not culminate with her marriage. Suqiu's husband Jia, although enjoying their marital relationship very much, fails to resist the tempting offer of Han Quan, and agrees to exchange Suqiu for two concubines and a huge amount of gold. Thus so far, Suqiu has been exchanged for three times: first from her brother to Yu Shen, then from Yu Shen to Jia, and at last from Jia to Han Quan. In all these three transactions of Suqiu, what seems to be desired by men is more of her exchange value rather than use value, or they have to sacrifice her use value in order to deploy her exchange value.

To some extent, Suqiu is viewed as "a product of man's labor",[5] thus she becomes "a mirror of value of and for man",[6] alienated from her own body to better facilitate relations between men. Luce Irigaray believes women "only have value in that they serve as the possibility of, and potential benefit in, relations among men",[7] despite the overtly assertive posture in this contention, it nevertheless helps to clarify women's situation of being constantly involved in relations of exchange. In this sense, Suqiu's body can be viewed as a locus of men's investment and her exchange value can only be realized in her equivalent. The item identified as her equivalent might reveal the male's cohesion in establishing homosocial bonds through an agreement on how much they would like to pay for her investor's labor. In this light, Suqiu becomes the materialization of an abstract human labor, as fetish-objects, she is "the manifestation and the circulation of a power of the Phallus, establishing relationships of men with each other."[8]

In the transactions, Han Quan is a key figure that reveals the underlying mechanism of the male bonds. The heterosexual relationship between Han Quan and Suqiu is not a direct one, but mediated by homosocial force. In his twice-failed efforts to obtain Suqiu, the relationship he intended to establish between him and Suqiu actually followed rather tortuous formulas in both cases: Han Quan's first attempt takes place when he comes to Yu Shen's house to mourn over Xunjiu's death as Yu Shen's brother-in-law, there he gets the first sight of Suqiu, and immediately decides to purchase her as his concubine. Although having his sister in his camp to persuade his brother-in-law, he fails this deal, at the expense of a break-off of his relation with Yu Shen. His second try is carried out after Suqiu's marriage. By offering two concubines and a huge amount of gold to Suqiu's husband Jia, he actually gives a competitive bidding for the value of Jia's labor, however the homosocial bonds established between Jia and

[5] Irigaray 1985, p. 175.
[6] Ibid., 1: 177.
[7] Ibid., 1: 172.
[8] Ibid., 1: 183.

Yu Shen through the medium of Suqiu does not allow this deal to be fulfilled so easily. Since Jia's relationship with Suqiu is not clear of Yu Shen's investment, the final say of this deal falls upon Yu Shen, and again Han Quan's second try eventually turns into a push-and-pull between him and Yu Shen.

From these two formulas above, it is apparent that in his hot pursuit of Suqiu, the first relationship into which Han Quan is involved is the relationship between him and Suqiu's male owner, first Yu Shen and then Jia. However those male bonds are not established directly either, but are played out through the bodies of women. In his homosocial relationship with Yu Shen, Han Quan resorts to his sister as a mediator, and with Jia, he offers two concubines as the bribe. In this sense, women's body becomes the site where male's rival relationship is built, which is one major form of male bonds, a relationship full of tension because of the concatenation of interplays of power. Suqiu seems to be the last link in both chains above, a male-male relationship is seemingly further pointed to a male-female relationship. However, in fact, she is out of reach throughout the whole process. For Han Quan, she is inaccessible and thus severed from these links, the truly meaningful part of these links stops at the position of Yu Shen. Revolving around the matter of Suqiu, the latter half of the story is actually mainly addressing the relationship between Han Quan and Yu Shen. In the first chain, Han Quan undergoes a clean break with Yu Shen after an unpleasant experience of his proposal being turned down resolutely. In the second chain, Han Quan regains the original bonds with Yu Shen nevertheless in the way that he is accused by Yu Shen of his conspiracy of buying Suqiu.

Thus, a heterosexual relationship with Suqiu, which seems to be the end of all these male bonds, turns out to be a strategic agent through which these male bonds are created, a necessary locus male bonds work on. To put it another way, "heterosexuality has been up to now just an alibi for the smooth workings of man's relation with himself, or relations among men."[9] Interestingly, the tense homosocial relationship between Han Quan and Yu Shen is, again, eventually assuaged by the mediating of women. After Jia's mother offers two concubines to bribe Yu Shen, and with the mediation of Yu Shen's wife requested by her father, Yu Shen finally withdraws his lawsuit. The pursuit of Suqiu in this story seems to have little to do with Suqiu herself. Her body serves more as the site of power play between men, the competition around her becomes a reification of male's rivalry which is a tense yet permanent form of male bonds, a fighting for power in their power relations. Thus in the subtle workings of power, the heterosexual relationship serves as the signifier of the homosocial bonds which is the final signified, whose smooth operation necessitates the existence of exchange of women as the lubricant.

Song Geng sees the late imperial China as being dominated by a homosocial 'male culture" which was constructed by the Confucian discourses as the master narrative. In his view, "This culture was characterized by the

[9] Sedgwick 1992, p. 172.

repression of heterosexual desire and the reliance on male-male social bonds." It was a world of 'male homosocial bonds which valued same-sex loyalty, friendship and solidarity'.[10] Such a value system, while bringing forth and nurturing the overarching dominance of male homosocial desire, also inevitably has some bearing on the construction of heterosexual relationship, thus it would be too rash to claim that "the male-male bond does not need to use woman as the medium",[11] and as I argues with the example of Suqiu, females have key roles to play in the male homosocial desire.

The story of Suqiu is relatively less romantic, since the relationship between man and woman is a blatant transaction deprived of the affectional bond. Yet, even in those most romantic stories, as I will allude to below, the romance fails to serve as a successful diversion of male homosocial desire, but is reduced to what Ma Ruifang terms "a love utopia generated by patriarchal discourse."[12] The female protagonist is armed with patriarchal values, and distorted into a puppet or a mouthpiece of the male desire, if not homosocial desire. Therefore, the supernatural nature of the female does not alter its submissive position.

The overwhelming power of male-male bond sustained by the patriarchy is vividly illustrated in the story of Liancheng 连城.[13] When Liancheng is of her marriage age, her father Shi recruits young scholars to write a poem for one of Liancheng's embroideries, hoping to choose the most talented one among them as Liancheng's future husband. Of all the young scholars, Qiao's poem is most appreciated both by Shi and Liancheng. Yet, Shi refuses to marry his daughter to Qiao because of Qiao's impoverished condition at that time. Despite the fact that his daughter is very much willing to marry a man of such outstanding talent, Shi very shortly betroths his daughter to Wang Huacheng, son of an affluent salt merchant. Knowing this, Qiao is seized with deep grief.

Later, Liancheng is diagnosed with tuberculosis and it is believed that man's flesh in the chest can cure this disease. As Liancheng's *fiancé*, Wang is expected to undertake this job, however, when Shi turns to him for help, Wang turns down his request brutally. At his wit's end, Shi claims that he would marry Liancheng to anyone who is able to sacrifice a piece of his flesh. Then Qiao is recruited again, voluntarily and without any competitors this time. Liancheng is restored to good health after she consumes the medicine made from Qiao's flesh. However, before Shi is finally convinced to marry his daughter to Qiao, he still feels obliged to consult with Wang at first. Wang is inflamed with anger to

[10] Song Geng 2004, p. 182.
[11] Ibid., p. 147. Song Geng's assertion is based on the assumption that homophobic discourse was not so dominant in the construction of masculinity in pre-modern China, and the homosexual/heterosexual dichotomy in the modern sense did not exist in the indigenous culture.
[12] Ma Ruifang 2000, p. 73.
[13] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 361.

hear this, and threatens to take Shi to court. Terrified by Wang's threat, Shi cancels the engagement and tries to compensate for Qiao's sacrifice with a large amount of gold. Qiao is irritated by Shi's offer, explaining that he is not selling his flesh for money, and the only reason why he does this is his unconditional love and gratitude for Liancheng. Unfortunately, Liancheng undergoes a relapse of her disease and dies several months later, and Qiao dies of a broken heart.

However, it turns out to be a blessing for this couple to be transformed into ghosts. While their union was constantly obstructed in the human world, they are eventually allowed a considerably less disturbed relationship in the underworld. Actually, as they enjoy so much their blissful relationship in the underworld, they hesitate to come back to life when they are granted the chance to be revived. Fearing that their relationship might not be accepted in human world, they consummate their marriage in the underworld before they are revived. Their concern is not without good reason. When the news of their resurrection is brought to Wang, Wang could not bear the truth that his dead *fiancée* has now become somebody else's living wife, and he would kill to win her back. Wang bribes the judge in the court, and makes Liancheng his legal wife again. After being sent to Wang's house, Liancheng soon finds life unbearable and tries several times to hang herself. Qiao, failing to secure their underworld marriage, aspires to the same thing, death, the only thing that makes their marriage possible. At the end of the story, Liancheng and Qiao's reunion is secured precisely by claiming death, since Liancheng's resolution to die renders a peaceful marriage with Wang unattainable, Wang has to return her to Shi, which finally complete her marriage with Qiao.

In this story, the male-male bond between Shi and Wang can be identified in the contract made over a transaction of Liancheng which is conferred legal power in the patriarchal society. This contract seems to be based on a principle of equal exchange, according to which Liancheng's potential exchange value must be found an equivalent. Qiao's poor condition deprives him of the right to deserve her value, and Wang is qualified in this transaction because he is able to afford her exchange value, in other words, he is able to offer an equivalent for Shi's investment in his daughter, to materialize his labor. Justified by the support of the whole patriarchal system, this kind of contract between men is a highly prized one to which great power and authority is attributed. This partly explains why Shi barely hesitates to break his contract with Qiao again and again, but always abides by his contract with Wang even when Wang fails to pass the test.

The male-male bond between Shi and Qiao seems less valid in that particular patriarchal context, since Shi's verbal commitments to Qiao are not based on the equal exchange principle, thus are considered to lack validity, and can be rescinded without severe condemnation. It might be a nice gesture for Shi to keep his promise to Qiao, but if he fails, it is Qiao who is to be pitied, and Shi is not the one to be criticized. However this is not the case when it comes to the male-male bond between Shi and Wang. Their contract is entitled more stability

and validity because it meets every criterion of a legal exchange appreciated by that society. It is backed up by both the traditional Confucian propriety (礼), and the newly established value of commercial awareness with the emergence of merchant class. Therefore, their contract is naturally bestowed with power, and any violation to that contract may be interpreted as a violation to the whole order by which the patriarchal society is constructed. Thus this contract, although morally condemnable, is legally protected.

Sedgwick prefers to name various male bonds with a Freudian term "male homosocial desire" to highlight their affective force which is analogous to 'libido'. For her, it is the male homosocial desire that operates as the primary motivation in male's heterosexual relations. Thus men's heterosexual relationships seldom operate as an end in themselves, but constantly as a means to enhance male bonds; in this light, male heterosexual desire does not constitute an antithesis of male homosocial desire, but should be in a subordinate, complementary and instrumental relation to bonds with other men. Sedgwick further claims that male heterosexual desire, is not clear of male homosocial desire, but exhibits itself "in the form of a desire to consolidate partnership with authoritative males in and through the bodies of females."[14] Although this contention is made in certain context and thus cannot be taken as universal, it nevertheless can serve as a very productive perspective to examine the function of male bonds as showed in the case of Shi and Wang.

Governed by the privileged male-male contract, the male-female relationship is relatively powerless and fragile. The relationship between Liancheng and Qiao is not blessed in a male-dominated society, since it fails to attain the justification of the value endorsed within it. The mutual affection is not a valid value, and is in no position to emulate the more practical and feasible exchange value. Therefore, within the patriarchal system, the male-female relationship constructed on an exchange principle is a constant, the male-female relationship based on mutual love is merely a contingency, it is submissive, and only allowed to exist when it does not directly contradict the patriarchal mechanism. The spontaneous love between Liancheng and Qiao, once it comes into contradiction with the powerful male-male bond that is sustained by the exchange principle, can have little security in the human world. Thus death becomes one of the thinkable ways to escape the omnipresence of this powerful bond.

In this story, death does not signify the end, but initiates a brand new start for their relationship. It is in the underworld that their relationship is temporarily secured from brutal interrogation of the male-male bond. Relieved from the surveillance of the regulatory force, Liancheng finally can attain certain ownership over her own body. It is irony that the subjectivity she is supposed to be entitled as a human being is belated until she is transformed into a ghost. Nevertheless, they are still too naïve to assume that the freedom they enjoyed in

[14] Sedgwick 1992, p. 38.

the underworld could be continued into their life after their resurrection. Liancheng insists to consummate their marriage before they come back to the human world, in the hope that this established fact could at least be admitted if not respected by the patriarchal order. However, the human society holds little generosity for this couple. The cruel fact that Wang manages to win Liancheng back as his legal wife, indicates another cruel fact that no matter how cruel he is, as long as he plays by the rule, he will always be the winner. Although at the end of the story, Liancheng gets back together with Qiao, this does not claim a victory over the patriarchal order, but a total failure, since that reunion is secured by Liancheng's insistence on her death, the one condition that is beyond the control of patriarchy.

Women's exchange value

The transaction of women between men, as observed above, more often than not, renders the women as a locus where power relations are formed. In the story Changting 长亭, the first daughter Changting, is married by her father to the exorcist Shi as a thank-you gift for his successfully exorcizing the ghost who has been long harassing Hongting (the second daughter). However, this is not a voluntary decision, since Changting's father is threatened by Shi to sacrifice his daughter for the security of the whole family.

As a matter of fact, no real exorcism has ever taken place, the whole exorcism is a conspiracy. The ghost comes to an agreement with Shi that he promises to leave Hongting in due time, and as a reward for Shi's generosity of allowing him to do so, the ghost would like very much to cooperate with him in this 'exorcism' to deceive Changting's father into marrying Changting to him. Instigated by the ghost's words, Shi readily launches this evil deal. At first, the ghost stops harassing Hongting for a while to make Changting's father believe that Shi's exorcism does work, then he comes back to harass Hongting again while Shi is absent. Convinced of Shi's exorcising power, Changting's father turnes to Shi for the second time, Shi pretends that he has some difficulty in moving because his feet have been scalded by hot water, and imputes this to his lack of a wife who is supposed to take proper care of him. When asked why he hasn't found a new wife so far, Shi hastens to answer that because he fails to find any woman as elegant as his daughter. Realizing what Shi has been up to so far, Changting's father goes back home to consult with his wife. With his wife's consent, Changting's father assures Shi that if he successfully exorcizes the ghost, he give Changting to him in marriage.

So far, Changting has been transacted twice by men before she even officially shows up in this story. At the beginning, the male ghost introduces Changting to Shi to secure himself. Despite the fact that he does not own Changting, the male ghost still manages to exert power over Shi and Changting's father by making a decision of whether to harass her or not, and

whether to harass her or her sister Hongting. While the ghost can exert power over the father through each daughter's body, he can only exert power upon Shi through not occupying Changting's body. Since Changting is the one he chooses to exchange for Shi's mercy, he has to "keep her intact for the right man."[15] Therefore it is through not occupying Changting's body that Changting's exchange value can be reserved, thus the power over Shi can be exerted, and consequently the male bonds through her can be established.

For Changting's father, what matters about Changting is also her exchange value. What is fundamentally different from the case of the ghost is, while the transaction between the ghost and Shi is initiated by the ghost voluntarily, the father is made to complete this transaction under pressure, since he would be putting his whole family at risk if he did not consent to exchange. Thus in the second transaction, the power relation first established between the father and Shi was one-sided in which the father is rendered rather passive. This detail seeds the future unfolding of the story. It is easy to notice that little has been mentioned about Changting's relationship with Shi after marriage, the rest of the story is all about how the father attempts to regain power in the power relation with his son-in-law through a fight over Changting. After Shi successfully exorcizes the ghost (although according to their contract, the ghost simply takes his departure), the father attempts a breach of this marriage contract by murdering Shi when he is sleeping. The murder inevitably fails, and Changting marries Shi after, however, her father constantly asks Changting to return home and keeps her there for incredibly long time with various excuses. By retrieving his daughter, the father indeed exerts some power over his son-in-law by disrupting his family life. As the father of Changting, he is morally infallible in retrieving his daughter, since a daughter is supposed to be filial and submissive to her parents according to the womanly virtues in Confucian norms. However Shi is not completely powerless in this competition, as Changting, now his wife, is also supposed to be submissive to her husband according to the same value system. And when these two obligations become contradictory, the patriarchal system find itself caught with a dilemma, since favoring either over the other would be against its constitutive principle.

Thus it is the intrinsically contradictory principles of the patriarchal society that lends great legitimacy to the father's absurd behavior, since by simply being Changting's father, he is backed up by the whole patriarchal order in his fight against Changting's husband — his absurd action may not be right, but it cannot be wrong either. But the complexity lies in how Shi also possesses power over Changting's body. Thus due to the contradictory nature of patriarchal law, the patriarchy double bind, there will be neither winner nor loser in this war. Therefore, the patriarchy double bind makes not only women but also men suffer.

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[15] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 3: 1329.

The exchange value of woman is emphasized more blatantly in the story Yun Cuixian 云翠仙. When Liang Youcai's gambling friends come to visit, they are astonished to find that Liang is keeping such a beautiful wife at home. They quickly convince Liang that his wife's beauty is quite incommensurate with his family background, and he is not in any good position to deserve it, thus it would be well-advised to sell his wife to become rich. Apparently, in the eyes of Liang's gambling friends, Cuixian means nothing but her potential exchange value. Her body, as a commodity, should be put into market to find a more commensurate equivalent to manifest and realize its exchange value. And since as her husband, Liang has his investment in Cuixian, a desirable result would be to maximize her exchange value. As his friends suggested, "if you sell your wife to a family as a concubine, you get one hundred taels of silver; if you sell her to a brothel as a prostitute, you get a thousand taels of silver."[16] Therefore, according to the principle of profit maximization, Liang set his mind to sell his wife into a brothel.

Although Liang's wishful thinking aborted before it can be launched into practice as a result of Cuixian's supernatural power, his intention to sacrifice his wife reveals his willingness to privilege male bonds over heterosexual bonds. For Liang, his bonds with his gambling friends stand for a more fundamental association with the patriarchal system, which in many ways boost his masculine morale. As indicated by his gambling friends, with the one thousand taels of silver, he no longer needs to be worried about acquiring money for drinking and gambling, which are Liang's two main activities of socializing with other men. It is in this sense that we can interpret the money he wishes to be gained from selling his wife as capital that is to be invested in the construction of male bonds. Actually Liang's inclination of privileging male bonds over male-female bonds can be exposed even before he makes the decision to sell Cuixian. After their marriage, Liang accepts his mother-in-law's financial support without feeling any guilt. Rather than supporting his family, Liang prefers to squander the money in goofing around with his male friends. Eventually, he begins to satiate his ever increasing appetite by selling his wife's jewelry.

To a great extent, Liang's marriage with Cuixian, or his heterosexual relationship, serves to facilitate his homosocial desire. It is with his wife's financial support that he could sustain his homosocial bonds, and when there is a chance his wife could facilitate these bonds once and for all, he never hesitates to take such a risk. He never listens to Cuixian's sincere advice that he cut off relation with that disreputable gang, but he is readily swayed by his male friends that he should terminate his marriage, in order to be better involved into the gang. Obviously, of these two bonds, homosocial and heterosexual, Liang gets a clear idea of which is primary and which is secondary. Male-female relationship here should obey the rules set by male-male relationships. In this particular case,

[16] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 2: 754.

one discursive feature that functions behind the scene underpinning Liang's weighing of options is the virtually universalized presumption that the manhood, or masculinity, constitutes the core of a male's (gender) identity; and more importantly, such manhood is constructed as a contract between males whereby the only adjudicator is other men.

Besides, masculinity is not a matter that is fixed and permanent; rather it is presented as "a process which needs constantly reaffirming."[17] One's gender identity as a man is achieved through one's performance as being a man, through living up to the social norms, which means there is no original gender identity beyond performance *per se*, and consequently this identity can only exist and be constituted in a repetition of acts and deeds; therefore, one's status of being a man in certain society has its temporal dimension, it can hardly be secured once and for all, but is in a perpetual need of justification from other men. As Kimmel states, 'We [men] are under the constant careful scrutiny of other men."[18] Men are watched, ranked, granted the acceptance into the realm of manhood all by other men. The performance of manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval. As showed in the story, Liang's performance of his manhood actually is not some desirable quality in light of his own social condition, given that his unprivileged economic condition does not allow him to squander too much money on gambling; his understanding of manhood is imposed on his body through everyday discourse by some external regulating force, which has been successfully internalized by Liang.

With a desire for being accepted into this local male community, and feeling constantly being watched through the male gaze, Liang is forced (maybe unconsciously) into a permanent process of adjusting his behavior to one of the local discourses of manhood, which is temporarily constituted as tough character and hedonism, but is subject to alternative definitions through time. Thus it is this pursuit of a male identity acknowledged by other men, the homosocial bonds between male, that Liang becomes a docile body in relation to the male community. However, he is an alienated body to himself. In this sense, masculinity, although frequently defined as anything that is not femininity, it is not exclusively or even primarily a cluster of concepts developed to structure power relations between men and women; rather, it is an arena of power relations among men. It is unsurprising that at the end of the story, Liang kills the man who has persuaded him to sell his wife, as he loses everything after this plan is discovered by Cuixian, Cuixian soon disappears along with all his property. However his crime is not committed to revenge his lost of Cuixian, but to revenge his lost of the male bonds constructed through Cuixian. Undoubtedly, the bonds he aspires to establish is sustained and secured by a good capacity of power exchange. After he loses all his property nobody in that town would even bother to speak to him. His consequent bankrupt status followed by Cuixian's

[17] Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon 2002, p. 143.
[18] Ibid., p. 143.

departure inevitably isolates him from that circle, which for him is the most unbearable situation. In this sense, the male bonds, perceived as male privilege, is also a trap, it is a "permanent tension and contention",[19] and it can be disruptive when a man has to sacrifice too much to sustain this bond to secure his identity as a man, or a sense of belonging.

The function of the exchange of women may be more manifest if juxtaposed with gift theory (Marcel Mauss) and traffic in women (Levi-Strauss). Mauss identifies gift giving as a structural principle of the primitive society, claiming that "giving, receiving, and reciprocating gifts dominate social intercourse." In gift giving, "the objects are never completely separated from the men who exchange them",[20] unlike the objects sold whose ownership can be completely shifted to the buyer, the objects given bear a quality of inalienability; they cannot be alienated from their original owner. It is precisely because this inalienable bond between the giver and the gift that gift giving is able to create a social bond between the giver and the recipient through which the social solidarity can be achieved. Levi-Strauss grafts Mauss' gift theory onto his analysis of structures of kinship, and added that "marriages are a most basic form of gift exchange, in which it is women who are the most precious of gifts." Thus "the prohibition of incest is less a rule prohibiting marriage with the mother, sister, or daughter, than a rule obliging the mother, sister, or daughter to be given to others. It is the supreme rule of the gift."[21] By being exchanged as gifts, the exchange of women between men constitutes the essential cement of social system.

One fact that can be derived from the stories aforementioned is that although the privileged male homosocial bond induces a degrading of the heterosexual bond as submissive, its survival inevitably relies on the heterosexual bond. Thus the Confucian masculinity may be constructed within a homosocial world instead of heterosexual relations, however, the key role played by female in the sustaining of male bond should not be underemphasized.

Stability that is hierarchical

In Pu Songling's *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, there is more than one story in which the wife's beauty causes great trouble for her humble husband. In the story of Yun Cuixian, the husband ends up with losing his wife as well as his established male bonds; in Bookworm 书痴, the humble male scholar invites jealousy from a man of officialdom because of his intimate relationship with a supernatural woman who is believed to be of a superior status, and this scholar is unjustly put into jail; in Wanxia 晚霞, the local magistrate attempts to rob Wanxia from her

[19] Bourdieu 2001, p. 50.
[20] Mauss 1990, p. 31.
[21] Lévi-Strauss 1969, p. 481.

husband because he thinks her husband does not deserve to possess such a wonderful wife. In these stories, a superior wife for a humble husband constitutes a threat to the stability well maintained by the hierarchical structure.

Ideally, the stability endorsed by this structure is based on a respect for order. This has been well illustrated in one fox story in Pu's *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. In Maohu 毛狐,[22] Ma Tianrong, the son of a peasant, is too poor to take another wife after his wife's death until one day he meets a fox spirit and begins to keep a sexual relationship with her. Knowing that a fox spirit is omnipotent with her supernatural power, he wishes to benefit more from their relationship by imploring her to get him gold and rescue him from his poverty-stricken condition. The fox spirit consents to his request, but procrastinates in giving him the requested gold until Ma reminds her for several times. Later, Ma is surprised and furious when he finds out that the gold he has received from her turns out to be nothing but much less valuable tin. But the fox spirit has her good reason to answer his interrogation: "Your fate is just too doomed to deserve the real gold."[23] Apparently Ma fails to learn anything from this experience, which encourages him to be bold enough to ask why the fox spirit is not as beautiful as it allegedly should be. Again, the fox spirit speaks her biting sarcasm: "Our beauty scale is supposed to match with the status of the man we are with, you even cannot deserve the real gold, how can you expect to deserve real beauty? My beauty scale may be not high enough to serve those upper-class men, but compared with those women with big feet and hunch back, I am already excessively beautiful (for you)."[24] And it turns out later Ma ends up with a wife with big feet and hunch back. Thus according to the fox spirit and the whole patriarchal society, as a son of a peasant, Ma's life has been predestined to be peasant-like, he is encouraged to stick to what he is entitled, aspiration to things as extra fortune and beauty is considered as incommensurate with his present position.

Therefore, a woman's body and her financial position granted by her natal family are viewed as some commodities which are finely stratified into different levels, and thus they are not supposed to be objects to which every man has equal access.[25] While it is legal for the wealthy echelon to accumulate women, both from elite class and the underclass, the union of a superior woman and an inferior man may cause anxiety and fear in men of the higher social rungs who tend to regard this union as posing a serious danger to the present hierarchy, and may even destabilize its working mechanism. However, what may not occur to elite men is the fact that disturbing elements like this sort are

[22] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 440.
[23] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 440.
[24] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 440.
[25] Men of higher status accordingly enjoy privileges in accumulating women. The amount of concubines a man can legally take is decided by his social status in the hierarchical structure, normally nine for the lord, two for high officials, and one for common officials. See Rosenlee 2006, p. 123.

nothing but part of that mechanism. Disrespect to the order can have a constructive relationship to that order in the way that it brings to the fore the underlying functioning mechanism of that order, something otherwise might have lost its dynamism and been consigned to oblivion due to its overly smooth workings. In many ways, it is just these disturbing elements that keep goading the patriarchal order into permanent self-criticism and self-improvement, and in this sense, a sustainable system presupposes its antithesis.

The patriarchal hierarchy is a structurally stable one, in the way that the hierarchical structure *per se* does not change, what changes is merely the position of people involved into this structure, and even this mobility is dormant. This feature of patriarchy has only been intensified in Confucianism, as a major characteristic of Confucianism is its holistic view of human relationships, according to which people are divided in hierarchical terms into the sovereign and the subordinate; and as Sherry J. Mou points out, "gender relations are all built upon this foundation of hierarchical order."[26]

In this transcendental structure, the male are pigeonholed into particular category and each category has their particular identification. Thus what is identified as the emblem of one category should not be confused with others, especially the less valued ones. Male's cohesion and rivalry within one class makes this structure only more stable and permanent. Under such a structure, not only women's mobility is strictly confined, physically and socially; men's social mobility is also kept in a rather narrow spectrum.

Thus the union of a supernatural woman and an inferior human, although interpreted by many scholarly debates as a gesture of rejecting or keeping away from the overarching hierarchal structure, unfortunately is engulfed by that structure. Actually Pu Songling himself may regard this union as subversive or revolutionary, however what seems to have mitigated his revolutionary effort is the fact that he is using the same ideology to fight against the ideology he has been taking issue with, only substituting the patriarchal authority with authority of supernatural female. To keep distance from the dominant ideology, the male protagonists unfortunately resort to what is precisely endorsed by that ideology as desirable: favor of certain authority to confirm one's superiority to others. Thus what has been regarded as subversive force to the social order has eventually been transformed into a reinforcement of that order.

Thus, the subversive function previously read into the supernatural women by the scholarly discourses, turns out to be minimal. The phantasmatic characteristic of this subversive force can be observed even in the most subversive-like metamorphosis stories, namely the immortal-seeking story. Ideally, what is supposed to ensue with the immortal-seeking activity is to abandon all the previously established secular relations and acquire the entrance into an ethereal realm where the mind rests in eternal peace, no longer disturbed

[26] Mou 2004, p. 7.

by all the sound and the fury from the terrestrial sphere. But this is hardly the case in Pu Songling's immortal-seeking fictions. We may be constantly aware of a profound reversion to the patriarchal order underneath such a superficial pursuit. What is supposed to be an antithesis of the patriarchal world eventually deteriorates into a complementary part of that world.

The story Bai Yuyu 白于玉 is a case in point for such a reversion. Wu Qing'an's two-staged immortal-seeking (or social climbing) activity in this story is not self-willed, but is carefully instigated and guided by two males respectively, each offering women as the bait. Ge, the court historian, serves as Wu's first guider. Poor, but well-known for his outstanding literary talent, Wu is held in high esteem by Ge who believes that a young man with such outstanding talents would become prosperous very shortly. Therefore, based on a staunch faith in Wu, Ge promises that he would like to marry his daughter to Wu once Wu succeeds in passing the civil service examination. Wu is thrilled to hear this unexpected news, knowing that Ge's daughter is allegedly very beautiful, and is determined to devote himself to harder work. Apparently, it is Ge's faith in him that helps Wu to boost his self-confidence ("生闻大喜,确自信"[27]), and his self-confidence in turn begets his belief of an upward social mobility. Actually his belief is so strong that even his first try ends up with failure, he does not flinch from trying again and declares that "richness and honor are something guaranteed for me, what hasn't been assured so far is just when they will take place."[28] Thus in the first stage, Wu's interest in social climbing is intrigued by a male bond which is predicated on his future success, initiated by a man with superior social status, and achieved through a marriage with a woman.

In the second stage, Wu's guider is Bai Yuyu, a mysterious being manifesting himself as a human male. Wu and Bai become bosom friends at their first encounter out of their mutual admiration for each other's talent, and soon begin to live together in Wu's residence. Later, Wu is surprised to find that what Bai is reading has nothing to do with any practical purposes, but are all about ways of immortal-seeking. When Bai attempts to get Wu on board, Wu rejects his suggestion without any hesitation, claiming that he is unable to forgo all the worldly ambitions and romances. It is not until Wu gets the chance to visit the immortal world and spend one night with four immortal females that he realizes how narrow-minded he has been, and how blissful it is to be immortal. He spontaneously fixes his mind on immortal-seeking without further persuasive words from Bai. Thus instead of promising some practical benefits as Ge once did, Bai's guiding strategy is to let Wu experience in person a part of immortal life first, and to convince him with concrete evidence that immortal life is worth pursuing. However, Wu's motivation of immortal-seeking is against the very essence of that project. Rather than forgoing all the desires generated in the worldly relations, and regarding the immortal world as an antithesis of the

[27] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 337
[28] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 337.

patriarchal one, Wu's efforts merely drag the immortal world into patriarchy's territory, causing it to degenerate into another place occupied by symbolic order and power relations. In Wu's case the immortal world is by no means separated from the real world, quite the opposite, the superior power gained from immortal world is in turn used to enhance the stability of hierarchy in real world.

Therefore, in Wu's immortal life, the supernatural woman in the immortal world can give birth to a son who is later raised by Wu's wife in order to carry on Wu's family line, and Wu's immortality can frequently benefit his secular family in a way that otherwise cannot be achieved. For example, he can distribute magic pills to grant his wife and father-in-law a longer life, and he can protect his family from a conflagration. Although Wu is physically severed from his secular family, he reverts to it with a higher position, armed with more transcendental power.

Interestingly, in both stages of Wu's social-climbing process, although directed by men, his efforts towards a higher position in power relations are actually incited directly by women. Offered by men as incitement, women's exchange value here is achieved more likely in a symbolic sense, which means her exchange value is not necessarily fully achieved in real life, but suffices to function well as a beckon not completely out of reach yet still quite elusive, which is the very source her enigmatic charisma derives from. It seems like Wu's efforts start with a pure pursuit of the women (both human women and supernatural women), however his desire for women cannot be independent from the powerful influence of male bonds. What also interest him, maybe in a more profound way, are the luring power that enables him to own and deserve these women, and various privileges secured by male bonds. One detail that exposes this motivation is that when Bai doubts that Ge's daughter might not be really beautiful, Wu hastens to add that he is not the only one that adores her, rather every man admires her beauty. Thus Wu's judgment on a woman is not primarily based on his personal impression about her, but has to be supported by men's collective opinions on her, because only in this way can his efforts be rewarded properly — a better position among men. Women, again are used as a springboard, they are at once the media through which male bonds are to be established and social ladders leading to a higher position of social status.

Women's admiration value

The exchange value, nevertheless, is not the whole story of supernatural women. As supernatural beings created by male authors, they are meant to be distinguished from human female one way or another, and it is just their uniqueness derived from their supernatural attributes that grants them some sort of anti-exchange qualities. One extreme form of these qualities is their invisibility.

Although Chinese women were generally kept invisible outside the domestic area, supernatural women are sometimes literally invisible to the human being to whom they choose not to show themselves; actually in most cases, they only allow themselves to be seen by their chosen human lover. And besides the fact that the supernatural women are capable of physically invisible to other men, they also mentally dislike the idea of manifesting themselves in front of other men even when they are required to. This invisibility may preclude their possible exchange value, it nevertheless constitutes what I call women's "admiration value", which promotes "the chosen one" as superior to other men. If the exchange value works through connection, the admiration value works through isolation.

Ainu 爱奴,[29] is one supernatural woman who combines these two values. She is sent by her mistress to the private tutor Xu in which Ainu is used as the exchange value. However as soon as she becomes Xu's private property, her exchange value ceases to exist. Because of her ghostly nature, she is able to be only visible to Xu in his residence, Xu's guests could not be aware of her presence even they are in the same room. This kind of invisibility is achieved through an objective supernatural force on the condition that no other person is informed of such a ghostly existence, however, even after her existence is exposed to the public, she still subjectively prefers to avoid being seen by other men. In the story Scholar from Jiaping 嘉平公子,[30] the ghost prostitute Wenji also prefers to only show herself to Jiaping. Jiaping's brother-in-law only gets a chance to see her by ensconcing himself in the servant's room and peeking. In The Fourteenth Sister Xin 辛十四娘,[31] the invisibility of the fox spirit Xin not only protects her beauty from other male's gaze, but also assumes some practical function when she is primarily involved in the mission of rescuing Feng out of jail. In addition to her own physical invisibility, she also psychologically detests the idea of having any visitors at home, and tries to persuade her husband to avoid involvement in harmful male bonds outside, by which she is trying to make her husband Feng invisible too.

To some extent, the supernatural women's invisibility boosts the man's superiority in that in contrast to other properties a man aspires to possess, the possession of an exclusively visible woman is less fluid, less common, and less subject to contestation. Being her chosen one is the mark that distinguishes him from all the other competitors, it is the one way in which no one can emulate him, the one chance that the social imbalance can be adjusted. Through daydreaming about the favor of a much more powerful force which is exclusive to him, he manages to regain some power he feels lost in other fields. However, it needs to be pointed out that the value represented by the admiration of men does not exist in the supernatural women's invisibility itself. Rather, it can only

[29] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 3: 1186.
[30] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 3: 1555.
[31] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 545.

exist and be better confirmed in a challenge to that invisibility. Thus she must be at once invisible and desirable, at once desirable and inaccessible for other men, especially for those men who are considered as superior to the man who actually owns this supernatural woman. Without at least two men to invest in her, a woman can have no value.

In the story of Liansuo 连锁,[32] Liansuo's visibility is exclusively saved for Yang, the one she chooses as her human lover. She enjoins Yang not to publicize their secret relationship for fear that she might be harassed by some unwanted guests. Thus for a good while, Yang and Liansuo live a tranquil life as a couple until one day a friend Xue comes to Yang's place and notices some items that are not supposed to be a man's stuff. Under Xue's interrogation, Yang confesses that he is visited nightly by a female ghost who does not prefer to meet any other man. Envious of Yang's romantic affair, Xue begs to see his ghost lover. Liansuo is driven angry when Yang conveys Xue's admiration to her, and threatens not to come again. The next evening, Xue came to Yang's place with another two friends to wait for Liansuo's visit. But Liansuo refused to show up.

On the one hand, Liansuo's admiration value is only made possible in Xue's challenge to her invisibility, it is by making known his ghost lover's existence that Yang's privilege is publicly confirmed; on the other hand, Liansuo's sticking to her invisibility to other men makes this challenge unthreatening, and further confirms Yang's privilege over other men, since she makes it very clear that this privilege is not to be extended to any other males. To Yang, his distinction from other men, his special power over other men can only be confirmed by a challenge to that power from other men, a power that has not been confronted with any challenge is not a real powerful one. Thus challenge constitutes part of power.

In the story Huqie 狐妾,[33] the fox lady's magic power invites an admirer. Having heard a lot about the fox lady, Zhang Dao, a townsman of Liu Dongjiu, asks for Liu's permission to see his fox concubine. Liu readily gives his consent, probably thinking of this as a compliment rather than an insult, but this request is met with a straightforward rejection from the fox lady. Left with no alternative, Liu shows Zhang a portrait of her. Zhang is so impressed by her beauty that he insists to take this portrait home and hangs it on the wall. From then on, he prays in front of this portrait every day, hoping that the fox lady could abandon Liu and favor him instead, this, of course, again is met with the fox's lady's punishment.

In this case, the invisibility of the supernatural woman is challenged by the husband's complicity with Zhang, however is eventually secured through the fox lady's mental rejection. The contradictory attitudes towards the fox lady's

[32] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 327.
[33] Quanben Xinzhu *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 1: 415.

visibility between Liu and the fox lady actually reflect the ambivalence within Liu himself. They are two respects that Liu has to concern and make a balance between. On the one hand, Liu is eager to show his superior concubine to other male, to prove that he is the one who has been chosen and blessed, therefore has special power and is superior to those who do not have this privilege; on the other hand, the display of his concubine is not without risk, there is always a risk of being robbed of this mark of superiority, a risk of being exchanged for her equivalent. Thus for this special power to be secured, the absolute ownership of the fox lady must be secured at first, which means this ownership must not be challenged through his displaying of her superiority.

A perfect solution for this mental imbalance is to endow the supernatural woman an inborn ability of being physically invisible accompanied by her strong inclination of unwilling to be seen. In this way, through the woman's internalized self-discipline, a desirable tension has been kept between desire and actual access, the superwoman can only be vainly desired, but can never be really approached. Thus, the display of the supernatural women symbolizes the power being exerted upon other men, however the rejection of any accessibility to the supernatural women betrays men's fragile confidence in this power. Such men refuse any possibility that this power may be endangered, they only allow this power to be acted out, to be challenged within a non-threatening dose, but are too afraid to allow any condition of exchange or contest of powers in which this power may be lost. Therefore, it is true that the admiration value exists and only exists in the challenged invisibility, but the power of challenge has been immensely weakened, in order to make it manageable.

Conclusion

To sum up, although the heterosexual relationship between human male and supernatural female has long been a focal point and one of the most contested topics in studies of Pu Songling's *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, it is still worthwhile to re-examine this relationship by juxtaposing it with male homosocial relationship in which a more comprehensive picture of general gender relation can be expected. Rather than its being a tangential issue, the male homosocial bonds, although less visible in Pu's metamorphosis narrative, nevertheless play a fundamental role in shaping and regulating the heterosexual relationship. In this sense, the male-female relationship has never been a self-sufficient or unmediated domain but under constant supervision of male-male bonds. As a result, the union of human male and supernatural female, what used to be interpreted as subversive force to the social order, has eventually been transformed into a reinforcement of that order.

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STRANGE STORIES OF JUDGE SHI: IMAGINING A MANCHU INVESTIGATOR IN EARLY QING CHINA

OLIVIA MILBURN
(Seoul National University)

During the second half of the Qing Dynasty, there was a great increase in interest in crime fiction, in particular *gong'an* 公案 (legal case) literature. Often closely intertwined with another genre— martial arts fiction— legal case literature focused on the investigation and punishment of crime by judicial means. (Martial arts fiction, on the other hand, was based upon the righting of wrongs by extra-judicial means, in particular through the intervention of a chivalrous hero). Enormously popular with a contemporary audience, Qing Dynasty legal case fiction has received comparatively little attention from modern scholars. One of the most ignored forms of this genre is literature set during Manchu rule. The reasons for this neglect are no doubt complex; Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) in his magisterial *Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shilüe* 中國小說史略 (*A Short History of Chinese Fiction*) of 1924 wrote scathingly of the quality of much of this type of literature, - singling out for praise only the *Sanxia Wuyi* 三俠五義 (*Three Heroes and Five Righteous Men*) a mixed legal-case-and-martial-arts novel which begins with a description of various crime investigations undertaken by the great Judge Bao of the Northern Song Dynasty, and the *Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* 兒女英雄傳 [*Tales of Lovers and Heroes*], which is often cited as one of the finest early martial arts novels.[1] Lu Xun's unfavourable opinion of legal case literature certainly seems to have contributed to the contempt with which this genre was treated in much twentieth century scholarship. However, a further factor is also at work— the innately controversial nature of much Qing Dynasty legal case literature, which describes *Chinese* criminals being tracked down and punished by *Manchu* officials. Unlike contemporary martial arts fiction, which tended to avoid issues of ethnicity, Qing Dynasty legal case literature could and did tackle this issue directly.

This paper will focus on one seminal Qing Dynasty legal case novel: the *Shigong Qiwen* 施公奇聞 [*Strange Stories of Judge Shi*]. This is a High Qing Dynasty crime novel of unknown authorship and complex publishing history. Unlike many other examples of legal case literature, this particular novel is almost entirely free of any martial arts fiction influence. The main

[1] See Lu Xun 2010, pp. 305-314.

protagonist is closely based upon a genuine historical individual: Shi Shilun 施世綸 (1659-1722); a member of the Manchu ruling elite.[2] Although the novel gives his name as Shi Shilun 施仕倫 (with different characters but an identical pronunciation), many of the details concerning his ethnic background, his family, and his official career are clearly based on this historical personage. Throughout the novel, Shi Shilun is clearly positioned as a *Manchu* official. Although many crime novels were written during the Qing Dynasty, a number of which featured Manchu officials in the role of investigators, the *Shigong Qiwen* provides an unusually nuanced portrayal of the interactions in the courtroom of individuals of different ethnic identity. Furthermore, Shi Shilun is described throughout this novel as a man struggling against severe physical handicaps. In spite of this, it is his duty both to investigate criminal cases occurring within the area under his jurisdiction and to mete out justice to evil-doers. It is these two aspects of Shi Shilun's literary identity— a member of the Manchu ruling class protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty in spite of his crippling physical problems— that make the *Shigong Qiwen* unique within Qing Dynasty legal case literature.

The 'Shigong Qiwen' and 'Shi Shilun'

The *Shigong Qiwen* is a classic of late imperial era legal case fiction and it would spawn a host of adaptations including numerous plays, as well as spin-off novels featuring other Qing Dynasty officials as intrepid investigating magistrates.[3] During the course of the nineteenth century, it was also translated into a number of foreign languages, including Mongolian (*Ši Mergen Noyan-u Eki Toytaγa Kemekü Teüke*) and Malay (*Si Kong ann*).[4] The precise date of composition of the *Shigong Qiwen* is not known— the earliest surviving edition of this text consisting of ninety-seven chapters was printed in 1820 in Xiamen under the title *Xiuxiang Shi Gong' an* 繡像施公案 [*The Illustrated Cases of Judge Shi*] by the publishing house Wendetang 文德堂. This edition featured a preface dated to 1798.[5] The handful of scholars who have studied the history and

[2] For the official biography of Shi Shilun; see *Qingshigao*, 277: 10095-10098.

[3] The origins of at least thirty plays have been traced to this tradition, of which one of the most famous is *E'hucun* 惡虎村 [*Evil Tiger Village*], based on chapters 64-68 of the *Shigong Qiwen*; see Tao Junqi 1963. For the popularity in the late Qing of drum ballads and chantefables about Judge Shi, see *Yan Xiaxiang Cuolu*, 4: 3b-4a and Wan 2009, p. 12.

[4] These two translations are discussed in Riftin 1987, p. 241 and Lombard-Salamon 1977, p. 85.

[5] The sole known surviving copy of this text is found in the British Library, see Liu Cunren 1983, pp. 182-183. Liu Cunren notes that the final chapter of this text ends extremely abruptly, which suggests that the ninety-seven chapter version of the novel is in some way incomplete. The preface to the *Shigong Qiwen* was largely copied from that to the late sixteenth century collection of crime stories: *Longtu Gong'an* [*Cases of Judge [Bao] of the Dragon-Design*]; see Ding Xigen 1996, 3: 1602, 1610-1611.

reception of this novel generally agree that it was written in the late Qianlong-early Jiaqing era.[6] The *Shigong Qiwen* is known under a number of different titles, of which the one most generally used today is *Shi Gong'an* 施公案 [*Cases of Judge Shi*]. However, versions of this text were also published with the titles *Shi Gong'an Zhuan* 施公案傳 [*Traditions of the Cases of Judge Shi*], *Shi'an Qiwen* 施案奇聞 [*Strange Stories of [Judge] Shi's Legal Cases*] and *Baiduan Qiguan* 百斷奇觀 [*Unusual Perspectives on One Hundred Judgments*], and so on. Although the *Shigong Qiwen* as originally printed was incomplete at ninety-seven chapters, the abrupt ending has not survived. A final ninety-eighth chapter, providing a conclusion to some aspects of the plot, was incorporated in 1891 by Shanmei Jushi 珊梅居士, the pseudonymous editor of the *Sangong Qi'an* 三公奇案 [*Unusual Legal Cases [solved] by Three Judges*]. Modern editions usually include this extra chapter, as well as one or more of the numerous later sequels, which are also of anonymous authorship.[7] These longer versions of the text are usually printed under the title of *Shi Gong'an*: the 1982 Wenbaotang 文寶堂 edition published in Beijing consists of four hundred and two chapters; while the 1903 Guangyi shuju 廣益書局 edition printed in Shanghai under the title *Huitu Shi Gong'an* 繪圖施公案 [*Illustrated Cases of Judge Shi*], which is the longest to date, contains five hundred and twenty-eight chapters.[8] In these editions, the *Shigong Qiwen* is normally printed at the beginning, though not all versions of the text distinguish clearly between the original novel and the later sequels.

The *Shigong Qiwen* is primarily a crime novel; it concerns the discovery of a criminal offence, the collection of evidence, the tracking down of the guilty parties and the administration of justice. Unlike earlier court case fiction in China, such as the *Bao Longtu Baijia Gong'an* 包龍圖百家公案 [*Cases of One Hundred Families [Judged by] Dragon-Design Bao*] by An Yushi 安遇時 (first published in 1594), where each chapter constitutes effectively a short story focusing on a single case or a series of interlinked crimes, the *Shigong Qiwen* presents Judge Shi engaged on numerous different

[6] See Liu Yinbo 1992, p. 221 and Han Cao 1993.

[7] Ten sequels to the original novel are known, see Wang Junnian 1992, p. 120. The most detailed attempt to date to ascertain the publication history of these texts is found in Yang Shumei 1996, pp. 15-26.

[8] References to the *Shigong Qiwen* in this article will be taken from the edition of *Shi Gong'an* annotated by Qiu Gu; a recension based on the earliest known version of the text, the Daoguang era recension of the text produced by the Wendetang in Xiamen, collated with various other late Qing Dynasty editions. References to the sequels are derived from the Taiwanese reprint of the Guangyi shuju edition, which has been collated against the 1912 recension published by the Jianqingzhai shuju 簡青齋書局 under the title of *Huitu Shi Gong'an Quanzhuan* 繪圖施公案全傳 [*Illustrated Complete Traditions of the Cases of Judge Shi*]; see Huang Shen, annot., *Shi Gong'an*, p. 15. It should be noted that the two versions of the text are significantly different; not only is variant wording common, but in some cases material is arranged in a completely different chapter order or missing entirely.

investigations at the same time, showing him as an overworked and harassed magistrate attempting to maintain law and order in the teeth of an apparently endless supply of villains.[9] This interlocking structure, which is a very striking feature of this text, would not be generally adopted within late Qing crime writing, though many subsequent novels would show some efforts at providing a linked sequence of actions underpinning the narrative.[10] The later sequels to the *Shigong Qiwen* are mainly martial arts novels— Shi Shilun is no longer the main character, for the focus has shifted to the bandits whom he has reformed, who now proceed to round up evil-doers in the name of justice.[11] The narrative is much more linear, relying on series of dramatic incidents to build tension, rather than following the interlocking structure of the first novel, where tension is created by the fact that the moment a crucial piece of evidence has been garnered in one case, Judge Shi has to drop it in order to send his men out to deal with some completely different crime. In order to clearly distinguish between the two quite different literary forms found within this one textual tradition, the ninety-seven chapter crime novel which is the subject of this paper will be referred to as the *Shigong Qiwen*; the longer versions of the text which include significant martial arts sequences will be distinguished by the designation *Shi Gong'an*.

In order to appreciate the reflections on the nature of Manchu government found in the *Shigong qiwen*, it is necessary to understand the cultural background of the main protagonist, and the differences between the historical and the fictional character. The historical Shi Shilun was a 'Martial Han' (*hanjun* 漢軍) member of the Bordered Yellow Banner (*Xianghuangqi* 鑲黃旗): one of the Three Upper Banners (*Shangsanqi* 上三旗). However, unlike the majority of Martial Han people in the early Qing government, he was not descended from ethnically Chinese or other sinicized immigrants into Manchuria— his father, Shi Lang 施琅 (1621-1696), was a native of Jinjiang County 晉江縣 in Quanzhou 泉州, in Fujian province.[12] Shi Lang was rewarded with inscription into the Bordered Yellow Banner thanks to the crucial role that he played in putting down the ongoing resistance to the Qing conquest

[9] For a discussion of this innovative feature of the narrative, see Zhang Jun 1997, p. 327.

[10] This structure is shared with another Qing Dynasty legal case classic, the *Yu Gong'an Qiwen* 于公案奇聞 [*Strange Stories of the Cases of Judge Yu*], the first known edition of which was published just two years after the *Shigong Qiwen*, and which is derived from incidents in the career of Yu Chenglong 于成龍 (1638-1700), a famous honest official of the early Kangxi reign era. This anonymous novel is notable for the fact that it too is free of any influence from martial arts literature. For a detailed study of this text, see Hou Zhongyi and Li Shi 1994.

[11] For a study of this theme, see Xu Xiaoming and Tu Chunfen 2012.

[12] *Qingshigao*, 260: 9864-9868. In addition to playing a small part in the *Shigong Qiwen*, Shi Lang is also a minor character in Jin Yong's 金庸 *Ludingji* 鹿鼎記 [*Record of the Deer and the Cauldron*]. A vast body of research on Shi Lang and his career exists, see for example Shi Weiqing 1987; see also Xu Zaiquan and Wu Youxiong 2001; and Shi Xingshan 2006.

orchestrated by Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624-1662) on the island of Taiwan; having previously served under the Zheng family, Shi Lang surrendered to the Manchus in 1646. (Subsequently Shi Lang's sixth son, Shi Shibiao 施世驃 (1667-1721), also played a major role in maintaining Qing control on Taiwan during the reign of the Kangxi Emperor).[13] Thanks to his father, Shi Shilun (Shi Lang's second son) was a member of one of the most prestigious of the Eight Banners, and he was granted an official position without having to pass the *jinshi* 進士 examinations.[14] However, in spite of his position as a member of the Qing ruling elite, he was both unequivocally of Chinese ethnicity and lacking in any connection with Manchuria, and was hence liable to be looked at askance by Manchu Bannermen, particularly given his father's often difficult relationship with the central government.[15] Although many Martial Han individuals found themselves caught in ambivalent circumstances following the Qing conquest of China, the Shi family is notable for their staunch loyalty to the dynasty in spite of their lack of connection with Manchuria.

One of the principal source of information concerning the historical Shi Shilun's biography, in particular the official positions that he held, is the account given in the *Qingshigao* 清史稿 (*Draft History of the Qing Dynasty*).[16] The chronology provided here is useful, since it is clear that the *Shigong Qiwen* follows the basic outline of the early part of the real Shi Shilun's career.[17] Thus, he began as the 'Taizhou Zhizhou' 泰州知州 (Magistrate of Taizhou) in 1685, being promoted to 'Yangzhou Zhifu' 揚州知府 (Prefect of Yangzhou) in 1689;

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[13] *Qingshigao*, 284: 10189-10191. For a contemporary account of Shi Shibiao's pacification of Taiwan, putting down the rebellion by Zhu Yigui 朱一貴 (d. 1721), an imposter claiming to be a member of the Ming Dynasty ruling house, see *Ping Tai Jilüe*.

[14] The importance of Shi Shilun's status as a *yinsheng* 廕生 (scholar exempted from the examinations due to parental status) can be seen by the number of times this is mentioned in biographical accounts; see for example *Jiangnan Tongzhi*, 112: 1848. However, as of 1664, *yinsheng* were required to study at the Imperial College before becoming eligible for appointment and was usually reserved only for the eldest son of a senior official; see Lui 1981, pp. 48-49.

[15] References to Shi Shilun in official gazetteers suggest some ambivalence about his position; the *Yangzhou Fuzhi*, 38: 4b, carefully notes that although he was a member of the Bordered Yellow Banner, his household registration (*ji* 籍) was in Quanzhou, a most unusual locution which can only indicate that he was regarded as different from other Martial Han Bannermen.

[16] An alternative official biography, much longer and more detailed, may be found in the *Qinding Baqi Tongzhi*, 192: 7b-13a. Shi Shilun's biography is followed by that of his younger brother, Shi Shibiao; 192: 13b-17b.

[17] Ma 1979, pp. 235-240, argues that after the publication of Pu Songling's 蒲松齡 (1640-1715) *Liaozhai Zhiyi* 聊齋志異 (*Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*) which contains a number of short stories that revolve around legal cases, it no longer became acceptable to use historical figures as protagonists caught up in situations completely divorced from any historical context. As a result, the portrayal of genuine investigating magistrates in later Qing Dynasty legal case literature tends to be reasonably closely based on the historical facts.

at this time the situation in the city was described as "volatile" (*youdang* 游蕩)— no doubt a mild description of the ongoing problems caused by the massacre some decades earlier, recorded in the famous *Yangzhou Shiriji* 揚州十日記 (*Account of Ten Days in Yangzhou*).[18] Having successfully dealt with the situation there, in 1693, he was moved to become 'Jiangning Zhifu' 江寧知府. His career was then interrupted for a short period by mourning on the deaths of his parents. In 1697 he was appointed as 'Suzhou Zhifu' 蘇州知府, after which he became, in 1701, the 'Hunan Buzhengshi' 湖南布政使 (Hunan Provincial Administration Commissioner); taking up the position of 'Anhui Buzhengshi' 安徽布政使 in 1704. In 1720, Shaanxi province was badly afflicted by famine in the wake of a drought. Shi Shilun was appointed as 'Shaanxi Zuo Zongdu' 陝西左總督 (Governor-General of the Left of Shaanxi province) and took charge of the relief operations.[19] This was to be the last important government position that he held, for in the fourth lunar month of 1722, ill-health forced him to resign. He died just a few weeks later and by special permission from the emperor was buried in Fujian, next to his own father's grave.

The account of Shi Shilun's life in his official biography lays considerable stress on his great moral probity, his strict sense of justice, his determination to do the best for the people under his administration and his hatred of anything that smacked of nepotism. His popularity with the ordinary people is emphasized on a number of different occasions; for example, when he left Jiangning, more than ten thousand people are said to have begged him to stay, subsequently raising money to construct two commemorative pavilions in front of the main entrance to the government offices; his popular tax reforms when working as the Hunan Buzhengshi saw the local populace erect a stele in his honour; he is also said to have been known by the epithet of 'Qingtian' 青天 (Blue Sky), which is normally associated with Judge Bao.[20] The *Qingshigao* also records two occasions when Shi Shilun argued with prominent Manchu officials about their inappropriate behaviour; he is said to have commented satirically upon Tuoheqi's 託合齊 (d. 1712) encroachments on the prerogatives of his superiors and thus affected a reformation of his behaviour.[21] Furthermore

[18] See *Yangzhou Shiriji*, pp. 229-243. For a study of these events, the number of dead, the damaged caused, and the ongoing effect of the massacre in the early Qing Dynasty, see Finnane 2004, pp. 69-113.

[19] Shi Shilun was advantaged in his career by the fact that the early Qing government reserved many senior posts (notably provincial governor-generalships) for Martial Han Bannermen. During the course of the eighteenth century, these positions would become divided between Chinese officials and Manchus, while in the nineteenth century they would become the preserve of Chinese officials only. See Wakeman 1985, pp. 1020-1033.

[20] This designation also appears a number of times in the *Shigong Qiwen*; see for example 71: 124.

[21] See *Qingshigao*, 277: 10097. This particular incident is repeated in the *Shigong Qiwen*, 71: 125-72: 127; though rather than involving a Manchu official, Tuoheqi, who held the position

he is said to have reprimanded E'hai 鄂海 (?-1725) for attempting to give Shi Shilun's own son, Shi Tingxiang 施廷祥, an official position which his father felt that he had done nothing to earn.[22] These stories of Shi Shilun's arguments with senior Manchu officials are echoed in the *Shigong Qiwen*, which records the fictional character's difficult relationship with a number of senior government figures.

The *Shigong Qiwen* begins during Shi Shilun's time in office in Yangzhou. This corresponds to the historical Shi Shilun, who served as the Yangzhou Zhifu from 1689-1693. However, afterwards the *Shigong Qiwen* diverges from the account given in the *Qingshigao*, for the novel takes Judge Shi to Beijing, with a position as the Shuntian Zhifu 順天知府. Although this position is not recorded in Shi Shilun's official biography, it would nevertheless appear that this is a historical fact: a number of texts mention that he was indeed appointed to office there. The *Shigong Qiwen* follows the *Daqing Yitongzhi* 大清一統志 [*Unified Gazetteer for the Great Qing Dynasty*] in suggesting that this appointment followed on immediately from his term of office in Yangzhou; the *Fujian Tongzhi* 福建通志 (*Complete Gazetteer of Fujian province*) instead suggests that he hold office in the capital after his appointment as Anhui Buzhengshi.[23] Thus, it would seem that the author of the *Shigong Qiwen* was historically accurate in sending his main protagonist to Beijing for the last part of the novel.

Judge Shi: The Manchu Detective

Contemporary legal case fiction in the Qing Dynasty is significantly different from that which is found in earlier dynasties, or indeed from historical crime fiction set in previous regimes. The reason for this is that it is often unashamedly colonial literature— it describes the interactions between a small foreign ruling elite and the ordinary population. Though other forms of literature from the same historical era may share aspects of this colonial influence, it is particularly strong in crime fiction, in which the agents of the Manchu government are shown administering the machinery of justice, bringing the indigenous population to court.[24] Although crime novels like the *Shigong Qiwen* are known

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of 'Bujun Tongling' 步軍統領 (Commander General of a [Bannerman] Infantry Brigade), the name is changed to 'Tao Tidu' 陶提督 (Provincial Military Commander Tao); an individual of indeterminate ethnic origin but higher rank.

[22] For the official biography of E'hai, a member of the Bordered White Banner (*Xiangbaiqi* 鑲白旗) who held a series of senior appointments in Shaanxi and Sichuan during the later part of the Kangxi Emperor's reign, see *Qingshigao*, 276: 10079-10080.

[23] See *Daqing Yitongzhi*, 328: 53a; and *Fujian Tongzhi*, 45: 63a-63b.

[24] For a discussion of the importance of concepts of law and order in colonial cultures, which in turn affected literature dealing with such regimes, see Thompson 1993.

to have been enormously popular in their own time (and indeed retain considerable numbers of devotees to the present day), they have been the subject of very little serious scholarly attention. When they have been studied, it is with considerable discomfort; this seems to be due in large measure to the sympathetic portrayal of Manchu officials in the setting of a colonial government. As a result, Qing Dynasty historical crime fiction, featuring Chinese officials investigating crimes in the Song and Ming dynasties in particular, has been much better researched than novels with a contemporary setting. It should however be stressed that the *Shigong Qiwen* is also a kind of historical novel, since it was produced in the reign of the Jiaqing Emperor but set during the reign of his great-grandfather: the Kangxi Emperor. From the perspective of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when serious problems had begun to afflict the Qing regime, the reign of the Kangxi Emperor could be portrayed as a golden age of good government, when honest officials administered a peaceful realm.[25] Naturally, this did not obviate the tensions between the Manchu ruling elite and the Chinese population; indeed setting a crime novel of this kind in the city of Yangzhou during the early Qing Dynasty suggests that the author wished in some way to explore these issues, showing that public order could be achieved by a good official even at the site of a terrible massacre perpetrated by the regime that he serves.

At the very beginning of the *Shigong Qiwen*, the prologue describes the ethnic background and historical importance of the Shi family at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty. These opening comments provide the context within which the rest of Shi Shilun's interactions with other officials, and with members of the public who came under his jurisdiction, can be placed:

> In the time of the Kangxi Emperor of the present dynasty, the winds were mild and the rains were timely, the country was great and the people were at peace.
> In Jiangdu county, Yangzhou prefecture, [there was an official] named Shi Shilun, who was by imperial edict bestowed with the taboo name Buquan (Incomplete). He was an honest and upright person, though he was extremely ugly— he was inscribed in the records as a Martial Han member of the Bordered Yellow Banner […] His father held the hereditary title of Marquis of Zhenhai.[26]
> 聖朝康熙年間, 風調雨順, 國泰民安。
> 揚州府江都縣, 姓施, 名仕倫, 御賜諱不全 。為人清正, 五行甚陋 。係鑲黃旗漢軍籍貫[…]他父世襲鎮海侯爵位。

The carefully chosen wording of this passage establishes the identity of the main protagonist while creating a distance from the genuine historical character, Shi

[25] This issue is discussed in some detail in Liu Shide and Deng Shaoji 1964.
[26] *Shigong Qiwen*, A: 1.

Shilun.[27] Although the novel is clearly set in the Kangxi era, this is in fact one of only two dates given in the entire novel; hence though certain incidents in the careers of the genuine and the fictional Shi Shilun coincide, the reader is not encouraged to associate the two too closely. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the name of the fictional character is given with different wording to that of the historical individual, and the real Shi Shilun was Prefect of Yangzhou, not Magistrate of Jiangdu County in Yangzhou prefecture. Likewise, the title mentioned for Shi Shilun's father is incorrect: he was in fact awarded the position of 'Jinghai Hou' 靖海侯, a marquisate that would be held by his descendants until the end of the dynasty. Last but not least, this opening passage contains a reference to Shi Shilun's nickname, Buquan, an allusion to his physical disabilities.[28] Although this is an important part of the characterization of Judge Shi in the *Shigong Qiwen*, it is not clear whether this too should be regarded as an invention by the author.

Within the *Shigong Qiwen*, Judge Shi's ethnic and cultural identity is a very important part of his characterization. It would, however, be going too far to say that it is realistic. Although it is made clear that Judge Shi is a Martial Han person, there is no detailed discussion of the complexities of his relationship with the Manchu regime. There is no mention of the law and order problems and ethnic tensions inherent in a situation where Shi Shilun was a Qing government official serving in Yangzhou just some forty-five years after tens of thousands of the inhabitants of that city were massacred by the invading Manchus. Furthermore, there is little emphasis in the novel itself upon the location in which these events were happening. Although the first part of the *Shigong Qiwen* is set in Yangzhou, virtually all the cases solved by Judge Shi are ones that could equally well have been taking place in any other city in China at the time. The only case to bear any sign of local colour is that of the teenaged concubine of a salt-merchant (a major industry brokered from the city of Yangzhou for many centuries), attempting to assert the rights of her son after the death of her nonagenarian spouse.[29] Given the truly enormous wealth accumulated by successful salt-merchants, it is hardly surprising that the dead man's family were extremely unwilling to share their inheritance with a posthumous child born to a concubine many decades her husband's junior.

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[27] In his study of the *Shi Gong'an* tradition, Yang Zijian 1994, p. 196, suggests that in fact the only inaccuracy in the passage quoted above is the different name accorded to the historical individual. As will be seen below, this is not entirely correct.

[28] For a reference to the tradition that Shi Shilun was extremely ugly and thus came to be known by the epithet Buquan, see *Qingbai Leichao*, 61: 12. For a description of his supposed physical deformities, see *Gudong Sanji*, p. 507. All surviving accounts of Shi Shilun's disabilities appear to date from the late Qing Dynasty and therefore may be influenced by the portrayal in the *Shigong Qiwen*.

[29] See *Shigong Qiwen*, 45: 73, 50: 83. This particular case has a venerable history, since it is almost certainly derived from a Northern Song Dynasty compilation of legal cases, see *Zheyu Guijian*, 3: 133; a similar case is also recorded in the *Nanshi*, 52: 1303.

However, this one story can hardly be said to represent an adequate reflection of the unique problems of administration seen in the city of Yangzhou.

By comparison with other examples of Qing Dynasty legal case fiction involving Manchu officials and their interactions with Chinese criminals— such as Peng Peng 彭朋, the main protagonist of *Peng Gong'an* 彭公案 [*Cases of Judge Peng*], the *Shigong Qiwen* places much greater emphasis on the status of the chief protagonist as a Manchu Bannerman.[30] The author repeatedly stresses the fact that Judge Shi could speak Manchu; indeed he needs to use it in communication with other government officials when faced with particularly challenging cases.[31] This can particularly be seen in the treatment of the main case with which Shi Shilun is confronted in the early part of this novel— an immensely complex and difficult campaign to eliminate a group of bandits operating in the region. The endless ramifications of this case serve as a leitmotif to tie together the various different crimes that he investigates at this time. However, in spite of the references to Judge Shi's linguistic competence, there is little evidence in the *Shigong Qiwen* that the author had any particular close knowledge of Manchu culture, though a "Qing flavour" is imparted to the text, most noticeably in the sections describing life in Beijing, by occasional use of a Manchu term or a description of some quintessentially Manchu feature of contemporary society. This serves to distinguish the second part of the novel from the earlier sections set in the overwhelmingly Chinese city of Yangzhou. So, for example, on arrival in the capital prior to being appointed to a new position as Shuntian Zhifu, Judge Shi is described as presenting his *hale nesiha* 哈勒呢思哈 (name-card) at the palace in the company of a relative by marriage of the Kangxi Emperor, chatting all the while in Manchu.[32] This little vignette does much to impart an exotic air to the encounter between the emperor and his officials; enough Manchu words transliterated into Chinese are scattered through this novel to give it verisimilitude without impairing the comprehension of a reader with little or no exposure to Manchu culture.

Once the action of the *Shigong Qiwen* has moved to Beijing, the descriptions of crimes committed there stress the role played by powerful households in covering up the iniquities of their dependents, together with the difficulties posed by investigating offenses committed by people of different ethnic backgrounds. The following account, which features a litany of crimes

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[30] In *Peng Gong'an*, 1: 1, the main character is said to be a Qing Dynasty official inscribed in the Bordered Red Banner (*Xianghongqi* 鑲紅旗), but this is the only reference to his ethnic background. In fact, according to his official biography in the *Qingshigao*, 277: 10087-10090, the historical Peng Peng (1635-1704) was Chinese, a native of Futian county 莆田縣 in Fujian province.

[31] See for example *Shigong Qiwen*, 14: 26.

[32] See *Shigong Qiwen*, 69: 120-121. In the early part of the Qing Dynasty, Bannermen were supposed to be proficient in at least two of the three imperial languages: Manchu, Mongol and Chinese; see Crossley 1999, p. 287. Of these, Manchu was by far the most important; see Rawski 1998, pp. 36-37.

committed by a wide variety of individuals under the protection of important personages living in the capital, comes from a complainant reporting peculations from the state granaries:

> His imperial majesty's uncle by marriage Suo[e'tu] (Songgotu 索額圖, 1636-1703) has a major-domo whose name is Lu Tong— he is familiar with the Five Garrisons, the Six Ministries and the Yamen. Day after day he is there doing deals with officials, getting together with the people in charge, so that when the granary is opened in the second and eighth months, he can secretly engage in robbery, doing just what he likes. Rice destined for the black market is moved out through the gates of the granary without the slightest hindrance, openly piled onto carts big and small. There is another bunch of men who are all members of the Eight Banners: Manchus, [Martial] Han or Mongols, who are famous in the capital. They go around causing trouble, doing whatever they like, and they can get away with their skullduggery because they are often seen together with the majors-domo from the residence of imperial relatives and eunuchs [from the palace]. There is one man; his name is Chang Tai, who is a wicked slave from the residence of the imperial uncle by marriage [Suo]. [There is also] the Mongol Storehouse Controller Hualabu [in the service of] the Manchu Imperial Guard Akuidun— people call him the Stinking Tartar. Another one is E'shiying, a Martial Han Storehouse Controller— people call him the Tunneling Granary Rat.[33] These people are all extremely wicked; they are in league with all the granary officials whether important or unimportant, and they have managed to make away with a great deal of grain for the black market.[34]
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> 皇親索國舅有一個管家, 姓路名通, 五府六部衙門, 俱皆相熟.夙日結交官吏, 拘串倉上花户, 逢二八月開倉之時, 暗行舞弊, 諸事横行, 黑檔子米, 竟敢大車小輛, 任意運出倉門。還有幾人, 皆是八旗滿, 漢, 蒙古人, 京都著名的。横行無道, 仗着皇親國戚府門上的管家, 太監, 時常來往, 所以大胆胡為。有一人, 名叫常泰, 也是國舅府中的惡奴。滿洲驍騎啊逵敦的蒙古領催花拉布 - 外號人稱臊韃子。一名額士英, 漢軍領催- 外號人稱鑽倉鼠。這些人走眼甚大, 合倉大小官吏皆通, 黑檔米出來的實系不少。

The abrupt ending of the *Shigong Qiwen* means that the denouement of this case is missing. However, it is perhaps relevant to note that in real life Songtotu was found guilty of various charges of corruption and treason for which he was imprisoned, and eventually starved to death. Although it lies beyond the scope of the novel, the tragic end to the Kangxi Emperor's uncle-by-marriage's ambitions were perhaps intended to be in the reader's mind at this point. In another telling encounter later on in the novel, Judge Shi comes across a Manchu of the Bordered Yellow Banner named Huai Zhongzhi 懷忠之; for his

[33] When this passage is given in the *Shi Gong'an*, 89: 239, this man's name is given as Wang Shiying 王世英 and his epithet is omitted.
[34] *Shigong Qiwen*, 90: 163.

evil actions he has become known by the epithet: Huai Zhongzi 壞种子 (Evil Bastard).[35] Although the *Shigong Qiwen* may be categorized as a colonial novel and portrays many Bannermen in a highly sympathetic light (beginning of course with the main protagonist), that does not preclude a sprinkling of Manchu villains. The novelist's skill can be seen in his handling of the different registers concerning the ethnic identity of the character of Judge Shi. In the early sections of the novel, he is portrayed as a Bannerman: an outsider who investigates horrific cases of endemic violence among the majority Chinese population, shining light into some extremely dark corners. In the later part of the novel, he is shown as a perhaps more conventional figure; an honest and upright official bringing even senior members of the ruling elite to book for their crimes: here he is represented as an insider dealing with corruption at the heart of government. However, the author drew back from the final level of complexity possible in his narrative, showing Judge Shi as the real Shi Shilun— an ethnically and culturally Chinese person, who held status as a Bannerman purely through the achievements of his father and who administered justice on behalf of a foreign regime.

Judge Shi: The Crippled Detective

The dominant trend within recent research on the portrayal of disabled people in literature has been to focus on the construction of disability as a means of marginalizing a certain part of the population vis-à-vis other normative bodies.[36] The decision to categorize certain conditions as disabling is designed in part to reaffirm the social and cultural supremacy of the normative group. Within crime fiction, the presence of disabled criminals can be used to reinforce the stereotype, whereby a deformed body is equated with a warped mind; alternatively, in more sympathetic portrayals, an already socially marginalized character can be shown as having been driven to crime through a vicious circle of lack of opportunity, prejudice and low self-esteem.[37] On the occasions where a disabled detective (or in traditional Chinese legal case fiction, an investigating magistrate) is juxtaposed with able-bodied criminals, this literary trope is invested with new meanings. The disabled detective is shown as having risen above the circumstances of his disability— his intelligence and sensitivity are highlighted by the contrast with the "normal" villains. During the Qing Dynasty, registered disabled persons were prohibited from holding government positions.[38] This

[35] *Shigong Qiwen*, 93: 172.
[36] See Thomson 1997, pp. 5-18.
[37] See Zola 1987, pp. 488-491.
[38] Qing Dynasty legislation restricting the careers of disabled persons is considered in Campbell and Lee 2003. This study, focusing on a sample group of 84,973 male Martial Han Bannermen living in the Liaoning region notes that a distinction was maintained between

makes the portrayal of the character of Shi Shilun in the *Shigong Qiwen* even more remarkable; there is no other crime novel of the Qing Dynasty which features such a controversial figure as the main protagonist.

In the *Shigong Qiwen*, the reader is only slowly introduced to the physical handicaps suffered by the main protagonist. The first aspect to be mentioned is the difficulty that Judge Shi has in walking; this is followed by a reference to how habitual criminals showed their contempt for him by using the nickname Buquan; finally, his physical problems are carefully delineated: "a pock-marked face, a missing ear, a crooked mouth, a pigeon chest, a humped back and a very thin and feeble physique" (*ma lian, que er, wai zui, ji xiong, tuo bei, shenqu shouruo* 麻臉, 缺耳, 歪嘴, 雞胸, 駝背, 身軀瘦弱).[39] This extremely unprepossessing physical appearance serves to make Judge Shi instantly recognizable; on the rare occasions that he attempts to meet suspects informally he is at once placed in considerable danger, because his identity is immediately obvious and he can neither run away nor defend himself. However, one of the author's aims seems to be to throw the intelligence of the main protagonist into relief. Judge Shi's physical problems force him to rely entirely upon interpreting the evidence gathered by his subordinates and his own skill at interrogating witnesses in court, allowing the reader to appreciate his exceptional brilliance and astute handling of complex situations.

There are two aspects of the portrayal of Shi Shilun in the *Shigong Qiwen* that are directly affected by his physical handicaps. The first is his relationship with his yamen runners. Yamen runners are important characters in many late imperial crime novels— they are responsible for the collection of evidence and the arrest of suspected criminals. In legal case fiction, yamen runners may be said to provide the brawn, with the judge providing the brain. Judge Shi is even more dependent on his runners than most local officials, since it is impossible for him to go and inspect crime scenes or visit a suspect incognito.[40] Judge Shi is consistently portrayed as very frustrated by the limitations of his physique; his relations with his yamen runners and other members of his staff are often made fraught by him giving them impossible

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those who were registered as disabled and those who were not, even though some of those who were not registered certainly suffered from crippling medical conditions.

[39] The description of Shi Shilun's stumbling walk first appears in Chapter 1 and is then repeated at various junctures in the narrative. In Chapter 3, an evil monk shows his contempt for Judge Shi by the use of his nickname. However, it is not until much later that the reader receives the first description of his appearance. See *Shigong Qiwen*, 1: 4; 3: 11; and 37: 57 respectively.

[40] Although yamen runners were technically government officials, they formed a much despised group, being regarded as semi-criminal at best, and at worst as a class of outcasts, polluted by contact with blood and other body fluids in the pursuit of their profession; see Hansson 1996, pp. 48-50. Judge Shi's difficult relationship with his runners was probably intended by the author to be a reflection of his discomfort at the fact that he was forced to associate with such unpopular, low-status people on unusually intimate terms because of his disability.

orders, or by deciding that he wishes to visit crime suspects on his own in spite of the hair-raising dangers that he will run by doing so.[41] Although the dichotomy between the intelligent judge and his runners (or in mixed legal-case-and-martial-arts novels, the chivalrous heroes) who actually perform any task requiring physical strength is a common feature in this form of literature, it is rarely presented so starkly as in the *Shigong Qiwen*.

Interestingly, in addition to his runners, Judge Shi is also assisted by a reformed bandit— Huang Tianba 黃天霸— who is so devoted to his master that he adopts a new name: Shi Zhong 施忠 (Loyalty).[42] The *Shigong Qiwen* appears to be the earliest known legal case novel to feature a bandit turned chivalrous hero, working hand-in-glove with a government official. Later on this would become a standard aspect of mixed legal case and martial arts narratives: the officials provide a gloss of legality as the heroes in their entourage right wrongs and beat up anyone required. However, in the case of perfectly able-bodied individuals like Judge Bao, the presence of the heroes in this kind of narrative make the officials appear significantly physically weaker, more defenseless and vulnerable than earlier literary representations. Taken to extremes, scholar-officials can appear quite useless in comparison with their resolute and brave assistants.[43] It is therefore helpful to trace this development back to its original appearance in the *Shigong Qiwen*, where Huang Tianba/Shi Zhong is required to help a severely handicapped master, who simply cannot protect himself in any situation of danger. In these circumstances, the addition of a chivalrous hero-cum-assistant is an important part of expanding the reader's appreciation of the limitations imposed by Judge Shi's physical problems.

The *Shigong Qiwen* is not only a unique account of a disabled crime investigator in Qing Dynasty China, there are also a number of other physically handicapped individuals who crop up in the course of the narrative, making this an unusually rich source of information about contemporary attitudes towards such people. It should be stressed that Shi Shilun's own physical limitations do not make him more sympathetic to others. He is consistently portrayed as highly aggressive towards the individuals who turn up in his court (either as victims of crime or as accused criminals); this is a characteristic that he shares with a number of other famous figures from late imperial-era crime fiction such as

[41] Huang Yanbo 1991, p. 234, suggests that one of the reasons for the popularity of the *Shi Gong'an* tradition lies in the handicaps suffered by the main character. This reading ignores the aggressive and irritable portrayal of Shi Shilun found in the first novel, which is often quite unsympathetic.

[42] See *Shigong Qiwen*, 34: 54.

[43] This point is discussed in Ch'en 1970, p. 810. This study compares the weak portrayal of the figure of the magistrate in the *Peng Gong'an* and the *Shi Gong'an* traditions. In many of the reprints of the *Shi Gong'an* tradition, descriptions of Judge Shi's physical disabilities have been almost entirely excised from the first novel and are then also lacking in the sequels. This serves to significantly alter the portrayal of the Judge Shi character from that seen in the *Shigong Qiwen*.

Judge Bao.[44] As with Judge Bao, a number of Shi Shilun's cases revolve around the idea that he gives a voice to the voiceless— for example, by interpreting the actions of animals who serve to "report" a crime, or that unconsciously provide crucial testimony necessary to convict a villain. In interactions between a human judge and an animal witness, the judge displays his intelligence by his understanding of the information given by the animal. A standard narrative structure can be seen in this type of story. First, the other human beings present prove incapable of comprehending the evidence provided by the animal. The judge is the only one to see its importance. This is then followed by the judge carefully collecting further evidence to prove the criminal's identity and confirm the significance of the animal's testimony to the amazement of all observers. This type of story was very popular for showing the exceptional brilliance of a judge and a number of such tales were told of Judge Shi.[45] However, he is also the hero of a number of tales where he extracts crucial testimony from a physically handicapped person— these seem to be unique to the *Shigong Qiwen*. Again they serve to demonstrate his exceptional abilities, but they also provide a stark account of the difficulties faced by the disabled within Qing Dynasty society.

In the case of Wu Er 武二 and his wife, she left her husband and moved in with another man because she was frustrated and angered by the fact that he was unable to speak.[46] When Wu Er finally succeeds in tracking her down, he is hauled into court accused of attempting to make off with another man's wife. Completely unable to make himself understood, a miscarriage of justice is averted by Judge Shi's patience in allowing him to use a rudimentary form of sign language to communicate:

> Judge Shi asked the dumb man: "What is your relationship with this woman?" The dumb man pointed at himself, then he made a cross with his two fore-fingers, which he then turned upside down several times. Next, he curled up and pillowed [his head] on his hand, to show that the two of them had slept together. After that he got up and scratched at his throat, while thumping on his chest— all the while he was so upset that he was making sobbing, rasping noises. Judge Shi laughed and said to Wu Er: "I understand absolutely […]. Nobody knows how much you have suffered, innocent of the crime of which you are accused. Am I right in my assumption?"[47]

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[44] For a comparative analysis of the manner of speaking attributed to Judge Bao and Judge Shi (based upon the *Longtu Gong'an* and the *Shi Gong'an* texts respectively), see Kádár 2008.

[45] For example, in the *Shigong Qiwen*, 4:12; and 40:65, an otter and a dog respectively assist with the discovery of the corpses of murder victims.

[46] In contemporary Qing Dynasty practice, the care of a disabled person devolved upon family members; see Wang Weiping 2004. In this instance, the wife of Wu Er has not just committed adultery; she is also guilty of depriving her husband of his identity as a direct result of her attempts to shirk her duty of care.

[47] *Shigong Qiwen*, 26: 40. In the *Bao Longtu Baijia Gong'an*, Judge Bao is able to assert the identity of a dumb man dispossessed of his inheritance by his brother, however, that story

> 施公問啞巴說：“你與那婦人有什麼親?” 啞巴指了自己, 將兩手第二指十字架兒, 反正比比；又把身子仄倒, 將手比枕：二人同睡之相。又起身抓抓噪子, 拍拍心口, 急得呵呵連哭帶嚷。施公帶笑叫聲武二：“本縣深曉[…]你的冤枉, 別人不知。本縣猜的是不是?”

The story of the dumb man strikes at the heart of one of the key conventions found in early Chinese crime writing— both in fiction and in case histories. In these accounts, the witnesses (and on occasion the victims) of crime are portrayed as speaking fluently and at length about their experiences, explaining in detail what they saw and the motives for their actions. At the same time, they stress the generally law-abiding nature of the society in which they lived, making the crime an aberration, a challenge to the norm.[48] In the story of Wu Er, not only is he unable to present evidence on his own behalf in anything other than the most perfunctory way, it is also clear that his life has been marked by constant trouble, social exclusion and contempt, exemplified by the story of his failed marriage. This case is but one of many such found in the *Shigong Qiwen*. For example, Judge Shi is also required to adjudicate in the case of a woman accusing her second husband of murdering her first husband— an alcoholic— where attempts are made to discredit her testimony because of her unstable mental health; subsequently he also deals with the case of a blind man accused of theft.[49] The latter case is particularly interesting, because the blind man is in fact guilty. This latter case serves to highlight the unsentimental portrayal of the physically handicapped individuals in the *Shigong Qiwen*; though such people require careful handling in order to extract valuable testimony, they are shown as being quite capable of criminal activity should the opportunity present itself.

The final example of a handicapped person to be found in the *Shigong Qiwen* narrative is presented in a very different way, for Judge Shi does not encounter him in the context of a legal case. This individual is a severely mentally disabled young man, born into a family of extremely devout Buddhists, whose future causes his parents great anxiety. In the event, when orphaned at a young age, he is taken into the care of an elderly monk who carefully raises him and fosters his remarkable spiritual gifts.[50] The highly sympathetic portrayal of

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merely uses the handicap as a plot device and it is not worked into the narrative in a meaningful way; see *Bao Longtu Baijia Gong'an*, 35: 123-124.

[48] See Hegel 2004, p. 62.

[49] See *Shigong Qiwen*, 5: 13-11: 23 for the case of the woman of unstable mental health; 79: 138-80: 140 for the blind man robbing his sighted cousin. As with disabilities, persons with mental problems were supposed to be registered with the authorities and cared for at home by their families; in the event of a recovery, an order had to be obtained from the local official to allow their release; see Hao Bingjian 2002.

[50] Given the sudden ending of the *Shigong Qiwen*, it was left to the author of the supplementary ninety-eighth chapter to round off the narrative by identifying the mentally handicapped young monk as an *arhat*, manifesting himself in Qing Dynasty China as a sign of grace. He is awarded the title “Protecting the Nation and Helping the People Universally

these characters stands in stark contrast to the stereotypical evil monks and nuns found elsewhere in the narrative.[51] This account of the young man's upbringing does not minimize the difficulties faced by the monk taking care of a mentally handicapped boy:

> There was an old monk in the temple, already over seventy years of age, who accepted the idiot as his disciple. After another few years the idiot had attained the age of seventeen or eighteen *sui* and he was still incapable of understanding human affairs; he would just give a silly giggle. The old monk had instructed him in the sutras, but the only thing he could say was one line: "My Buddha."[52]
> 廟中有一位老和尚, 年已七旬, 把傻子收為徒弟。有過了幾年, 傻子長到十七八歲, 還是人事不懂, 就是傻笑。老和尚教授他經卷, 只會一句: "我的佛。"

There is only one occasion in the entire novel when Judge Shi's Manchu identity intersects with his physical handicap. This occurs right at the end of the *Shigong Qiwen*, when a Manchu official of the White Banner (*Zhengbaiqi* 正白旗), named Zhao Suose 趙索色, is extremely unimpressed with Judge Shi's physical appearance and attempts to embarrass him by making clear how far he falls short of the Manchu ideal of physical fitness and military prowess. The emphasis placed by members of the Manchu ruling elite upon their martial heritage was enormous— throughout the Qing Dynasty it retained an almost mystic significance for Bannermen.[53] In particular, this was one of the key skills required of the Martial Han. It is suggestive in the passage translated below that this point has to be explained; it is likely that the author was aiming his novel at a Chinese audience with little direct contact with Manchu customs, who would need to have such interesting and exotic details spelled out to them:

> Censor Suo […] looked carefully at this wise official [Judge Shi], noticing that he was wearing a gauze cap, while he was wearing a *mang* (four-clawed) dragon robe [under a formal] jacket and surcoat, with official boots on his feet, a short walking-stick in his left hand, to balance his dragging right leg.[54] He had

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Responsive Chan Buddhist Master" by the Kangxi Emperor, who also posthumously honours his parents. See *Shi Gong'an*, 98: 262. Whether this ending bears any relation to that originally intended by the author is unknown.

[51] The association between monks and criminality (often sexual in nature) is discussed in Karasawa 2007. As described here, the portrayal of members of the clergy in contemporary literature was closely allied to accusations filed against them in Qing Dynasty courts.

[52] *Shigong Qiwen*, 90: 164.

[53] See Rawski 1998, pp. 43-46. The importance accorded to skill at archery within Qing society seems to have been derived from Mongol attitudes towards martial prowess; see Liu Xiaomeng 1994.

[54] Given that the name of this official is given as Zhao Suose, it is somewhat eccentric to find him referred to as 'Suo Yushi' 索御史 (Censor Suo). It is likely that this nomenclature was

> a pigeon-chest and a hump-back; his body was both thin and crooked. What is more he was extremely ugly. Censor Suo laughed to himself: "No wonder people call him 'Incomplete Shi'— he really deserves his name! How can his majesty admire this kind of person so much?" […]
> Archery is the most popular [sport] of the Manchus. Censor Suo saw how disabled Judge Shi was and so he came up with a plan which would make him look stupid in front of everyone else. He announced that they would be shooting swans. Judge Shi said with a laugh: "That is a wonderful idea, sir. It is what our people have always done to amuse themselves. However, there is one thing that I must make clear in advance to all of you. From a young age I have suffered from ill-health, so I have no strength in my arms. It would be impossible for me to pull back a bow. I do hope the rest of you don't mind."[55]
> 索御史[…] 仔細將賢臣一看, 只見頭戴緯帽, 身穿蟒袍补褂, 足穿官靴, 左帶矮拐, 右帶點脚, 前有雞胸, 後有斜肩, 身體瘦小歪斜, 十分難看。索御史心中暗笑："怪不得人說稱他施不全, 真名不虛傳。皇上怎麽愛惜他這等人品?" […]
> 且說满洲人, 最愛喜的弓箭。索御史見施公身帶殘疾, 心中暗生一計, 打算叫施公人前出丑。說射鵠。施公帶笑道："大人出的主意甚妙, 却是一宗解悶的事。但只一件我施某有一句拙言, 在眾位面前先要說明。我夙有賤恙, 兩膀無力。未免弓箭不堪。眾位要莫見怪。"

Earlier in the novel, Judge Shi is shown dispensing justice in the law-court, where he deals with a series of disabled and disadvantaged plaintiffs. In this context, he is shown as a man who transcended his own physical handicaps, which might otherwise have reduced him to the same marginal status as those he adjudicates on. In the passage quoted above, Judge Shi is temporarily bracketed with these despised members of Qing society. Zhao Suose is determined to humiliate him, not because he is ethnically Chinese or of lower status, but because he is physically disabled. Naturally, Zhao Suose fails in his attempt to make Judge Shi look foolish but before this happens, Shi Shilun is presented to the reader in a manner that directly challenges the racial prestige and manliness of the colonial elite.[56] The physical problems described in this passage serve to make it clear how far removed Shi Shilun was from the qualities most admired within Manchu society— how incapable he was of participating in one of the

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chosen by the author to suggest some kind of connection with the famous members of the Manchu Hešeri family: Sonin 索尼 (1601-1667) and his son Songgotu.

[55] *Shigong Qiwen*, 91: 166. This particular incident should be seen in the context of contemporary concerns that the Martial Han were extremely lax in maintaining the cultural values of Bannermen, in particular military prowess. The Kangxi Emperor is the first to have expressed worry that they were adopting degenerate habits; in 1731 the Yongzheng Emperor ordered the construction of a special camp were the sons of famous Hanjun families could be instructed in proper mores. For a discussion of this, see Elliot 2001, pp. 335-337.

[56] The portrayal of Judge Shi in this passage can usefully be compared to that of Englishmen in crime fiction dealing with the Indian Empire, in which similar anxieties can be seen; see Mukherjee 2003, pp. 26-27.

most important social activities for this martial people. That he is subsequently able to turn the tables, thanks to his intelligence and quick wit, does not affect the highly subversive nature of this portrayal of a very "un-Manchu" Bannerman.

Conclusion

In the famous novel, *Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*, there is a description of a performance of Judge Shi narratives in the late nineteenth century, which is a testament to the ongoing popularity of stories concerning this famous upright and honest official from the early Qing Dynasty. In this conversation, a man named Deng Jiugong 鄧九公 engages in an animated discussion with the hero's father, his old friend, concerning his favourite episodes in the life of Judge Shi, oblivious to the fictional aspects of the narrative that he so much enjoys:

> Deng Jiugong said: "[…] Well, yesterday they got in a troupe called Harmony something-or-other and performed a classic from the *Shi Gong'an*; that was right up my street. My absolute favourite is the bit where Zhang Guilan steals the gold plaque bestowed on Judge Shi by the emperor that allows him to 'go on progresses on behalf of the emperor, as if his majesty himself were present.' Then when Judge Shi goes to the Phoenix Zhang the Seventh's house, not only does he not punish his [daughter], but he even has her marry Deputy General Huang Tianba; what a generous and noble character![57] You could really say that the minister showed his magnanimity there." Old Mr. An said: "My friend! *It's a play*!" He said: "My friend— that play is part of the true history of our great Qing Dynasty. Everyone knows that Judge Shi was completely loyal to the nation, but I have even seen Huang Tianba's old dad, the 'Flying Dart' Huang Santai; he really is what you would call a chivalrous hero!"[58] Old Mr. An said: "So of course it is all true and Judge Shi is wonderful— is that what you mean?" Deng Jiugong stroked his beard and opened his eyes wide as he said: "What do you mean it's not true? It is as true as could be! Are you telling me that you don't admire people like Judge Shi?"[59]
>
> 鄧九公道: "[…]果然昨日換了一個和什麼班, 唱的整本的施公案。倒對我的勁兒。我第一愛聽那張桂蘭盜去施公的御賜: '代天巡狩, 如朕親臨' 那面金牌。施公訪到鳳凰張七家裏, 不但不罪他, 倒叫副將黃天霸和他成其好事。真正寬宏大量。說的起: '宰相肚子裏撐的下船。'" 安老爺便道: "我的哥! 那是戲!" 他道: "老弟這戲可是咱們大清國的實在事兒呀! 慢說施公的盡忠報國, 無人不知, 就連那黃天霸的老兒飛鏢黃三太我都赶上見過的; 那才稱得起綠林中一條好漢呢!" 安老爺笑道: "然則這事情是真的, 施公是

[57] The author is here referring to events at the beginning of the fourth sequel to the *Shigong Qiwen*; see *Shi Gong'an*, 250: 860, 268: 926.
[58] Here, one of the chivalrous heroes from the mixed legal case and martial arts classics, *Peng Gong'an*, is being mentioned.
[59] *Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*, 32: 650.

> 好的, 都是老兄你說的。” 鄧九公綽着鬍子, 瞪着眼睛說道：“怎的不真? 真而又真! 難道像施公那樣的人老弟你還看不上眼不成?”

By the late nineteenth century, stories about Judge Shi seem to have become ubiquitous, to the point where the more controversial and unusual aspects of the original novel were ignored. Shi Shilun was of Chinese ethnic origin— although a great deal of research has been done in recent years on the sinicization (or separatism) of Bannermen during the Qing Dynasty, there has been comparatively little recognition of the existence of people like the Shi family, who became integrated into the Manchu ruling elite in the wake of the Qing conquest. In the *Shigong Qiwen*, Judge Shi is consistently presented as a Bannerman official administering justice among Chinese criminals; clearly if the story were good enough, the tensions and conflicts implicit in this difficult role could be ignored. Likewise, once the character of the crippled magistrate had been firmly established in the public mind, there was nobody to remark on the fact that this was almost certainly an invented part of Shi Shilun's characterization. The difficulties attendant on such a person holding office had become so fully integrated into the plot of these narratives as to occasion no remark. This absorption of the remarkable features of the *Shigong Qiwen* into popular consciousness means that the unusual portrayal of Judge Shi found in this novel has gone almost entirely unnoticed.

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THE TAIPING REBELLION IN THE LETTERS OF THE CATHOLIC FATHERS IN CHINA[1]

FRANCESCO PARODI
(Tsinghua University)

Since its early days the Taiping Rebellion[2] was followed with great attention by Western observers,[3] by 1850, when the uprising broke out, trade between Great Britain and China was sufficiently developed for political stability in China to be seen as a non negligible factor for the health of British economy.[4] The rebellion was however also an opportunity for the Western powers to put pressure on the Manchu government: after the attempts to contact the rebels during 1853, they adopted a position of apparent neutrality aimed at obtaining a revision of the treaties. This 'armed neutrality' was abandoned only in 1862 when, after reaching their objective, they joined forces with the Qing.[5]

Apart from its political and economical implications, the great revolt soon drew upon itself the attention of the West also for its religious component. Although the big picture on the rebellious movement was destined to remain rather obscure until the taking of Nanking and even later, it soon became known[6]

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[1] This article is the abridged version of the dissertation I wrote in 2012 under the supervision of Prof. Dong Shiwei 董士伟 for my M.A. in Chinese Modern History.

[2] In the past quite a few scholars believed that the elements of discontinuity in the *Taiping Tianguo* political agenda were such that it could be in all respects defined a "Revolution". Without trying to downplay the revolutionary elements of the Taiping ideology, I have opted here for the term "Rebellion", which is more commonly used nowadays.

[3] A good picture of Western reactions to the Taiping Rebellion in this first stage can be found in Clarke and Gregory 1982, pp. 3-39, work on which I relied heavily for all the non-Catholic primary sources.

[4] *Locus classicus* for this aspect is Karl Marx article in *the New York Daily Tribune*, where the German philosopher, not without sarcasm, stresses how even the right-wing *the Economist* is this time compelled to depict the situation no differently from himself, Marx 1853. See also Cady 1954, p. 103.

[5] Teng Su-yu is pretty clear-cut on this reading in his work: "In the mid-1850s, the main interest of Western powers in China was treaty revision, their object being to gain more privileges […]. The diplomatic representatives of the three powers agreed to act in concert to force China to a thorough treaty revision. England and France had been allies in the Crimean War, and the United States wanted to co-operate with them. […] the Western powers, especially Britain, played politics so skillfully that it is still difficult to discern their real policy. The causal student often thinks that the British maintained neutrality for many years during the Taiping Rebellion. In every negotiation, both the bigoted imperialists and the naïve Taipings were outmaneuvered by the shrewd Western diplomats. […] It was an armed neutrality, with a concentration of naval force ready to chastise any injury to Western interests in China." Teng Su-yu 1971, pp. 231-234.

[6] In the *Overland Friend of China* of the 23rd May 1851 we already find clear references to

that the iconoclastic fury of the Taiping rebels was rooted in some form of Christianity and, as the Protestant name for God, *Shangdi* 上帝[7] began to be more and more frequently associated with the rioters in the reports, the idea took hold that the rebellious movement had something to do with Protestant circles.[8] Various attempts of Protestant ministers to make contact with the rebels followed, the vicissitudes of those who finally managed to enter the Heavenly Kingdom, in general the response of the reformed churches to the Taiping movement, have rightly become an integral part of the history of the *Taiping Tianguo* 太平天国. The reactions of their Roman Catholic counterpart to the rebellion and its pseudo-Christian religion have been much less studied, one could almost say neglected. The position of the Catholic Fathers has often been ignored, and when examined, it has been just superficially sketched because they are deemed to play a secondary role compared with the Protestants. Their position has often been dismissed as lack of interest or has been depicted as clear opposition motivated by the supposed Protestant affiliation of the Taiping religious ideology. Examples of this can be found in the most influential classical studies on *Taiping Tianguo*, like Jen Yu-wen's,[9] but also in more recent scholarly works on the subject, like that of Clarke and Gregory.[10] Also Frank

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the religious persuasions of the rioters: "A report has got into circulation that the new Emperor, a scion of the Ming Dynasty, is a Roman Catholic, and that he is destroying idols and temples with all the fury of a zealot – Others speak of him as a *Shang-te* man, (the name generally given to converts of protestant missionaries) but that is more unlikely to be true than the other report." Quoted in Clarke and Gregory 1982, pp. 7-8.

[7] The term *Shangdi* was initially introduced by Matteo Ricci as one of the translations for 'God' in Chinese, but its use was forbidden in 1715 by Pope Clement XI with the Apostolic Constitution "*Ex illa die*", who imposed the use of Tianzhu 天主, Lord of Heaven.

[8] The famous meeting between Rev. Hamberg and Hong Rengan 洪仁玕 came in March 1852, and the Rengan's story of his cousin Hong Xiuquan's 洪秀全 conversion and early activities were published already in 1854. Although quite a few remained skeptical, to many Protestant missionaries forced to preach only in the five ports opened by the Nanking Treaty the revolt appeared as a clear intervention of Divine Providence. In the eyes of those men of faith behind those new astounding events this was nothing than the Hand of God itself opening the Celestial Empire to the Gospel, and it was their duty to follow it.

[9] "The Heavenly dynasty believed in Christian religion, but its doctrine came from the Protestant Reformation and the lexicon in all its scriptures belonged to the reformed doctrinal system as well. The knowledge of this fact probably filled the heart of French missionaries with hatred, because if the Heavenly dynasty succeeded, evidently the whole of China would be converted to Protestantism and Catholicism surely would not be able to set foot on Chinese territory anymore" (天朝崇奉基督教，但其教是源出于新派的改正宗而所有的经籍文字皆属于新派系统的。大概这一证实的知识，即令法教士大起忌恨之心，因为如果天朝革命成功，明显地全中国将皈依新派的基督教，而天主教必至不能立足于中土了). Jen Yu-wen 1958, Vol. 3, p. 811.

[10] "The main concern of these missionaries was with the protection of their churches and converts, and they did not display any deep interest in, or attempt much analysis of, the Taiping itself […]. For most of them the Taipings were both dangerous and protestant", Clarke and Gregory 1982, p. 171.

Cady in his essay on Catholic missions and French Imperialism reasserts the same basic idea, claiming that "from the outset the missionaries were hostile to the rebellion", because of the Protestant traits of the rebels' religion, but also because "the imperial Chinese officials regarded Christianity as a causal factor in the rebellion and accused the illegally resident Catholic missionaries of fomenting unrest."[11] A remarkable exception is that of Teng Ssu-yu, who in his important volume on the Western Powers during the Taiping Rebellion criticizes the idea that the Catholic Fathers were against the Taipings, calling it an 'inaccurate generalization',[12] and ultimately claiming that "The Catholics, as the Protestants did in the early period, wished the Taiping success."[13] Although Teng's observations are admittedly based on limited documentary basis, it is interesting to note that also the view of a Missionary Studies specialist like Latourette diverges somewhat from the mainstream idea, going so far as to argue that "In some places, because of the resemblance of the two faiths for each other, the T'ai P'ings dealt considerately with the Roman Catholics", nevertheless concluding that "For the most part however, they paid them scant respect."[14]

Latourette's words touch here an important point: unlike the Protestant ministers, Catholic missionaries during the Taiping Rebellion were not confined to the foreign concessions. On the contrary, in many cases they were operating in the hinterland looking after communities of believers, trying tirelessly to make new converts. As such, not only their vantage point of the rebellion and its effects was often quite peculiar, in some way unique amongst Westerners, the way civil war affected their lives and activities was pretty different from that of their Protestant colleagues. Nevertheless, the Catholic missionaries' view of the Taiping Rebellion and its evolution as well as the contacts between the Catholic Fathers and the rebellious movement have never been properly investigated, being considered to be of secondary relevance they ended up being reduced to a cliché. The letters and the articles written by the missionaries operating on Chinese territory in those years, to some extent caught between the two fields of "Missionary Studies" and "*Taiping Tianguo* Studies", have never been used for a specific survey on the subject. This is precisely what I attempt to do in this essay: through the analysis of the documents left by the Fathers in China at the time,[15]

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[11] Cady 1954, p. 103-105.

[12] "It is a common belief that the Catholic missions were adverse to the rebellion from first to last. The main cause was supposedly the fact that the French missionaries mistrusted the protestant origin of Taiping Christianity. [...] This generalization is not entirely accurate. From the beginning, Catholic opinion about the Taiping Rebellion also varied. The two French missionaries, Callery and Yvan, who wrote the History of the Insurrection in China, were quite fair in their attitude to the rebels." Teng Ssu-yu 1971, p. 203.

[13] Teng Ssu-yu 1971, pp. 204.

[14] Latourette 1929, pp. 299-300.

[15] In order to gather together a corpus of primary sources on which to conduct my analysis that was as complete as possible, I made use of *Bibliotheca Missionum*, the Bibliography of Missionary texts edited by Robert Streit, to review the writings of the Catholic Fathers of those years. Despite having consulted rather a large number of sources, I found the most

I shall try to shed some light on the direct and indirect impact of the rebellion on missionary activities and to reconstruct as far as possible the voices of the Catholic Fathers on the matter in their complexity, taking into account how it changed over time against the evolution of the background during the years of the uprising.

1. Catholic Missions in China between the two Opium Wars

In 1844, with the Treaty of Whampoa, the French plenipotentiary Theodose de Lagrené, in addition to extending to France the privileges of the Nanking Treaty, managed to add some clauses in favor of missionary work;[16] and finally, in 20 February 1846, after a long negotiation, obtained the Toleration Edict that put an end to the Yongzheng proscription of Christianity in force since 1724, officially beginning a new era for the mission work in China.

The legalization of Christianity within the Chinese empire was seen by the French as an opportunity to counterbalance Britain's commercial and political ascendency over "the sphere of civilization and moral concern"; its attainment was pursued with determination by the ambitious Lagrené who did not fail to magnify the result by claiming it was a "diplomatic feat equal to the opening of the five treaty ports."[17] If this outcome is to a certain extent due to the personal initiative of Lagrené,[18] as Frank Cady's work highlighted, the stance in favor of the missionaries was to become a characteristic trait of French policy in the Far East. Unlike Great Britain, France, which at the time did not have significant commercial activities in the region, put itself forward as the Protector of Christianity and used support to the Missionaries as a pretext to justify its presence in Asia.[19] This strategy was a product of circumstances more than deliberate decision but it did allow France to increase its international prestige without competing directly with the British ally, while on the domestic

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valuable material in the letters collected in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* and his corresponding Lazarist publication, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission*.

[16] Although the Christian religion or missionaries are never mentioned explicitly, some articles of the treaty were thought specifically to sustain them, in particular the XXII article allowed the construction of churches, hospitals, hospices, etc., within the concessions, and more important, according to the XXIII article any French citizen captured by Chinese authorities in the interior had to be brought back unharmed to the consulate of France.

[17] Cady 1954, p. 51.

[18] Originally, the legalization of Christianity was not one of the objectives of the mission, Prime Minister Guizot did not order Lagrené to pursue it and was informed only when the negotiations were completed and the treaty signed. Guizot however, after being made aware of it, approved the move, giving his consent to the plenipotentiary to push the issue further. Cady 1954, pp. 43-69.

[19] Paul Cohen puts it even more bluntly: "a consequence of her lack of real interests in the empire was that she was forced to create unreal ones in order to counter and influence the prestige and influence of Great Britain", Cohen 1963, p. 65.

front it was useful to ease friction with the Catholic Party. It is for these reasons that the anticlerical Orleanist regime ended up laying the foundations for French Colonialism in the Far East by the presumption of endorsing Catholic missions.[20] On the other hand, as Cady put it, the Catholic program in the Far East "was moving forward under its own momentum, accepting no limitations by the Paris government but ready to accept any support that might be forthcoming."[21] In the case of China, it is quite clear that the Catholic Fathers did not simply welcome French aid. On many occasions they actively sought to make the most of the circumstances, by putting pressure on French authorities in China,[22] by trying to move public opinion in France,[23] *de facto* exploiting in their turn the French presence in the region. This peculiar fellowship between the two parties, which was based on mutual benefit but was not devoid of tensions, characterizes the entire period and must be taken into due consideration when analyzing the missionary activities of the time. Concessions to Christians in the Treaty of Whampoa, as well as the Toleration Edict obtained in 1846, stem from this opportunistic synergy between France and the Missionary Church.

The effects of this colonial support on the missions were momentous, "Now the breach is open, sooner or later Catholicism will be the master of the fortress",[24] wrote full of expectation a Lazarist Father in 1850. If without doubt the Christian siege to the 'fortress China' entered a new phase after the treaties, it is also true that, against the background of a resurgence of the missionary movement during the Restoration, a renewed Catholic interest for the Celestial Empire became apparent even sooner. Already since the 1830s additional missionaries were sent and new Vicariates apostolic created[25] in order to respond to the needs of a Chinese Christian community, that, proscription notwithstanding, not only survived persecutions but also seems to have grown

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[20] Cady 1954, pp. 18-28. Actually an analogous cunning use of the missions to extend its political influence predates these events; already in the 17th century France promoted itself as Protector of the missions and began interfering in their affairs (see Prudhomme 2006, pp. 39-43). Later, Napoleon clearly saw the possibility of exploiting the missions as an instrument of political power, putting the three French missionary orders under direct control of the state (see Metzler 2002, pp. 28-30).

[21] Cady 1954, p. 27.

[22] For example during the negotiations in 1844-1846, Lagrené and Callery, his interpreter, "were under constant harassment locally from missionary groups in China, especially the Lazarists, who were determined to make the maximum use of the presence of the French mission and naval forces in the area, and who were grievously offended over being denied an active role in the negotiations", Cady 1954, p. 68.

[23] Missionaries had influential political contacts in France capable of pursuing their claim (Cady 1954, pp. 68-69) and they could count on the ecclesiastical periodicals to make their voice heard (*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* in 1840 had a circulation of 150,000 in France, Prudhomme 2006, p. 85).

[24] Quoted in the introduction of *Annali della Propagazione della Fede* 1850, p. 22. His name is not given.

[25] Latourette 1929, p. 232.

steadily during all the first half of the century.[26] Catholics in China were divided into communities scattered throughout the country, and according to the '*Jus Commissionis*'[27] different regions were entrusted to different orders.[28] To attend to the needs of these local Churches, Catholic priests before 1844 had to act primarily in secret: defying Qing authorities, missionaries used to penetrate the interior disguised as Chinese to reach the faithful and preach them the Gospel. Pastoral activities had to be carried on in secrecy and the Fathers were compelled to conduct a roving life, putting their lives at risk in order to perform their priestly duties. In 1844 things began to change slowly. Although preaching was still allowed only in the open ports, now, under the new arrangement, missionaries caught preaching their religion in the hinterland, instead of being put to death, were sent back to one of the treaty port.[29] In 1846 then, Daoguang Emperor officially recognized the Christian religion as good, and in theory, consented the worship of *Tianzhu* 天主 among Chinese people;[30] in practice though what happened is that the edict extorted by Lagrené had never been properly publicized by the Qing Court, with the result that the implementation of the toleration policy was largely left to the discretion of local officials[31] and persecutions, far from stopping at once, still occurred in many places.

To sum up, the Catholic Fathers were in this phase beginning to abandon their 'Underground Missionaries' status to gradually become 'Treaty Missionaries'.[32] In the same way, Christianity in China as a whole was going through a period of transition, on the one hand driven by the support of the colonist, on the other still kept at a distance by the aversion of Chinese Court for

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[26] Depending on the estimates, it is believed that the number of Chinese faithful went from a minimum of 150,000 to a maximum of 200,000 around 1800 to reach 264,000 by 1838 and 360,000 in the early 1860s. Arnulf Camps in Tiedemann 2010, pp. 115-116.

[27] Prudhomme 2007, pp. 38-39.

[28] Lazarists were in Henan, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Zhili 直隶 and for a time also in Hubei and Hunan; Dominicans were in Fujian; representatives of the *Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris* were in Guangxi, Guangdong, Sichuan and Manchuria; Franciscans were in Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi and Hubei and finally Jesuits after the restoration of the order in 1814 made their return in 1840, establishing themselves in Xujiahui 徐家汇 in 1847. Latourette 1929, pp. 235-240.

[29] Examples of this new treatment are the cases of the Franciscans Rizzolati and Novella In 1847 or 1848, as well as that of the Lazarists Gabet and Huc in 1846. Latourette 1929, p. 233.

[30] "[…] the teaching of the Lord of Heaven exhorts people to do good, it is completely different from the other unorthodox teachings." ([…]天主教即系劝人为善，与别项邪教迥不同，业已准免查禁[…]), quoted in Gu Zhangsheng 1981, p. 56.

[31] "Both edicts and treaties were dependent for their enforcement largely upon the good-will of local officers and gentry, and since they were the penalty for defeat in war there was at the most half-hearted compliance with them. Peking was not eager to enforce them and, especially after the accession of Hsien Feng, […] it was quite willing to have them ignored." Latourette 1929, p. 231. See also Charbonnier in Tiedemann 2010, p. 232.

[32] I borrow the categories of "Underground Missionary" and "Treaty Missionary" from Arnulf Camps, for a more detailed comparison between the two conditions see Arnulf Camps in Tiedemann 2010, pp. 126-130.

the foreign religion. This condition of '*demi liberté religieuse*', as some missionaries of the time defined it,[33] was widely criticised by the Catholic Fathers, who tried insistently to put pressure on the French authorities to change things. In the meanwhile, the Fathers continued to go into the hinterland to preach, blaming the lack of freedom for the scarcity of new converts, and devoting themselves to the baptism of dying infants and ill people, a 'souls-saving' activity that in their eyes had great value, and that they and their local helpers could carry on in secret, bypassing the cultural resistance of the Chinese people to the foreign religion. It is in similar circumstances, just when things were slowly starting to improve for the missionaries, that the big Taiping Rebellion broke out, the rebels trying to spread with the sword their sinicized Christian religion as an ideological base for a new dynasty.

1.1. Qing reaction and its impact during the early years

All the other Westerners in China at the time, residing in the open ports, came into contact with the revolt only indirectly, reached only by the echo of what was taking place in the form of rumors and hearsay. By contrast, the Catholic Fathers in their clandestine outposts soon became affected by the events in a more direct way. Their response to the Taiping Rebellion cannot be fully understood without taking into account this factor. Up till 1850, the main concern we find in their missives is still the condition of half liberty of Catholicism in China, but soon with the approaching of the rebellion, new and more pressing problems begin to appear in their letters. In May 1851 Mgr. Florent Daguin writes:

> […] the progress of the rebellion, that begins to extend toward the inner regions, increases the fears of the emperor, making him accept thoughtlessly all the slanders against the Christians […]. A persecution already broke out in *O-nan* […where] a Chinese priest has been put in prison and left to starve. It is said that also in *Su-tchuen* a persecution is going on, and that the Chinese hold the opinion that the Christians are part of the conspiracy; this is very evident in their eyes since is said that the Chief of the Rebels is a Protestant […].[34]

The emergence of a wave of anti-Christian persecution linked to the revolt of the Taipings we find mentioned in these lines became a recurring theme in the missionaries' letters of those years. Accused of being part of the rebellion, Christian communities were subjected to a series of searches, interrogations, beatings and arrests. According to their reports, persecutions seem to have been

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[33] Mgr. Bernard Laribe, Jiangxi, September 15th 1849, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1850, p. 93. Mgr. Anot, Jiangxi, October 25th 1850, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1851, p. 168.

[34] Mgr. Florent Daguin, Shanghai, May 21st 1851, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1852, p. 271.

particularly intense in Hu-guang and Henan,[35] but episodes of violence or suspicion against Christian communities occurred also in many other regions, arousing the indignation of the Fathers.[36] In the years before the fall of Nanking, when information on the Taiping movement was especially scanty and confused, this connection between Taipings and Christians looked absolutely preposterous to the Catholic priests who, certain of the innocence of their faithful, were prone to see it as a mere pretext used by the Qing government to restart the struggle against the spread of Christianity in China. As Mgr. Danicourt put it: "The current government is hostile to [the Christian] Religion, which it confuses, more out of malice than out of ignorance, with different rebellious sects which have arisen in China, and that seriously trouble the authorities in Kuang-si and on the coasts."[37] If this type of intent by part of Qing authorities to a certain extent is plausible, these persecutions against Chinese Catholics must however be seen in a broader framework of anti-heterodoxy paranoia and suspicion which in those days concerned any kind of sects,[38] and against a background of

[35] For example Mgr. Rizzolati tells how Andrea Cong, a Chinese priest, in Hu-guang 湖广 was captured and tortured together with eight other believers because he was thought to be one of the rebels, Mgr. Rizzolati, Hong Kong, October 18th 1852, *Annali della Propagazione della Fede* 1853. In Henan all the Christians were forced to flee and hide in the mountains, Mgr. Delaplace tells of another Chinese priest, Father Song, who was placed under arrest. Mgr. Louis Gabriel Delaplace, Henan, November 21st 1851, *Annales del Congrégation de la Mission* 1853. In any case, references to abuses against believers or Chinese priests are very frequent in the letters of these years.

[36] See, for example, Mgr. Xavier Maresca, Nanking, October 1st 1851, *Annali della Propagazione della Fede* 1852, p. 418; or Mgr. Joseph Marie Chaveau, Yunnan, October 20th 1851, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1853, p. 13.

[37] Mgr. Francois-Xavier Danicourt, Ningbo, September 23rd 1851, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1852, p. 115. Another explanation, in which the association of the rebellion with Catholics is seen as intentional, is that of Mgr. Tinguy, who writes: "Several of the Generals deputed to destroy the rebellion, unable to prevent its progress, hanged themselves to avoid the wrath of the emperor. Between them, there were three old persecutors of Christianity; the others, in agreement with civil authorities, wanting to excuse the futility of their efforts in front of the prince, told the government that the majority of the rebels are Christians, backed by the English. It is certain that among them there are neither Christians nor English, as their country lies far away from the ports, and we have no neophytes there." Mgr. Tinguy, Xujiahui, July 25th 1851, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1853, pp. 338-339.

[38] As clearly emerges from these lines of Mgr. Rizzolati: "Authorities' reports announced to the emperor that all the sects of China, especially metempsychosis sects, joined together with an oath against the reigning dynasty, and promised to support all those who will rise up and hand the crown to a prince of Chinese origin. After such a denunciation, the emperor ordered the mandarins under very severe penalties to destroy completely all the sects, except for Confucius' disciples. Hence followed the massacre of all existing sects that is going on in U-quang [Huguang 湖广], particularly those of the fasting ones ("quelle dei digiunanti"). Not even the bonzes of the sects of Foo and Tao are forgiven, slaughtered in the streets as they were pigs." Mgr. Giuseppe Rizzolati, February 13th 1852, Hong Kong, *Annali della Propagazione della Fede* 1852, p. 297.

general agitation growing more and more intense as the rebels advanced towards the heart of the Empire; in many cases then the resulting climate of terror likely combined with local issues to exacerbate previous frictions and enmities against the Chinese Catholics.[39] Finally, the presence of foreigners in China inland in itself was a serious source of anxiety for the Chinese authorities who in more than one case came to suspect the missionaries of being important leaders of the rebellion,[40] or searched Catholic chapels for weapons and cannons.[41]

It was nevertheless the idea that Christians and Taipings shared the same religious belief that played a major role in the association of Catholic communities and missionaries with the rebellion; today we have a relatively clear idea of how the *Shangdijiao* 上帝教, the Taiping Christianity, differed from Western Christianity. But these differences must have looked meaningless in the eyes of the Qing functionaries of the time, who were unable and probably not very interested in distinguishing between the two.[42] There is considerable

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[39] As these lines of Mgr. Delaplace for example suggest: "All the land of Ho-nan is infested by bandits more than ever. They form a society, whose Chief became so famous, that is said his fame reached the throne of the Celestial Son […]. *Hong-hu-tse* is the common name of these bandits […]. If it is reported that in a place there is a *Hong-hu-tse* […] all the village is lost. And the enemies of Christianity exploit the public terror and the rashness of the mandarins to harm it." Mgr. Louis Gabriel Delaplace, Henan, December 5th 1851. *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1853, p. 104.

[40] One is the case of Mgr. Rizzolati in Huguang region, that he himself reports in one letter of the March 4th 1853, *Annali della Propagazione della Fede* 1854, p. 111. Another example is that of Mgr. Baldus in Henan; Mgr. Baldus would have been mistaken for one of the leaders of the rebels because of his Chinese name, An Ruowang 安若王; according to the version of the missionaries, this name, containing the character '*Wang*' 王, 'King', make people of the place believe that he was one of the 'three Kings of the Peilienkiao', *Bai Lianjiao* 白莲教, who according to a prophecy would set to fire the country (for the full version of this story see Mgr. Delaplace, September 25th 1851, Henan, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1852, pp. 53-55). How such superstition may really have influenced local officials is quite hard to say, it is in any case more interesting to notice how from the report of the missionaries' local authorities were perfectly aware of their presence in the region and were following their activities well before recent developments.

[41] For example see Delaplace's letter of September 21st 1851 from Henan, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1852, p. 53; and also his already cited letter of December 5th 1851 from Henan, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1853. Another explicit reference can be found in a letter of Mgr. Anouilh, where he tells how five officials came to search their houses looking for weapons, bullets and soldiers. Mgr. Jean Baptiste Anouilh, Beijing, June 29th 1853, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1853, p. 134.

[42] Li Enhan hold the same idea: "Nor western nor eastern, the Shangdi Society's religious doctrine defied simple descriptions and was rather difficult to classify, Shangdi Society was created solely by Hong Xiuquan's imaginative brain and unshakable belief. But […] the functionaries and the Gentry of every province confused it with the Catholicism that had already spread in all the regions" (上帝会在宗教教义上，本来只是个不中不西不伦不类的东西，上帝会纯粹是由洪秀全脑海中的幻想和他坚决的信念而成。但[…]各省官绅士民都将它和已经流传各省的天主教，互相混淆), Li Enhan 1967, p. 56. And the same can be said for Xie Ming: "During the first period of the Taiping Tianguo, the Qing government

evidence for this, from the "*Zeiqingjiyao*"《贼情集要》(Collected reports on the rebels' situation) of Zhang Dejian 张德坚 to the "*Taoyuefeixi*" (Proclamation of war against the bandits of Guangdong and Guangxi)《讨粤匪檄》of Zeng Guofan 曾国藩.[43] There is also evidence that Ye Mingshen 叶名琛, the governor of Guangdong province (广东巡抚), once claimed: "*Shangdijiao* is just another name for *Tianzhujiao* 天主教 (Catholicism)."[44] It is hence precisely on the basis of this identification that Xianfeng Emperor ordered compliance with the treaty, ordered that the missionaries not be harmed, but also that they be kept away from the inland to prevent the proliferation of this treacherous religion in order to prevent rebellion flaring up in elsewhere.[45]

2.2. Qing reaction after the fall of Nanking

When in March 1853 the rebels established the capital of their Heavenly Kingdom in Nanking, the Taiping Rebellion entered a new season; the threat against the Manchu dynasty was no more a roaming army but a force with a clear epicenter and a relatively steady area of influence, focusing the Qing intervention in those places. While this settlement helped to make the nature of the Taiping movement less obscure, Manchu officers did not cease to identify Taiping rebels with Chinese Catholics. In a letter of 1855, we still have Mgr. Montels complaining that they lived "in uncertainty and sometimes in anxiety due to the edicts of the Mandarins posted in many places, in which they confuse Christians with the Rebels and invoke the hatred of the people against them."[46] All in all, the situation continued to remain tense. On the one hand, the neutrality that the Western Powers maintained even after the contacts they had with the rebels during all the 1853 partially reassured the Manchu government

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believed *Shangdijiao* and Catholicism to be the same, TaipingTianguo actually used the Christian religion to stir and organize the masses, hence they implemented a strict anti-Christian policy, and spared no effort to be on guard against the Taipings, against the Christians and against the westerners who had close relations with the Taipings" (太平天国初期，清政府把拜上帝教等同于基督教，认为拜上帝教就是基督教，太平天国就是以基督教来组织、发作群众的，所以实行严格的限教政策，对太平天国，对基督教，对与太平天国关系极为密切的西方人都极力防范，政教关系极为紧张), Xie Ming 2005, p. 127.

[43] Xie Ming 2005, p. 127.

[44] "上帝教乃天主教之别名", Ibid. p. 127.

[45] "Comply with the existing agreement, do not let the rebellion spread elsewhere" (坚守成约，勿令别生枝节), Ibid. p. 127. This order of the emperor was probably leaked, since, in a letter of September 25th 1851, Mgr. Delaplace mentioned clearly that a secret dispatch of the Xianfeng Emperor was circulating in which he abolished the legalization of Christianity in China accepted by his predecessor the Daoguang Emperor. *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1852, p. 53.

[46] Mgr. Ferdinand Montels, Jiangxi, March 30th 1855, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1856, pp. 460-461.

about the risk of an alliance between the two; on the other hand, after the fall of Nanking many shrewd western traders took advantage of the proximity to Shanghai to start a profitable trade in arms with the Taipings, instilling in the minds of officials the suspicion that foreigners were secretly supporting the rebellion and that it was not unlikely they were doing it also on the basis of the same religious faith.[47]

If we have evidence of this kind of linkage going on, it has to be said that there are also signs of change; reading the letters of the missionaries we can see that after an initial wave of panic, in many cases the Qing authorities gradually had to acknowledge that the majority of Christians had no direct involvement with the uprising, and that they continued to keep an eye on them more out of fear that they could join forces with the rebels at a later time, believing that their common religious belief could become the basis for an alliance.[48] The overall impression, however, is that situation varies considerably from place to place, so that we could cite examples in both senses and one should not generalize too easily.

An example of improvement could be that of Mgr. Mouly in the Peking zone, who in one of his letters recounts how he decided to voluntarily hand himself over to local authorities:

> In such an extreme situation, it seemed to me that, to save the lives of innocents already put in irons, to put an end to the investigations that would have made many more victims, and especially to destroy in people's mind the idea that we were the ones to start and continue the rebellion against the ruling dynasty, I should have deliver myself to the authorities and repudiate the accusations that were made against me and our Christians.[49]

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[47] "There were a lot of foreigners coming and going and looking for information, several western merchants even had commercial exchange with the Taipings, secret transports smuggled weapons, gunpowder and other military supplies to assist their army. Hence, Chinese functionaries' prejudices against the Taiping Tianguo religion deepened. They believed that because the Taipings and the westerners shared the same creed, the two probably had some kind of secret agreement" (外人络绎前往探听消息者甚多，不少洋商甚至与太平军进行贸易，秘密载运抢械火药等作战物货，济助其军。因此，中国官员对于天主教的一些成见，更趋于加深，认为外国人既与外国人奉一教，两者之间可能有着某种秘密的勾结), Li Enhan 1967, p. 57.

[48] This is the hypothesis proposed by Yang Dachun: "The Qing government saw the Taiping Tianguo as an inner danger. Knowing that the Taipings believed in *Shangdi*, it became even more suspicious and kept an even closer watch on the other Christian believers to prevent them from colluding with the Taipings. For this reason relations between the late Qing government and the Christian religion became increasingly strained" (清政府视太平天国为其心腹之患，知道太平天国信仰上帝，因此愈发加强了对其他信仰上帝的基督徒的猜疑和防范，以预防这些和太平天国勾结起来，晚清政教关系因此变得更加紧张), Yang Dachun 1999.

[49] Mgr. Joseph-Martial Mouly, August 1st 1854, Peking, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1855, p. 146. A more detailed version of all the story appeared in a letter of the February 2nd 1855, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1855, pp. 179-240.

According to his version, as a result of his actions some believers would be released and he himself brought back unharmed to Shanghai, while the Mandarin who executed the arrest got punished. Mouly's letter then ended up emphasizing how the affair ultimately had a positive effect as the local community did not suffer any other harassment at the hand of the Qing authorities after this incident.[50]

Another example of an improvement can be found in a Mgr. Chiais's missive of 1856. In the beginning of the letter he describes the incredible rumors that began to circulate about them after the revolt started:

> In these three years, the Gentiles of the district, moved by an evil spirit, have resorted to one of their usual machinations against us, that of spreading thousand calumnies about us. Thus during the Easter festivities of 1853, across the country people did not talk about anything else than our wicked designs. They said that we had dug vast dungeons under our houses where we had garnered supplies of all kinds, and [built] more than fifty mills; two thousands men at least were hidden there, ready to assault at the first order the city of *Sigan-fu*, capital of the province. Of course, they meant that we were in contact with the rebels of the empire […]. By night, the chief of the tribunal sent spies around our house, he did it in secret, not daring to start open investigations […].[51]

The letter follows then reporting how Serafino da Campo di Pietro, after being arrested in 18th July 1855, has been kept in prison for a year and a half. In the last part however, Father Chiais relates that after a period of vexations and suspicions local authorities had to admit the non-involvement of Christians and allowed them continue practicing their religion undisturbed. Nevertheless, beside examples of this kind, there is still evidence of the opposite type with missionaries in different regions reporting all kinds of harassment. Again in 1856, Mgr. Baldus in Henan wrote: "In China, in these tormented days, more than the sword of the rebels, we fear the persecution of functionaries, or the vexations of Qing soldiers."[52]

Speaking of Qing anti-Christian reaction one cannot fail to mention the

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[50] In fact, the version filed by Guiliang 桂良, general governor of Zhili region (直隶总督), is quite different. First of all, it is never said that the missionary delivered himself spontaneously. Besides, the report of the magistrate is full of suspicion, while admitting that there was no evidence of criminal behavior ("尚无不法事迹"), not only did he explicitly suspect the involvement of the Christians ("曾否勾结为匪？"), but emphasized the need to keep a close watch on them and to contain the diffusion of their religion, as there was a risk of collusion with the rebels ("此时逆匪未平，难保不互相勾结"). Zhu Jinfu 1996, Vol. 1, pp. 155-159.

[51] Mgr. Efisio Chiais, September 6th 1856, Shanxi, *Annali della Propagazione della Fede* 1857, p. 137.

[52] Mgr. Jean Henry Baldus, November 14th 1856, Henan, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1857, p. 346.

famous case of Mgr. Chapdelaine at Xilin 西林 in Guangxi, whose death sentence in February 1856 became the pretext later adopted by France to take part in the Second Opium War. On that occasion the death penalty imposed by local magistrate Zhang Fengming 张凤鸣 appeared again to be related to the influence of the Taiping Rebellion. The words of Zhang Fengming left in the records clearly show how in his eyes Chapdelaine was a dangerous agitator: "What did you come to do here? Why, under the guise of spreading your religion, do you secretly prepare rebellion and ensnare the masses to oppose the government? I know you came to organize an armed rebellion."[53] The theme of rebellion emerges quite clearly as well in the reconstruction of the events we find in the letter Mgr. Guillemin wrote in 1856.[54] As Guangxi was the wellspring of the movement, the presence of the missionary there evidently hit a raw nerve, causing the mandarin to act more rashly than in the case of Mgr. Mouly.

Only one year later the case of Chapdelaine, in a region directly hit by the uprising, that of Jiangnan, another missionary, Mgr. Montels, met his death, and this time also his execution by Qing soldiers was connected with the Taiping Rebellion. According to Mgr. Guillemin's account:

> Mr. Montels stayed on in a territory occupied by insurgents and consequently wore his hair long, wanting to cross an area occupied by the Imperials to visit a brother [who fell ill], had to have his hair cut. But he put the hair in his bag to be able to show it on his return and prove to the rebels that he had had to cut it only out of necessity. [On the path] a squad of Imperials fell on him, and they wanted at all costs to open his luggage. Finding in it two or three European books and as many Chinese ones, and especially finding his hair, they began to suspect him and brought him with the others two Christians to the headquarters.[55]

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[53] "What did you actually want to do when you came here? Why with the excuse of spreading your religion, did you stir up the people and conspire a riot against the government? I know you came to organize a group of armed forces" (你来这里究竟想干什么？为何你以传教为名，搞阴谋暴动，诱惑群众，反抗政府？我知道你是来组织一支武装部队), quoted in Xie Ming 2005, p. 128.

[54] "It has been said, among other things, that the Christian religion is false and perverse, that its members learn to fly like birds and possess magic secrets by which they can do whatever they want, at their head is a foreigner named Ma (Chapdelaine's Chinese name), who came from far away countries to push people to rebellion […]." Mgr. Philippe F.Z.Guillemin, Canton, July 8th 1856, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1856, p. 460.

[55] Mgr. Francois X.T. Danicourt, September 15th 1857, Jiangnan, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1858, p. 140. Actually, in a later reconstruction of the event by Mgr. Anot, the theme of the hair disappears to be substituted by a "priest hat" found in Montels' bag; in Anot's version the fault of Montels was simply to be a missionary preaching a foreign religion that was not accepted, while the suspicions of his involvement in the rebellion fade into the background. See Mgr. Antoine Anot, Jiangxi, July 15th 1859, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1860, pp.190-193. This second version nevertheless seems less convincing, even not counting that between the events described and the attempted reconstruction of Anot a

And finally at the Qing headquarters, after a summary trial, on June 26th 1857 he was put to the sword. This "Story of Hair" is just an extreme example of the impact of the Taiping Rebellion on Catholic missions; it also gives an idea of how easily missionaries were still associated with the Rebels.

To sum up, as far as one can count some signs of improvement, a certain anti-Christian feeling related with the Taiping Rebellion was still clearly present even in these later years, continuing to be a rather concrete problem for the missionaries and the communities they cared. Such a situation could not but affect the response to the rebellion of the Catholic Fathers; in this regard, it is noteworthy that, unlike the early years when Catholic Fathers tended to deny the association with the Taipings as a cunning plot of the Manchu, later they dealt with it as a real issue. In their letters we find evidence of how they positively tried to differentiate themselves and their faithful from the rebels in order to be safe from reprisals of the Imperials. Montels, for example, emphasized the effectiveness of works of charity for this purpose,[56] while Rouger in 1856 even argued that:

> For the sake of Religion and of our good name, we need to suffer something from the *Sipines*. Why? Because the people in the neighborhood see us continuing with our work with the same zeal and the same confidence as before, and they imagine that we are part of those people, that we have relations with them, they suspect that our homes conceal weapons. It is not honorable and not safe for us to be confused with the rebels, and it is fatal to Religion.[57]

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year and a half had passed, Montels himself mentioned in his letters the problem of the hair in that zone (see Mgr. Ferdinand Montels, Jiangxi, April 15th 1857, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, pp. 425-453).

[56] Mgr. Ferdinand Montels, Jiangxi, December 20th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 384.

[57] Mgr. François-Adrien Rouger, Jiangxi, December 8th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 369. On the same point, Mgr. Mouly strikes a more optimistic note. He believed that seen over a longer term, the rebellion could have a positive effect for the spread of Christianity in China, disproving with facts the charges laid against the Chinese faithful of being connected with the rebellion." They believe that Christianity is a political emissary, a secret agent of the Foreigners, come in China to prepare its conquest for the Western sovereigns. The present war of the rebels will contribute supremely toppling this baleful prejudice, for the government could not fail to recognize that Christians have remained quiet everywhere, despite the infamous slander claiming them to be accomplices of the rebels." Mgr. Joseph-Martial Mouly, January 25th 1855, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1855, p. 302. Frank Cady also raises a similar issue: "The unanimous opinion among Catholic missionaries was that every effort should be made to clarify to Peking the difference between Protestant and Catholic Christianity and to convince the emperor that Catholics were not the enemies of the Manchus and had no part in the rebellion." Cady 1954, p. 105. These remarks of Cady are based on the records left by Bourboulon in Shanghai, but actually in the letters we never find the problem of distinguishing themselves from the Protestants, we only find the urgent need of distinguishing themselves from the rebels.

3.1. Taipings in the eyes of the missionaries: the early years

Against the background of this wave of persecution that swept through the community of the Chinese faithful, what did the Catholic priests actually know of the rebellion that was raging in the Celestial Empire? What was their level of understanding of what was happening? And especially what were their views in this regard? Reading the letters of the Fathers, the impression is that in those early years when little was known about the Taiping movement, the underground life they conducted limited their access to official information, sometimes making their ideas rather confused, it looks like their unique position that in some occasion allowed them to be closer to the events, also made them more dependant on any sort of rumor and hearsay. One example of this confused knowledge is a sort of '*Miao-tze* explanation', which in the first years imposed itself as a credited reading of the nature of the rebellion: merging "Ming lealism" with the place of origin of the rebellion, the Guangxi region, a restive area rich in ethnic minorities, some missionaries, welcomed some circulating rumors and attributed the outbreak of the revolt to the population of the '*Miao-tze*', "namely Chinese retired on the mountains, who since the fall of the Ming Dynasty, that is maybe more than three hundred years ago, never wanted to submit, nor pay tribute to the current dynasty of Manchu emperors."[58] This explanation was further popularized by Mgr. Broullion in his 1855 book, where he used the *Miao-tze* also to explain the Christian component of the Rebellion:

> In a letter sent to me on August 5th 1853, I've been assured that amongst the rebels there are some who adore the true God and destroy the idols out of hate of superstition. They belong to the tribe of the *Miao-tze*, their ancestors were converted to Christianity by three missionaries during the Ming period.[59]

This is just an example of how at that time the little information available about the rebels were distorted, mixing real elements with unreal ones and creating a quite confused picture of what was happening.[60] Another letter Mgr. Daguin wrote in 1851 can further exemplify the extent of the bewilderment of those years. In the missive Daguin tells how, thanks to a Christian who worked as a servant for a major mandarin, 'Tchou-Tien-kia',[61] he had the chance to read the

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[58] Mgr. Florent Daguin, Shanghai, May 21th 1851, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1852, pp. 268-272. The same description can be found also in Mgr. Tinguy, Xujiahui, July 25th 1851, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1853, pp. 337-345.

[59] Broullion 1855, p. 10.

[60] The '*Miao-tze*' mentioned by the Fathers are the *Miaozu* 苗族 minorities who live in that region. Today, we know that the revolt of the Taipings was linked to the *Hakka* 客家 minority, and that, if anything, it was this that laid the way for the *Miao* uprising of 1855 led by Liu Xiumei 刘秀眉. On this second uprising and its relation with Taiping Rebellion, see Luo Ergang 罗尔纲 1991, pp. 2573-2603.

[61] Almost certainly it is Zhou Tianjue 周天爵, general governor of the Huguang (湖广总督)

report of investigations into the origin of the Rebellion that his master had drafted. Even if vague enough, today we can say that the information Daguin obtained through that report was one of the most accurate pieces of information available to foreigners in those early years: broadly speaking, the story presented at least some of the basic actors and corresponds to what we know was the embryonic phase of the Taiping movement, when the pseudo-Christian ideology forged by Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 was taking shape, giving birth to a community bound together by its egalitarian ideals, which soon began to come into conflict with the local authorities.[62] Nevertheless, irony of History, influenced by the precedent hostility of the mandarin[63] and the explicit anti-Christian content of the report,[64] Mgr. Daguin concluded the letter by dismissing the report as a biased and unconvincing story, claiming to find the *Miao-tze* explanation more persuasive.[65]

On some other occasions though, instead of trying to cope with rumors, the Catholic Fathers had the chance to observe the events directly with their own eyes. For example in 1853 Mgr. Peschaud was able to witness the siege of Nanchang 南昌. Closer contact resulted in a more focused view of things, as is evident by the way he summarized the nature of the Taiping movement:

> The revolt has four reasons: first, against the tartar; second, against corruption; third, against the unaffordable taxes; fourth, it must liberate the country from the idols that have been worshipped here for so long, and from those infernal spirits who deceive men so negatively, it should replace all these superstitions

during those years.

[62] In the report of the Mandarin the key character is *Fong Yun-chan* (Feng Yunshan 冯云山) from *Hoa Hien* (Huaxian 花县) in Guangdong. Feng is said to have worked as a private tutor first at *Lou-Lieou*'s (Lu Liu 卢六) house and then to have had the same role by *Tsen-You-tsen* (Zeng Yuzhen 曾玉珍) between 46-47. Arrested by the local mandarin *Ouang-Tsou-Xin* (Wang Zuoxin 王作新) on charges of inciting social unrest, Feng Yunshan and Lu Liu, were freed thanks to the intervention of the rich Zeng and together with him and a fourth person, *Hong-Tsien* (Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全?), would later become leaders of the rebel movement. Mgr. Florent Daguin, Shanghai, November 26th 1851, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1852, pp. 119-130.

[63] He was known to the missionaries because he had sentenced Mgr. Jean-Gabriel Perboyre to death.

[64] Daguin reports passages like this: "Since in his books of magic the name of Jesus appeared, he has to be European and a perverted spirit, all those who adore Jesus are perverted men. Moreover, Feng Yunshan uses arguments from our sacred texts to create a pernicious feelings [in the mind of the people]." Ibid., p. 122.

[65] This old persecutor cannot help but see everywhere the Christian religion, however, out of his confusion, he speaks without giving any proofs: he speaks of rebellion, but he doesn't mention any crime having to do with it. […] According to this piece, Feng Yunshan is simply a Chinese priest, or a zealous catechist, or more probably an emissary of the Protestants. The reasons why I believe this are two: first, in Chinese, '*Yesujiao*' indicates the Protestant religion, second, Mgr. Chen, a Chinese priest from Jiangnan who knows all the Chinese priests of Canton area has never heard of this Feng Yunshan. Ibid., p. 128.

> with the true religion of the Supreme Being.[66]

From the description of Father Peschaud the egalitarian component of the movement also clearly emerges:

> When they arrived in Nanchang, the fasters of the White Lotus and of the Society of the Thousand Blades (*Tsien-ta-houi*, *Qiandaohui* 千刀会), those that in France we call Freemasons, Communists, Reds, immediately tagged along with the riot. How do they feed all these soldiers? They plunder, for they joined brigands of all sorts […]. First they made people swear (Do you renounce your father and your mother? your woman? your children?) some sort of police law is then re-established, and then the agrarian law is published: all the fields and properties, and even the oxen are shared equally.[67]

While persuaded of the presence of Protestant emissaries amidst the rebels, when it comes to speaking of the religion professed by the Taipings, interestingly enough, even Father Peschaud looks rather puzzled, not concealing his concern:

> So what is their religion? We do not know much, and even after reading the catechism of their doctrine, doubt does not dissipate. It is a mixture of Protestantism, Mohammedanism and Christianity. They say to worship the Supreme Being, and Jesus the savior, but make no mention of *Tianzhu*, the Chinese name which we [Catholic] Christians use to refer to God every day, they use a kind of holy water, talk about Christmas, celebrate Easter and Pentecost […]. What will come out of such a mixture? The martyrdom or our freedom?[68]

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[66] Mgr. Étienne-Bernard Peschaud, Jiangxi, October 16th 1853, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1854, p. 45.

[67] Ibid., pp. 46-47. While Peschaud merely record the fact, directing his main criticism at other aspects and worrying mostly about the effects that the uprising will have on the development of Christianity, the tone of Mgr. Rizzolati in a letter of the same year is more explicitly harsh: "All of my priests, both Chinese and Europeans, paint the rebels as promoters of communism: this is so dreadful, that the hand fears to write, and the mind to conceive the horrendous cruelty and impostures of these sectarians. […] They strip affluent and wealthy families of their wealth to reduce everyone to the equality of nudity", and again, "in each conquered city, after killing a part of the citizens, and having stripped the other part of all their possessions, they put everything into a public treasure, and then recompose the society anew, in groups of 25 people. Each family thus constituted does not count anything but men on one side and women on the other: the two sexes cannot, under very severe penalties, dwell together, rule which will last until the complete conquest of China. After the empire is conquered the families that will not be useful to the war will return to town, and then there will be neither rich nor poor, according to the rules of communism. Only they, the kings, the princes, the generals, they alone, have the right to possess and buy." Mgr. Giuseppe Rizzolati, Hong Kong, August 4th 1853, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1854, pp. 15-16.

[68] Mgr. Étienne-Bernard Peschaud, Jiangxi, October 16th 1853, *Annales de la Congrégation*

Interestingly enough, in spite of the cliché that sees the identification with the Protestant religion as the main reason for Catholic aversion for the Taipings, a closer look to the writings of the Catholic missionaries rather reveals a considerable degree of confusion, a genuine inability to classify, which forces the writer to resort to different monotheistic religions to describe different features of the new religion, leaving its origins without any real explanation. This passage of a letter Mgr. Rizzolati wrote in 1853 is another example of this kind of bewilderment:

> What kind of idea of the rebellion I got, I really can't say. Nothing that has to do with the idolatry cult spread throughout the empire, and the surrounding kingdoms, because anywhere they arrive, they overturn and raze the temples of the idols to the ground, then break and trample them, and finally scatter the wreckage around. They do the same thing with the monasteries of bonzes […]. For this reason, nobody can guess what their religion is, nor what kind of worship they intend to establish in China, an impenetrable mystery which created the guesswork and the gossip all the Chinese engage in these days.[69]

Even if it sometimes emerges that they suspect or fear that Protestant preachers could have played some role in the birth of this unclassifiable faith, not only do the Catholic Missionaries not see the Taiping Christianity as Protestant or as its direct offspring, they are rather unable to link this hybrid religion clearly to any known major religion. In at least one case then, we have a missionary going so far as to claim explicitly that the rebels' religion has been invented by them in order to serve as a unifying ideology to the rebellion, remarking again its spurious nature:

> To give unity to this association of Chinese and make it as compact as possible, they created a new religion, that is the most extraordinary mess the human spirit has ever concocted, it contains haphazardly some primitive cults, some Judaism, some Mohammedanism. […] They make offerings of fruits of the earth and sacrifices of animals, have the Decalogue almost complete; strongly inculcate the idea of unity of God, but have an incomplete idea of the trinity, refuse the name of God to our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom they admit the mission in this world and the redemption of men by his death on the cross. Finally they are Mohammedans in morals and indeed surpass Muhammad in terms of religious nonsense.[70]

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de la Mission 1854, pp. 45-46.

[69] Mgr. Giuseppe Rizzolati, Hong Kong, January 28th 1853, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1853, pp. 303-304.

[70] Mgr. Mahon, Hong Kong, July 20th 1853, *Annales de L'Œuvre de la Sainte Enfance* 1853, pp. 49-50. Gabriac also believes that the Taiping religion was invented, but in his eyes the reason is to look for support among Europeans: "China seems to be on the verge of great change. At present a political revolution afflicts this country and prepares a religious revolution. This uprising is the effect of a powerful Chinese national reaction against the

As well as there is no Catholic missionary claiming unequivocally that the Taipings were Protestant, in the letters of the Fathers of these early years we do not find any clear-cut opposition to the rebellion. At this early stage when most observers took the victory of the rebels for granted, knowledge about the rebellion was still too limited and the nature of the movement and its religion still too unclear, so that the general opinion emerging from the writing of the Fathers was that it was necessary to await the development of events to see if what was happening was positive or not. For example Mgr. Mahon in Summer 1853 writes:

> A little while ago, China was inert and silent, the sacred yeast of Christianity, that the missionaries laid there for several centuries, has never leavened the whole mass. Today, agitation follows the calm, can one hope that maybe in God's design this rebellion, so stubbornly anti-idolatrous, will become the principle of holy fermentation? It seems appropriate not to prevent the holy Providence, and wait again to appreciate the outcome of these serious events that are shaking China […].

But if generally speaking their position was of neutrality, some of them also sounded cautiously optimistic, like Delaplace or Gabriac, who believed that the defeat of the Manchus would bring more freedom for Christian religion in China, making them ultimately hope for a Taiping victory.[71]

3.2. Fall of Nanking and first contacts

After the Taiping Army took Nanking, Westerners, impressed by the achievements of the anti-Manchu movement and favored by the proximity to Shanghai, soon wanted to establish contact: in April an expedition guided by Sir George Bonham, the governor of Hong Kong, sailed to Nanking on the Hermes,

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oppression of the Tartars. […] to conciliate the support of Europe, *Te-Tien*, head of the rebels (during the early years of the rebellion, the Leader of the Taiping movement is called this way in many sources, see Clarke and Gregory 1982, note 5 p. 8, Ed.), profess a confused religion, but in which he acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind, and he allows freedom of worship." De Gabriac, Hong Kong, June 21th 1853, *Annales de L'Œuvre de la Sainte Enfance* 1853, p. 28.

[71] "If, as seems probable, the insurgents triumph perhaps we can hope for some freedom for our religion, but if on the contrary the Tartar dynasty wins, we will see a tremendous reaction against anything that has character or semblance of association." Mgr. Louis Gabriel Delaplace, Jiangxi, November 6th 1852, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1853, p. 300. "[The chief of the rebels] allows freedom of worship. Our missionaries do not ask for more here, and it should be noted that, if only there was some freedom of preaching, this vast country would offer to the flame of faith a huge field of 300 million men." De Gabriac, Hong Kong, 21th June 1853, *Annales de L'Œuvre de la Sainte Enfance* 1853, p. 28.

French and American parties followed the same year. The settlement in Nanking also attracted the Protestant ministers, who full of expectations, despite the considerable risks, tried to reach the capital several times, although without much luck.[72]

Unlike the Protestants, Catholics did not see the fall of Nanking in a good light in the first place, since for them it meant above all the subjugation of the entire Catholic community of the city and could not in any way be mistaken for a sign of Divine Providence. Mgr. Maresca, the Jesuit responsible for the Vicariate of Nanking, denounced vigorously the mistreatment to which the Chinese converts of Nanking were subjected by the rebels, creating a real case that had a certain echo in France, marking the Taipings as persecutors of the Catholics. In a letter sent in June 1853, Maresca, basing himself on the account of a fugitive, reported in quite a detailed way what happened to the Nanking Catholics when the Taiping Army took the city. According his reconstruction:

> [On March 21th] several insurgents entered the city chapel, where the Christians were gathered to recite the prayers of the Holy Week. The rebels forbade them to kneel for prayer and ordered them to be seated while reciting the new prayers to *Tianfu* 天父. The Christians answered that they were Catholics and did not know any other religion. They were told that if within three days they still would not obey they all would be decapitated.[73]

And then, after some days of imprisonment and threats:

> On March 28th, several young men, tired of suffering and fearing more torments, convinced themselves that they could recite the famous prayer, since it contained nothing contrary to the dogmas of our holy religion. After protesting that they intended to remain Catholic, twenty-two of them recited the prayer and were shortly afterwards unbound; but the others declared that they preferred to die rather than recite the prayer before knowing if it was proper: therefore several of them were cruelly beaten.[74]

This treatment was emphasized by the Jesuits in Shanghai and later further magnified by the Catholic press in France, giving birth to a marked anti-Taiping

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[72] Two Ministers of the London Missionary Society, W. Muirhead and A. Wylie in June 1853 set out for Nanking disguised as Chinese but they did not manage to pass Suzhou. Later S. Carpenter, a Baptist pastor, went further, but at the end was forced to give up. In the same days Taylor, an American missionary, reached the occupied Zhenjiang 镇江, becoming the first western missionary to enter the *Taiping Tianguo* territories. Issachar Roberts, former Hong Xiuquan mentor, received a letter of the Tian Wang himself and decided to head for Nanking, but got caught by Qing forces along the way. Finally, E.C. Bridgman and M.S. Culbertson in May 1853 took part in the American expedition and visited Zhenjiang and Nanking.

[73] Mgr. Xavier Maresca, Shanghai, June 8th 1853, Broullion 1855, p. 276.

[74] Ibid., pp. 276-277.

feeling amongst Catholic public opinion.[75] It is however reasonable to suspect that to a certain extent the Jesuits overemphasized the facts on purpose to use the accident as leverage on the French colonial authorities in order to obtain more protection for missionaries and Chinese believers. On the other hand, French colonial authorities exploited the events too, since investigating the condition of the Chinese Catholics in Nanking became one of the official reasons for the French expedition that headed for the Taiping capital in November 1853. This is just another example of the interaction between missionary and colonial interests described above.

In accordance with the motives of the expedition, two Catholic missionaries took part in the trip: Mgr. Clavelin and Mgr. Gotteland. Interestingly enough, the record of their impressions of the Taiping headquarter is less negative than might be expected, Mgr. Clavelin in particular left a vivid description of the visit, that in addition to being a valuable document on the rebellion, is all in all one of the writings that is most favorably disposed towards the Taiping movement left by the Catholic missionaries. First of all, once there they realized that maltreatments of Nanking Catholics had declined after the first period,[76] and later in the text Mgr. Clavelin eventually claimed that it was unlikely that the abuse were due to an aversion for the Catholic religion.[77] Not only that, although in his report we find a Nanking in rather poor state, with burnt houses and no store open, making it look "less a city than a camp", his description of the living conditions of people in the Heavenly Capital is rather positive,[78] and he went so far as to show a certain admiration for the spirit of

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[75] "The public press of France turned against the Taipings because of the rumors of ruthless massacres of Roman Catholic Christians", Teng Ssu-yu 1971, p. 205. Also Mgr. Clavelin mentions in his report from Nanking the "blazing controversy which has recently arisen among the chief Paris newspaper on the subject of the events in China, and in particular about the persecutions our Christians had to endure at the hands of the *Kuam-si-jen*." Mgr.Stanislas Clavelin, Xujiahui, January 6th 1854, Clarke and Gregory 1982, p. 100. Originally published in Broullion 1855, pp. 337-389.

[76] "[…] he was the brother of a student of a little seminary of the mission, He told me that, by the grace of god, our Christian women had been able to stay in their house or their chapel, that they were in no way molested on account of their religion, and that they had what was necessary in the way of provisions and clothing. As to the men, there remain scarcely more than twelve or fifteen in the city, almost all have escaped. Three others Christians that father Gotteland was able to see several days later, confirmed with him these details. Only it appears that several of our Christians, scattered or forced to serve the *Kuam-si-jen*, have had to suffer harassments at the hands of some rebel chiefs, the most rigid observers of the new religion prescriptions." Mgr. Stanislas Clavelin, in Clarke and Gregory 1982, p. 95.

[77] "Our Christians have not been maltreated in so far as they are Christians, and if a cross and images have been destroyed at the hand of some subordinates, the chiefs have received such things from our hands with much respect." Ibid., p. 113.

[78] "We also saw a large number of women carrying the rice ration assigned to each of them […]. The appearance of these women did not at all reveal any poverty: I saw no beggars among them. Some of them wore rich clothing: but the majority, without showing much affluence, were nevertheless decent and passable." Mgr. Stanislas Clavelin, in Clarke and

brotherhood behind their community life:

> The communal life is truly represented in Nanking in its most expressive aspect and in the widest sense of the word but without the slightest detriments to morals […]. One cannot deny it, there is something in their relationships with one another which justifies the name of brothers which the *Kuam-si-jen* adopt among themselves. There is moreover a family likeness now. Thus all the dwelling places are communal property: provisions and clothing have been deposited in public store; gold, silver and precious objects taken to the public treasury. One cannot sell anything nor buy anything, in fact, would be useless in the hands of individuals […]. It is truly something worthy of admiration, that a population which the invasion has raised to more than one million can be regularly nourished and clothed this way.[79]

Particularly interesting is the report of his conversation with the 'secretary of minister TChen', a 'man of uncommon intelligence', who explained how the Taiping religion was still developing, and denied ideas like the divine nature of Hong Xiuquan and the reality of his dialogues with God himself, ascribing this kind of nonsense to the ignorance of the mass of ill-educated people. On the whole, Clavelin reports his investigation into the rebels' religion quite neutrally, after managing to gather information and material about it, he tends to consider that it is religion of new formation that is yet to stabilize,[80] in which more components are present and in which a certain Protestant influence, although undeniable, seems to play a minor role.[81] Finally, when it comes to expressing his overall opinion, his words become prudent, stressing how uncertain the possible developments of the situation were. Nevertheless, he sees something positive in the action of the Taipings:

> May the Father of mercies look with compassion on this vast empire! The *Kuam-si-jen* are in his hand, may He make of them an instrument of salvation for their unfortunate country. At the present time they are clearing the ground, that is certain. Even more, it is a devastating torrent, truly, especially so for

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Gregory 1982, p. 96.

[79] Ibid., p.107.

[80] "[…] judging by all I've seen, read and heard, the religious inclinations of the *Kuam-si-jen* have still not been revealed in all their aspects, and their doctrinal system seems to me to be composed of rather diverse elements, although the Christian element is dominant therein." Ibid., p. 111-112.

[81] "Would this new religion approximate more closely to Protestantism? […] indeed the protestant bible has been reprinted by the *Kuam-si-jen* […] however if the protestant ministers are really the fathers of this new doctrine the element of Mohammedanism does them no great honor (with reference to the polygamy of the leaders, and the strict separations between sexes in the city, Ed.). Besides which, all the *Kuam-si-jen* that we have questioned have always rejected such an origin. […] If their religion did come from some Anglican ministers, the disciples showed little gratitude to their teachers, for none of these has been able to establish himself among them." Ibid., p. 113.

> paganism, but one that brings in its flood, and raises to the surface a crowd of new ideas, more universal and more in harmony with those of the rest of the civilized world. And consequently it tends to bring into the bosom of the great family of the human race this empire hitherto so careful to hold itself apart. It is now that these tendencies are showing themselves, they have not yet assumed complete stability.[82]

Definitely worthy of note is then a passage in the end of the report where Father Clavelin discloses the reasons that prevent him from more openly embracing the rebel cause, making explicit an important point that to a certain extent was common to all the Catholic Missionaries:

> Would it not be possible to give them a certain direction, in a word, to catholicize them? That is without doubt the dream of more than one missionary. You have an excellent opportunity, you will tell me, why let it escape? […] To stay among the *Kuam-si-jen* would be to go over to the insurrection, to break with the imperialists; it would be in the hope of uncertain success, to expose nine tenths of our Christians to obvious dangers, it would be to sacrifice all our other missions.[83]

In short, this paper of Father Clavelin further shows how simplistic and approximate is the idea that Catholic missionaries were adverse to the Taiping movement. Clavelin had an unique chance for direct and deep contact with the rebels, but even reading the writings of less privileged observers, we see that Catholic position during those early years is less unequivocal than previously thought. This diversity of voices is also found in other contemporary Catholic authors less close to the field. Callery and Yvan who, as Teng Ssu-yu remarked, in their 1853 book "*L'insurrection en Chine*", even if still rather confused on the nature of the rebellion, appear basically convinced that what was happening in China in those days was an important step forward for China:

> […] it may be perceived that a new regenerative element has penetrated those obscure retreats where projects of national independence are formed, we mean the Christian element [...]. They talk of "decrees of Heaven" [...] "Supreme Being" expression unknown to the idolaters of China and foreign to the language of Catholics. The honor of introducing them to China belongs to the Protestant, and if we may trust reports, it appears that a native protestant holds an elevated rank and exercises a high authority among the insurgents, this protestant is, we are assured a convert of Gutzlaff.[84]

And again:

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[82] Mgr. Stanislas Clavelin, in Clarke and Gregory 1982, p. 114.
[83] Ibid., p. 114.
[84] Callery et Yvan 1853, *L'Insurrection en Chine, Depuis son Origine jusqu'à la Prise de Nankin*, pp. 113-114.

> At the present moment, however, the Chinese pretender is representative of the progress, He appears to be a reformer, lamenting abuses, and inspiring hope in those who suffer, and confidence in the rich and learned. [...] His auxiliaries, the five kings, are all enlightened persons, being at the same time disciples of Confucius and Protestants or Deists, they fight against barbarism with the sword, and attack the superstitions of Buddhism, proclaiming a purer morality and the doctrine of the unity of God.[85]

But next to passages such as these, so full of idealistic expectations, one could put the disillusioned and pessimistic comments of the Abbot Huc, who in his 1854 reissue of his "*L'Empire chinois*" dismisses the rebellion without reservation both as a chance of religious opening and as a hope of political renewal. Therefore, as for the early years of Taiping Rebellion, one cannot speak of a clear and definite reaction by Catholics in one way or another.

3.3. Middle years

With the conquest of Nanking in 1853 the Taiping movement reached the height of its success on the field, subsequent offensives towards north and west failed to achieve their goals and the conflict entered a stalemate, while on the internal front the rivalry between the various leaders in 1856 degenerated into a bloodbath that brought the party of the rebels very close to implosion. Besieged by Qing imperial forces and struggling with internal problems, *Taiping Tianguo* closed in on itself and after the expeditions of 1853, while the exchange of weapons and provisions did not stop, any other kind of relations with foreigners ceased. In addition to this closure, the impression one gets reading the letters of the missionaries is that a discovery phase came to an end bringing with it a drop in curiosity, a decline of interest that was also determined by the fact that unlike the early years, when the victory of the Taipings seemed only a matter of time, in this second phase Qing forces had recovered ground and the success of the revolt seemed much less likely.[86]

Apart from this, after the fall of Nanking another event closely linked to the revolt directly involved the people of Shanghai and the Jesuits residing there. I am referring to the occupation of the Chinese part of Shanghai by the Small

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[85] Ibid., pp. 262-263.

[86] "If I am to believe the information that I obtained during my trip it appears to me, that the state of the Imperials has generally improved, and that the prestige of the *Kuam-si-jen* has fallen, at least in the south and at west of Nanking. They have also lost, little by little, their most valiant soldiers and officers." Mgr. Stanislas Clavelin, Huanlin, March 19th 1855, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1856, p. 428. See also Mgr. Joseph-Martial Mouly, Beijing, January 25th 1855, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 1855, p. 305; and Mgr. Chaveau Mgr. Joseph-Marie Chauveau, Yunnan, December 1st 1854, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1856, p. 147.

Swords Society (*Xiaodaohui* 小刀会) a secret society that rose up taking advantage of the Taiping Army's advance, and later tried unsuccessfully to form an alliance with them. Whatever the real relation between the two might have been, at the time it was at first believed that the invaders of the city were Taipings, and it took time to realize that the two were distinct groups;[87] the occupation that last from September 7th 1853 to February 17th 1855 was in any case marked by frictions and problems of various kinds with resident Westerners, to the point that to a certain extent it negatively affected Taipings' image also, since the Small Swords were seen as part of the bigger rebellion.[88] Anyway, without dwelling on the details of the occupation, the importance of the event lies primarily in the fact that it 'set a precedent for foreign intervention':[89] while at the beginning the representatives of the Western Powers maintained neutrality, France after little more than one year took the field alongside the imperial forces against the Small Swords, breaking neutrality for the first time. What needs to be emphasized here is the role the Catholic missionaries had in that occasion. When the Small Swords invaded Shanghai, the Jesuits of the city soon began to look unfavourably on their presence, and after two Chinese catechumens were put in irons by the occupants on December 12th 1853,[90] they started to put pressure actively on the French representatives in the city for intervention; Catholic consul Louis de Montigny by his part exposed himself from the beginning of the occupation to protect the missionaries in Xujiahui, so it did not take long before the situation began to escalate, with France declaring war on the Triads on December 14th 1854 and opening fire with its cannons on the city on January 6th 1855. In brief, France once again put its forces at the disposal of the missionaries, taking the opportunity to give a show of strength. The French move, however, was openly criticized by the British and American allies, and Admiral Laguerre once back in his home country received similar criticism from the French government itself.[91] What interests us here anyway is to note how

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[87] Mgr. Mathurin Lemaitre, Shanghai October 4th 1853, in Nicolas Broullion 1855, p. 340.

[88] "The disorganization and unruly behavior of the Small Sword rebels in Shanghai led some Westerners to ask whether the Taipings were not of similar stamp", Clarke and Gregory 1982, p. 130.

[89] "The Triad occupation of Shanghai, one must conclude, was important in that it 'set a precedent for foreign intervention'; thereafter the Westerners formed a habit of determining, often by force, and often entirely capriciously, the course of events in the city", Teng Ssu-yu 1971, p. 266.

[90] Joseph de La Serviére 1914, pp. 275-276.

[91] In Shanghai's newspaper of the time one could read lines like these: "Pendant que les confédérés de la Triade occupaient Chang-hai, il se forma contre eux une opposition formidable parmi la communauté européenne: opposition secrète d'abord, insidieuse: je veux dire les intrigues hostiles des jésuites [...]. Le consul de France, le Chef de la Marine à Chang-hai, étaient tous deux des bigots et vendus aux prêtres [...] ils donnèrent assistance aux Impérialistes, et la Triade fut chassée par eux de la ville chinoise", quoted in Joseph de La Serviére 1914, p. 262. Teng Ssu-yu also in his essay uses the same words of Lindley. Teng Ssu-yu 1971, p. 205. While the Catholic de La Serviére denies any undue influence: "Quant à

behind France there was the hand of the Shanghai Jesuits. French intervention on this occasion, not only, as Teng Ssu-yu noted, set a precedent for the Western interference in the Taiping conflict but also consolidated once more the support of France for the missions, as well as once again convincing the missionaries that they would be able to take advantage of the French support for the safeguard of the faithful as well as for the protection of French interests.

From an overall point of view, it was largely on the basis of Jesuit reaction to the 'Nanking incident' and of the role they had during Triad occupation of Shanghai that the idea of a stern opposition to the Taipings by the Catholic Fathers took shape. The active role of the Jesuits that characterized the occupation of the Small Swords did not stop with the liberation of Shanghai but, on the contrary continued in the following years when the Taipings occupied territories next to Shanghai to the point that Lindley defined "the tartar worshipping Jesuits the most bitter enemies the *Ti-pings* ever had."[92] It is this idea of hostility without exception that passed into history concealing the more nuanced initial reaction that I tried to highlight above. But taking the Shanghai's Jesuit position for the general Catholic position, one not only misses the variety of opinions of the early years but also loses sight of the situation of other zones. The case of Jiangxi entrusted to the Lazarists, which as far as I know has never been taken into account,[93] is rather interesting in this regard as it differs considerably from the mainstream idea.

Jiangxi was one of the main theaters of the armed conflict between the Taiping army and Qing forces. In 1855 during the West Campaign it was reached by the armies of Shi Dakai 石达开, who joined his forces with the Guangdong Triads of Li Wenrong 李文茂 and Chen Kai 陈开, and engaged battle with the soldiers of Zeng Guofan. However, just as Shi Dakai was about to seize Nanchang and eliminate the Taipings' most dangerous enemy he had to pull back to Nanking to save the capital under siege. Later, when Yang Xiuqing 杨秀清 wanted to have a clear field for his coup in Nanking, he sent Wei Changhui 韦昌辉 to Jiangxi to conclude the unfinished work. Also Wei Changhui 韦昌辉 however, not long after arriving in the vicinity of Nanchang, had to rush back to Nanking to support Hong Xiuquan. In this succession of interrupted campaigns in which both sides continued to gain ground and then lose it again, for some periods anyway the Jiangxi region remained under the full control of the Taiping Army, and the Lazarist Fathers who were stationed in that area experienced their dominion directly as their letters attest.

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l'accusation de n'avoir été que le docile instrument des missionnaires, elle est vraiment sans fondement. Sans doute les pères du Kiang-nan, qui hésitèrent un certain temps sur le caractère de la révolte des T'ai-p'ing, n'eurent jamais d'illusions sur celui de la rebellion des Rouges de Chang-hai. C'etaient des brigands et rien autre chose." Joseph de La Serviére 1914, p. 293.

[92] Augustus F. Lindley 1866, p. 171.

[93] Except for the brief allusion of Latourette that I mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, see note 13.

The first mention of the Taiping presence in Jiangxi is in a letter of Mgr. Montels from 1855 March 3rd,[94] but it was in late 1856 that the Fathers in that region began to write extensively of the Taipings. According to Montels, by July the region was almost entirely in the hands of the rebels.[95] In his first missive is fairly quite a detached way and describes their communitarian management of property, their distinctive red turbans and the long hair, customs that they imposed on the local population. The narrative of the events does not gloss over bloody episodes such as the massacre perpetrated in Fuzhou where two thousand citizens were beheaded.[96] Moreover, both Montels and Rouger speak of frequent cases of cannibalism among the rebels, who according to the former, "require that every novice eat human flesh in order to become unbeatable in battle."[97] Nevertheless, the iconoclastic wave that hit the temples everywhere, as well as the strong anti idolatry professed by the rebels, were enough to make their judgment of the rebellion not entirely negative, Taipings were ultimately seen as "instruments of Divine Providence to pave the way to the spread of the Gospel",[98] or as the "scourge of God" to punish the Chinese country for its sins.[99] This kind of detached, lukewarm instrumental view was destined to be replaced by fuller sympathy after the Taiping authorities expressed their support for the work of the missionaries. During the first few months of cohabitation with the rebel occupation, even the more ill-disposed of the Catholic Fathers

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[94] Mgr. Ferdinand Montels, Jiangxi, March 30th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1856, p. 461-465.

[95] "In all other places of Jiangxi, the key points have all fallen into rebel hands, who this time have settled permanently, of the thirteen Fu (府) of the province, only the chief town and Kan-Tcheou-Fu (Ganzhoufu 贛州府) are not in their power [...]. There are many districts where the Rouges reign supreme, so that not even a single Imperial soldier is visible any more: the people pay taxes to the rebels and wear their hair long." Mgr. Montels, Jiangxi, July 2nd 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1856, p. 474.

[96] "At Fou-tcheou-fou (Fuzhoufu 抚州府), a day and a half from here, two thousands heads of Chinese, charged with lack of patriotism, fell for punishment. Only in this city there will be 20 or 30 thousand rebels. Their dress is as follows: silk red or blue or light black, and a kind of turban wound in the head, the hair is styled in Japanese fashion. One of the four kings who have been appointed to govern China resides there." Mgr. Montels, Jiangxi, July 2nd 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1856, p. 475.

[97] Mgr. Montels, Jiangxi, July 8th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1856, p. 460-461. "They arrive at the point of devouring without the slightest pity nor the slightest repugnance the heart and liver of the imperial soldiers who fall under their blows. The barbarians are so accustomed to these cannibal ways that they can be found telling each other stories about a more or less big heart, a more or less voluminous liver they have eaten in that place, that city, that battle." Mgr.François-Adrien Rouger, Jiudu 九都, Jiangxi, December 8th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 351-352.

[98] Mgr. Montels, Ibid. p. 476.

[99] "These rebels are truly the scourge of God, the instrument of vindictive justice that strikes at once and in the most awful way great men and commoners, because everywhere there is idolatry and injustice, corruption, and the most abominable crime of infanticide." Mgr. François-Adrien Rouger, Ibid., pp. 349-350.

could not help noticing that the rebels did not display any particular enmity against them,[100] but it was only after the end of 1856, when Mgr. Anot decided to address the heads of the Taipings directly in order to obtain a safe-conduct to travel on streets constantly patrolled by soldiers that they realized how the Taiping leaders were much better disposed towards them than they might have expected. In particular 'Chief Ly', who from the description of Anot seems to have been the highest authority in the area, manifested his full approval for the missionaries and their work, not only giving them freedom to move but also declaring himself ready to support them with all the means in his power. The reaction of the Fathers was one of surprise and joy, for the first time in China, authorities not only did not repress Catholicism, they even seemed to support its spread. Anot is perhaps the most enthusiastic:

> Our Jiangxi! Yes our own Jiangxi! It seems to have three major advantages over all other provinces in China: security for Europeans, religious freedom, destruction of idols. An entire province with outstretched hands begging for our help [...]. As for the new lords who were said to be Protestants, who we feared were enemies of Catholicism, are neither the one nor the other. The Chief Ly that I met and with whom I have spoken, seemed to me to be completely indifferent to the problem, or rather he cannot tell the two cults apart. We Catholics, then, having the initiative, knowing the language and customs of the country are thus advantaged.[101]

But the words of Montels are not so different: "The new power that governs Jiangxi recognizes us, encourages us, protects us. For this freedom to become complete, we only need its official publication and its inclusion in the treaties with Europeans",[102] and even Rouger, the least sympathetic towards the rebels, also confirms the concept:

> The new masters adore one God, preach the doctrine of one God, so that the European priests, Catholic missionaries, far from being proscribed, far from being forced into hiding as in the past [...] with the sole title of propagators of the religion of the lord of Heaven, penetrate into the sanctuary of the new power where everyone else has no access. [...] What more could we want for the time being? What greater sign of the mercy God will give us in these regions?[103]

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[100] "If you tell me that I have to fear from these monsters who deserve the name of tigers more than that of men, I would believe you, except that they are not hostile to our religion nor to the missionaries." Mgr. François-Adrien Rouger, Ibid., p. 350.

[101] Mgr. Antoine Anot, Jiangxi, December 15th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, pp. 375-376 .

[102] Mgr. Ferdinand Montels, Jiangxi, December 20th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 402.

[103] Mgr. François-Adrien Rouger, Jiudu, 九都 Jiangxi, December 25th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 407.

The endorsement of the Catholic missionaries by Chief Li continued in the following months, and the Lazarist Fathers in an atmosphere of renewal and excitement tried to make the most out of the situation, preparing propaganda material to spread the Christian faith in the region freed from the Qing yoke.[104] However, what is interesting to note here is that, even in a such favorable situation, unlike Father Clavelin in Nanking, missionaries never thought or at least never spoke in their letter of an attempt to catholicize the rebels. While the rebels, who with few exceptions barely distinguished between different strands of Christianity,[105] supported or at least accepted the missionary work on the basis of religious brotherhood, the Lazarists do not consider the Taiping rebels as Christians at all, or even followers of a defective or immature form of Christianity. They carefully avoid using the adjective 'Christian' when speaking of the rebels and of their spurious faith. It is not only that they do not recognize them as Christians or even pseudo Christians, in a certain extent they choose not to commune with them. In other words, even in the face of a sympathetic Taiping party, the attitude of the Lazarists remains essentially opportunistic. For them the rebels are basically useful, because they make a clean sweep of idolatry, and because they allow missionary Fathers a freedom that under the Qing they have never had, but little more than that. This passage from a letter of Mgr. Danicourt of the beginning of 1857 exemplifies quite well the Lazarist position in those days:

> The party of *Sipines* is made up solely of miserable, brigands who had nothing to lose, dulled by opium. Nevertheless, it will win because the enemy is weak and hated by all. Within two or three years, half of China will be in their hands unless the Europeans take the part of the imperialists. This is not desirable because the old Chinese society needs a radical and universal shock. It must be stirred completely, as it were shaken, so that none of its institutions and its idolatrous habits are saved in the end. Purified by the trial, she will be more ready to receive the essentially regenerative action of Catholicism, the only one that can bring nations in the way of civilization, progress and temporal

[104] "The idols have been abolished, everywhere the beginning of a spiritual revolution is evident. It appears that the time has come to start Catholic proselytization, before it would have been useless and impossible, now there is nothing more urgent. We wrote some pamphlets to be distributed: '*Réfutations de l'idolatrie et des superstitions nationale*'; '*Exposition abrégè de la foi chretienne avec exhortation à l'embrasser*'. We are too far from Paris to wait for your permission." Mgr. Antoine Anot, Jiangxi, January 28th 1857, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 414.

[105] "The chieftains, the directors of the movement, are well aware that our holy religion is not completely equal to theirs, one of them told us '*Tianfu* is different from *Tianzhu*'. Our faith is different from that of the country but we pray to Jesus and that's enough." Mgr. Ferdinand Montels, Jiangxi, December 20th 1856, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 403.

prosperity, opening the doors of eternal happiness.[106]

The predictions of the Lazarist Fathers however were soon disproved and their hopes were dashed. The conditions that were at the basis of their opportunistic support for the party of the rebels did not last long as the stability of the early days of occupation was soon replaced by turmoil. In the summer of 1857 the death of Mgr. Montels occurred and by the beginning of 1858, the region was again in the middle of the conflict. After a few months the same Fathers who were hoping that the Western Powers would not take the field alongside the Manchu forces, were praying for their intervention: "It seems that all these evils can only increase, that the Kiangsi [Jiangxi] will perish, that the whole of China will perish if the Europeans do not come to save it."[107]

3.4. Late years

After the signing of the Treaty of Tianjin in June 1858, two new foreign official expeditions reached Nanking. Both visits however followed a similar pattern to those of 1853, confirming once more Western views on the Taiping rebels. In August 1860, when Li Xiucheng 李秀成 tried to seize Shanghai, neutrality was finally broken even by non French forces, and the Taiping soldiers' assaults were repelled by Western armies. If a softer line was adopted in Ningbo where Taiping occupation was tolerated for a few months in 1862, the Western Powers in this later phase definitely sided with the Qing and on several occasions took to the field alongside them before the final collapse of the *Taiping Tianguo*. However, even in these last years of the revolt, not all Westerners opposed the Taipings; the conquest of Jiangsu in 1860 that brought the Taiping territories nearer to Shanghai facilitated the Protestant pastors who wanted to preach to the rebels, opening a new phase of interests between the Protestants. Despite the support of Hong Rengan 洪仁玕 who invited missionaries of every affiliation to preach in Nanking and who together with the Reverend Morrison on November 18th obtained the promulgation of an "Edict of Religious Freedom" (宗教自由诏) by the *Tianwang* 天王 himself,[108] the expectations of the Protestant community in Shanghai were disregarded as the opening phase did not last long. Those few ministers who actually managed to reach the Heavenly Capital soon had to come to terms with the impossibility of bending the Taiping religious ideology to their dogmas. Hong Xiuquan's revelation being the foundation of his legitimacy to power, he could not accept any religious authority other than his,

[106] Mgr. Francois-Xavier-Timothée Danicourt, Jiangxi, February 17th 1857, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1857, p. 421.
[107] Mgr. Antoine Anot, Jiangxi, September 28th 1858, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1858, p. 533.
[108] Xia Chuntao 2005, p. 278.

so that finally even Hong Rengan gave up all attempts at mediation and in 1862, one after another, Protestant ministers all left the city.

With regard to the Catholic missionaries, after the Tianjin Treaty the predominant topic of their letters was once again the achievement of 'religious freedom' in China and the Taiping Rebellion was reduced to a marginal problem. Moreover, the same movement towards East that rekindled the interest of Protestant circles, possibly had a further negative influence on Catholic opinion, having a concrete impact on the missions, with the devastation of churches and especially the death of Chinese faithful and of more than one missionary.[109] In the eyes of Catholic priests the rebels at that point were just a problem, if in the past, as we have seen, some Fathers had been able to see positive aspects in the rebellion, framing the event as a part of divine plan, now they were viewed in an entirely negative way and defined by many simply as "bandits". To a certain extent in these lines Mgr. Anouilh summarized what will go down in history as the Catholic missionaries' judgment of the Taiping Rebellion:

> Ten years ago one often heard of the rebels who were raging at this time in our province of Kiannan [Jiangnan 江南], the richest in China. For a long time it was believed that they were a political party, a real revolution with the aim of overthrowing the Manchu dynasty to put a pretender to the throne who was said to be a descendant of the Ming. Protestant ministers especially, perhaps even some Catholics, often applauded the successes of the rebels, who were also believed to be Christians, good Christians. They were seen praying, burning pagodas, accepting and distributing Protestants Bibles. But nowadays it is useless to deceive ourselves further: the rebels are just a group of bandits, thieves, arsonists, murderers, and I do not speak of the corruption that amongst them was as bad as can be amongst men or even brutes.[110]

4. Conclusions

It has been thought, exceedingly polarizing their respective positions, that Protestant missionaries, enticed by the use of a Protestant vocabulary by the Taipings, endorsed the rebels as soon as their pseudo-Christian religion emerged as one of the movement's distinctive features, while Roman Catholic priests for the same reason oppose to the Rebellion without compromise from its early days. Through the analysis of the documents made so far, it should be clear by now

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[109] Li Xiucheng's forces established their own headquarter in Xujiahui, when they arrived in the middle of August the church and the orphanage managed by the Jesuits were occupied, on that occasion Mgr. Luigi Massa lost his life along with 27 Chinese believers. On April 24th 1861 a church in Zhejiang was devastated by the Taipings and Mgr. Peschaud was wounded with a spear, and finally during the second attack on Shanghai, on March 4th 1862 Mgr. Victor Vuillame also lost his life at the hand of the rebels.

[110] Mgr. Jean Baptiste Anouilh, Shanghai, August 29th 1860, *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 1862, p. 367.

how this is an oversimplification of the facts. Roman Catholic missionaries, who faced a completely different situation from that of their Protestant colleagues, did not have a clear reaction in the early years of the revolt, the opinions of the various Fathers differing widely. Their attitude was closer to "wait and see" than to opposition. Some of them actually even saw the outbreak of the Taiping Rebellion as a positive event. Nevertheless, it is good to highlight how even the most favorable were quite detached in their approval. While they rejoiced at the heavy blow rebels were inflicting on all traditional Chinese religious forms ('idolatry'), and saw all in all the Taipings as a step forward compared to the Manchu government, with the remarkable exception of Clavelin they never really identified themselves with their cause, even when in Jiangxi under their protection they found the 'religious freedom' they craved for so long. The Catholic Fathers' approval is in the last analysis only opportunistic. Sooner and more severely than the Protestants, who never really dealt directly with the Taipings at any time in the 1850s, they developed an antagonistic position that was mainly related to some episodes of harassment of Chinese Catholics, a position which ultimately passed into History deleting a more gradual process of negation, made of different subjectivities as well as different regional situations as exemplified by the case of Jiangxi managed by the Lazarists in comparison with the better known Shanghai area under the Jesuits.

As for the idea that the opposition of the Catholic missionaries was due to a Protestant affiliation of the Taiping religion, there is no such evidence in the documents I checked. If a certain Protestant influence is recognized at least at the terminological level, the Protestant component is never seen as dominant. In general the religion of the Taipings is never even considered Christian but rather it is seen as a patchwork of influences whose origin can only be conjectured. Other reasons led Catholic missionaries to a more and more clear-cut antagonism. Maybe Protestants had a less dogmatic doctrinal position, and surely the use of a certain Protestant terminology had on them an appeal that left Catholic Fathers unaffected, but the importance of these aspects appear less relevant when compared to the impact the outbreak of the Rebellion had on Catholic missions. While for the Protestant pastors the Taiping movement remained a relatively abstract matter until they were able to reach Nanking in 1860-61, the Rebellion had a considerably concrete and direct effect on Catholic missions and, as I tried to highlight in the first part of this essay, even before they were reached by the proper Rebellion, its indirect effect impacted on them in terms of anti-Christian persecutions perpetrated by the imperial authorities. Qing reaction certainly influenced the relation of the Catholic Fathers with the rebels; to be or not to be associated with them in certain situations could have meant death or life for them and for their acolytes and pushed them to keep their distance if they could. Finally, there is another factor which must be taken into account, while Protestant pastors had only limited support from British or American colonizers, Catholics missionaries enjoyed much more care and support from the French authorities and were thus less in need of a supportive

force, further reducing the appeal the Taipings could have had on them. Not only that, while they proved able to exploit opportunistically the Taipings' support when they met it in Jiangxi, they tended more than anything to use the overall situation to exert pressure on the French authorities both locally and in France in order to obtain even more help for their cause.

To sum up, the Catholic missionaries' position, in addition to being more multifaceted than previously thought, more than being caused by some doctrinal opposition, seems to be the result of a series of contingent factors, interests and problems which both limited or directed their response. If we do not consider properly the influence of these factors when we analyze the Catholic Fathers' response to the Taiping Rebellion or when we compare it to the Protestant response our conclusions will inevitably be out of focus; at the same time the weight of these factors ought not to be exaggerated, the Protestant case suggests that even in the absence of these contextual influences, the final outcome could not have been different, the Taiping religion being at the center of their ideological framework, any external religious authority could only be rejected.

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POETRY ANTHOLOGIES' STRATEGY FOR CONSTRUCTING OF LITERARY HISTORY: A FOCUS ON CONTEMPORARY ANTHOLOGIES OF THE EARLY QING

WANG BING 王兵
(Nanyang Technological University)

This study was initially inspired by the American sinologist Pauline Yu's work on the relationship between poetry anthologies and literary history. In her articles,[1] which mainly focus on early poetry anthologies of ancient China, Yu highlighted that anthologies were indeed the primary agents and expressions of literary canon-formation. In this paper, I would like to argue that this literary history-making process is even more evident during the Qing 清 Dynasty (1644-1911), especially the early Qing period. From a diachronic perspective, the large number and diversity of Qing poetry anthologies make these contemporary poetry anthologies a useful vehicle for understanding and reconstructing literary history. Anthologies are not just a medium of literary production; they are also crucial agents that shape literary history. Therefore, this article seeks to examine how poetry anthologies from the early, middle and late Qing Dynasty contributed to the construction of literary history, with in-depth analysis of the strategies behind individual editors' personal choices and of the collective norms and practices of anthology editors in general.

Aware that their actions will eventually contribute to the construction of literary history and the formation of poetry canons, these anthologists begin by selecting works of various poets and then arranging them based on their personal tastes. Ultimately, the anthologists edit their anthologies according to certain standards and guidelines. This selection and rejection process, as Adele Rickett observed, "[…] as well as the inclusion of critical comments after many of the

[1] For example, she said: "the intimate connection between anthologies of poetry and the shaping of Chinese literary history and theory is well known; it is one that may follow naturally from the fact that the earliest specimens of the genre appear in a text whose provenance in a sage's act of selection represents one of the first assertions to be made about it." See Pauline Yu 1994, p. 70. "Anthologies, like the canon itself, were regarded not only as repositories of cultural paradigms but even more concretely as works of history. Just as the works in the Confucian canon possessed value precisely because they were construed not as abstract principles but as events or rituals that in theory could be replicated, so anthologies functioned as literary chronicles. […] and indeed, dynastic histories and anthologies represent the two major sources for early literary history and share similar methods." See Pauline Yu 1990, p. 169.

pieces, enabled the critic to put into practical application his views on literature and its place in society."[2] The selection process and the product can thus be seen as a re-creation that inevitably embodies an individual anthologist's interpretation of the history of Qing poetry. Because of significant differences in the subjective aesthetic preferences of individual anthologists, one editor's practices might not be representative of the entirety of Qing poetic history. However, through a comprehensive analysis of the selection and editing practices employed in a sizable pool of anthologies, we believe that a relatively objective history of Qing poetry can be constructed.

Subjective preferences of individual editors in their poetry selections

In a letter to Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673-1769), Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1798) wrote that "the 'way' of poetry-selection and history-writing is similar (選詩之道，與作史同)."[3] Awareness that editing a poetry anthology is equivalent to creating poetic history is often highlighted by editors in prefaces or postscripts to their anthologies. Alternatively, such awareness can be found in the anthologies themselves, albeit indirectly, in individual editors' selection strategies, which encompass their selections of works by famous Qing *literati*, their arrangements of poetry based on their views regarding the development of Qing poetry and the poetry chosen from different poetic sub-genres. These factors are keys to understand the role of editors' perceptions in their constructions of Qing poetic history. The first of these can be assessed by examining the number of works of individual poets selected, while the latter is reflected mainly in the numbers of works chosen from each poetic sub-genre.

1.1 The number of selected works—an overall assessment of poets' achievements

As the main content of Qing poetry anthologies, works created by poets of the Qing Dynasty are an indispensable part of Qing poetry; more importantly, the number of selected poems representing each chosen poet largely reflects the editors' attitude towards the poet and his perception of the poet's literary ranking in the history of Qing poetry.

First, the number of works of an individual poet selected may reflect the editor's assessment of the poet's creative achievement and his ranking in the history of Qing poetry. Consider, for example, Shen Deqian's *Guochao Shi Biecai*

[2] Rickett 1975, p. 146.
[3] *Xiaocang Shanfang Wenji*, 17: 1504.

Ji 國朝詩別裁集 (*A Separate Anthology of Qing Poetry*, also known as *Qingshi Biecai Ji* 清詩別裁集), which features more than 10 works of each of 95 poets who account for approximately 10% of all poets included in the volume. Of these, only 14 poets, including Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664), Wu Weiye 吳偉業 (1609-1671), Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳 (1615-1673), Song Wan 宋琬 (1614-1674), Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1618-1683), Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711), Ye Xie 葉燮 (1627-1703), You Dong 尤侗 (1618-1704), Pan Lei 潘耒 (1646-1708), Zhang Duqing 張篤慶 (1642-1715), Shao Changheng 邵長蘅 (1637-1704), Li Biheng 李必恒, Shen Yongji 沈用濟, and Fang Chao 方朝 (1675-1734) were represented by more than 20 selected works each.[4] Compared with an average number of 4 poems by each poet included in *Guochao Shi Biecai Ji*, the number of selected works by this group of poets is notably large.[5] In addition, according to the selection criteria used by Shen, this body of poets was chosen because of the merits of their poems. These poets are thus recognized as the most outstanding poets among their peers. This is especially true of the first 5 poets in the group: Wang Shizhen, Qian Qianyi, Shi Runzhang, Wu Weiye and Song Wan. All of them have been canonized as the greatest poets of the early Qing Dynasty by later generations of literary historians.

The achievement of the early Qing poets is reflected not only in the numbers of their works featured in famous collections, such as *Guochao Shi Biecai Ji*, but also in the numbers of their works included in anthologies of Qing poetry arranged chronologically. Consider the *Shichi Erji* 詩持二集 (*The Second Collection of Maintenance of Poetry*) selected by Wei Xian 魏憲 (1626-?). In this volume, the following poets are represented by 20 or more poems: Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (1612-1672) (42 poems), Gong Dingzi (31 poems), Wu Weiye (30 poems), Wei Yijie 魏裔介 (1616-86) (21 poems), Chen Baoyue 陳寶鑰 (36 poems), Lin Gudu 林古度 (1580-1660) (27 poems), Gong Xian 龔賢 (1618-1689) (20 poems), Li Zanyuan 李贊元 (1613-1699) (21 poems), Song Wan (27 poems), Shi Runzhang (28 poems), Zhang Sengchi 張僧持 (24 poems), Wang Shizhen (24 poems), Tong Guoqi 佟國器 (20 poems), Wu Xuejiong 吳學炯 (25 poems), Xu You 許友 (1620?-1663) (22 poems), Du Zilian 杜子濂 (1622-1685) (21 poems), Zeng Wan 曾畹 (1621-1677) (32 poems) and Kong Zilai 孔自來 (20 poems).[6] Wei Xian thus indicates his own views regarding the famous *literati* of the early Qing in his selections, views that contrast with those of Shen Deqian in *Guochao Shi Biecai Ji*. However, "Jiangzuo San Dajia" 江左三大家 (lit. the Three Great Masters of Lower Yangzi River), "Nan

[4] The above statistics come from *Guochao Shi Biecai Ji*, Contents, pp. 1-19.

[5] Shen Deqian said in the preface to *Guochao Shi Biecai Ji:* "I have selected 996 contemporary poets' works, a total of 3952 poems (予輯國朝詩，共得九百九十六人，詩三千九百五十二首)." See *Guochao Shi Biecai Ji*, Preface, p. 1.

[6] The above statistics come from *Shichi Erji*, Contents of each Volume.

Shi Bei Song" 南施北宋 (Shi Runzhang and Song Wan), Wang Shizhen and other famous poets of the early Qing are chosen by both anthologists. Therefore, although the editor did not present these poets strictly according to the anthology's arrangement order, the position of their achievement in the poetry world can still be ascertained based on the numbers of their works selected. This evaluative mode of selection has been confirmed by Ezra Pound (1885-1972) in his citations of other literary theorists. For example, he quotes René Wellek (1903-1995): "Most of his critical books serve the second purpose: exhibition, pointing out, selection. 'I am for say 80 per cent exhibit and 20 per cent yatter', 'Critics to be judged for more by their selections than by their palaver.'"[7]

Additionally, the editor usually established the positions of famous *literati* selected from specific groups, as in geographical anthologies or anthologies of specific poetry schools, which are the two types of anthology compiled most often after the early Qing period. Thus, we will examine some poetry anthologies from the mid-to-late Qing Dynasty. During the reign of Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1736-1795), the editor Lu Jianzeng 盧見曾 (1690-1768) from Dezhou 德州 edited and engraved *Guochao Shanzuo Shichao* 國朝山左詩鈔 (*Anthology of Qing Poetry from Shandong*), which recorded the development of poetry in Shandong during the early Qing Dynasty. The anthology included more than 520 poets and 5900 poems. In terms of numbers of selected poems, poems by Wang Shizhen, Zhao Jinmei 趙進美 (1620-1692), Song Wan, Zhao Zhixin 趙執信 (1662-1744) and Gao Heng 高珩 (1612-1697) outnumbered those by any other poets; these writers are represented by 398, 163, 162, 154, and 151 poems respectively.[8] At the same time, the editor thought highly of their creative achievements and the important roles they played in their times: "In the early Qing, no schools can surpass the flourishing poetics of Shandong. Wang Shizhen was seen as the acknowledged leader for nearly five decades in poetic circles for his grand and magnificent knowledge. Meanwhile, Song Wan, Zhao Jinmei, Gao Heng, Tian Wen 田雯 (1635-1704), Wang Shilu 王士祿 (1626-1673, Wang Shizhen's brother), and Zhao Zhixin (Zhao Jinmei's grandnephew) were all extremely talented and had nationwide influence. Accordingly, poetry from Shandong was considered the best in China (國初詩學之盛，莫盛於山左。漁洋以實大聲宏之學，為海內執騷壇牛耳垂五十餘年。同時若宋荔裳[宋琬]、趙清止[趙進美]、高念東[高珩]、田山薑[田雯]、漁洋之兄西樵[王士祿]、清止之從孫秋谷[趙執信]，咸各先登樹幟，衣被海內。故山左之詩，甲於天下)."[9] Wang Shizhen played a key role in the history of Shandong poetry, as did other poets from the same region. It should be noted here that researchers seldom pay attention to the poetry of Zhao Jinmei and Gao

[7] See Wellek 1986, p. 153.
[8] The above statistics come from *Guochao Shanzuo Shichao*, Contents of each Volume; also can see Gong Quanjiu 2009, Appendix, pp. 14-19.
[9] *Guochao Shanzuo Shichao*, Preface, p. 1a.

Heng,[10] who clearly were not so influential in the early Qing poetry world. In addition, 4 *Jintai* poets 金臺詩人 (lit. Poetic Group from Imperial Court) from Shandong in the early Qing period are also represented in *Guochao Shanzuo Shichao*, with 127 poems from Tian Wen, 81 poems from Xie Chonghui 謝重輝 (1639-1711) of Dezhou, 71 poems from Cao Zhenji 曹貞吉 (1634-1698) of An-qiu 安丘 and 79 poems from Yan Guangmin 顏光敏 (1640-1686) of Qufu 曲阜. Each poet is represented by poems far in excess of the usual less-than-10 per individual convention characteristic of the collection. It can be concluded that the works of these 4 Shandong poets of "Jintai Shizi" 金臺十子 (Ten Elites of the Imperial Court) were also highly regarded by contemporary editors.[11]

Loudong Shipai 婁東詩派 (the Poetic School of Taicang) of Wang Xuejin 汪學金 (1748-1804), which appeared during Emperor Jiaqing's 嘉慶 reign (1796-1820), is similar. This anthology includes works of the famous *literati* Wu Weiye, who was popular among the local gentry, as well as many works by the "Taicang Shizi" 太倉十子 (Ten Elites of Taicang), who enjoyed fame throughout the country. For example, 174 poems by Wu Weiye were included in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the collection. Additionally, a total of 281 by the *Taicang Shizi* were included in the anthology: 12 by Zhou Zhao 周肇 (1615-1683), 14 by Wang Kui 王揆 (1619-1696), 50 by Xu Xu 許旭, 52 by Huang Yujian 黃與堅 (1620-1701), 20 by Wang Zhuan 王撰 (1623-1709), 61 by Wang Hao 王昊 (1627-1679), 12 by Wang Shu 王攄 (1636-1699), 8 by Wang Yaosheng 王曜升, 10 by Gu Mei 顧湄 and 9 by Wang Bian 王忭. On the one hand, this kind of selection reflects the important position of Wu Weiye and the "Taicang Shizi" in the poetic history of the Taicang area during the Qing Dynasty; on the other hand, we can clearly deduce the rankings of the "Taicang Shizi" poets.

Identifying poets' achievement by the numbers of their works selected for anthologies may be a more subjective exercise than appears. For example, in *Wan Qing Sishi Jia Shichao* 晚清四十家詩鈔 (*Poems by the Forty Masters of*

[10] With regard to poetic history of Qing China, the most influential writings of multi-volume literary history, such as *Chinese Literary History* 中國文學史 respectively edited by You Guo'en 游國恩, Zhang Peiheng 章培恒 and Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 etc., as well as the poetry history writings of Qing Dynasty, such as Liu Shinan 劉世南 *Schools History of Qing Poetry* 清詩流派史, Yan Dichang 嚴迪昌 *History of Qing Poetry* 清詩史 etc., all did not mention the achievements of Zhao Jinmei and Gao Heng's poems.

[11] Wang Shizhen once launched an activity on selecting *Poetry Anthology of Ten Poets* 十子集 in Beijing from 1658 to 1659. Finally, Song Luo 宋犖 (1634-1714), Wang Youdan 王又旦 (1636-1687), Cao Zhenji, Yan Guangmin, Ye Feng 葉封 (1623-1687), Tian Wen, Xie Chonghui, Ding Wei 丁煒 (1627-1696), Cao He 曹禾 (1637-1699) and Wang Maolin 汪懋麟 (1640-1688) were selected and called "Jintai Shizi" by people. But, there were controversial about the selected list of "Jintai Shizi" in the present academic circles. See Ma Dayong 2007, pp. 161-165.

the Late Qing), edited by Wu Kaisheng 吳闓生 (1877-1950), although the title suggests that this is a national anthology, the selected works are in fact limited to a circle of the so-called "teacher and student's inheritance relationship (師友源瀾)";[12] thus, the anthology can be viewed as a school-based selection depicting the poetic development of the Tongcheng School 桐城派 during the late Qing. More than 20 works were selected from each of the following poets: Zhang Yuzhao 張裕釗 (1823-1894) (29 poems), Fan Dangshi 范當世 (1854-1905) (101 poems), Li Gangji 李剛己 (1872-1914) (66 poems), Yao Yonggai 姚永概 (1866-1923) (66 poems), Ke Shaomin 柯劭忞 (1848-1933) (33 poems), Fang Shouyi 方守彝 (1845-1924) (32 poems), Yi Shunding 易順鼎 (1858-1920) (25 poems), Zheng Xiaoxu 鄭孝胥 (1860-1938) (27 poems), Wang Yujing 王毓菁 (58 poems) and Qin Song 秦嵩 (46 poems). Except for Yi Shunding, the above poets are all renowned poets of the Tongcheng School of the late Qing period. By contrast, some famous *literati* who were active on the poetic scene are neglected because they did not belong to the famous *literati* field of the Tongcheng School. For example, only one poem each by Wang Kaiyun 王闓運 (1833-1916), Li Ciming 李慈銘 (1830-1895) and Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909), and only four poems by Fan Zengxiang 樊增祥 (1846-1931) were chosen. Clearly, many subjective factors influenced editors' choices, which may imply that the actual literary scene of poetic development during the late Qing cannot be fully outlined using this method alone.

1.2 Predilection of representative works in various poetic sub-genres—identifying poets' specific achievements

The overall achievement of a poet may in some sense be reflected in the number of his works selected for Qing poetry anthologies, but this may not accurately reflect his specific artistic skills and poetic talents. However, this shortcoming is often compensated by the organizational structure of poetry anthologies with respect to various forms and styles of poetry or poetic sub-genres. Generally, poetic sub-genres of selected works are presented in the following order: *Yuefu* 樂府 (ballads and songs), *Wugu* 五古 (five-character ancient verses), *Qigu* 七古 (seven-character ancient verses), *Wulü* 五律 (five-character eight-lined regulated poems), *Qilü* 七律 (seven-character eight-lined regulated poems), *Wujue* 五絕 (five-character four-lined poems or quatrains), *Qijue* 七絕 (seven-character four-lined poems or quatrains). Few of the selected works have *Wupai* 五排 (five-syllable extended verses with the platoon rule) or *Qipai* 七排 (seven-syllable extended verses with the platoon rule). Editors' evaluations of a poet's

[12] *Wanqing Sishi Jia Shichao*, Preface, p. 25.

predilection and literary merits attached to a certain poetic sub-genre can be clearly determined in poetry anthologies by the numbers of selected works in each poetic sub-genre.

By simultaneously considering the different number of poems allocated to different poetic sub-genres and the number of selected works of various poets, we can better deduce the editor's assessment of the individual poet's literary achievement in both national and regional anthologies.

In Chen Weisong's 陳維崧 (1625-82) *Qieyan Ji* 篋衍集 (*Collected Works in Square Box*), an anthology that includes 157 poets, 730 poetic topics and 849 poems categorized according to various poetic sub-genres, not only we could find selected works by reputable poets from the early Qing period, we also, through the allocations to different poetic sub-genres, discern the specialized poetic talents of individual poets. Detailed information is presented in the following table.

Poetic sub-genres / **Poet**	*Wugu*	*Wulü*	*Wujue*	*Qigu*	*Qilü*	*Qijue*	Sub-total
Shi Runzhang	3	5	0	5	2	0	15
Cheng Keze	5	**11**	0	1	2	0	19
Wang Shizhen	**11**	7	3	**11**	6	**9**	**47**
Qu Dajun	5	**12**	0	3	0	6	26
Wang Youdan	8	6	1	4	6	0	25
Wang Wan	2	0	1	3	0	**16**	22
Wu Weiye	3	**21**	2	**14**	9	**12**	**61**
Song Wan	0	2	0	2	4	0	8
Qian Qianyi	1	0	0	7	9	**14**	31
Gong Dingzi	0	0	1	6	0	3	10
Feng Ban	0	3	2	0	**13**	**32**	**50**
Wang Yanhong	0	3	0	0	**24**	2	29
Zeng Wan	0	14	1	0	2	0	17
Zhu Yizun	0	0	0	4	6	3	13
Total	38	**84**	11	**60**	**83**	97	373

Table 1: Statistical tables of selected works in *Qieyan Ji*

Table 1 indicates that the 373 poems anthologized were composed by 14 poets. That is, less than 10% of the selected poets wrote 44% of the total selected works,[13] confirming that all of the poets are well-known representatives of the early Qing period. Of course, the data provided in the table have far greater significance. They can be interpreted from two perspectives:

[13] The above statistics come from *Qieyan Ji*, Contents of each Volume.

First, the editors noted the poets' unique achievements in each genre. As indicated in Table 1, the poet with the largest number of selected works is Wu Weiye; next are Feng Ban 馮班 (1602-1671) and Wang Shizhen, followed by Qian Qianyi, Wang Yanhong 王彥泓 (1593-1642), Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630-1696), Wang Youdan and so on. In the view of the editors, all these poets are celebrated writers from the Ming-Qing transition, but they are largely recognized for their achievements in specific poetic genres. For example, Wu Weiye is skilled in many different poetic genres, especially *Qigu* and *Wulü*. In fact, more of his works in these two styles were selected for this anthology than those of any other poet. Moreover, he was well-known for his mastery of the *Qijue* style. In contrast, Feng Ban's main achievements were in the *Qijue* and *Qilü* styles, especially the former, as indicated by the fact that 32 of his poems in this genre were chosen, far more than any other poet for any other styles; however, this fact also indicates that his poetic achievement was unbalanced across different genres. Wang Shizhen also specialized in various genres, especially *Wugu* and *Qigu*. Poetically accomplished mainly in the seven-syllable genres, Qian Qianyi was clearly not as involved or specialized in five-syllable genres such as *Wugu*, *Wujue* and *Wulü*. Wang Yanhong was very adept at *Qilü*, while Qu Dajun specialized in *Wulü*; Wang Youdan clearly did not focus on *Wujue* or *Qijue*, while Wang Wan's accomplishments are seen in his works in *Qijue*. Additionally, Zeng Wan 曾畹 (1622-1677) and Cheng Keze 程可則 (1624-1673) were expert in *Wulü* poetry. Thus, the literary merits of each poet in specific sub-genres are clearly indicated in the editing practices employed, which serve as an important strategy among Qing poetry anthologists in constructing Qing literary history.

Second, with respect to poets' predilections for certain sub-genres, we can trace the development of poetic genres during Qing poetic history: *Wugu*, *Qigu* and *Wujue* were less favoured during the early Qing poetic period. Renowned poets express their ideas and feelings most profoundly in the *Wulü*, *Qilü* and *Qijue* genres. According to the statistics presented in the above table, *Wugu* poems by well-known poets account for only 10% in this anthology, while *Qigu* poems account for 16%, and *Wujue* poems account for less than 3%. By comparison, the number of *Wulü* or *Qilü* and *Qijue* written by renowned poets account for a total of 22% of poems anthologized. The popularity of different genres can be attributed to significant differences between the genres with respect to features and functions. For example, the rhyme and form requirements of ancient poetry are relatively less strict than those of the metrical verse.

Because ancient forms are not highly regulated and offer no specific rules to obey or follow, it would appear difficult for new learners. But the regularities of metrical verse will be more suitable for beginners, as noted by the editor Tie Bao 鐵保 (1752-1824): "ancient poetry is more difficult than the regulated form because, after all, a regulated poem has some rules to abide by, but the ancient genre has infinite variations like antelopes hanged by their horns, leaving no traces that can be sought for and completely in accordance with nature.

When *Shengdiao Pu* 聲調譜 (Voice Spectrum), created by the later generation (namely Zhao Zhixin), was published, it became a cause for writers' complacency with cadence and syllable, so that their poems go further and fare worse. So beginning poets should first be proficient in regulated poetry. Seeking to learn ancient-style poetry before one is proficient in regulated poetry is similar to toddlers who want to walk quickly without learning to walk: few of them will not tumble (古詩難於律，以律有牆壁可循，古詩則羚羊掛角，無跡可求，闔闢變化，純乎天機。後人作《聲調譜》，沾沾於平仄間求音節，愈失愈遠，故初學為詩，先精律體，律不精而欲求為古，是未學步而先學趨，鮮有不蹶者)."[14] Thus, *Wulü* or *Qilü* became "the favored or fashion in trends of that time (為近今之所尚也)"[15] in the early Qing, while, by contrast, poems in the *Wugu* or *Qigu* styles are often not of equivalent literary merit. There is no doubt that the popularity of regulated poetry during Qing Dynasty also had much to do with imperial examination-oriented poetry. In addition, from an evolutionary perspective, there is a great difference between *Wujue* and *Qijue* poems from the early Qing. Although both genre forms are metrical and use relatively few syllables, complicated ideological content and the poet's emotions cannot be fully and clearly expressed in the *Wujue* form; thus, this poetic genre gradually declined after flourishing during the Tang Dynasty. However, *Qijue* continued to play an important role in Qing Dynasty poetry. Yuan Jinglu 袁景輅 (1724-1767), in his anthology, explained the reasons for the different destinies of these two poetic sub-genres: "*Qijue* has many praiseworthy successors, but human effort could not enable *Wujue* to prosper; thus, many *Qijue* poets follow in Wang Changling's 王昌齡 (698-756) footsteps, but there are no worthy *Wujue* successors to Wang Wei 王維 (701-761). This historical trend is indicated by the larger number of *Qijue* poems than *Wujue* poems in the collection (七絕貴有遺音，五絕非關人力，故龍標之外多嗣響，右丞以後無專家。集中七絕多於五絕，勢使然也)."[16]

The evolution of poetic genres during the Qing Dynasty is not only marked by individual poets' predilections for specific poetic genres, but also by the abundance of poetic works in more popular genres, which strongly inflences which poems anthologists select. These factors combine to determine the strategies used by Qing poetry anthologists in constructing the history of Qing poetry. As Wang Zhongling 王鐘陵 believed, compiling collections can often "shape the fashion of a given era and establish its aesthetic tradition (影響一代風氣與確立一種美學傳統)"; thus, "anthologies usually serve as an opportunity to shape the development of literary history (總集往往構成文學史發展的契機

[14] See Tie Bao, "Lüjie Xu" 律介序, in *Mei'an Wenchao*, 3: 5a.
[15] Sun Hong, "Shengji Chubian Kelüe".
[16] *Guochao Songling Shizheng*, Liyan 例言, p. 3b.

).”[17] It should be noted that the regularity of a genre’s evolution during the Qing Dynasty is not only reflected in *Qieyan Ji*; anthologies based on other poetic sub-genres during other periods witnessed similar trends. For example, *Shuhuafang Shike* 書畫舫詩課 (*Poetry Collection Composed in the Boat of Calligraphy and Painting*), edited in the Daoguang 道光 era (1821-1850), includes 3,137 poems. Specifically, it contains: 314 *Yuefu*, 10% of the total; 188 *Wugu*, 6%; 186 *Qigu*, 6%; 354 *Wulü*, 11%; 1,205 *Qilü*, 38%; 63 *Wujue* are and 10 hexasyllabic quatrains, 2%; 809 *Qijue*, 26%; 37 *Wupai*; and 11 *Qipai*, 1%.[18]

Considering *Lingnan San Dajia Shixuan* 嶺南三大家詩選 (*Poetry Anthology of Three Great Masters in South of the Five Ridges*) as another example, Wang Bangji 王邦畿 (1618-68), the father of Wang Sun 王隼 (1644-1700), who edited and engraved *Lingnan San Dajia Shixuan,* first highlighted three poets from Lingnan in the Ming-Qing dynastic transition—Liang Peilan 梁佩蘭 (1629-1705), Qu Dajun and Chen Gongyin 陳恭尹 (1631-1700). Wang Sun once noted that he served his father and provided commentary on poetry when he was young. His father, he said, “chooses the best poems of the poets who contributed to the poetic circles for twenty years, including works by Liang Peilan, Qu Dajun and Chen Gongyin, because of their unique poetic style (舉所最厚善，二十年共壇坫，如藥亭、翁山、獨漉三先生撰著，其獨造入微旨趣).”[19] Thus, it is evident that these three poets had an enormous impact at the beginning of the Kangxi 康熙 period (1662-1722). Of course, these poets were already labelled the “three great poets of Lingnan” (嶺南三大家) in *Lingnan San Dajia Shixuan*.

Active in establishing poetry societies and involved in poetic activities, the three great poets of Lingnan founded the West Garden poetry organization with other poets, including Wang Sun, from the same hometown. Their poetic style and strength in specific genres were emphasized in Wang Sun’s selection of works for *Lingnan San Dajia Shixuan*.

Poet / **Poetic Sub-genre**	Liang Peilan	Qu Dajun	Chen Gongyin
Yuefu	48	0	50
Wugu	50	106	51
Qigu	49	20	33
Wulü	165	154	47
Qilü	76	53	67

[17] Wang Zhongling 2003, pp. 267-300.
[18] The above statistics come from *Shuhuafang Shike*, Contents of each Volume.
[19] *Liuyingtang Ji*, Preface, p. 1a.

Wujue	6	52	7
Qijue	65	33	14
Wupai	0	4	0
Miscellaneous Poem	0	18	0
Total	459	440	269

Table 2: Statistics for selections by poetic sub-genre in *Lingnan San Dajia Shixuan*

There are 1,168 poems by Liang, Qu and Chen in this collection, accounting for 39%, 38% and 23% of the total, respectively. The proportional distribution of the poets' selected works exactly accords with their degrees of literary merit.[20] By comparing the numbers of selected works of the three poets, we gain a sense of the three poets' literary merits, in the view of the editor, Wang Sun. Moreover, because the anthology is edited and arranged according to poetic genres, the predilections of each poet within each genre can be identified on the basis of the quantity of his works that the editor has selected. For example, Liang Peilan is skilled in all genres of poetry except *Wujue* and *Wupai*; Qu Dajun's poetic output focuses on five-syllable poetry, and his *Wugu* and *Wujue* poems clearly stand out, while his *Wulü* and *Wupai* poems are also of high quality. However, the small number of *Qigu* and *Qilü* and the absence of *Yuefu* reflect a lack of diversity in Qu's poetry. The achievements of Chen Gongyin are mainly in *Yuefu* and *Qilü*.

In addition to the above two strategies, some editors use other techniques to identify poets' literary achievements and rankings in the poetic world. For example, if important poets' works are placed at the beginning of a volume, this demonstrates the editor's recognition and identification of the poets' relative positions in the poetic field. Most editors explain in the *Fanli* 凡例 (Preface) that poets' works are arranged by seniority, their age or the time of their imperial examination. As described in the *Fanli* of *Qingshi Chuji* 清詩初集 (*The First Collection of Qing Poetry*): "The works of poets are not presented in the order in which they were submitted, and the editors' editing does not involve rating. Everyone should be treated equally, regardless of whether he lives in the mountains or serves in the imperial Court (編次無分後先，較正寧論甲乙。山林廊廟，悉屬等觀)."[21] Although there appears to be subjective prejudice in editors' selections, the editors' arrangements nevertheless convey subtle intentions. For arrangements related to the poets' ages or imperial examinations, the editor subjectively decides which poet to place at the beginning of a certain volume. Zeng Can 曾燦 (1622-1688) noted in the *Fanli* of *Guori Ji* 過日集 (*Collection of Living with Poetry*): "Originally, this poetry anthology did not rank the poets and their selected poems, but the most professional poet's work will be positioned

[20] The above statistics come from *Lingnan San Dajia Shixuan*, General Contents.
[21] See *Qingshi Chuji*, Fanli, p. 1b.

first in the volume (選中原無次第，而卷首取冠群才)."[22] For instance, in Shen Deqian's *Guochaoshi Biecai Ji*, the poets whose works appear at the beginning of the volume are as follows: Qian Qianyi, Cao Rong 曹溶 (1613-1685), Shi Ruizhang, Wang Shizhen, Qian Lucan 錢陸燦 (1612-1698), Ye Xie, Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623-1716), Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709), Zhao Zhixin, Shao Changheng, Gao Qizhuo 高其倬 (1676-1738) and Zha Shenxing 查慎行 (1650-1727), followed by others. All of these poets appear to have been carefully chosen by Shen Deqian. Additionally, they are all treated as important poets of the early Qing Dynasty by anthologists.

Moreover, several poetry anthologies contain only poems of specific sub-genres. Examples include *Lizhu Ji* 驪珠集 (*Collection of Precious Poems*) and *Guochao Qilü Shichao* 國朝七律詩鈔 (*Qing Anthology of Qilü*), which focus on *Qilü* poetry; *Guochao Lüjie* 國朝律介 (*Qing Anthology of Regulated Poems*) and *Erjia Lüxuan* 二家律選 (*Anthology of Two Poets' Regulated Poems*), which contain regulated poems; and *Sanjia Jueju Xuan* 三家絕句選 (*Anthology of Three Poets' Quatrains*) and *Qing Liu Dajia Jueju Chao* 清六大家絕句鈔 (*Qing Anthology of Six Great Poets' Quatrains*), which focus on quatrains.[23] Such anthologies not only summarize the development of specific poetic genres during the Qing Dynasty but also contain works by renowned Qing poets in specific genres. Poems thus selected can be viewed as a construction of Qing poetic history through specific poetic sub-genres.

Collective editing patterns across a sizable body of anthologies

In constructing the history of Qing poetry, an editor can only rarely "judge a poet by his poem" (以詩存人); indeed, most editors select works according to their own subjective preferences. Typically, a poet who had assimilated the editor's literary preferences or enjoyed a close relationship with him would have more of his poems selected. In contrast, poets whose literary views differed from those of the editors would have fewer poems selected and published in anthologies. While individual editors cannot disregard their subjective preferences in selecting poems for anthologies, if we combine and synthetically analyze the choices of various editors of a sizable body of anthologies, we can obtain a relatively ob-

[22] Zeng Can, *Fanli* of *Guori Ji*, See Xie Zhengguang and She Rufeng 1998, p. 192.

[23] Editions of the above-mentioned anthologies as follows: Gu Youxiao 顧有孝 (1619-1689), *Lizhu Ji*, 12 Vols., Kangxi Jiunian Keben 康熙九年 (1670) 刻本; Huang Jintai 黃金臺 (1789-1861), *Guochao Qilü Shichao*, 10 Vols., Qing Gaoben 清稿本; Tie Bao, *Guochao Lüjie*, Qing Qianlong Jian Keben 清乾隆間 (1736-1795) 刻本; Li Fenglun 李豐綸, *Erjia Lüxuan*, 2 Vols., Tongzhi Wunian Keben 同治五年 (1866) 刻本; Jiang Yu 江昱 (1706-1775), *Sanjia Jueju Xuan*, Qianlong Jian Keben 乾隆間刻本; Sangyuan Chen 桑園忱, *Qing Liujia Jueju Xuan*, Kyoto: Dongtang Ting 東塘亭, 1912.

jective view of the Qing poetic landscape. The Taiwanese scholar, Wang Wan-Hsiang 王萬象, similarly argues: "The criteria for literary canonization, which is a complex process, do not reside with one person. Indeed, literary canons are constructed by numerous poets, anthologists and readers, a fact confirmed by the presence of various anthologies and collections (文學典律的生成有其曲折複雜的過程，經典的準則並非全繫於一人一家之手，正典的版圖是由無數的作者、編者與讀者所共同形塑打造而成的，這種情形可由林林總總的總集或選集看出端倪)."[24]

2.1 Establishment of a representative poetry community in the early Qing Dynasty

Regarding the collective role of anthologists in shaping the history of Qing poetry, their first important task is to select renowned poets and their works, so that the selections reflect the creative achievement of Qing poetry. Only after poems have been repeatedly chosen by many editors from different perspectives, so that individual prejudices in the assessments of selected poets have been minimized or eliminated, can a representative body of poetry and community of deserving poets be established. This process can be further divided into "integrating the scattered" (散點聚合) and "seeking sameness from differences" (異中求同):

First, "integrating the scattered" occurs when a relatively stable line-up of well-known Qing poets has been formed from anthologies of Qing poetry through integrative processes. Considered as a collective effort and responsibility by anthologists in the various collections, this strategy can be perceived as an act to establish a representative poet community in the early Qing period.

We first combine the early Qing poetry anthologies that focused on renowned poets' works. These include *Xiling Shizi Shixuan* 西陵十子詩選 (*Poetry Anthology of Ten Elites of Xiling*), *Taicang Shizi Shixuan* 太倉十子詩選 (*Poetry Anthology of Ten Elites of Taicang*), *Yantai Qizi Shike* 燕臺七子詩刻 (*Poetry Anthology of Seven Elites Living in Beijing*) from the Shunzhi 順治 reign (1644-1661); *Wu Dajia Shichao* 五大家詩鈔 (*Poetry Anthology of Five Great Masters*), *Bajia Shixuan* 八家詩選 (*Poetry Anthology of Eight Poets*), *Shizi Shilüe* 十子詩略 (*Brief Anthology of Ten Poets*), *Jiangzuo Shiwuzi Shixuan* 江左十五子詩選 (*Poetry Anthology of Fifteen Elites of Lower Yangzi River*) and *Jiangzuo San Dajia Shichao* 江左三大家詩鈔 (*Poetry Anthology of Three Great Masters of Lower Yangzi River*) from the Kangxi reign; *Guochao Si Dajia Shichao* 國朝四大家詩鈔 (*Qing Anthology of Four Great Poets*), *Guochao Liujia Shichao* 國朝六家詩鈔 (*Qing Anthology of Six Poets*) and others from the

[24] Wang Wan-Hsiang 2008, p. 265.

Qianlong reign.[25] In assessing these early Qing poetry anthologies edited by contemporary anthologists, the selection of poets and poetry can be seen as reflecting the editor's subjective choices if a particular poet does not consistently reappear elsewhere. However, it should be noted that, except for anthologies based on geographical regions, there is usually considerable overlap of poets among anthologies. For example, Ding Peng 丁澎 (1622-1686) in "Xiling Shizi" 西泠十子 (Ten Elites of Xiling) is also a member of "Yantai Qizi" 燕臺七子 (Seven Elites of Yantai); Shi Runzheng and Song Wan, who belong to "Yantai Qizi" are also two important members of "Guochao Liujia" 國朝六家 (Six Elites of the Qing Dynasty); Qian Qianyi, Wu Weiye and Gong Dingzi, three elites from *Wu Dajia Shichao*, are all members of "Jiangzuo San Dajia". In addition, Song Wan, Shi Runzhang, Wang Shizhen and members of *Guochao Si Dajia Shichao* are all members of the "Guochao Liujia".

Hence, we can conclude that, although individual editors embraced their subjective perspectives when deciding which celebrated Qing *literati* to include in their anthologies, examining the collective choices of a large number of anthologies can establish a representative Qing *literati* community. This community mainly includes Qian Qianyi, Wu Weiye, Gong Dingzi, Song Wan, Shi Runzhang, Shen Quan 沈荃 (1624-1684), Cheng Keze, Cao Erkan 曹爾堪 (1617-1679), Wang Shilu, Wang Shizhen, Yan Hang 嚴沆 (1617-1678), Chen Tingjing 陳廷敬 (1638-1712), Tian Wen, Cao Zhenji, Qu Dajun, Chen Gongyin, Chai Shaobing 柴紹炳 (1616-1670), Shen Qian 沈謙 (1620-1670), Mao Xianshu, Wang Maolin, Yan Guangmin, Zhu Yizun, Zhao Zhixin, Song Luo, Xie Chonghui, Ding Wei, Liang Peilan, Qian Mingshi 錢名世 (1660-1730) and Zha Shenxing. Although these editors' selections may not cover every important Qing *literati*, and some chosen poets are not especially representative or reputable, the early Qing poetry landscape has generally been defined.

By contrast, although the selection criteria are vastly different for national Qing poetry anthologies, some representative poets are commonly agreed upon. Putting together these similar choices, the basic line-up of reputable Qing

[25] Mao Xianshu 毛先舒 (1620-1688), *Xiling Shizi Shixuan*, 16 Vols., Huaiduzhai Keben 還讀齋刻本, 1650; Wu Weiye, *Taicang Shizi Shixuan*, 10 Vols., Shunzhi Jian Keben 順治間 (1644-1661) 刻本; Yan Jin 嚴津, *Yantai Qizi Shike*, 7 Vols., Shunzhi Shiba Nian Keben 順治十八年 (1661) 刻本; Zou Yi 鄒漪, *Wu Dajia Shichao*, 38 Vols., Qing Kangxi Keben 清康熙 (1662-1722) 刻本; Wu Zhizhen 吳之振 (1640-1717), *Bajia Shixuan*, 8 Vols., Wushi Jiangutang Keben 吳氏鑒古堂刻本, 1672; Wang Shizhen, *Shizi Shilüe*, 10 Vols., Kangxi Shiliunian Keben 康熙十六年 (1677) 刻本; Song Luo, *Jiangzuo Shiwuzi Shixuan*, 15 Vols., Shangqiu Songshi Wanweitang Keben 商丘宋氏宛委堂刻本, 1703; Gu Youxiao and ZhaoYun 趙澐 (?-1676), *Jiangzuo San Dajia Shichao*, 9 Vols., Kangxi Liunian Keben 康熙六年 (1667) 刻本; Shao Qi 邵圻 and Tu Dexiu 屠德修, *Guochao Si Dajia Shichao*, 24 Vols., Yuyingtang Keben 玉映堂刻本, 1766; Liu Zhiyu 劉執玉, *Guochao Liujia Shichao*, 8 Vols., Yiyanlou Keben 詒燕樓刻本, 1767.

literati can be constructed. This strategy can be called "seeking sameness among differences". Of course, there are diverse ways of "seeking sameness" in different kinds of anthologies. In general, evaluations of poets in most anthologies continue to be largely based on the number of selected works included, while poets' literary merits are less clearly indicated by their order of appearance in anthologies. Although there are many variations in selection criteria and approaches used by different anthologies, common collective preferences can still override individual preferences. If we were to randomly select several poetry collections, we would certainly find a group of common poets among them.

The first example is *Qieyan Ji*, edited by Chen Weisong in the pre-Kangxi period. According to the number of selected poems listed in Table 1, the famous Qing *literati* recognized by Chen are Wu Weiye (61 poems), Feng Ban (50 poems), Wang Shizhen (47 poems), Qian Qianyi (31 poems), Qu Dajun (26 poems), Wang Youdan (25 poems), Wang Wan (22 poems), Cheng Keze (19 poems), Zeng Wan (17 poems), Shi Runzhang (15 poems), Zhu Yizun (13 poems), Gong Dingzi (10 poems) and Song Wan (8 poems).

The second example is *Qingshi Chuji* from the twentieth year of the Kangxi's reign.[26] This anthology was edited based on various poetic sub-genres, and poets' literary merits within each genre. Poets whose literary worth was highly-regarded were placed first in each volume. Detailed information is presented in the following table.

Volume	**Selected poets**
Vol.1 *Yuefu*	Wang Shizhen, Li Wei 李霨 (1625-1684), Sun Zhiwei 孫枝蔚 (1620-1687), Han Shi 韓詩 (?-1662), Zhou Lianggong, Li Wen 李雯 (1608-1647), Song Zhengyu 宋徵輿 (1618-67) and others.
Vol.2 *Wugu*	Shi Runzhang, Li Nianci 李念慈, Du Jun 杜濬 (1611-1687), Liang Qingbiao 梁清標 (1620-1691), Wang Chongjian 王崇簡 (1602-1678), Wu Maoqian 吳懋謙, Gong Dingzi and others.
Vol.3 *Wugu*	Wang Wan, Chen Hongxu 陳鴻緒, Zhang Gangsun, Zhou Lianggong, Fang Xiangying 方象瑛 (1632-?), Song Zhengyu and others.
Vol.4 *Qigu*	Chen Weisong, Shen Han'guang 申涵光 (1618-1677), Cao Rong, Ji Yingzhong 紀映鐘 (1609-1681), Wang Chongjian, Wu Weiye, Shen Qian and others.
Vol.5 *Qigu*	Mao Xianshu, Wang Maolin, Zhou Lianggong, Wang Guangxin 王廣心 (1610-1691), Wang Wan, Xu Sunquan 許孫荃 (1640-1688) and others.
Vol.6	Liang Qingbiao, Xu Chengqin 許承欽, Zhu Heling 朱鶴齡

[26] The information is indicative of the various selection criteria exercised by anthologists especially in the arrangement of poets and their poetry in each volume of *Qingshi Chuji*, co-edited by Jiang Long and Weng Jiemei.

Wulü	(1606-1683), Zhou Tinglong 周廷鑨 (1606-1671), Wang Chongjian, Qian Qianyi and others.
Vol.7 *Wulü*	Wang Maolin, Qian Zhideng 錢稚登, Ma Shijun 馬世俊 (1609-1666), Wu Maoqian, Hao Yu 郝浴 (1623-1683), Xu Bingyi 徐秉義 (1633-1711) and others.
Vol.8 *Qilü*	Zhu Yizun, Sun Hui 孫蕙 (1632-?), Mao Xianshu, Ni Can 倪燦 (1627-1688), Dai Mingshuo 戴明說 (1605-1660), Cao Rong, HuangYuji 黃虞稷 (1629-1691) and others.
Vol.9a *Qilü*	Ding Peng, Wang Dai 王岱, Wang long 王鑨 (1607-1672), Yao Mengxiong 姚夢熊 (?-1735), Zong Yuanding 宗元鼎 (1620-98) and others.
Vol.9b *Wupai*	Xu Jiayan 徐嘉炎 (1631-1703), Xu Yuanwen 徐元文 (1634-1691), Wang Guangcheng 王光承 (1606-1677), Gong Dingzi, Ye Xiang 葉襄, Wang Duo 王鐸 (1592-1652), Wang Shilu and others.
Vol.10 *Qipai*	Lü Zuode 呂祚德, Zhao Qian 趙潛, Xiang Jingxiang 項景襄 (1627-1681), Zhao Bin, Song Wan, Peng Ershu 彭而述 (1605-1665) and others.
Vol.11 *Wujue*	Li Nianci, Wang Shizhen, Song Zhengyu, Zhou Tinglong, Cheng Feng 程封, Xu Qiu 許虯, Lü Qian 呂潛 (1621-1706) and others.
Vol.12 *Qijue*	Gu Jingxing 顧景星 (1621-1687), Gong Dingzi, Yang Sisheng 楊思圣 (1621-1664), Huang Jingfang 黃景昉 (1596-1662), Song Quan 宋權 (1598-1652), Shen Han'guang and others.

Table 3: Statistics of selection in *Qingshi Chuji*

The third example is *Guochao Shipin* 國朝詩品 (*Qing Anthology of Poetic Classification*), which was edited by Chen Yigang 陳以剛 in the twelfth year of Yong Zheng's 雍正 reign (1723-1735). This anthology has frequently been criticized for favoritism. For example, Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠 (1887-1960) argues: "Although there are too many poems by Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 [1672-1755] and his son in the collection, people can understand this as they are hometown fellows. However, if a whole volume filled with poems by Nalan Chang'an 納蘭常安 [1681-1747] is not an act of toadyism, what could it be? (集中多取張廷玉父子之詩，猶可以私其鄉里為解。若常安亦盈一卷，非貢諛而何?)"[27] Even if selections based on "judging a poet by his social status" (以人存詩) cannot be fully avoided, an outline of a community of deserving Qing poets can still be

[27] Deng Zhicheng, "Postcript to *Guochao Shipin*", see Xie Zhengguang and She Rufeng 1998, p. 313.

sketched. Such poets may be presented in the following order: Wang Shizhen (122 poems), Wu Weiye (91 poems), Qian Qianyi (85 poems), Gong Dingzi (58 poems), Chen Tingjing (43 poems), Wang Wan (27 poems), Du Jun (21 poems), Xiong Wenju (12 poems), Zhou lianggong (9 poems), Yan Ermei 閻爾梅 (1603-1679) (9 poems), Li Tianfu 李天馥 (1637-1699) (9 poems), Zhu Yizun (9 poems), Xu Qiu (9 poems), Shi Runzhang (8 poems) and Shen Han'guang (8 poems).[28]

Bai Mingjia Shixuan 百名家詩選 (*Selection from One Hundred Famous Poets*), edited by Wei Xian, is similar. The editor claimed that the selection standard was "people-oriented" (以人為重),[29] and that the poetic arrangement was somewhat random. However, among the 91 selected poets, at least one-third also appear frequently in other Qing poetry anthologies. These include Gong Dingzi, Qian Qianyi, Wu Weiye, Cao Rong, Shen Han'guang, Wang Shizhen, Cao Erkan, Shi Runzhang, Yan Hang, Song Wan and Cheng Keze.[30]

Based on the technique of "seeking sameness from differences" to analyze the common choices of reputable Qing *literati* selected from the above four anthologies, it can be concluded that the main canonized poets from the poetry community of the Kangxi and Yongzheng years are Qian Qianyi, Wu Weiye, Gong Dingzi, Shi Runzhang, Song Wan, Wang Shizhen, Wang Wan and Zhu Yizun. Moreover, a poetic field had already formed in the early Qing Dynasty, with poetry circles composed of members of "Jiangzuo San Dajia" or "Guochao Si Dajia" and famous poets from other schools surrounding them. According to descriptions of later literary historians, the above conclusion is fully consistent with the objective historical reality of the Qing poetry scene; it also demonstrates the scientific value of analyzing the collective selection approaches taken in anthologies of Qing poetry in constructing the history of Qing poetry.

2.2 Converging options for masterpiece selection in Qing poetry canons

In constructing the history of Qing poetry, not only did poetry anthologies select many celebrated poets from a particular timeframe, they also canonized numerous poetry masterpieces of the Qing Dynasty. Because each editor's selection criteria varied significantly, and the works selected of any given poet cannot be identical across editors, individual editors do not necessarily choose the representative works of each poet. However, when many editors choose works of the same poet based on multiple perspectives, the subjectivity of an individual editor can be largely ignored and their "collective decision" considered objective and rational. Thus, anthologists can select masterpieces of Qing poetry, and

[28] From the above statistics we can see that each volume in *Guochao Shipin* has been selected.
[29] Wei Xian, *Fanli* of *Bai Mingjia Shixuan*, see *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu*, 1624: 427.
[30] "Contents of *Bai Mingjia Shixuan*", Ibidem., 1624: 428-431.

strengthen some poets' unique merits in particular poetic genres by using this approach.

Because these celebrated poets were already influential in the poetic field before their works were selected in anthologies, and their literary achievements were recognized by most editors, different works by these celebrated poets are likely to be chosen by different editors for convergent reasons. Over time, selected poems become canonized works; later, they come to the attention of present readers. The canonization of Wu Weiye's poetry is significant evidence of the canonizing effects of anthologies of Qing poetry.

It is widely recognized that the achievement of Wu Weiye lies mainly in his unique creation of a feature-length epic with seven words per line, a style known as "Meicun style" (梅村體). Through repeated selection of his Meicun-style poetry in anthologies over time, as listed below, his poetry became canonized.

Anthologies of Qing poetry	**Editing year**	**Selected poems**
Shiguan Chuji (Deng Hanyi)	1672	"Pipa Xing" 琵琶行, "Gong Shan" 宮扇, "Ting Nüdaoshi Bian Yujing Tanqin Ge" 聽女道士卞玉京彈琴歌, "Yanmen Shangshu Xing" 雁門太守行, "Yinquan Shan" 銀泉山, "Linhuai Laoji Xing" 臨淮老妓行, "Xiaoshi Qingmen Qu" 蕭史青門曲, "Guo Jinshulin Yujing Daoren Mu" 過錦樹林玉京道人墓
HuangQing Shixuan (Sun Hong)	1688	"Yuanhu Qu" 鴛湖曲, "Huazhong Jiuyou Ge" 畫中九友歌, "Dabing Ci" 打冰詞, "Zeng Lusheng" 贈陸生, "Luzhou Xing" 蘆洲行, "Pipa Xing", "Beige Zeng Wu Jizi" 悲歌贈吳季子, "Bei Tengcheng" 悲滕城
Qieyan Ji (Chen Weisong)	1697	"Sansong Laoren Ge" 三松老人歌, "Song Jiu Zongxian Gong Xiaosheng Yi Shanglin Yuanjian Chushi Guangdong" 送舊總憲龔孝升以上林苑監出使廣東, "Tanxian Guanfang Wenxuebo Jieshi Jian Du Cangxue Shi Jiuji Yougan" 曇縣觀訪文學博介石兼讀蒼雪師舊跡有感, "Beige Zeng Wu Jiji", "Xiaoshi Qingmen Qu", "Pipa Xing", "Ting Nüdaoshi Bian Yujing Tanqin Ge", "Yinquan Shan", "Haihu Qu" 海戶曲, "Gong Shan", "Xuanzong Yuyong Qiangjin Xishuai Pen Ge" 宣宗御用戧金蟋蟀盆歌, "Tianjia Tieshi Ge" 田家鐵獅歌, "Luoyang Xing" 雒陽行,

		"Yonghe Gong Ci" 永和宮詞
Guocha Shipin (Chen Yigang)	1734	"Pipa Xing", "Gong Shan", "Ting Nüdaoshi Bian Yujing Tanqin Ge", "Song Zhiyan Ru Shu", "Xiang Huangzhong Jia Guan Wansui Tongtian Fatie" 項黃中家觀萬歲通天法帖, "Zhuochuan Xing" 捉船行, "Xiaoshi Qingmen Qu", "Yanmen Shangshu Xing", "Linhuai Laoji Xing", "Guo Jinshulin Yujing Daoren Mu", "Xiyan Gu Shiyu Zhao Tong Shen Shanren Yousheng Huqiu Yeji Zuotu Jisheng Yin Fu Changju" 西巖顧侍御招同沈山人友聖虎丘夜集作圖紀勝因賦長句
Guochao Shi Biecai Ji (Shen Deqian)	1760	"Yuanhu Qu", "Yonghe Gong Ci", "Yanmen Shangshu Xing", "Huazhong Jiuyou Shi", "Xuezhong Yulie" 雪中遇獵, "Yong Zhuozhengyuan Shanchahua" 詠拙政園山茶花, "Beige Zeng Wu Jizi"

Table 4: The inclusion of Wu Weiye's seven-word narrative epics in anthologies of Qing poetry

Table 4 shows that, although each editor selected a different group of poems, some of the poems in the early Qing anthologies were re-selected several times. Examples include "Yuanhu Qu" (Song of the Mandarin Duck Lake), "Pipa Xing" (Ballad of the *Pipa* Player), "Ting Nüdaoshi Bian Yujing Tanqin Ge" (A Song on Hearing the Taoist Nun Bian Yujing Playing the Zither), "Beige Zeng Wu Jiji" (Lament Presented to Wu Zhaoqian 吳兆騫 [1631-1684]), "Xiaoshi Qingmen Qu" (Song of Xiaoshi at Green Gate), "Yanmen Shangshu Xing" (The War Minister from Yanmen), "Linhuai Laoji Xing" (An Old Singer from Linhuai), "Guo Jinshulin Yujing Daoren Mu" (Passing the Tomb of the Daoist Bian Yujing in the Brocade Woods) and "Yonghe Gong Ci" (Lyrics on the Eternal Peace Palace). Not only are these poems outstanding representatives of Meicun style; they are also considered the most successful works in all his poetry.

Because Wu Weiye's seven-word narrative epics factually record the Ming-Qing transition or describe the dramatic events following the transition, his Meicun-style poems can also be called "poetic-history" (詩史). The editor Deng Hanyi 鄧漢儀 (1617-1689) once described Wu's poetic style in *Shiguan Chuji* 詩觀初集 (*The First Collection of Perspectives on Poetry*) in his critique of "Gong Shan" (Palace Fan): "With the rise and fall, the beginning and end all written through a Court fan, sentimentality and hesitation are felt by the readers, who can merely walk back and forth. […] It is the sigh of the *literati*! (一宮扇寫出盛衰始末，使人婉轉彷徨[…]係才人之感歎耳！)"[31] And on "Yanmen

[31] *Shiguan Chuji*, 1: 18a.

Shangshu Xing": "A veritable record of the rise and fall of a dynasty or an era (一代興亡之實錄)."[32] When commenting on Wu's "Yuanhu Qu", Shen Deqian observed: "The many words that are related to 'rise' and 'fall' in this poem, just like listening to lyre-playing of Yongmen—the whole intent is at the end of the poem (篇中極言盛衰，如聽雍門之琴，用意全在收束)."[33] Thus, it is evident that editors were consciously aware of the poetic-epic nature of Meicun-style poems.

In addition, with the reinforcement and publicity of this selection over time, these long-song-form narrative poems gradually evolved into a unique creative personality for Wu, a development validated by the critics who wrote after the early Qing. For instance, Zha Weiren 查為仁 (1695-1749) observed: "Meicun is at its best in song form. Wu's 'Yonghe Gong Ci', 'Xiaoshi Qingmen Qu', 'Yuanyuan Qu' 圓圓曲 [Ballad of Yuanyuan] all are up to the standards of Yuan Zhen's 元稹 [779-831] and Bai Juyi's 白居易 [772-846] works (梅村最工歌行，若《永和宮詞》、《蕭史青門曲》、《圓圓曲》等篇，皆可方駕元、白)."[34] Zhang Ruzai 張如哉 also said: "With a grand momentum and dramatic polarity of emotions, Meicun's Qigu generally inherited Wang Wei, Gao Shi 高適 [706-765], Cen Shen 岑參 [715-770], Li Qi 李頎 [690-751] from High Tang and others with slight differences and is similar in terms of poetic length to Li Bai's 李白 [701-762] and Du Fu's 杜甫 [712-770] poetry. Wu's poems, such as 'Yonghe Gong Ci', 'Pipa Xing', 'Nüdaoshi Tanqin Ge', 'Linhuai Laoji Xing', 'Wanglang Qu' 王郎曲 [Song of Mr. Wang] and 'Yuanyuan Qu' are similar to the famous works of Yuan and Bai. However, this imitation is not exclusive. 'Yuanhu Qu', 'Hualan Qu' 畫蘭曲 [Song of Painting Orchids], 'Zhuozhengyuan Shanchahua' and 'Baiyan Yin' 白燕吟 [Song of White Swallow] display rich literary talent, exhibit strong emotion and excellent rhythm and have far-reaching significance; in these ways, he differs from his predecessors and no contemporary counterpart can approach his style. Therefore, these poems belong uniquely to Meicun (梅村七古，氣格恢宏，開闔變化，大體本盛唐王、高、岑、李諸家而稍異，其篇幅時出入于李、杜。《永和宮詞》、《琵琶行》、《女道士彈琴歌》、《臨淮老妓行》、《王郎曲》、《圓圓曲》，雖有與元、白名篇酷似處，然非專仿元、白者也。至如《鴛湖曲》、《畫蘭曲》、《拙政園山茶花》、《白燕吟》諸作，情韻雙絕，綿邈綺合，則又前無古，後無今，自成為梅村之詩)."[35] With the exception of "Yuanyuan Qu", which was not selected for political reasons, various editors commonly included all of Wu's poems in their anthologies, which serves as proof that these masterpieces should indeed be canonized.

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[32] Ibidem., 1: 20b.
[33] *Guochao Shi Biecai Ji*, 1: 13.
[34] See Li Xueying 1990, Appendix 4, p. 1505.
[35] See Wu Weiye and Jin Rongfan 1995, p. 450.

Conclusion

Eighty years ago, the great writer Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) observed that: "Anthologies have a huge impact in shaping future literature. Perhaps this influence is even greater than that of renowned writers' personal collections. I think this phenomenon is something that historians of Chinese literature should be aware of (評選的本子，影響於後來的文章的力量是不小的，恐怕還遠在名家的專集之上，我想，這許是研究中國文學史的人們也該留意的罷)."[36] The above analysis indicates that anthologies of Qing poetry reflect editors' interpretations and understandings of Qing poetic history along different dimensions, e.g. the assessment of different poets' literary achievements, the selection of renowned masterpiece, and the evolution of different poetic genres. By examining and integrating the subjective choices of individual editors and the collective selection approaches employed in a large number of anthologies, a relatively objective history of Qing poetry can be constructed. Broadly speaking, "a history of Chinese anthologies can be seen as a history of literary criticism or of literary theory, and even that is a 'unique' literary history (一部中國選本史可以說就是一部中國文學批評史、理論史，甚至就是一部「特殊的」文學史)."[37]

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[36] Lun Xun 2005, p. 139.
[37] See Zou Yunhu 2002, Introduction, p. 6.

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THE ORIGIN, TRANSFORMATION AND REPRESENTATION OF THE DOUBLE LOTUS

WANG YIZHOU 汪一舟
(University of Glasgow)

The double lotus (in Chinese: *bingdi lian* 并蒂莲, *bingtou lian* 并头莲, *tongxin lian* 同心莲, or *shuangtou lian* 双头莲) is a rare species of the lotus, with its unique feature of two lotus flowers growing from a single stalk.[1] This unusual flower has been used as a popular motif to represent love in Chinese poetry since the Jin dynasty (265-420). According to classical Chinese literature and modern botanical studies, there are two main types of the double lotus.[2] The first type (Fig. 1) is double-headed (*shuangtou* 双头) and it is this version which the 'double-lotus' usually refers to in Chinese literature, rather than the second type. The second (Fig. 2) is double-floored (*chongtai* 重台) that the stamen or pistil of the lotus flower curls towards the centre and looks like another small lotus flower.[3] It is one lotus flower head growing two floors or layers of petals. The double-headed lotus only rarely appears at random in nature, but the double-floored lotus can be cultivated by professional gardeners.

Fig. 1. The double-headed lotus appearing at the Northern Sea Park in Beijing. Image taken from *Beijing Evening Newspaper*, 2004.

[1] *Changwu Zhi*, 2: 90-91.
[2] Zhou Zhaoji 1980, p.44.
[3] *Ibid*, p.44.

Fig. 2. The double-floored lotus growing in the East Lake at the city of Wuhan in Hubei province. Image taken from *Nanguo Morning Newspaper*, 2008.

Sometimes in Chinese weddings, the phrase "*Huakai bingdi* 花开并蒂" ("Wishing you happy marriage like the double lotus blossom!") or some other ones related to the double lotus will appear, giving the best wishes to the new couple. The meaning of the double lotus has almost been permanently fixed without doubt, probably because it seems so easy for us to imagine and understand the correspondence between the "two-in-one" shape of the double lotus and the unity of lovers' minds and bodies. Nevertheless, how was the term double lotus and the idea behind it originally born? Was the meaning of double lotus in Chinese history the same as the one we often use from a modern perspective? Could the visual representation of the idea behind the double lotus be different from what we see in reality and in photos? Through the investigation of the double lotus and its related concepts, this article aims at redefining the common terms and concepts that we seem to have accepted in their current use and meaning, and to consider a different way of thinking.

The Origin

In Chinese historical records and literary works, the double lotus was often called *ruilian* 瑞莲 (auspicious lotus) or *jialian* 嘉莲 (fine lotus). Why was it assigned such names of merit? What was the 'auspicious' or 'fine' feature of the double lotus?

The historical document *Yuanjia Qiju Zhu* 元嘉起居注 (*The Records of Emperor Liu Yilong's Actions*) (Liu Song Dynasty, 420-479) probably gave the earliest record of the double lotus:

> In the second year of the Qinshi reign (265-274) (that is 266 AD, Western Jin Dynasty), there were a pair of 'fine lotuses' growing in the Yuzhangli Lake,

> having two lotus flowers and lotus seed pods in one joint stalk (秦始二年八月，嘉莲一双，骈花并实，合跗同茎，生豫章鲤湖).[4]

Besides this, most of the early historical records of the double lotus can be found in *Furui Zhi* 符瑞志 (*The Records of Auspicious Omens*) from *Song Shu* 宋书 (*Book of Song*) which was compiled by Shen Yue 沈约 (441-513).[5] There were at least twenty-one records of discovering the existence of the double lotus during the Liu Song Dynasty (420-479) of the Southern dynasties (420-589).[6] The format of these records was simple and fixed, and it often indicated the time, the location, the specific pond with the double lotus, and the individuals who heard about it and who reported it. These people reporting it were either officials (e.g. *cishi* 刺史, *taishou* 太守) or imperial family members (e.g. the crown prince), which shows the great attention paid to the double lotus and the importance of reporting its existence to the governors.[7] There was no detailed interpretation of these records of the double lotus, but other records in this book could be helpful for further understanding.

The beginning of *Furui Zhi* was the collection of legendary stories of kings and emperors relating to various signs and omens dating back from the periods of ancient emperors (i.e. *Sanhuang Wudi* 三皇五帝 "Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors") to the Liu Song period (420-479) of the Southern dynasties (420-589).[8] It was believed that the sage had the greatest power to conquer the *Four Seas* (*sihai* 四海, namely, the whole world) and to control the *Ten Thousand Things* (*wanwu* 万物, all the things on the earth).[9] It was considered that the different unusual signs and omens occurred as the result of the "interaction between the heaven and the human beings 天人之应."[10] Before the part containing the double lotus records in this historical document, there are many records of the 'fine grain' (*jiahe* 嘉禾), the 'fine wheat' (*jiamai* 嘉麦), the 'fine melon' (*jiagua* 嘉瓜), all of which abnormally had more than one ear or fruit growing from one stalk. According to *Furui Zhi*, when the emperor has

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[4] See *Caomu Dian, Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 98: 31 (Vol. 539).

[5] *Song Shu* (*Book of Song*) covers the history from 420 to 479, Liu Song Dynasty of the Southern Dynasties of China. It is one of the Twenty-Four Histories. The twenty-one records of double lotus from *Song Shu* can be found in *Caomu Dian, Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 98: 31 (Vol. 539).

[6] It covers the reigns of Yuanjia 元嘉, Xiaojian 孝建, and Taishi 太始 (or 泰始) in the Liu Song period. See *Caomu Dian, Bowu Huibian,Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 98: 31 (Vol. 539).

[7] *Ibid*., 98: 31 (Vol. 539).

[8] See *Song Shu*, in *Wenyuan Ge Siku Quanshu*, 257: 478-497. The "Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors" were mythological rulers and heroes from ancient China who used their magical powers and virtue to improve the life qualities of their people and to give their county the great peace.

[9] *Song Shu*, in *Wenyuan Ge Siku Quanshu*, 257: 478.

[10] *Ibid*., 257: 478.

the greatest virtue (*de* 德), the 'fine grain' would come with double ears of grain ("王者德盛，则二苗共秀"), which obviously could be a sign of a rich harvest in crop farming;[11] in this case, the officials would then present a document in the literary forms of *biao* 表, *fu* 赋, or *song* 颂 to congratulate the emperor in that the emperor's virtue had been recognised and sensed by the heavens via bringing the 'fine grain' to the country.[12] A similar interpretation of 'fine grain' could also be found in an earlier Han Dynasty document *Baihu Tong* 白虎通 (*The Universal Principles of White Tiger*) complied and annotated by a group of scholar-officials and commissioned by the Emperor Zhang of Han (57-88) during the Eastern Han period (25-220). It made clear the specific function of the emperor's virtue signified by the abnormal phenomenon of grains, it states: "when three ears of grains share one stalk, it means the whole world will be unified (三苗为一穗，意天下其和为一乎)."[13] Images of 'fine grain' were also visible in Han Dynasty stone carvings.[14]

To sum it up, the early Chinese principle of how to define auspicious plants is as follows: if one stalk of a plant grows more heads or branches than a normal one, it is considered auspicious, and the meaning was always associated with political power. The abnormally overabundant growth of plants was credited to the emperor's great virtue. The double lotus was one of the selected auspicious plants as an auspicious omen (*xiangrui* 祥瑞) which followed this principle.

Comparatively, we must also discuss another important concept, that of the *lianli* tree 连理木, which was considered similar and related to the double lotus from very early on, to modern times. There was a close relationship between the double lotus and the *lianli* tree in Chinese poetry and fiction, and also in Ming-Qing Chinese visual culture. Let us examine first the auspicious meaning of the *lianli* tree. *Lianli* 连理 means the intertwined roots and branches of trees and plants. The *lianli* tree is a tree composed of two trees having joint roots or branches. The *lianli* tree often refers to an imaginary phenomenon, but it can also occur in nature as a rare natural phenomenon. In the ancient geographical work *Shuijing Zhu* 水经注 (*Commentary on the Waterways Classic*) compiled by Li Daoyuan 郦道元 (466?-527) during the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), the *lianli* tree was objectively recorded as a naturally occurring phenomenon without any specific symbolic meaning attached.[15]

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[11] *Song Shu*, in *Wenyuan Ge Siku Quanshu*, 257: 519-520.
[12] *Ibid*., 257: 519-520.
[13] *Baihu Tong*, 6: 287.
[14] Li Falin (1987), p. 74.
[15] In *Shuijing Zhu*, there are two trees growing in opposite sides of a stream but having intertwined branches above the stream, and they are called the *lianli* tree. See *Shuijing Zhu*, 7: 195.

Before this geographical record, the *lianli* tree was already recorded in the Han Dynasty (25-220) documents and was also depicted in the Han Dynasty stone carvings, earlier than the time of the earliest records of the double lotus. In the Han Dynasty documents, the *lianli* tree was an auspicious plant which symbolised the virtue of the emperor in that he was powerful enough to balance the *yin* and *yang* forces of heaven and earth, and thus was able to cause such plants to flourish. According to *Baihu Tong*, when the emperor managed the country wisely, the *yin* and *yang* forces would remain in harmony, everything in nature would grow in order, and the world would be filled with the *qi* 气 energy ("调和阴阳，阴阳和，万物序，休气充塞"); at a certain point all the auspicious signs would come together as a result of the emperor's virtue ("天下太平，符瑞所以来至者，以为王者承统理"); and when the emperor's virtuous action was broad and extended to the plants, the trees would be jointed through their roots and branches ("德至草木", "木连理").[16]

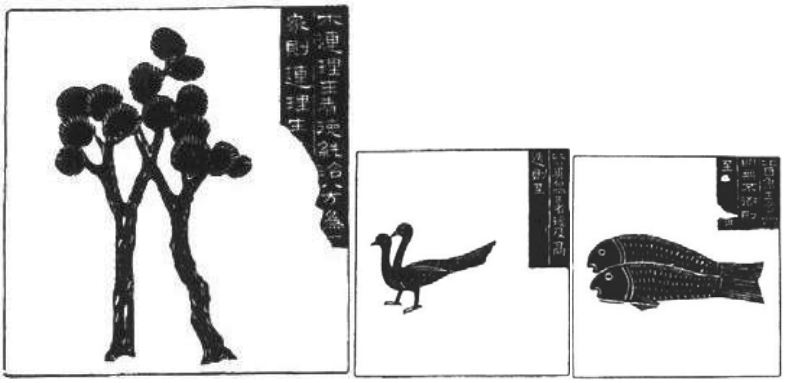

Fig. 3a. *Lianli* Tree, 3b. Double Bird, 3c. Double Fish,
Eastern Han Dynasty. Rubbing of the stone carving with inscriptions.
Wu Liang Shrine 武梁祠, Jiaxiang County 嘉祥县, Shandong province.

In the Wu Liang Shrine (*Wuliang Ci* 武梁祠), constructed during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) and situated in today's Shandong province, there was a piece of stone carving showing the *lianli* tree with the engraved inscription on its right side, on the ceiling of the shrine (**Fig. 3a**). This depicts a pair of pine trees, of which one tree is leaning on the other one with the branches overlapping, and it was entitled *lianli* tree, "*mu lianli* 木连理". The inscription reads:

[16] *Baihu Tong*, 6: 283-284.

> When the emperor's virtue is extended all over the world, things in all directions (*bafang* 八方, the eight points of the compass) will be united in one home (木连理，王者德洽，八方为一家，则连理生).[17]

The almost same record also appeared in *Furui Zhi* together with the double lotus and the 'fine grain'.[18]

Besides the *lianli* tree, there were also some other auspicious omens representing the same idea that two bodies were connected into one. The double bird (*biyiniao* 比翼鸟) (**Fig. 3b**) and the double fish (*bimuyu* 比目鱼) (**Fig. 3c**) were depicted on the same ceiling, along with inscriptions pointing out the exact name of the omen and the conditions of its presence.[19] The double bird was a pair of birds having one eye and wing each, so they could not fly without being parallel to each other; the bird would appear when the emperor's virtue reached the highest level and a certain depth ("比翼鸟，王者德及高远则至").[20] The double fish was two fish with only one eye each which could only move in the water when their two eyes were parallel; and it would come into being when the ruler was sufficiently wise to maintain fairness in every aspect ("比目鱼，王（者）明无不（衙则）至").[21] Wu Liang Shrine was built for a Wu family member Wu Liang (78-151) during the Eastern Han Dynasty. Wu Liang was a secluded Confucianist, and Wu Hung indicated that the stone carvings reflected Wu Liang's political perspectives and also the popular beliefs of this time.[22]

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[17] The original text is: "木连理，王者德（洽，八方为一）家，则连理生" and the lost part of the inscription in the bracket was from *Baihu Tong* "木连理，王者德洽，八方为一家，则连理生." See Wu 2006, p. 259.
[18] *Ibid*., p. 259.
[19] *Ibid*., p. 254.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 260.
[21] *Ibid*., p. 260.
[22] *Ibid*., p. 93.

Fig. 4 *Shooting Monkeys under Trees*, Eastern Han Dynasty. Rubbing of carved brick. The Stone Chamber of Mount Liangcheng 两城山石室, Ji'ning County 济宁县, Shandong province.

The use of the *lianli* tree seems not to have been random in the stone carvings of the Eastern Han Dynasty, especially in Shandong province. In another stone carving at the Stone Chamber of Mount Liangcheng, two trees that have two roots connected and all the branches and leaves twisted together are located in the central space. A group of creatures like monkeys stand at the top of the trees, facing each other and holding on to each other. Birds fly around the trees in the sky. Two figures hold the bow towards the sky. Xing Yitian points out that this image represents the theme of "Shooting monkeys under trees (树下射猴)".[23] In Chinese, monkey (*hou* 猴) is a pun for "*hou* 侯", the marquis. Thus, "shooting monkeys" was equal to "shooting the marquis". In the *Book of Rites* (*Li Ji* 礼记), it writes:

> The high-level shooting by the emperor is called shooting the marquis (*hou* 侯) (故天子大射，谓之射侯); if the person is shot, he will be awarded the marquis (射中则得为诸侯).[24]

[23] Xing 2012, pp. 71-76.
[24] *Ibid*., pp. 71-76.

According to the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhou Li* 周礼):

> If the person being shot by the emperor is a marquis, all the marquess will resign themselves to the emperor; if the person being shot is below the title of the marquis, he will be awarded the marquis (所射正谓之侯者，天子中之则能服诸侯，诸侯以下中之则得为诸侯).[25]

"Shooting monkeys under trees" was a popular auspicious image shown in the Han stone carvings.[26] As there is no inscription accompanying this image, we are unable to understand whether these two trees showing the feature of *lianli*, having connected roots and interlocked branches, are the *lianli* tree or not. However, the theme of this image about the political power of the emperor to control and unify the country is consistent with the one of the Wu Liang Shrine *lianli* tree.

So, we find that the 'fine grain', the *lianli* tree, the double bird, and the double fish were all treated as auspicious omens and signs with clear interpretations of the specific conditions in which they arose, in the historical records (e.g. *Baihu Tong*) and visual art as early as the Eastern Han Dynasty, but the existing earliest record of the double lotus shows its appearance in the West Jin Dynasty, later than the Eastern Han Dynasty, and more records indicate that it had be widely accepted as a politically significant symbol in the Southern dynasties while no specific conditions preceding its appearance were alluded to. We may conclude that the 'two-in-one' idea to symbolise the emperor's virtue as seen in plants and animals had already existed before the earliest records of the double lotus.

In the Han Dynasty, auspicious omens were used by the emperors and the imperial family as the powerful proof from the heavens to consolidate their political power and governing. The Han Dynasty central government encouraged the regional officials to report the appearance of auspicious omens in their governed regions by awarding them a higher official title or material benefits.[27] The group of identifiable auspicious omens in official documents had kept expanding from a very limited number since the early Han Dynasty, and this theory of auspicious omens had increasingly become widely accepted.[28] As a result, the *lianli* tree and the double lotus were successively developed to become the acknowledged auspicious omens during this trend.

The use of the double lotus as an auspicious omen was extended to the later dynasties. The double lotus was treated as a politically auspicious sign in the formal and official literature forms of *biao* 表 (official document presented to the emperor), *fu* 赋 (ode), *ji* 记 (narrative record), and poems by scholar

[25] *Ibid*., pp. 71-76.
[26] *Ibid*., pp.71-76.
[27] Wu 2006, p. 112.
[28] *Ibid*., p. 108.

officials in order to congratulate the emperor on his virtue which had been noticed by the heavens. In the *biao Zhongshu Menxia He Shenlong Si Quzhong Ruilian Biao* 中书门下贺神龙寺渠中瑞莲表 (*Congratulations on the Double Lotus in the Divine Dragon Temple under Zhongshu Gate*) to the emperor, the famous mid-Tang Dynasty scholar-official Quan Deyu 权德舆 (759-818) reported the blossoming of a double lotus in front of the Divine Dragon Temple 神龙寺, and he praised the emperor by attributing the appearance of this auspicious double lotus at the Buddhist temple to the fact that the emperor's kindness and wisdom had been acknowledged by the heavens.[29] At the same time, the renowned mid-Tang Dynasty poet and scholar-official Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) also wrote a *biao Wei Wang Jingzhao He Jilian Biao* 为王京兆贺嘉莲表 (*Congratulations the Emperor on the Double Lotus*) to the emperor for the same purpose. He stated that this sign of a double lotus was to "praise the virtue of the heaven and the emperor and to share the happiness of deities and humans (赞天地之合德，表神人之同欢)."[30]

In the Ming Dynasty, records of the double lotus can also be seen in *biao* presented to the emperor. Furthermore, numerous official records noting the appearance of this auspicious phenomenon in the ponds of certain regions exist, particularly in the local official records of *xianzhi* 县志, *fangzhi* 方志, *zhouzhi* 州志, and *fuzhi* 府志.[31] There are further records which explicitly describe the auspicious meaning of the double lotus, mainly covering the period from the Hongwu reign (1368 – 1398) to the Wanli reign (1573 – 1620) in the Ming Dynasty. In the *Ruilian Fu Bing Xu* 瑞莲赋并序 (*Preface to the Ode of Double Lotus*) by the top ranking scholar-official Shen Shixing 申时行 (1535-1614), he praises the emperor's kindness and virtue and also considers the double lotus to be a sign of great filial piety that is about to come ("大孝潜孚").[32]

Among local official records of the double lotus, some simply indicated the occurrence of the double lotus in the pond of a person's house, in a temple, a county, or a city in a certain year, acknowledged as auspicious signs but without much further detail being provided. In one example of this type, it simply states:

> From the *Record of State Deng* (*Dengzhou Zhi* 邓州志), in the sixth year of the Hongzhi reign, the double lotus grew in Dengzhou (邓州志，弘治六年，邓州产并蒂莲).[33]

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[29] *Caomu Dian*, *Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 98: 13 (Vol. 539).
[30] *Liu Hedong Ji*, in *Wenyuan Ge Siku Quanshu*, 1076: 337.
[31] *Caomu Dian*, *Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 98: 33-35 (Vol. 539).
[32] *Ibid*., 98: 18 (Vol. 539).
[33] *Ibid*., 98: 33 (Vol. 539).

Others clearly indicate the specific meaning of this auspicious sign under certain circumstances, and they can be largely categorised into three groups: 1) Success in the Imperial Examinations or the students' hard work in the government schools; 2) Filial piety; 3) A bumper harvest. The first group, relating to the Imperial Examination - the crucial path towards getting an official title and career in the Ming Dynasty, was the largest.

There are quite a few records which explicitly connect the success of those passing the Imperial Examinations with the appearance of the double lotus, especially in the ponds of government schools, usually called "*Xuepan chi* 学泮池". From the *Record of County Pu* (*Putian Xianzhi* 莆田县志), in the third part of the Yongle reign (1403-1424), the double lotus grew in the *Xuepan chi*; and the following year, the student Lin Huanting ranked first in the court level exam, the highest level exam in the Imperial Examination system ("永乐三年，莆田县学伴池生并头莲。明年，林环廷试第一").[34] In the *Record of State Jian* (*Jianzhou Zhi* 简州志), there was a pond called the *Auspicious Lotus Pond* (*Ruilian chi* 瑞莲池) situated beside an ancient pond, and it would produce the double lotus without roots when someone in the State Jian passed the Imperial Examination, and thus, people called it "The pond signifying success in the Imperial Examination (应第莲池云)".[35]

Records describing the filial piety of sons, or other Confucianist virtues, belong to the second group. In the following two records, the double lotus would appear in a pond near the grave of, or in the courtyard pond of a well-known filial son. From the *Record of County Yingshang* (*Yingshangxian Zhi* 颍上县志), in the twentieth year (originally, the year name was *Jiachen* 甲辰) of the Chenghua reign (1465-1487), the double lotus bloomed in the lotus pond near the grave of the student Wang Xianglu's father, as a response to student Wang's filial piety ("成化甲辰，生员王翔卢父墓所蓄莲于池内生并头花，盖孝感也").[36] The *Record of County Wenchang* (*Wenchangxian Zhi* 文昌县志) states:

> In the fortieth year of the Jiajing reign (1507-1567), the elected filial and honest son (*xiaolian* 孝廉) Zhao Zhike in the Dragon Bay Valley had the double lotus growing with lotus seeds in the pond of his courtyard (嘉靖四十年，龙湾溪孝廉赵志科园池开并蒂莲结菂).[37]

The filial piety was an auspicious phenomenon or a great virtue that the double lotus was able to response. In the records of the third group, the double lotus can be a sign predicting the forthcoming harvest. From the *Record of State Yuan*

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[34] *Ibid*., 98: 33 (Vol. 539). The Imperial Examination system includes the county level exam, the provincial level exam, and the court level exam.
[35] See *Caomu Dian*, *Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 98: 34 (Vol. 539).
[36] *Ibid*., 98: 33 (Vol. 539).
[37] *Ibid*., 98: 33 (Vol. 539).

(*Yuanzhou Zhi* 沅州志), during the twenty fourth year of the Jiajing reign (1522-1566), the red lotus in the Southern Pond grew to be double-headed, and the lotus's fragrance spread over the whole pond; the following year, there was a great bumper harvest ("沅州志，嘉靖二十四年，南池红莲夜结双蒂，满池香馥。是岁，年登大有").[38]

To summarise the "origin", the double lotus was treated as one of the auspicious omens (祥瑞) representing the emperor's virtue as early as the Western Jin Dynasty (265-317), while the *lianli* tree that also embodied the idea and visual feature of "two-in-one" and "jointing" appeared in the earlier Eastern Han Dynasty. They both belong to the system of Chinese auspicious omens created by the rulers to assist their governing of the country, and their use to represent the emperor's virtue was extended to the later dynasties. In the Tang Dynasty, *biao*, *fu*, *ji*, and poems about the appearance of the double lotus were written by the officials presented to the emperor to show the heavens' reply to the emperor's virtue. In the late imperial period, the appearance of the double lotus was developed from generally the emperor's virtue to be associated with more specific aspects including students' success in the Imperial Examinations, filial piety, and harvest.

The Transformation

The double lotus became particularly politically meaningful from the West Jin Dynasty onwards, while the first poem about the double lotus without much political meaning might be *The Song of Qingyang* (*Qingyang Gequ* 青阳歌曲), which was written in the form of *yuefu* 乐府 (Music Ballad) during the Jin Dynasty (265-420):

> 青荷盖绿水，芙蓉披红鲜。下有并根藕，上生同心莲。[39]
> Green lotus leaves spread over green water, lotus flowers wear the fresh red garment;
> Below are the double lotus roots, above are the 'same heart' double lotus flowers.

This seems to be a folk song written from the perspective of a lotus picker or just a traveller crossing the lake, which was filled with lotuses. It is difficult to guess exactly the meaning the author wanted to express, but nevertheless this poem is one of the *Three Modern Miscellaneous Songs* from *Yutai Xinyong* 玉台新咏 (*New Songs from a Jade Terrace*), an anthology of Chinese love poetry compiled in the sixth century, and the other two poems are both explicitly love

[38] *Ibid*., 98: 33 (Vol. 539).
[39] *Yutai Xinyong*, 10: 484-485.

songs filled with sorrow.[40] Thus, this one is also probably a poem in the theme of love. At least, we can see the author's attention to the connection with the idea of physically 'joint', 'double', or 'united' when writing about both the lotus roots and the lotus flowers, which might suggest a love theme within the context of the whole poem anthology.

In the later Southern dynasty, Zhu Chao's (朱超) poem about the double lotus is titled *The Song of One Heart Lotus* (*Yong Tongxin Furong* 咏同心芙蓉):

> 青山丽朝景，玄峰朗月光。未及清池上，红蕖并出房。
> 日分双蒂影，风合两花香。鱼惊畏莲折，龟上碍荷长。
> 云雨流清润，草木应嘉祥。徒歌江上曲，谁见缉为裳。[41]
> The morning landscape would be splendid in the green mountains, the moonlight would be clear in the dark mountains; Before the sunlight reaches the green pond surface, the two flower heads blossom out together from the red double lotus.
> The sunshine draws the outline of the one double lotus into two separate flowers in the shadows, but the wind combines the aroma of the two flowers into the same one; The fish fears the breaking off of the lotus, the tortoise hinders the growth of the lotus.
> The flow of clouds and rains bring fresh moisture, the vegetation should grow to be fine and propitious. We can only sing the river song, but who can seethe one who sewed the suit?

The double lotus was positioned in such a peaceful natural environment, but the author also conveyed his anxiety and worries by mentioning the fish and tortoise, and then his loneliness and missing somebody whilst singing the river song which was a love song, and thinking of the person who made the clothes for him. This poem delivers stronger human emotions than the former one. The 'united' behaviours of the double lotus in that they blossomed out together and had the same aroma whilst remaining separate in the shadows, underlines the meaning of 'one heart' and 'union' that was associated with humans' sentimental separation and emotional longing.

It is probably during the Tang Dynasty that this remarkable meaning of the double lotus was developed to be frequently used later in various forms of literature. The Tang Dynasty poet Wei Zhuang 韦庄 (836-910) wrote the poem *The Hehuan Lotus Flower* (*Hehuan Lianhua* 合欢莲花):

> 虞舜南巡去不归，二妃相誓死江湄，空留万古香魂在，结作双葩合一枝。[42]

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[40] The other two poems: One is *Xunyang Le* 浔阳乐 (*Happiness from River Xunyang*) that is about the woman's repining when the man has other lovers, while the other one is *Cansi Ge* 蚕丝歌 (*Song of Silkworm*) which depicts a woman's endless longing for her lover. *Yutai Xinyong*, 10: 484-485.

[41] *Caomu Dian*, *Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 95: 19 (Vol. 539).

> The great Emperor Shun did not come back from the Southern Tour, and his two consorts swore to commit suicide together on the river bank; their two fragrant souls were preserved, lonely, for thousands of years and connected in a double lotus.

This poem refers to the legendary story of the two famous consorts of the Emperor Shun 舜帝, who committed suicide together on the river bank after Shun's death. He compares the two consorts' shared great souls to the double lotus's two flowers sharing one stalk. The two consorts of Emperor Shun were sisters. This blood relationship suggests the two sisters' lives coming from one life, and it is parallel to their determined 'one heart' to commit suicide for their shared husband. These features match the double lotus's physical feature of growing two flowers from one root and one 'flower heart' (*huaxin* 花心), and also suit the already formed use of the lotus as a feminine metaphor. Wei Zhuang's use of this legendary story gave the double lotus the additional human characteristics of 'loyalty', 'suicide for faithful love', and of course 'one heart', that is to say, the union of the soul. This idea might be explained more directly in another Tang Dynasty poem, *The Song of Picking Lotus* (*Cailian Qu* 采莲曲) by Xu Yanbo 徐彦伯 (?-714): "We are searching for the 'same heart' partner, and then we pick the 'one heart' lotus (既觅同心侣，复采同心莲)."[43] 'One heart' lotus (*tongxinlian* 同心莲) is another name for the double lotus, and it is equal to the willingness to find the 'same heart' partner, referred to in modern terms as a 'soul mate', or a 'true love'.

In the Ming Dynasty, this concept was not only continued in poetry but also in drama and fiction. The great *literati*-artist and poet Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427-1509) wrote the poem *The Double Lotus* (*Bingdi Lianhua* 并蒂莲花):

> 耶溪新绿露娇痴，两面红妆倚一枝。水月精魂同结愿，风花情性合相思。赵家阿妹春眠起，杨氏诸姨晚浴时。今日六郎憔悴尽，为渠还赋断肠诗。[44]
> The Stream Ye had the new green lotus leaves showing the girl's delicacy and prettiness with two blossoming lotus flowers leaning on one stalk like a lady's face with pretty reddish makeup on each side.[45]

The souls of the water and moon made a jointed wish, and the emotions of the wind and flower were connected to generate lovesickness.

It happened when the girl of the Zhao Family woke up in the Spring time, and when the concubines of the Yang Family were bathing at night. Today,

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[42] *Huanhua Ji*, in *Wenyuan Ge Siku Quanshu*, 1084: 549
[43] *Caomu Dian*, *Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 95: 19 (Vol. 539).
[44] *Caomu Dian*, *Bowu Huibian, Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 96: 25 (Vol. 539).
[45] The Stream Ye was said to be the place where the historically famous Chinese beauty Xishi 西施 washed clothes.

the Darling Six (*Liulang* 六郎, the sixth child of a family) was thin and pallid, and he wrote a broken-hearted poem (*Duanchang Shi*断肠诗).

This poem creates an image of a charming lady, lovely 娇, deeply in love 痴, wearing attractive red make-up (*hongzhuang* 红妆). She was devoted to finding a soul mate ("水月精魂同结愿"), and she had been longing for love with great passion ("风花情性合相思"). However, it was so difficult to be together with her lover that her lover in his sadness wrote the '*Duanchang Shi* 断肠诗', a poem that could express the deepest pain and sorrow leading to death of a broken-heart. This poem shows the lovers' determination to become 'one heart' like the double lotus, but as a result of this longing, life might end up being sacrificed. Thus, the double lotus can be considered as a symbol of eternal love and death. This symbolism was fully elaborated in a story from the 16th or 17th century fiction collection *Xu Yanyi Bian* 续艳异编, which was also included in *Qingshi* 情史.

In the story entitled *The Story of the Double Lotus* (*Bingdi Lianhua Ji* 并蒂莲花记) from *Xu Yanyi Bian*, in the city of Yangzhou, the daughter of the wealthy Zhang family encounters the son of the poor Cao Family in the private school of the Zhang family, and they fall in love.[46] They are both talented in poetry and start to write love poems to each other. They deeply appreciate the beautiful love poems received from each other. Encouraged by the father of the Zhang family, they get married and live happily, until pirates conquer the city of Yangzhou. The pirates start to raid the city while the married couple are still sleeping in bed. The young couple are not able to escape and they choose to hold each other's bodies and commit suicide together in the pond, in order to avoid being humiliated by the pirates. In the year following their death, a lovely fragrant double lotus suddenly appears in the pond. Many scholars came to write poems in celebration of this love story. In the full story, it is the heroine, the daughter of Zhang, who initiates the marriage on her own. She firstly peeps at the young scholar of the Cao family through the flowers; then she secretly listens to him reading poem through the window ("潜听"), and she can not control her mind or emotions ("情不能已"), replying to him by reciting her own poem; when he comes out to see her, she bravely shows her willingness to wait for his reply of love and marriage; later, she knocks at the door of his bedroom, giving him her love poems. However, it is also she who politely refuses the young scholar's sexual advances after this romantic tryst initiated by her, believing that neither of them are of flirtatious minds and manners, and that they should therefore wait for marriage.

Here, the double lotus represented by the love of this young couple has several features. Firstly, it is driven by the powerful feminine force, the force of *yin*; secondly, it represents the uncontrollable love and passion that is open, free,

[46] *Xu Yanyi Bian*, 5: 52-54.

dynamic; but which is also faithful love, the union of soul, transcending the union of the body, and where lust should be controlled and delayed to fulfill the desire to become 'one heart'.

Interestingly, when this story appears in *Qingshi* by Feng Menglong 冯梦龙 (1574-1646) which was entitled *The Double Lotus* (*Bingdi Lian* 并蒂莲), it adds after the original paragraph that:

> The man and woman who have illicit love and then commit suicide together in the water all become the double lotus the following year ("民家有男女以私情不遂，赴水死"，"是岁，此陂荷花无不并蒂者").[47]

Feng Menglong was trying to mix and blur the boundaries of moral love ending in marriage and the illicit love of sexual affairs by giving them both the result of eternal love, the double lotus, and to raise the new virtue of sentiment (*qing* 情). In the dialect *Mountain Songs* (*Shang'ge* 山歌), another work by Feng Menglong, it states:

> 郎种荷花姐要莲，姐养花蚕郎要绵。
> Although the male lover wants to raise a lotus flower, his female lover wants the lotus root; although the female lover raises silk worms, her male lover only wants the cotton.[48]

Here, 'the lotus root' suggests her intention to receive the fruit of love and to marry her lover (to have eternal love), but he prefers to have the lotus flower only, which suggests he would prefer to have the pretty young girl as a girlfriend rather than a wife, and refers to making love rather than getting married. The cotton, *mian* 绵, is a pun on the word for sleeping, *mian* 眠, and it also shows man's preference for sexual love. In *Shan'ge*, Feng Menglong presents a strong flavour of sexual love and the striking difference between men and women in their purpose of being lovers. The story of *The Double Lotus* included and revised in his *Qingshi* fits his intention to emphasise the aspect of sexual love, and this seems to be a trend among the *literati* group.

In the most famous late Ming erotic novel *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), the meaning and application of the double lotus was expanded upon. In the novel, the hero Ximen Qing 西门庆 always wears the hairpin given to him by his female lover to demonstrate his love for her. If he changes his love from one girl to another, he will also change his hairpin which acts as a love token. In chapter 8, titled 'All night long Pan Jinlian yearns for Ximen Qing', one of his concubines, Pan Jinlian 潘金莲 gives him a birthday

[47] *Qingshi,* 11:241.
[48] Ōki and Santangelo 2011, p. 349.

gift - a hairpin in the shape of a double-headed lotus blossom ("一根并头莲瓣簪儿"), which is engraved with a love poem written by Jinlian that reads:

> I have a lotus blossom with two heads, as a gift to help keep your topknot in place. As they grow from the same stem on your head, so we may never abandon each other (奴有并头莲，赠与君关髻，凡事同头上，切勿轻相弃).[49]

Cleverly, this hairpin has multiple meanings. Firstly, of course, it shows Jinlian's love for Ximen Qing and her thoughtfulness for his birthday gift. Secondly, the name of Pan Jinlian includes the character *lian* 莲 and she is also famous for her bound feet, "golden lotus". The hairpin in the shape of the double-headed lotus could then be seen to represent Jinlian herself. Thirdly, as we have seen above, according to Chinese tradition, the double-headed lotus is a symbol of eternal love and loyalty, the union of two bodies into 'one body', the union of two hearts into 'one heart', strong enough even to extinguish the fear of death. This gift is therefore almost a vow of her deepest love for Ximen Qing. It is a clever thought in Jinlian's poem that the intimate relationship between Jinlian and Ximen Qing is just like the two lotus flower heads growing from one 'heart' or one stalk that is tied by the double-headed lotus hairpin. Jinlian's hairpin was moved from her head to Ximen Qing's head. Here, the lovers' heads were compared to the inseparable lotus flower heads.

Although Ximen Qing was a merchant originally rather than a well-educated scholar, he was still a man of certain literacy who could not control his passion for women of artistic talents and also who cared a lot about the loyalty of his wife and concubines, and he was able to understand this symbolic meaning. Thus, we can understand why, upon seeing the gifts including this special hairpin, "Ximen Qing's heart was filled with delight", "he pulled her into an embrace with one arm and gave her a kiss", and said "who would have thought you were as clever as this?" While just a moment before this, there was such tension between them as Jinlian had snatched and thrown Ximen Qing's 'brand-new' hat, taking away his gold hairpin given to him by another concubine out of his hair, and at the same time breaking his finely made 'gold-flecked' fan. Jinlian had been yearning for Ximen Qing's visit for so long, but it seems that Jinlian was quite confident in the power of her gifts before her crazy behaviour which was bound to enrage a man who was always surrounded by flattering beauties and who was also well-known for his violence within the county.

After this birthday gift-giving scene, the hero and the heroine start 'exhausting themselves to please each other' and indulging their lusts without restraint' in the boudoir. *Jin Ping Mei* is an erotic novel in which Jinlian and Ximen Qing both die from endless lust at the end. The use of the double-headed lotus here has a significantly different meaning than in the previous literature,

[49] *Chukeben Jin Ping Mei Cihua*, 8: 87-99.

almost the opposite of its earliest meaning and is even beyond the level of Feng Menglong's interpretation mildly relating to sexuality. Without lovers' loyalty, without faithful love, the double-headed lotus now becomes a symbol of carnal desire and unrestrained lust.

To summarise, there are some general principles of the double lotus literarily. Firstly, it involves the physical feature or the visual image of combining two into one, in other words, the union of the body into 'one body'. Secondly, it represents the state of mind, being 'one heart' (*tongxin* 同心), equally, the union of the mind or the soul. Thirdly, it refers to the relationship between a male and female, ranging from noble eternal love to sexual love. Lastly, the determination to become 'one body' and 'one heart' often leads to the death or suicide of both partners.

It is worth noting that the literary idea and symbolic meaning of the double lotus was also shared with other plants, mainly the *lianli* tree and *hehuan* tree. The Song Dynasty poet Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126-1193) wrote a poem about the double lotus, *The Double Lotus in the County Pond* (*Junzhi Shuanglian* 郡治双莲):

> 馆娃魂散碧云沉，
> 化作双葩寄恨深。
> 千载不偿连理愿，
> 一枝空有合欢心。[50]
> The spirit of the neglected palace ladies (*guanwa* 馆娃) has gone, the green cloud has sunk,[51]
> Growing their strong and deep hatred into the double lotus flowers;
> Thousands of years, never realising their dream of union (*lianli* dream 连理愿),
> It is pointless and worthless for a single branch to own the joy of love heart (*hehuan* heart 合欢心).

In this Song Dynasty poem, the poet Fan Chengda shows his sympathy for these poor ladies whose love had not been fulfilled before their death. He regarded the double lotus as the embodiment of their emotions, the deep hatred (*Shenhen* 深恨), of these neglected palace ladies after their death. He compares their dream for a whole life – achieving the union of love with their lovers – to the state of being the entwined *lianli* trees, and he thinks of their strong but hopeless longing for the joy of love as the lonely *hehuan* heart. The idea of the double lotus, the *lianli*, and *hehuan* were united in one poem to represent love which lasts for a lifetime.

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[50] *Caomu Dian*, *Bowu Huibian*, *Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, 96: 23 (Vol. 539).

[51] *Guanwa* 馆娃 is a term used to describe the neglected palace ladies.

Lianli 连理

Similar to the double lotus, *Lianli* 连理, the joint and intertwined roots and branches of trees and plants, has been used not only as a politically auspicious sign of the emperor's virtue since the early periods, but has also been commonly used as a symbol of happy marriage in modern Chinese society, especially in wedding ceremonies. *Lian* 连 is the movement of joining together and is also a pun on *lian* 联 of *lianyin* 联姻 (getting married). *Li* 理 refers to the roots of trees or other plants.

The earliest example showing the idea of *lianli* as a symbolic term of eternal love can be found in a story from *Soushen Ji* 搜神记 (*In Search of the Supernatural*) which is believed to have been compiled by the historian Gan Bao 干宝 in the 4th century during the Jin Dynasty (265-420).[52] The King Kang of Song 宋康王 wanted to take the beautiful wife of Han Ping and he ordered the imprisonment of Han Ping. Han Ping and his wife then committed suicide together and hoped to be buried in one grave. The king was angry and separated their graves. Magically, two trees grew out of their graves separately but bent towards each other, with the tree roots growing to be intertwined underground and the tree branches twisted above ground. Meanwhile, there was a pair of mandarin ducks resting on the branches, crossing their necks, singing a deeply sad and touching song. Local residents called them '*xiangsi* trees 相思树' and considered the mandarin ducks to be the spirit and soul of this couple. The two trees with intertwined roots and the two mandarin ducks with necks crossed stand for the eternal love of the couple and their determination to stay together even after death. From this legendary story, intertwined plants and animals with their bodies intertwined became a standard symbol of a couple in love. The loyalty between the husband and the wife, which was an essential part of Chinese Confucian morality, is emphasised in this story.[53] The Ming Dynasty story of the two lovers reappearing as a double lotus after drowning themselves is similar to this Jin Dynasty story, as they are both associated with the eternal love of lovers, their joint suicides, and their subsequent transformation into the plants and animals.

In the Ming Dynasty, the Jin Dynasty story of the *lianli* tree or the *xiangsi* tree was summarised and collected in Feng Menglong's *Qingshi*, and it was also rearranged into two stories of the scholar-and-beauty love and suicide in the Li Changqi's 李昌祺 (1376-1452) *Jiandeng Yuhua* 剪灯余话 and the 16th or 17th century work *Xu Yanyi Bian* 续艳异编.[54] In the texts of the two stories, the double lotus, the *lianli* tree, and the *hehuan* tree were all used as

[52] *Soushen Ji*, 11: 265.
[53] Santangelo 2012, p. 59.
[54] It is *Lianli Shu Ji* 连理树记 (*The Story of the Lianli Tree*) in *Jiandeng Yuhuai* and *Shuangyuan Zhong Zhi* 双鸳冢志 (*The Story of the Lovebirds' Grave*) in *Xu Yanyi Bian*.

symbols of faithful love. Ming Dynasty representations of the double lotus and the *lianli* trees were mainly in praise of the eternal love of lovers, especially the scholar-and-beauty type, but the early Qing dramatist and scholar-official Kong Shangren 孔尚任 (1648-1718) in his poem *The Sewage Pool Water* (*Wuchi Shui* 污池水) criticised the imaginative and unrealistic thought of becoming "one body" following the double suicide of lovers in such legendary stories. He writes:

> 污池水浑不见底，池边灌园人早起。如雪白纡搅青丝，竹竿挑出两人死。
> 一男一女貌如花，香帕系颈肩相比。人人围看不识谁，有姥哭媳又哭子。
> 媳为嫂兮子为叔，嫂寡叔幼情偏美。昨日人投碧玉钗，花烛今夜照门里。
> 心急口懦无奈何，两人私誓同沉水。水底鸳鸯不会飞，那得生根变连理。[55]
> The sewage pool was too muddy to see the bottom; the gardener living by the pool got up early. He saw the snow-white clothes twisted with the black hair floating on the water's surface, and then he hauled out two dead bodies from the pool.
> They were a handsome man and a pretty woman, and their necks were tied together by a fragrant scarf so that they were parallel to each other. The people passing by could not recognise them but an old woman was seen crying for her son and daughter-in-law.
> Her daughter-in-law was the drowned man's elder brother's wife (*sao* 嫂); the pretty woman as a widow had had a beautiful loving relationship with her husband's younger brother (*shu* 叔). On the previous day, a precious green jade hairpin had been given to *shu* as a betrothal gift, and he was forced to marry a girl (he did not love) tonight and to have a love affair with her by candlelight with floral patterns.
> They were anxious in heart and weak in mouth, and they became so hopeless because of their illicit love that they swore to commit suicide in the water. How could the mandarin ducks fly away together after sinking into the bottom of the pool? How could this couple grow to be the plant roots and become the *lianli*?

He used the story of the lovers drowning themselves in the water from the double lotus, and mixed this episode with the symbols of the *lianli* tree and the mandarin ducks from the *xiangsi* tree story at the end. He also extended the application of these ideas to incorporate the illicit love of *sao* 嫂 (the elder brother's wife) and *shu* 叔 (the elder brother's younger brother). Here, the *lianli* and the double lotus are still the symbols of eternal love, but involve in sexual love and illicit love, and also represent the strong but hopeless longing for eternal love that leads to death.

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[55] *Huhai Ji*, 5: 951.

Hehuan 合欢

The double lotus was also called the *hehuan* lotus since the early periods. The Tang Dynasty poem of the double lotus by Wei Zhuang (mentioned above) used *The Hehuan Lotus* as the title. *Hehuan*合欢, 'joy of mutual love', is an erotic emblem appearing on quilts, fans, curtains, silk ribbons, and beds for lovers and wedding couples. There is a first or second century poem named 'Joy of mutual love quilt' (*Hehuan Bei* 合欢被) by Birrell from *Yutai Xinyong* 玉台新咏.[56] It says:

> The piece of fabric was embroidered with a pair of mandarin ducks, and it was cut into the *hehuan* quilt, 'joy of mutual love quilt'; it was stuffed with the padding of love (*changxiangsi* 长相思) that was cotton, and its edges were bind tight (to show this couple's determination to be together forever) and never to sunder (文彩双鸳鸯，裁为合欢被，着以长相思，缘以结不解).[57]

The pair of mandarin ducks (or lovebirds) is a symbol of eternal love because one could not live without its original partner. In this poem, *chang xiangsi* 长相思, lasting longing for love, refers to cotton, in Chinese, *mian* 绵. The term "*mianmian xiangsi* 绵绵相思" means that the love and the longing is very sweet, deep, and lasting. Thus, *hehuan* here represents the strong and faithful love between lovers.

The *hehuan* tree, albizzia julibrissin, is a deciduous tree with a tall trunk and pinnate ferny leaves reminiscent of wings or feathers. At night, the leaves spontaneously close and fold (*he*合), just as the humans sleep at night when couples go to bed seeking sexual pleasure. Thus, the *hehuan* tree is also named '*yehe* 夜合' (night-close) and '*qingchang* 青裳' (green skirt).[58] In summer, its numerous small flowers emerge with fluffy pink flowerheads.

The *hehuan* was first literarily recognized in an article *Yangsheng Lun* 养生论 (*A View of Health Maintenance*) by Ji Kang 嵇康 (223 - 263), one of the legendary *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove*, as a functional plant to maintain human health by magically releasing the emotions of anger and resentment ("*hehuan* kills anger 合欢蠲忿"), rather than as an erotic emblem.[59] In Li Shizhen's 李时珍 (1518-1593) *Bencao Gangmu* 本草纲目 (*Medical Compendium*), a Ming Dynasty encyclopedia of plants and animals, the *hehuan* has the medical function of bringing happiness and peace of mind.[60] According

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[56] Birrell 1986, p. 32.
[57] It is the eighteenth of the *Nineteen Ancient Poems* (*Gushi Shijiu Shou* 古诗十九首). See *Yutai Xinyon*, 1: 4.
[58] *Bencao Gangmu*, 35: 1351.
[59] *Ji Kang Ji*, 3: 146.
[60] *Bencao Gangmu*, 35: 1351-1352.

to Feng Menglong's *Qingshi*, this medically, or psychologically, effective plant was first called the 'erotic or carnal tree' (*yinshu* 淫树) and 'emotional or effusive tree' (*youqing shu* 有情树) after more than one thousand years.[61]In an attempt to revise the original meaning, Feng Menglong tried to connect *hehuan* trees with erotic connotations by underlining its physical features such as the fact that its green leaves would close at night like humans' habit of sleeping at night, which also refers to couple's sexual pleasure in the boudoir ("其叶色如今之蘸晕绿，至夜则合"). Meanwhile, it has the feature that its leaves were naturally conjunct but had the flexibility to loosen and stretch with the wind ("枝叶交结，风来自解，不相牵缀"). This might suggest the harmonious life of the lovers or the married couple. In addition, Feng Menglong related the *hehuan* tree to the *hehuan* grass which had hundreds of stalks in the daytime but would gather together and combine into one stalk at night ("一株百茎，昼则众条扶疏，夜则合为一茎"). It connects the *hehuan* tree with the idea of 'one heart' and 'one body' from the double lotus and the 'joint roots' from the *lianli* tree which were common symbols of eternal love in the Chinese tradition. Furthermore, Feng Menglong stated that the *hehuan* tree and the *hehuan* grass could not live alone and they must be grown in a group like a couple or a family ("若各自种，则无花也"，"然则草亦有合欢，不独树也"). This is connected with the lovers' determination to be together and their readiness to commit suicide for their love, and also a parallel can be drawn with the literary meaning of the mandarin ducks, which crossed their necks in the *xiangsi* tree and mated for life as a symbol of marriage and faithful love. This was also a popular symbol of couple's pleasures in Chinese erotic paintings.

More explicitly, in the plants section of *Xianqing Ouji* 闲情偶寄 by the well-known contemporary writer and dramatist Li Yu 李渔 (1610-1680), the practical value of the *hehuan* trees was not only to calm the flames of anger but also to bring happiness and pleasure in the bedchamber. Li Yu claimed that the resident lovers would be pleased by the existence of the *hehuan* tree and also its flowers, while the plants could also flourish more strongly if they were grown in the bedchamber of lovers.[62] The most amusing requirement from Li Yu is that these trees should be often watered with the bath water used by lovers or couples after bathing together, in order to make the flowers more vibrant. To prove his argument, Li even invited readers to do a casual test by growing two *hehuan* trees, one in the courtyard irrigated with common fertilizer, and another one in the bedchamber fed with lovers' bathing water. Although *Xianqing Ouji* is a collection of Li's personal statements on fashion and culture during the Ming-Qing period, the symbolic meaning of the *hehuan* tree 合欢树 was developed to be associated with the boudoir, sexuality, and the joy of sexual

[61] *Qingshi*, 23: 597.
[62] *Xianqing Ouji*, 5: 209.

intercourse, which might not perhaps have been a view as readily accepted by the masses as, for example, the mandarin ducks as erotic symbols.

From one of the later strange tales, *Wang Gui'an* 王桂庵, in Pu Songling 蒲松龄 (1640-1715) *Liaozhai Zhiyi* 聊斋志异, there is a mysterious love story in which the hero Wang Gui'an 王桂庵, born into an aristocratic family, is led to the *hehuan* tree by his dream to find his lover.[63] After an encounter with an embroidering girl in a neighbouring boat when travelling by river to the south, Wang falls in love. He becomes extremely depressed, sitting and daydreaming like an idiot ("心情丧惘，痴坐凝思"), and missing her when sleeping and eating ("寝食皆萦念之"). He buys a boat to use as a home and keeps watching every boat crossing the river to find the girl, but to no avail. One day, he has a dream: he lands by a village on the river, then passing through several doors, he enters a village courtyard with bamboo stalks forming the fence. One *hehuan* tree appears in front of him, with thousands of red flowers growing like red silk over the whole tree. Wang quietly recites the poem: 'there is a whole tree of *maying* 马缨 flowers in front of the door'.[64] Later, in a hut in the south corner with a window shielded by red banana leaves, he sees the pretty girl he had encountered before in the boat. Then he wakes up from the dream, feeling it to have been almost real. He keeps this dream a secret. One year later, on the way to meet a friend, he takes a wrong turning and enters into a small village, where he finds that he has seen everything before. Just like in his previous dream, there was a *maying* tree beside the door. He is shocked to find everything the same as in the dream. He finally finds the girl from his dream in the same south corner hut and they get married. In this 'strange' story, the *hehuan* tree or *maying* tree obviously acts as an important sign or signal guiding Wang to find the girl he loved in his dream, in reality. The poem that he reads, "there is a whole tree of *maying* flowers in front of the door (门前一树马缨花)", is probably originally from a Yuan Dynasty poem *Shuixian Shen* 水仙神 (*Narcissus Goddess*) by the Yu Ji 虞集 (1272-1348). This poem is written in a girl's tone:

> My home is along the Qiantang River, please come to have tea at leisure time, my darling. I am living in the house with the yellow-earth wall and the wheatgrass roof, growing a whole tree of *maying* flowers at the front door (钱塘江上是奴家，郎若闲时来吃茶。黄土筑墙茅盖屋，门前一树马缨花).[65]

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[63] *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, 12: 531-533.

[64] The *maying* flowers or trees refer to the *hehuan* tree. *Maying* 马缨 means the ornament put on the horse neck in Chinese. It is usually made of numerous red threads or lines, so its appearance looks like the red silk-like *hehuan* flowers.

[65] Wang 1983, pp. 460-461. Also see *Yuji Quanji* 虞集全集.

This poem seems to be a girl's love poem and a direct love invitation for her lover, giving a description of her house as a clue for his search, while similarly in the story, the poem suggests that the *hehuan* tree with red flowers is indeed a love invitation for the hero Wang to fulfil his intense passion and desire of love.

To sum up the "transformation", since the Jin Dynasty from the third to sixth century AD, the double lotus became one of the auspicious omens signifying the emperor's great virtue for its abundant growth that two flower heads grow from one stem, at the same time, it started to appear in the implicit love poems for the ideas of 'joint', 'double', or 'united' derived from its physical feature of joint bodies. Later in the Tang Dynasty, the double lotus had been a popular symbol of faithful love and the loyalty of lovers having 'one heart' or the union of body and soul, while in the Ming Dynasty, this symbolism was continued but expanded that it was able to emphasise on the sexual love, to represent the illicit love of sexual affairs, and even to involve in the carnal desire and unrestrained lust. The *lianli* tree had been not only accepted as a politically meaningful symbol representing the emperor's virtue, which is the same as the double lotus, but also embodied with the meaning of eternal love achieved by committing suicide, and later, associated with the theme of illicit love and sexual love. Without any politically significant meaning, the idea of *hehuan* ("joy of mutual love") and the *hehuan* tree was also a symbol of faithful love at the beginning while later became an erotic emblem. The three concepts, double lotus, *lianli*, and *hehuan* were often used in various forms of literature, together or separately, to represent the love that is extremely faithful, committed, and lifelong, or passionate and fevered. At the beginning, the meaning of them was pure and simple that was only suitable for the eternal love and mainly for the married couple. In the later Ming and Qing dynasties, they became more related to the content of sexuality and illicit love, but their symbolic meaning relating to faithful love and eternal love can exist together with the sexual subject. The proportions of the different meanings vary with the specific theme and characters of the literature.

Representations of the Idea "Joint Bodies and Minds of Lovers" in Ming-Qing Visual Culture

Visualisation in the Qing Imperial Palace

Fig. 5 The *Lianli* Tree at the Middle Front Door of the Qing Imperial Garden, Beijing, Qing Dynasty. Image taken by Wang Yizhou, 2014.
Fig. 6 The *Lianli* Tree in front of the Hall of Imperial Peace (*Qin An Dian* 钦安殿), Qing Imperial Garden, Beijing, Qing Dynasty. Image taken by Wang Yizhou, 2014.

In the Imperial Garden 御花园 of the Qing Imperial Palace (*Gugong* 故宫) in Beijing, there are at least two pairs of *lianli* trees whose branches are intertwined. They are called *Lianli Bo* 连理柏, branch-interlocked cypresses, but they were originally two trees that were artificially twisted together over a period of between 100 and 300 years. The first *Lianli Bo* (**Fig. 5**) can be seen upon entering the south entrance of the Imperial Garden and there is a huge incense burner behind it. The second *Lianli Bo* (**Fig. 6**) is situated in front of the Hall of Imperial Peace, *Qin An Dian* 钦安殿, and within the One Heavenly Gate, *Tianyi Men* 天一门. The Hall of Imperial Peace and this *Lianli Bo* were located on the important central axis of the Forbidden City. This hall is a major building in the Imperial Garden and it was a place for worshipping one of the Taoist deities, the Water God Zhenwu 真武 during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Taoist rituals were performed in this hall during formal festivals every year.

As the *lianli* trees in the Imperial Garden are both placed on the important central axis of the Forbidden City and accompanied by incense burners used for ritual purposes, the original intention to create them could be associated with the

political connotations of these multi-branched plants, that is to say, the emperor's virtue, which we examined in the earlier section. From another perspective, the Imperial Garden was made mainly for the emperors and their consorts to visit and rest during their private leisure time. It was said that the last Qing Emperor Puyi 溥仪 (1906-1967, reign. 1908-1912 and 1917) and his Empress Wanrong 婉容 took a photograph in front of the first *Lianli Bo* on the day of their wedding to symbolise the loyal love between them. Thus, we could say that the *lianli* trees in the Imperial Garden were strategically placed in this important location in order to match the ritual activities within the Imperial Garden and also to symbolise the expected loyal love between the emperor and his concubines.

Explicit and Implicit Hints in the Beautiful Women Paintings and Erotic Paintings

The painting *A Beauty Doing Needlework by Candlelight* (**Fig. 7**) from *Yongzheng's Screen of Twelve Beauties* depicts a beauty in Han Chinese costume doing needlework by candlelight, and she is looking at a double lotus outside the window. The needlework done by the beauty follows the requirements of 'lady's work or efficiency in needlework' (*fugong* 妇功), one of the *Women's Four Essential Virtues* (*side* 四德) in Confucianism.[66] This beauty might be waiting for her lover or husband while doing needlework, and the double lotus acts as a symbol of love suggesting her longing for the union of bodies and minds with her lover. This type of 'realistic' image of the double lotus is explicitly placed in the settings of *meiren* (beautiful woman) paintings 美人画 as a metaphor of eternal love and happy marriage, but the image embodied with the idea "joint bodies and minds of lovers" of the double lotus is more abstractly and implicitly depicted.

[66] According to *Zhou Li* 周礼 (*Rites of Zhou*), the *Women's Four Essential Virtues* are lady's fidelity (*fude* 妇德), physical charm (*furong* 妇容), propriety in speech (*fuyan* 妇言), and efficiency in needlework (*fugong* 妇功).

Fig. 7 ***A Beauty Doing Needlework by Candlelight*****, one screen painting from** ***Yongzheng's Screen of Twelve Beauties*****, Kangxi reign (1662-1722), Qing Dynasty. Ink and colours on silk, 184 cm x 98 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing.**

In an early Qing Dynasty imaginary portrait of Li Qingzhao 李清照 (**Fig 7**), the duck-shaped bronze incense burner is placed on a stand fashioned of twisted and entwined roots as table legs, which is situated very conspicuously in the front of the picture. The duck-shaped incense burner is a symbol of conjugal love in Chinese poetry. Li Qingzhao (1084-ca.1151) was a great female poet in the Song Dynasty (960-1279). She was a woman of high literacy and cultivated mind. She had an ideal marriage with her scholar-official husband and they enjoyed collecting rare books, paintings, and antiques together. She wrote a well-known poem *Zui Hua Yin* 醉花阴 (*Drunken in the Shadows of Flowers*) with the verse "my sadness was like the light fog and heavy clouds that never came to an end, the precious fragrant incense powder *ruinao* (瑞脑) was burnt in the animal-shaped incense burner (薄雾浓云愁永昼，瑞脑销金兽)" to express her loneliness at home awaiting the return of her husband.[67] This imaginary portrait of her depicts the scene from the poem very well.

[67] *Shuyu Ci*, in *Wenyuan Ge Siku Quanshu*, 1487: 556.

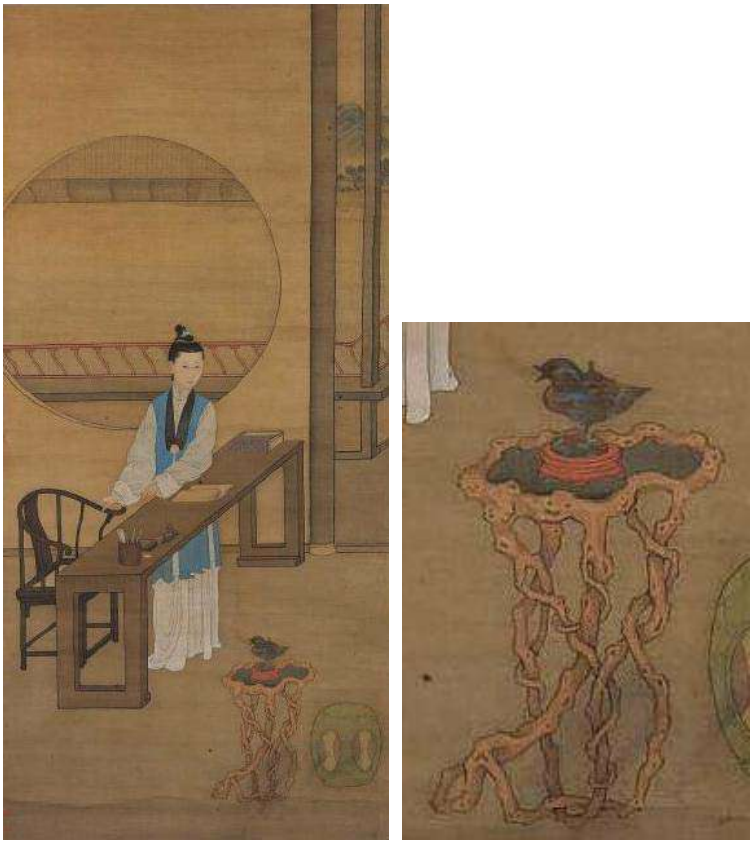

Fig. 8 Cui Wei (active ca 1720s-40s or after). Imaginary Portrait of Li Qingzhao. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk. 130 x 50.8 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.[68]

According to the notes of the literature professor Anne Birrell's *New Songs from a Jade Terrace: An Anthology of Early Chinese Love Poetry* (1982), the lotus is an erotic emblem. Its name *lian* 莲 is a pun for sexual love (*lian* 连 or *lian* 联), and its alternative name *he* 荷 means sexual union (*he* 合).[69] Lotus leaves are also erotic emblems, denoting passion, while the lotus roots, *ou* 藕, are a pun for mates (*ou* 偶), and most importantly, "their interlocking growth suggests the intimate bonds of love and entwined lovers."[70] Is it possible that the root-wood incense stand made of twisted roots is a metaphor for lovers' entwined bodies and their passion for love in some specific situations?

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[68] This painting has been referred to in some published academic articles and it was thought to be in the Palace Museum of Beijing by a few scholars, but it is not in the museum storeroom and it must come from another unknown source.

[69] Birrell 1986, p. 317.

[70] *Ibid*., p. 324.

Following Birrell, the art historian Ellen Johnston Laing indicates that trees and plants having interlocking branches or roots often imply mutual love, and she also identifies the distinct use of this in the portrait of Li Qingzhao.[71] Then, we find that the concept of the root-wood incense stand in this portrait overlaps with the idea of the double lotus, while the visualisation of the root-wood incense stand is closer to the *lianli* tree.

Fig. 9 Anonymous (False seal of Jiao Bingzhen 焦秉贞), *Seated Qing Manchu Lady*, Qing Dynasty. Hanging scroll, Ink and colours on silk, 71 x 48 cm. Private Collection.

Here is another painting (**Fig. 9**) in which the composition of the beautiful lady and the root-wood stand are conspicuous, and the state of mind conveyed is associated with the beauty's inner world. This painting depicts a Qing Manchu lady sitting upright in front of a screen. In her hair, she wears a gold ornament with a big pearl, a blue flower-shaped ornament, and a piece of red feather in the typical Manchu lady's fashion. She wears a long robe tightly fastened at the neck. Her long robe covers her whole body except her two hands and a pair of slightly exposed Manchu lady's horse shoes. She rests her left elbow on a round ball made of strings in various colours, inside of which was put a bunch of long cherry red strings. This ball is very likely to be a marriage ball, *xiuqiu* 绣球 (embroidered ball), which is usually used in the Chinese traditional custom where a girl who has come of age will throw a marriage ball to choose her future husband among a group of young men in the marriage competition. This formally dressed young Manchu lady was probably waiting for the important moment to throw her ball in the upcoming marriage competition. She tightly holds a piece of crumpled white cloth or a handkerchief in her left hand, indicating her eagerness and anxiety. She is stiffly looking in the direction of a root-wood stand on which is placed an incense burner, a vase of peonies, and

[71] Laing 1990, p. 289.

two volumes of books. This root-wood stand has twisted and interlocking roots and branches, and is surrounded by a vast area of empty space above and below in the composition, which makes it stand out. Considering the position of this Manchu lady and the location of the root-wood stand in the composition, the twisted root-wood stand might be signifying her emotions, which could be a longing for love and happy marriage, or the complex mood before throwing the marriage ball.

Fig. 10 A root-wood incense stand, 18th century, Qing Dynasty. Palace Museum, Beijing.
Fig. 11 A root-wood incense stand, 19th century, Qing Dynasty.

Fig. 12 A wood stand carved to imitate plant roots, 18th century, Qing Dynasty.

In the real world, such root-wood incense stands are still in existence. The first incense stand (**Fig. 10**) was part of the early Qing Emperor Qianlong's furniture, which is currently stored in the Palace Museum. It is made of natural root-wood and is polished to a high sheen, and is of the highest quality of its type. The second one (**Fig. 11**) is a nineteenth century root-wood incense stand assembled from three pieces fastened together with disguised wooden pegs, in order to create the illusion of a single piece of the 'naturally' twisted tree root through a

highly-skilled artificial craft. The last is an eighteenth century wood stand carved from a single piece of wood to simulate a root-wood stand (**Fig. 12**). To modern eyes, this kind of root-wood incense stand could never be associated with the double lotus, but it has been often depicted in the early Qing beautiful woman paintings as a motif evoking the literary idea of eternal love or sexual love and twisted bodies of lovers which was embodied by the double lotus.

In spite of the fact that every early Qing beautiful woman painting has its own context, theme, and prominent state of mind, there was a stereotyped iconographical system of idealised Chinese beautiful women that followed certain "beauty manuals" and represented fixed ideals in the early Qing beautiful woman paintings. In the late Ming and early Qing periods, literary works aimed at creating an iconographical system of beautiful women as appreciated by men started to appear and became widely spread from the early Qing Dynasty.[72] The standards and criteria of ideal beauty were collected in the early Qing "beauty manuals" including *Yuerong Bian* 悦容编 (*The Compilation of Pleasing Appearance*) by Wei Yong 卫泳 (active 1643-1654), *Meiren Pu* 美人譜 (*The Manual of Beautiful Women*) by Xu Zhen 徐震 (active 1659-1711), and *Huadi Shiyi* 花底拾遗 (*Picking the Rest below the Flowers*) by Li Suiqiu 黎遂球 (1602-1646), and these requirements overlapped with the visualised beauties in the early Qing *meiren* paintings.[73] The authors were all men, and this iconographical system of beauty and beautiful surroundings was created from the male's view. Besides the women's delicate make-up and dress, even the facial expressions and mood of the beauty presented to the man were recorded and represented in the paintings, e.g. "sweetly smiling nearby the bed and pillow (枕边娇笑)" and "secretly making eyes at the male viewer (眼色偷传)".[74]

One of the distinguishing features of these criteria was that the interior elements surrounding the beauty within the woman's space were just as important as the external and inner beauty of the woman herself. This is because the objects contained in the woman's space determined the men's judgement of the woman's taste, talents, literacy level and all the other skills and aspects of character in that period. For example, books are very often placed beside the beauty and "women reading" was a popular theme among the early Qing *meiren* paintings (**Figs. 13, 14 & 15**). Under the standards of the *Eruditeness and Archaism* (*Bogu* 博古) section written in *Yuerong Bian*, "women reading" shows a charm about her Confucian manner or scholarly taste that was

[72] Wu 2009, p. 268.

[73] These "beauty manuals" are mostly collected in Chong Tianzi's (虫天子) *Xiangyan Congshu* 香艳丛书 (*Book of Fragrance and Gorgeousness*) which was compiled in the late Qing Dynasty.

[74] The two examples are from Xuzhen's *Meiren Pu*. See *Xiangyan Congshu,* 2: 28.

appreciated by men.[75] "Women reading" was also listed in the "Beauty's Supplement (美人之助)" category of Xu Zhen's *Meiren Pu*.[76]

Similarly, talents, skills, manners, and activities particularly chosen for beautiful women were also recorded in the "beauty manuals", e.g. playing the zither or flute, playing chess, viewing paintings, embroidering, holding a fan, growing orchids, and burning incense. The corresponding objects were painted as interior decorations within the woman space in the woman paintings, implying the female room owner's charming character. This is related to contemporary high-class courtesan culture.

By investigating and comparing the visual manifestation of beauty from the early Qing women paintings and the various standards and requirements from the "beauty manuals", we can summarise the criteria or indicators of a beauty who was intentionally seductive and alluring to the viewer in the *meiren* paintings into four categories below, each with a few examples:

1. Clothing and Accessories (Ornaments): Wearing flowers and hairpins in the hair, wearing a translucent robe or exposing part of the body, holding a translucent fan and exposing part of the body behind it, showing the bound feet, etc.
2. Facial Expression and Body Posture: Head resting on the hand, one finger lifted to touch the face, one leg crossed, S-shaped body pose, direct eye contact with the viewer, or looking at the audience in a shy and reserved way, etc.[77]
3. Objects implying Knowledge, Talents, Skills, and Taste: Book volumes, scrolls, scholar's objects (e.g. inkstone, brush), musical instruments (e.g. zither, flute), etc.
4. Settings of Sensuality (smell and fragrance, elegance): Flowers in the vase, Buddha's hand citron, incense burner, lighted candle, etc.

The first two categories are more direct erotic indicators than the third and fourth groups. If the elements from all four categories simultaneously appear in one *meiren* painting, this painting was very likely to have been originally designed to be erotic and visually seductive for the viewers. The root-wood furniture was considered as the fashionable interior object among the elite class, *literati* group, and wealthy merchants and revealed high taste from the late Ming Dynasty.[78] This article argues that the root-wood furniture also represents one of the seductive indicators or erotic iconographies in certain circumstances.

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[75] *Ibid*., 2: 28.

[76] *Ibid*., 1: 6. Xu Zhen's *Meiren Pu* contains ten categories of criteria for an idealised beauty.

[77] It was probably a favourite stratagem in Chinese beautiful women paintings that a beautiful lady was depicted to appear aloof but somehow available. Being a "cold beauty" was one of the seductive tricks.

[78] Hay 2010, pp. 134-136.

Fig. 13 Leng Mei 冷枚 (active 1677-1742), Beautiful Woman in an Interior, with a Dog, dated 1724, Qing Dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 175 x 104 cm. Tianjin Museum.
Fig. 14 Leng Mei (active 1677-1742), Lady Reading a Book, dated 1721, Qing Dynasty. Hanging scroll, framed, ink and colours on silk, 105 x 62 cm. Esknazi Ltd., London.

In the *meiren* paintings by the early Qing painter Leng Mei 冷枚 (active 1677-1742) (**Fig. 13**), there is a beauty wearing the flower-patterned hair ornaments in the early-Qing fashioned hairstyle and costume. She is leaning on the desk, resting one knee on a stool below, one hand supports her chin with the little finger tip curved, and overall, she is presenting a very charming S-shaped pose of her feminine body. She also makes irresistible eye contact with the audience viewing the painting. These are very obvious seductive indicators from the first two categories above. She is holding a rolled-up book for reading and there is a book volume on the desk, which shows her scholarly taste and literacy level. She was painted in a pleasurable setting of sensuality: the Buddha's hand citron of fresh fragrance on the desk, a flute and a landscape painting hanging on the wall, and a root-wood stand holding a vase arranged with flowers, a red lacquer incense box, an incense burner and its little tools. Beside the beauty, a small dog is looking in the direction of her invisible feet hidden in her robe. Judged from the four categories composing a seductive *meiren* painting, this painting contains all the elements that give the whole painting an erotic flavour.

In James Cahill's words, it represents a distinct "heating up".[79] In this beautiful woman painting, the root-wood incense stand could imply the mutual love between lovers and twisted sexual bodies of lovers.

In another *meiren* painting (**Fig. 14**) by Leng Mei, the beautiful lady is also holding an open book but reading it in her left hand. She also crosses one leg in an S-shaped pose and seats on a couch next to a vase of flowers. There is a stool similar to that in **Fig.13** nearby and a large landscape screen at the back of the couch. The way she rests her leg generates a diagonal ground line and directs the viewer's eyes to the objects on the right. In the same right-hand corner, there is a root-wood incense stand (**Fig. 14a**) which is in the almost same style and shape of the one before (**Fig. 13a**). This root-wood stand is a motif that appears in the two *meiren* paintings of the "women reading" theme. Corresponding to the four categories of "beauty manuals", this anonymous *meiren* painting also conveys a sense of seduction, though the lady is looking down at her book rather than looking into the audience like the former beauty. Thus, this root-wood stand was also able to act as an erotic indicator suggesting the alluring message in the context of "beauty reading".

Fig. 13a Detail of Fig. 13
Fig. 14a Detail of Fig. 14
Fig. 15 After Cui Wei (active ca. 1720s-40s or after), *Passing the Summer by a Lotus Pond*. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 121.5 x 41.3 cm. Collection of Ferdinand M. Bertholet, Amsterdam.

[79] Cahill 2010, p. 186.

The whole painting *Passing the Summer by a Lotus Pond* (**Fig. 15**) depicts a semi-nude lady escaping the summer heat on a veranda overlooking a lotus pond in an architectural and landscape setting. It was attributed by Cahill to be a close copy after a painting by Cui Wei (active ca. 1720s-40s or after) who painted the imaginary Li Qingzhao's portrait.[80] It has a few erotic features: visible bound feet, translucent skirt draped loosely over her waist, holding a translucent fan between the parted legs, hand touching her cheek, and gazing out at the viewer. In this context, the root-wood stand next to the beauty is likely to hint at the erotic meaning of the entwined bodies of lovers.

Fig. 16 Attributed to Gu Jianlong 顾见龙, *Pan Jinlian Suffers Ignominy for Adultery with a Servant* 潘金莲私仆受辱, an illustration to the novel *Jin Ping Mei* Chapter 12, 17th century, early Qing Dynasty. Album leaf, ink and colours on silk. Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City.

[80] Cahill 2010, p. 192.

Fig. 17 Attributed to Gu Jianlong, *Jingji Flirts with Jinlian on the Lantern Festival* 敬济元夜戏娇姿, an illustration to the novel Jin Ping Mei Chapter 29, 17th century, early Qing Dynasty. Album leaf, ink and colours on silk. Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City.

In the early Qing narrative illustrated album of the late Ming erotic novel *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅(*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), the root-wood stand has been arranged in a different way. It is set in the explicitly erotic position which corresponds to the plot of the novel. Compared with the root-wood stands in the *meiren* paintings above, it has a smaller size and proportion. It is also placed in the corner instead of a position close to the main figures. It seems that the painter was trying to hide it yet still make it visible. It has an empty surface, which means it does not show its function i.e. used to hold an incense burner or anything else. Naturally, the audience might question the appearance and function of it. The first album leaf (**Fig. 16**) is an illustration of the *Jin Ping Mei* Chapter 12 where Pan Jinlian is punished to take off all her clothes and whipped by Ximen Qing for committing adultery with the servant Qintong 琴童. The second album leaf (**Fig. 17**) also depicts a scene with an erotic flavour where Chen Jingji 陈经济 flirts with Pan Jinlian, a concubine of his father-in-law Ximen Qing, at the Lantern Festival. Combined with the narrative of the illustrated album leaves, the symbolic meaning of the twisted tree roots will be noticed if the viewer has a certain level of literacy.

Fig. 18 Anonymous (False seal of Qiu Ying 仇英), *Subtle Pleasures*, 19th century, Qing Dynasty. Album leaf, ink and colours on silk. Collection of Ferdinand M. Bertholet.

This subtly erotic painting (**Fig.18**) depicts a delicate and pretty lady sitting on a young man's leg and reading with him in a room of the scholar studio style, a root-wood stand displaying a duck-shaped incense burner as a love symbol, an incense box, and a vase with a piece of red coral are positioned in the very front of the painting. The function of this root-wood stand seems similar to the one in the imaginary portrait of Li Qingzhao by Cui Wei in that it is quietly implying the symbolic meaning of love and "joint" "entwined" bodies.

Fig. 19 Anonymous, *The Gardens of Pleasure,* late 17th century and early 18th century, Qing Dynasty. Album leaf, ink and colours on silk. Collection of Ferdinand M. Bertholet.

In this explicitly erotic painting (**Fig. 19**), a root-wood stand with incense burning objects sits close to the sexual encounter going on which involves one man, one lady, and a maid. Its symbolic meaning of sexual love is hinted at.

Above all, the erotic symbolism of the root-wood incense stand that was based on the idea of "joint" and "entwined" from the double lotus and the *lianli* tree seems obvious and universal in the Chinese beautiful women paintings and erotic paintings. Furthermore, this erotic iconographic use might be extended to the images with the root-wood daybed or couch, but it was less obvious than the root-wood incense stand and so we need to be more cautious when attributing the meaning of its appearance.

Fig. 20 Anonymous, follower of Leng Mei (False seal of Leng Mei),
***A Woman Resting from Reading*. Hanging scroll, ink and**
Colours on silk, 163 x 97 cm. The British Museum.
Fig. 21 Anonymous (False seal of Tang Yin 唐寅), *A Beauty with a Fan*,
18th century, Qing Dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk,159 x 102 cm.
University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.

This beauty's portrait (**Fig. 20**) by a follower of Leng Mei depicts an attractive lady resting from reading in a seductive posture: flowers in the hair, jewelled earrings and bracelets, cheek resting on the hand, translucent robe making her red undergarment visible, one leg crossed on the root-wood couch, and an S-shaped pose. This is a painting with an explicitly erotic atmosphere. Like the root-wood stand, the root-wood couch was also made of twisted tree roots, and it

might be possible to hint at the similar seductive message of entwined bodies and minds of lovers as this is not the only *meiren* painting having a charming beauty seated on a root-wood couch in an erotic atmosphere.

In this 18th century *meiren* painting with the false seal of Tang Yin 唐寅 (**Fig. 21**), a dressed-up beauty is holding a translucent fan with orchids and is seated on a couch made of root wood covered by elaborate brocade with colourful patterns. Her face is painted in Tang Yin's typical technique of "Three Whites (*san bai* 三白)" (white forehead, white nose, and white chin) and painted red on the cheeks. She is turning her face to the viewer with a sweet smile, holding direct eye contact with her audience. The banana tree seen through the window was a plant which appealed to *literati* tastes, and it evokes the endless loneliness of the lovelorn woman and symbolises the feminine fragility in Chinese poetry.[81]

Fig. 22 Anonymous, *Putting Out the Lamp*, Qing Dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 136.4 cm x 59.1 cm. University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.
Fig. 23 After Gu Jianlong 顾见龙 (False seal of Gu Jianlong), *Pleasure on the Root-wood Daybed*, Qing Dynasty. Album leaf, ink and colours on silk. Private Collection.

[81] Xu Bo 2011, pp. 36-47.

This anonymous *meiren* painting (**Fig. 22**) depicts a beauty who wears pearl hair ornaments, earrings, and bracelets extinguishing a lamp at night. She is sitting on a daybed of gnarled tree roots with her leg crossed to her right, leaning on a hardwood table, and resting her on her left hand with her index finger curved. She is gazing into the distance and lost in melancholy thoughts, with the same background of banana trees.

The three beauties, each attractively seated on a root-wood couch in these settings creating an erotic flavour. The erotic album leaf (**Fig. 23**) clearly shows the sexual intercourse of a man and a woman on the root-wood couch, which was placed with the patterned fabric on the top. The zither, incense burner, book volumes, blue-and-green landscape on the screen, flowers and plants all compose a sensual and scholarly setting that followed the rules of the *meiren* paintings and "beauty manuals". This album leaf demonstrates that the root-wood couch was able to function as a bed for sexual encounters in the visual arts.

Fig. 24 Anonymous, *A Lady Reading a Book*, 18th century, Qing Dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 159 x 102 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Fig. 25 Anonymous (Signature of Jiao Bingzhen 焦秉贞), *A Lady Admiring Flowers*, late 17th and early 18th century, Qing Dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk. Private Collection.

However, the appearance of the root-wood couch was not an erotic indicator in every case among the *meiren* paintings. In the two *meiren* paintings above (**Figs.**

24 & 25), the two beauties are both seated on a couch made of twisted gnarled root wood. One is reading the poetry for the gentry ladies ("*guixiu* 閨秀"), another is admiring flowers which was also an encouraged activity in the "beauty manuals". Although the interiors are sensual and the second lady crosses her right leg over the left, they both sit straight, officially or stiffly compared with the seductive ladies before. Therefore, the root-wood couch in this context might not be designed to function as a symbol of love or a sexual iconography. It is more likely to be only a piece of luxury furniture showing the status and the elegant taste of these gentry women. This use of the root-wood furniture, not as a metaphor of eternal love or sexual passion, was probably more practical and applicable in the Qing Court.

Fig. 26 a. ***A Beauty Resting from Reading*** **26 b.** ***A Beauty Looking at a Mirror*****, two screen paintings from Yongzheng's Screen of Twelve Beauties, Kangxi reign (1662-1722). Palace Museum, Beijing.**

The Yongzheng's Screen of Twelve Beauties contains twelve highly-stereotyped images of beautiful woman doing things following the rules of ideal beauties in the "beauty manuals". From the scholars' debates, the twelve beauties on the screen could be twelve different idealised women, or only one beauty who was probably Yinzhen's (胤禛) dame-consort and Yongzheng's empress later. No

matter who they are, this set of *meiren* paintings was unlikely to have any erotic meaning at the beginning.

It was commissioned by Yinzhen, a prince before he became the Emperor Yongzheng, and the purpose was to decorate a screen in the Deep Willow Reading Hall (*Shenliu Dushu Tang* 深柳读书堂), a study within his private quarters at the Summer Palace. Between the 51st and 60th year of the Kangxi reign (1712-1721) when Kangxi's many sons were scrambling for the right of inheriting the throne, Yinzhen pretended to keep himself away from the fight but finally ascended to the throne as he expected.[82] During the fight while in the imperial palace, it was proper and safe for him to show his interest and admiration to the beautiful women, or his consort, but inappropriate to generate any erotic metaphors in the room for reading and studying. The poems written by Yinzhen mounted behind the beauty as a piece of decorative object were describing the lady's beauty and inner mind, mostly about the lady's loneliness, boudoir pining, and long periods of waiting for her lover, and it does not imply any erotic message.

The first lady is resting from reading, while the second is looking at herself in a bronze mirror. These are gentry women's activities, and their facial expressions and postures are normal and calm without much seductive intention. In the first painting (**Fig. 23a**), there is a root-wood incense stand placed in the extended room on the left side of the beauty, where the viewer's attention will be naturally led. The shape and style of this root-wood incense stand is visually identical to the one in Leng Mei's two *meiren* paintings (**Figs. 13a & 14a**). The second painting of *A Beauty Looking at a Mirror* (**Fig. 23b**) has a similar composition with the anonymous painting of the gentry woman's reading (**Fig. 21**), and it also has root-wood couch of the same style. Although these two screen paintings both have the root-wood furniture in the similar styles to the other *meiren* paintings above, they could not carry any erotic symbolism in the specific Qing Court context.

Through the "representations" of the idea of "joint bodies and minds of lovers" embodied in the double lotus and also the *lianli* tree, we have seen that the love theme and the political symbol are allowed to appear together in the *Lianli Bo* raised in the Qing Dynasty Imperial Garden which functioned as a space for both leisure and rituals. In the beautiful women paintings and erotic paintings, the root-wood stand is a commonly used object in interior settings to represent the idea of twisted bodies of lovers to match the themes and contexts of women's longing for love, beautiful women's seduction, erotic narrative, or erotic paintings. The root-wood couch or daybed is also able to have similar symbolism. However, the use and justification of the two root-wood objects change with the specific situation, and the proportion used to represent the idea of twisted bodies of lovers can be limited as there are instances where they are

[82] Yang 2011, pp. 6-23.

painted as luxury interior objects only, rather than erotic indicators, in the women's surroundings.

The Buddhist-related Perspective

The Idea of Root-wood Furniture: From Buddhism to Fashion and Seduction

In spite of the fact that the root-wood stand and couch are often shown in Chinese paintings of beautiful women and in erotic paintings, the history of root-wood furniture can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), but at this time being solely associated with Buddhist figures.[83] In the distinctive paintings of arhats (**Figs. 27 & 28**) attributed to the famous monk painter Guanxiu 贯休 (823-912) during the late Tang Dynasty and early Five Dynasties, these arhats are seated either on rocks or on root-wood chairs. The surface of the root-wood chairs look like the rocks, having various holes in irregular shapes and showing the quality of hardness but also a smoothness of outline (**Fig. 27a**). In the paintings, the root-wood chairs were considered to be an essential personal object for the arhats. They were painted in relatively thick black ink lines and were physically bonded with the body of the arhats in a conspicuous position in the painting. The unusual shapes and surfaces of the root-wood chairs mimic the grotesque facial features and expressions of the arhats. These paintings were often set in rock grottos and amongst trees in the mountains, indicating a reclusive life spent in solitude. In these Buddhist paintings, the root-wood furniture symbolises a hermit's eccentricity and rough surroundings, possibly serving as a metaphor for spiritual perseverance.

[83] Hay 2010, pp. 134-136.

Fig. 27 Attributed to Guanxiu (823-912), Luohan (Arhat). Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 123.7 x 71 cm.National Palace Museum, Taipei.
Fig. 27a Detail of painting in Fig. 27

Fig. 28 Attributed to Guanxiu (823-912), One of Sixteen Arhats' Paintings, late Tang dynasty and early Five Dynasties. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 92.2 cm x 45.2 cm. Kunaichō Collection (Japanese Imperial Household Collection).

In the late Ming Dynasty, due to the rise of lay Buddhism, the use of root-wood furniture became a lasting luxury fashion trend which expanded to be used in a non-religious context, especially in the *Jiangnan* region, Guangdong, and

Beijing.[84] The root-wood furniture remained a popular motif accompanying the arhats in Ming and Qing Buddhist figure paintings, but it was also used by the *literati* group and by wealthy merchants. Images of root-wood furniture were often depicted in scholar's portraits, paintings of beautiful women, erotic paintings, and other kinds of figure paintings. This fashion was continued in the Qing Dynasty and was adopted by the Manchu Court.

A Glimpse at the Sex Manual

The woodblock-printed image (**Fig. 29**) depicts the sexual affair of a couple in a pavilion surrounded by a lotus pond in the summer heat. With the curtains drawn to allow in the cool breeze, the couple sit on a round cushion decorated with floral patterns, in front of a single panel screen depicting a landscape. To the left of the couple, a pair of Mandarin ducks play in the water among the lotus flowers and leaves. This couple hold each other so tightly that the two bodies look like one body in the shape of a closed lotus flower. The title of this image is *The Double Lotus* (translated by Van Gulik), and the idea of this sexual posture was the same as that of the double lotus in the Ming-Qing fictions where two lovers' bodies were connected to become one unit through the emotions of love and sexual desire. This image more expressly and visually represents this idea.

Fig. 29 *The Double Lotus Posture*, reprinted from woodblocks made in the late Ming Dynasty. Woodblock print. Van Gulik Collection.

84 *Ibid*., pp. 134-136.

Fig. 30 *The Double Lotus Posture*, Qing Dynasty.
Album leaf, ink and colours on silk. Private Collection.

This image has a woodblock-printed poem beside it, which reads:

> 一捧莲
> 荷风醒暑倦，并坐蒲团，把禅机慢阐。驾莲航，扑个殷勤；开法门，往来方便。
> 你身有我，我身有你，团栾头做圆满。愁亦愁，苦海无边；喜杀那，善根种遍。[85]
>
> *The Double Lotus*
> The breeze over the lotus pond has roused the pair, tired by the summer heat. They sit together on the cattail round cushion. He lets his Meditation Instrument rise slowly and permits it to ride in the Lotus Boat thrusting with zeal he has opened the Dharma Door and now settles into an easy rocking movement.
> Your body contains mine; my body is part of yours. Together we form a perfectly round, unbroken circle. Sorrow is sorrow; boundless is the Sea of Suffering. What is the supreme pleasure? The seeds of good deeds are planted everywhere.

This poem has a distinct Buddhist flavor arising from the inclusion of the round cushion (*putuan* 蒲团), Meditation Instrument (*chanji* 禅机), the Lotus Boat (*lianhang* 莲航), the Dharma Door (*famen* 法门), the perfectly round circle (*yuanman* 圆满), the Sea of Suffering (*kuhai* 苦海), the seeds of good deeds (*shangen* 善根), all of which are Buddhist-related terms. The cattail round cushion which is made of cattail stems was often used by Chan monks while

[85] Wang and Wang 1990, p. 59

meditating. The Lotus Boat was not a common Buddhist term, but it includes the Buddhist symbol of the lotus and can therefore be seen as a Buddhist metaphor in this context. The Meditation Instrument means the Chan Buddhist subtleties that could be words or gestures used to stimulate sudden enlightenment. The Dharma Door in Buddhist terminology means the gate which leads to enlightenment. The perfectly round circle refers to a perfectly satisfactory state of mind when the highest level of Buddhist practice has been completed. The Sea of Suffering is a Buddhist metaphor for the frustration and misery in one's life. The seeds of good deeds refer to the good aspects of a human beings' nature, which existed before birth in the Buddhists' understanding. This image of the double lotus sexual position with its accompanying poem compares enjoyable sexual intercourse to the process of Buddhist meditation. The closely interwoven atmosphere of both sexuality and Buddhism creates a mood of mysticism and humour.

The colourful album leaf (**Fig. 30**) belongs to a Qing Dynasty album based on the late Ming Dynasty woodblock prints. It shows the continuity and popularity of this double lotus sexual image in the Ming and Qing dynasties, and it might not be the only Qing Dynasty edition based on the original woodblock prints. From the late Ming version to the Qing version, more softness and details of the brush work (e.g. hairs, decorative motifs) and rich colours can be seen, and these images could be commissioned and bought by wealthy merchant families or the elite, whereas the late Ming woodblock prints were likely to have been mass produced.

The Poetic Combination of Eternal Love and Buddhism

Feng Xiaoqing 冯小青 (1594-1612) was a talented woman who died at the young age of eighteen from her longing for love during the Wanli period (1573-1620) of the Ming Dynasty. She married a man who was from a rich and powerful family in Hangzhou and served as his concubine, but the man had a cruel wife who was jealous of her and drove her off to an isolated mountain.[86] She became a faithful student of the novel *Mudan Ting* 牡丹亭 (*The Peony Pavilion*) – reading it, commenting on it, and writing poems to relieve her sadness. In 1612, like the heroine Du Li'niang 杜丽娘 of *Mudan Ting*, she died after she had left portraits of herself. Unfortunately, most of her poems and comments on the novel were destroyed by the jealous wife. Among the surviving pieces written by her, a beautiful poem reads:

> Kowtowing in front of the eminent Monk Mercy Cloud (*ciyun* 慈云), I wish I would not be sent to the Buddhist *Western Pure Land* nor the heavenly paradise

[86] Li 2010, pp. 259-260.

> after death. I just wish I could be a drop of the Buddhist willow dew;[87] it will fall into the human world, and turn into a double lotus (稽首慈云大士，莫生西土莫生天。愿为一滴杨枝水，洒作人间并蒂莲).[88]

All Buddhists prayed and dreamed to live in the *Western Pure Land*, and no one would reject the opportunity to go to this heavenly paradise, but Feng Xiaoqing rejects it because she wants to fulfil her dream to have a happy marriage with her lover in the secular world. By contrast with the Buddhist belief, this poem makes the wish to be a double lotus (i.e. wish for eternal love) superior to the dream of the Buddhist paradise, and makes it reach a religious level. It borrows the magical power of the Bodhisattva Guanyin's willow dew from her treasured bottle, making a poetic connection between Buddhist belief and the belief in the double lotus and eternal love. It also hints at the lotus as a Buddhist symbol and presents the religious and sacred aspect of the double lotus. The story of Feng Xiaoqing and her surviving poems and letters were collected and included in *The Biography of Xiaoqing* by the lay Buddhist Jianjian (戋戋居士) in the same year of Xiaoqing's death. From then on, the story of Feng Xiaoqing was commented on and included by the *literati* in their works, and re-written to be incorporated into various pieces of fiction over the following three hundred years of the Ming and Qing dynasties.[89]

The lay Buddhist Jianjian's *The Biography of Xiaoqing* was included in its entirety in Feng Menglong's *Qingshi*.[90] In the preface of *Qingshi*, Feng Menglong writes:

> If the heaven and the earth have no love, there will be nothing in the world. If the ten thousand things have no love, they cannot extend their life. Because of the eternal love, the world is not dying (天地若无情，不生一切物。一切物无情，不能环相生。生生而不灭，由情不灭故).[91]

He believed it was the power of love that made everything stay alive, and thus he "wanted to build the religious belief of love – Loveism, and to educate all the beings in the world (我欲立情教，教诲诸众生)".[92] As the founder of Loveism, Feng swore to rescue human beings as a Buddha after death, and gave himself the Buddhist name "Buddha of Much Love and Happiness (多情欢喜如来)". Although he borrowed the name and fame of Buddha for his Loveism, the belief and practice of Loveism is against the Buddhist practice of asceticism, and he thought of love as the best religious practice and believed it was able to

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[87] The willow dew, *yangzhi shui* 杨枝水, in the Buddhist world, is a kind of precious and magical water that could make everything revive.
[88] *Qingshi*, 14: 318.
[89] Li 2010, pp. 259-273.
[90] *Qingshi*, 14: 316-319.
[91] *Ibid*., Preface: 3.
[92] *Ibid*., Preface: 3.

counteract the evilness of human beings. The use of the double lotus in *The Biography of Xiaoqing* fits his belief very well, and its symbolic meaning is lifted up to become sublime.

Conclusion: Double Lotus as a symbol of emperor's virtue? Eternal love? Sexual love? Religious belief? —— A Plant of Contradiction and Consistency

In our modern life, the double lotus is generally thought of as a stock symbol of eternal love and happy marriage, and meanwhile, it has been often reported in the newspaper as a rare and exciting phenomenon. However, the beginning and origin of the story of the double lotus in Chinese history is not about individuals' love and marriage.

About one thousand and eight hundred years ago, since the earliest existing record of the appearance of double lotus in 266 AD (West Jin Dynasty), the double lotus had been taken as a politically significant symbol of the emperor's virtue that officials strove to report, as its feature of two flower heads in one stem was seen as a sign of harmony in nature and unity of the country. As early as Eastern Han Dynasty, the plants abnormally growing two or more ears or fruits in one stalk (e.g. *jiahe* 嘉禾, *lianli* tree 连理木) and animals unusually having two bodies in one (e.g. *biyi niao* 比翼鸟, *bimu yu* 比目鱼), which shares the 'two-in-one' feature with the double lotus, were already existed and had been recorded in historical documents, and even represented in visual art. They were selected by the ruling class to be part of the auspicious omen system to assist their governing since the Han Dynasty, and the double lotus started to be chosen during the expansion of this system around the West Jin Dynasty. The way of using double lotus as an auspicious omen was continued in later dynasties in various forms of literature including *biao*, *fu*, *ji*, poetry, and regional official records, while the auspicious phenomenon or outcome signifying the emperor's virtue that the appearance of the double lotus could foresee was specified to the subjects of success in Imperial Examinations, filial piety, and harvest. Thus, we see how the political significance of the double lotus was initiated and developed through different dynasties, but we must also notice that this process is relatively steady and in the later periods, the meaning of the double lotus in the political aspect seems stock and stiff compared with the changes of its meaning related to the love theme.

During the Jin Dynasty and especially the Southern Dynasties (almost the same period when its political meaning was defined), the double lotus gradually became an emblem of eternal love in the love poetry, and then in the stories of love. In the late Ming and early Qing period, the double lotus was developed to be associated with the sexual desire and illicit love in the literary works, and this part is opposed to the modern perspective of thinking the double

lotus as a symbol of pure and eternal love and 'same heart (同心)' that was derived from the early stories of double lotus. During the same Ming-Qing period, another two closely correlated concepts of *lianli* and *hehuan* also experienced a transformation of its meanings, being more open to the fields of erotic love, illicit love, and carnal desire, while the *lianli* tree was also treated as an important auspicious omen for the court in the early periods, which is similar to the double lotus.

The idea "joint bodies and minds of love" from the double lotus was represented in the Ming-Qing visual culture. The artificially made *lianli* trees in the Qing Imperial Palace have apparently conveyed this idea together with it political meaning. The widely accepted symbol of eternal love is explicitly shown in the 'realistic' depiction of the double lotus in the paintings. The erotic idea of entwined bodies of lovers was implicitly embedded into the Ming-Qing *meiren* paintings and erotic paintings in the form of the root-wood stand and couch surrounding the beautiful women or the couple in love. It is difficult to relate the double lotus to the root-wood furniture through the modern eyes, but after acquiring a certain level of the knowledge of classical Chinese literary works like what the well-educated people of its time did, the concealed idea beneath the form of double lotus can be hinted. Thus, we may consider rethinking the way in which we understand the seemingly conventional objects.

The root-wood furniture was originally possessed by Buddhist figures with Buddhist-related metaphorical meanings. We might question why the root-wood furniture transmitting the erotic idea of the double lotus in the Ming-Qing visual art has a Buddhist origin. And then we see how the late Ming sex manual played with the Buddhist terminology accompanying the image of the 'double lotus' sexual posture. The late Ming poet and the tragic heroine Feng Xiaoqing raised the double lotus belief in eternal love to a religious height beyond the Buddhist belief, and the late Ming virtue of '*qing* 情' exemplified by Feng Menglong's Loveism was able to justify this thought of the poem.

Although the double lotus carried various symbolic meanings that might be opposing or contradictive, these meanings always reflect on the extremely idealised situations that people dream of. At the beginning, it is the emperor's dream in Chinese feudal society that his virtue and wisdom can be sensed by the heavens that his country will be granted a double lotus as an auspicious omen. Later on, it more became the ordinary people's dream to realise the union of bodies and minds with their lovers, which the double lotus represents. Under the social background of the Ming-Qing period, when this 'double lotus' dream becomes so strong that it can be superior to the life, it reached a religious level and became an ultimate fantasy in the fictions and images.

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LEAVING THE 'BOUDOIR' FOR THE OUTSIDE WORLD: TRAVEL AND TRAVEL WRITINGS BY WOMEN FROM THE LATE MING TO THE LATE QING PERIODS

YUAN XING 苑星
(City University of Hong Kong)

Introduction

In pre-modern China, women's lives were nearly always confined within their boudoirs. As a result, the subjects of their writings had close connections with their boudoir life: they used to sing about the objects they saw or played upon, to record the activities they undertook, and to express the feelings they had – hence this genre is known as "Boudoir Writing" (*Guizuo* 閨作). During the Ming and Qing dynasties, although the quantity of women's writings rose sharply, most of their subjects still fall within this genre, leaving the reader all too aware of their restrictive lives. However, there were exceptions: some women did take journeys out of their tiny boudoir world into the broad outside world, and wrote poems and essays on their unusual travels. This category of writing broke through the traditional limitation of Boudoir Writing, and formed a new element in women's literature in late imperial China.

1. Courtesans' journeys and writings in the late Ming Dynasty

In her monograph *Herself an Author*, Grace S. Fong has discussed the journeys and writings of three talented women in the late Ming: Xing Cijing (邢慈靜, fl.1573-fl.1640), Wang Fengxian (王鳳嫻, fl.1573-fl.1620) and Li Yin (李因, 1610-1685).[1] We should note that these women did not travel by themselves, nor travel for travel's sake. Instead, they accompanied their husbands, who were either going to faraway places to take up official positions, or returning home after finishing their official duties. And in some cases, their husbands might have died in post, so they escorted the coffins all the way back home for burial. In contrast, some courtesans were more independent and free – they travelled on their own and over a wider territory. Xue Susu (薛素素, fl.1575-fl.1652), one of the Eight Most Famous Gifted Courtesans in the Qinhuai Pleasure Quarters

[1] Grace S. Fong, 2008.

(*Qinhuai Bayan* 秦淮八艷) in Nanjing, journeyed to Beijing, and spent a pleasant time there, in her youth. As recorded in Qian Qianyi (錢謙益, 1582-1664)'s *Small Biographies Concerning Poetic Collections of the Various Dynasties* (*Liechao Shiji Xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳), Xue was skilled at painting orchids and composing poems, and also skilled at pellet-shooting on horseback, calling herself a female knight-errant. When young in Beijing, she, along with wealthy youths, rode their horses to the suburbs and engaged in pellet-shooting, and she became so popular that crowds of people came to watch her performance.[2] Xue's experiences in Beijing also attracted the attention of some *literati*, who commemorated her in their writings: in his book *Remaining Words of the First and Second* (*Jiayi Shengyan* 甲乙剩言), Hu Yinglin (胡應麟, 1551-1602) says that, besides the elegant and lovely Xue, none of the other courtesans in Beijing was excellent;[3] and the poet Qian Tinglang (錢廷烺, fl. in Qianlong and Jiaqing periods) composed a memorial *ci* poem (詞) on Xue's former residence in the capital.[4] Later in her life, Xue travelled back to the south, and her poetry anthology was named *Drafts from a Journey to the South* (*Nanyou Cao* 南游草).[5] Unfortunately this collection of poems has been lost, but the name of the anthology still implies that these poems were written during Xue's travels in the south. Having been recorded in some poetry collections complied by other writers in or after Xue's era, some of her poems do still exist today, including those on the subject of travelling to Mount Mao (茅山), Mount Jiao (焦山), Danyang (丹陽), and West Lake – all of which sites are in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. Thus Xue's journey in the southeast was recorded by herself and the record handed down to us today.

Some women made their journeys with reluctance: when escorting her husband's coffin from the faraway Guizhou to home in Shandong, Xing Cijing assumed her love and responsibility as a wife, but she certainly disliked this hard journey thousands of miles long, and in her essay *Summary of the Journey from Qian* (*Qiantu Lüe* 黔途略) the mountains and waters along the way are described as terrible and full of danger.[6] However, the distinguished courtesan Wang Wei (王微, fl.1597-fl.1647) did naturally love taking journeys among mountains and rivers. As Qian Qianyi records, Wang was born in Yangzhou, and orphaned at seven, she was forced to take up brothel prostitution. When she grew up, she became quite outstanding in her appearance and talent.[7] Simply dressed, she travelled alone hither and thither on the rivers and lakes in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces with her books in her boat. Then she travelled up the

[2] *Liechao Shiji Xiaozhuan*, 4: 770.
[3] *Jiayi Shengyan*, p. 7.
[4] *Guochao Cizong Bu*, 31: 278.
[5] Hu Wenkai 1957, p. 163.
[6] Grace S. Fong 2008, pp. 91-99.
[7] *Liechao Shiji Xiaozhuan*, 4: 760.

Yangtze River. She went into the Lu Mountains (廬山), and one moonlit night visited Kaixian temple (開先寺) from where she took a bird's-eye view of Green Jade Gorge (青玉峽), and, when meeting a tiger on the road, she was not at all intimidated. On finding that Bai Juyi (白居易, 772-846)'s Thatched Cottage was damaged and neglected, she helped rebuild it. Wang also visited the Dabie Mountains (大別山), Yellow Crane Tower (黃鶴樓), Parrot Backshore (鸚鵡洲) and Mount Tianzhu (天柱峰), where she picked ganoderma and watched the sunrise on three occasions.[8] She also contributed to the genre of travel records by widely collecting travel writings and compiling them into an anthology entitled *Records of Famous Mountains* (*Mingshan Ji* 名山記). Her own poetry anthology was entitled *Far Travels* (*Yuanyou Pian* 遠遊篇), informing us that it was a collection of writings on her long journeys amid the beautiful Nature.[9] Here is an example of one of her poems:

"Passing Rain Blossom Terrace Again"	重過雨花臺
The forms of spring are quiet in the eastern hills,	春姿靜東岑
The shadows of the clouds fashion a distant radiance.	雲影結遥粲
Sitting, I feel the high terrace is empty,	坐覺高臺空
Not realizing the greenish mist has shrouded half of it.	不知翠微半
Falling flowers make their own past and present.	落花自古今
Crying birds change from dawn to dusk.	啼鳥變昏旦
Reflecting on transformation, one easily goes along with change;	撫化良易遷
Things at hand serve as enjoyment for a while.	即事聊成玩
How much more so when the river opens out,	況乃晴江開
And the clear waves are lapping against the banks.[10]	渌波正拍岸

This poem is about Wang's journey to Rain Blossom Terrace (雨花臺) on the Yangtze River in Nanjing, and is Buddhist in sentiment: using her experiences there, Wang evokes concepts of the past and present, transformation and stillness, as well as the tension between the outside world and the inner world of man himself. She believed in Daoism and Buddhism (these two religions have fused and share many similarities in Chinese culture), and called herself 'Daoist Master in the Straw Garment' (*Caoyi Daoren* 草衣道人). When paying a respectful visit to Master Hanshan (*Hanshan Dashi* 憨山大師) in the Wuru Mountains (五乳峰), Wang wrote that she "wished to be a homing bird, flying among the clouds around Buddha."[11]

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[8] *Linxia Cixuan*, 9: 616.
[9] Hu Wenkai 1957, pp. 71-72.
[10] Kang-I Sun Chang and Haun Saussy 1999, p. 326.
[11] *Mingyuan Shigui*, 36: 414.

Now, we might ask, why it is the courtesans in the late Ming Dynasty that took extraordinary journeys and made ageless records? Of course, the reasons would be complex but the most important ones should be mentioned here. Firstly, most of the travels took place in the peaceful and prosperous south, which was an inviting destination, unlike the northwest where Li Zicheng (李自成, 1606-1645?) was leading a rebellion or the northeast where the Manchu invasion was underway. So the stability of society provided a stage for the travelling activities. Secondly, compared with gentlewomen from eminent families, the courtesans were freer from the Confucian orthodoxy which restricted women's activities oppressively, and were allowed to go out to travel and make friends with the male *literati*. However, for the gentlewomen, who were imprisoned in their deep boudoirs and strictly forbidden to make any male contact, free travels and association were unimaginable. In fact, *literati* intercourse with courtesans was not regarded as immoral. On the contrary, it was a romantic behaviour praised by society. *Literati* and courtesans also frequently corresponded and exchanged their verses to show off their literary talents. Thirdly, the late Ming was a time when human nature was rediscovered and highly-valued after a long oppression by the Cheng-Zhu School of Neo-Confucianism from the Song Dynasty on. The Taizhou School, which arose in the 16th century, deviated from Confucian orthodoxy and announced that every ordinary man could become a sage by behaving according to his true nature.[12] The philosopher Li Zhi (李贄, 1527-1602) declared that it was not solely by following Confucian principles that an individual could qualify him/herself as such, but that everyone was born with his/her own personal worth.[13] These progressive ideas probably provided theoretical support for individuals' by nature longing for what they needed and wanted, so that individuals were thus gradually acknowledged and respected. If a courtesan, like Wang Wei, loved beautiful mountains and waters, then she could take a brave journey – this abided by her true nature, and was a way to realize her personality, with her longing for independence and freedom, so that her behaviour was highly approved by her contemporaries. Fourthly, during late Ming, although there was little resembling a call for women's liberation or equal status with men, the talents and fine qualities of women were highly praised. Li Zhi denied that women were inferior to men in native intelligence, and declared that, on the contrary, many talented women were actually superior to men.[14] He criticized the belief that women's scope of knowledge was much narrower than men's, and announced that women could also achieve the highest Daoist level by religious cultivation.[15] In addition, by quoting Xie Ximeng (謝希孟, fl.1156-?), a rebellious disciple of the famous Neo-Confucian philosopher Lu Xiangshan

[12] *Minru Xuean*, 32: 703.
[13] *Fen Shu*, 1: 15.
[14] Ray Huang 1981, p. 208.
[15] *Fen Shu*, 2: 54-55.

(陸象山, 1139-1193), in his *History of Love* (*Qingshi* 情史), Feng Menglong (馮夢龍, 1574-1646) records Xie's words that "the extraordinary and splendid energy of the universe is always concentrated in the woman and not in the man."[16] More importantly, many male *literati* wrote prefaces for talented women's poetry anthologies, and compiled collections of women's poems. Thus, the fact that women's literary talent was highly admired certainly encouraged the courtesans to write accounts of their journeys, and send their writings to *literati* to be included in compilations.

2. Folklore records of talented women in the mid-late Qing periods

During the Qing Dynasty, some erudite women extended their travels widely, to more faraway territories, and they recorded not only the natural scenery, but also the ethnic customs and lives of people living on the edges of the Chinese cultural realm. The recording of folklore became a new element in Qing women's writings, as in previous reports by male travellers. We can make this point clearer by making two comparisons. The first is with the most famous female poet of the Qing Dynasty, Gu Taiqing (顧太清, 1799-1876). Although her poetry is of great aesthetic value, in subject-matter it still falls very much into the category of traditional Boudoir Writing, and the "travel" poetry she did write, in fact only treated short-distance excursions to nearby sites of Beijing city, where she had spent her whole life. So Gu was confined to her boudoir life, and there were no ground-breaking elements in her poems if judged on the thematic level. The other comparison to be made, is with the considerable amount of travel writings composed in the history of Chinese literature, including the above-mentioned writings by courtesans in the late Ming. Most such travel writings mainly focused on descriptions of natural scenery, while very few paid attention to local human lives. However, the travel writings by some gifted women in the Qing time did make a compensation for such a lack of folklore records.

Wang Zhenyi (王貞儀, 1768-1797) was born in a scholarly family native to Sizhou (泗州) prefecture, Anhui province, and her family later moved to settle in Jinling prefecture (Nanjing), Jiangsu province. She was a great female scientist in the mid-Qing Dynasty and produced many works on scientific subjects, including mathematics – especially trigonometry, the ball-shape of the earth and gravitation, and the eclipses of the moon. More progressively, she used scientific methods to assail the superstition of *fengshui* (風水). She also argued that men and women were equally human, and therefore

[16] *Qingshi*, 5: 185.

should have the same right to study. Wang's scientific achievements made her truly outstanding given that it was still quite unusual for women to be recognised as even having literary talent, while for Wang, she had additional talent in science. So Qian Daxin (錢大昕, 1728-1804) praised her as the only talented woman as great as Ban Zhao (班昭, fl.45-fl.117).[17] It is, however, a pity that she lived in the late imperial era. As Hu Shi (胡適, 1891-1962) said, "there were numerous talented women, whom, if had been born in a modern civilized nation, and well educated, would have made notable contributions to scientific studies, Wang Zhenyi being a good example of them. What a pity! They were born in a misshapen society, in which even men were only able to write Eight-legged Essays, and, for women, to have no knowledge was considered their virtue. Even writing poetry was an activity that women should not engage in, let alone studying in other academic fields."[18]

It is also a pity that many of Wang's works have been lost, but her extant works were compiled as an anthology named *First Collection of Defeng Pavilion* (*Defengting Chuji* 德風亭初集), which included her travel writings. In the preface of her anthology, she says that, from the age of 11 or 12, she travelled to many scenic spots with her father, and had wonderful experiences.[19] The biography in the anthology further tells us that her father took her to the northern border of the country to visit her grandfather, who was in Jilin for his official position, and when living there, she learnt archery and equitation from the wife of a Mongol general.[20] Wang produced many writings on the natural scenery and local lifestyles of Jilin. For example, the preface of her *Miscellaneous Verses on Jilin* (*Jilin Zashi* 吉林雜詩) records the newly built city in mid-Qing times:

> In Jilin, most of the buildings in the city are constructed with wood, and the streets are bounded by trees. People live alongside the River Songhua [松花江], and because they build boats on the river, it is also called Boatyard River [船廠江]. In the spring of 1676, the general of Ningguta [寧古塔, now the town of Ning'an (寧安)] was transferred here to govern the city and command all the Manchu troops. At the same time, thousands of refugees from Zhili province were moved and settled down here, because the land of Jilin is very fertile, enough to support a large population.[21]

Such records of the appearance of Jilin in Qing times serve as valuable information about the city's development on its early stages. From the northernmost part of the country, Wang Zhenyi travelled to the southernmost

[17] *Defengting Chuji*, preface: 140.
[18] Hu Shi, 1979, pp. 673-682.
[19] *Defengting Chuji*, preface: 139.
[20] *Defengting Chuji*, preface: 140.
[21] *Defengting Chuji*, 10: 210.

part – Canton, and composed several poems describing the local natural landscapes and people's lives. Her *Bamboo-twig Lyrics on Canton* (*Yuenan Zhuzhi Ci* 粵南竹枝詞) provide an overview. The Bamboo-twig Lyric was initially a form of folk song, and in the Tang Dynasty, poets such as Bai Juyi and Liu Yuxi (劉禹錫, 772-842) made use of this form of lyric in their own poetry, and gradually it was transformed into a category of literary genre, with the main subjects of ordinary folk life and love between young boys and girls. Wang Zhenyi also used this literary form to write about Canton. She has thirty poems in total, and we take four of them for analysis.[22]

The first is on Canton's distinctive climate, which was totally different from that of the Central Plain:

> The climate in Canton is the strangest;
> the weather here in December is like that in April (in the north).
> The swallows are taking care of their babies, and flowers are in full blossom;
> while the warm breeze passes by here,
> it is time for people to hole the ice to catch fish in the north.
>
> 嶺南時敘最稱奇，
> 臘月天如四月時。
> 燕子正雛花正放，
> 暖風吹過鑿冰期。

The second is about the simple and comfortable lives of local fishermen:

> In the morning, when east wind disperses the southern fog,
> the young fishermen dressed in white scull their emerald boats.
> They do not themselves eat the fish they catch,
> but exchange the fish for wine in the local market and then get drunk
> between the river and the sky.
>
> 東風晨起散蠻煙，
> 白衣兒搖翡翠船。
> 打得江魚不自吃，
> 市中換酒醉江天。

The third records the everyday lives of the local women:

> Wearing their bamboo hats, the women from poor families
> calculate their money to barter for rice and buy salt.
> Hearing that there will be a big bazaar on the thirteenth day every month,
> they come to gather in the Yapo market from every village.

[22] *Defengting Chuji*, 12: 223-225.

貧家婦女披葵帽，
換米沽鹽算長除。
聞道十三開積市，
村村都趁亞婆虛。

From the author's own note that "the Yao and Zhuang bazaars open on the thirteenth day of every month", we conclude that those women must have been from the Yao and Zhuang minorities, and, unlike the Han women, who stayed at home all day long, they went out to buy and sell for their living. So comparatively, the Yao and Zhuang women led a healthier life.

The fourth poem describes shamanistic activities, the local people's way of treating disease being decidedly superstitious and undeveloped:

When ill, the local people never turn to doctors or medicine;
instead, they perform a shamanistic dance at night.
After the dance, they pray to the gods for holy fire;
then the patients get burned with the Chinese mugwort all over their body.

疾病從無問藥醫，
夜中唯跳鬼娘旗。
跳罷敬求神火供，
一身俱灼艾沾皮。

Another talented woman who produced significant folklore writings was Zeng Yi (曾懿, 1852-1927), who lived in the late Qing to the early Republic periods. Like Wang Zhenyi, Zeng Yi also came from a scholarly family. Her father Zeng Yong (曾詠, 1813-1862) was the prefect of Ji'an (吉安) in Jiangxi province, and her mother Zuo Xijia (左錫嘉, 1831-1894) was a famous artist. Zeng Yi spent her childhood in Sichuan, and she was very intelligent and well-educated. The female poet Qu Huixiang (屈蕙纕, fl.1857-1929) spoke very highly of Zeng's talent, pointing out that Zeng's poems were quite similar to those of the great poet Du Fu (杜甫, 712-770), both poets being nurtured by the beautiful natural environments of Shu (Sichuan), and that when reading Zeng's poetry, one would feel as if he/she was enjoying the ethereal music, never conscious of the mundane sounds of *zheng*-zither or *pipa*-lute any longer.[23] Besides poetry, Zeng Yi also produced remarkable writings concerning female education, Chinese medicine and culinary skills, which served as evidence of the breadth of her abilities. Her works were compiled into a collection entitled *Collected Poems and Ci-lyrics from Ancient-joy Studio* (*Guhuanshi Shiciji* 古歡室詩詞集), which also included her travel writings. She married Yuan Youan (袁幼安, 19th cent.) whose mother Zuo Xixuan (左錫璇, 1829-1895) was Zeng's maternal aunt, and

[23] *Guhuanshi Shiciji*, Qu Huixiang's preface: 310-311.

who was also very cultivated. The couple enjoyed a happy married life, and shared a common interest in poetry, painting and antiquity. Later, Yuan Youan was appointed to an official position in Fujian province, so, accompanying her husband, Zeng Yi travelled from Sichuan to Fujian along the Yangtze River, and her travel writings were composed during that time. She produced several poems describing the landscape of the famous Three Gorges, which she passed through by boat. *The Height of Mount Wu* (*Wushan Gao* 巫山高) goes:

> Mount Wu towers beyond the sky:
> even the flying birds cannot reach its very icy summit
> The clouds float around the mountain's waist;
> and when it becomes sunny, the wind blows the clouds dispersed.
> The currents run rapidly washing the cliffs which rise sharply above the water;
> and the flow of water is like the surge of thousands of troops.
> There are numerous huge rocks scattered in the Yanyu Reef;
> and the roaring waves beating the rocks make a sky-shaking sound.[24]
>
> 巫山嵯峨插天表，
> 絕頂衝寒滅飛鳥。
> 山腰環合氣氤氳，
> 晴風吹空散白雲。
> 山腳壁立水勢奔，
> 水如導瀉湧千軍。
> 灩澦石嶙峋，
> 驚濤拍天聲。

This poem readily reminds the reader of the description of the Wu Gorge in the famous *Commentary on the Water Classic* (*Shuijing Zhu* 水經註) written by Li Daoyuan (酈道元, fl. 470-527) and in some poems or *ci* lyrics by great litterateurs such as Li Bai (李白, 701-762), Du Fu and Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037-1101). In fact, such descriptions of the Wu Gorge have become historical records, as the landscape along the Yangtze River has been completely changed since the Three Gorge Dam was constructed: the water level was raised sharply so the mountains alongside the river no longer look so towering; and the river is more like a huge reservoir now, flowing very slowly, with no swift currents any longer; and the once famous and dangerous Yanyu Reef was removed by an explosion in 1958, and is now merely a historical memory.

When living in Fujian, Zeng Yi also used the Bamboo-twig *ci*-lyric genre to write about the special scenery and customs there. There are five poems in her *Bamboo-twigs Ci-lyric on the South of Fujian* (*Minnan Zhuzhi Ci* 閩南竹枝詞).[25] The first records a custom in Fujian during her time. The hot season

[24] *Guhuanshi Shiciji*, 2: 323.
[25] *Guhuanshi Shiciji*, 2: 325.

came very early in the year, and the children flew kites during the Qingming Festival (清明節) on the field yards, in order to breathe fresh air to avoid disease. Thus at this time, kites flew all over the sky, and children played and cheered happily in the small woods. The second concerned the dress and lives of local women. "Dressed in black skirt with narrow sleeves and thin waist, and with the flowers stuck everywhere in their cloud-like hair, they shoulder baskets of sweet fruits to sell along the street. When they return after the sale, the sun has set."[26] And the poet notes: "Of those who farm in the fields and shoulder goods to market for sale, half are women."[27] Then we learn that like the Cantonese women recorded in the poems by Wang Zhenyi, the Fujian women also worked like the men, and were responsible for the daily life of the family. The third poem mentions the lychee, which is a valued native fruit in China and frequently mentioned in classical Chinese poems. It was also favoured by many renowned persons in Chinese history, including Bai Juyi, Su Shi and the Empress Yang Yuhuan (Yang Guifei 楊玉環/楊貴妃, 719-756). It is said that Yang Yuhuan prized lychee so much that Emperor Xuanzong (玄宗, 685-762) ordered the fruit delivered from Lingnan (嶺南, now Guangxi and Canton provinces) to the capital Chang'an at great speed and expense. Here, Zeng Yi points out that high-quality lychees were produced in Fuzhou as well, so there was no need to go as far as Lingnan for this fruit. The fourth poem talks about the relatively big temperature difference between day and night in Fujian: "Even though it is very hot in the daytime, you feel cool at night, due to the flow of the tides."[28] The last poem again concerns the Fujian women. Zeng Yi was surprised at the fact that the Fujian women kept their feet bare even in the winter, not caring about the cold. This record reveals that the Fujian women did not have their feet bound, while foot-binding was a foul custom prevalent among Han women. However, we should also note that, although Zeng Yi does not provide further explanation, it is very likely that those women in her poems were of lower class and lived in the less-developed rural areas, and were perhaps minority people.

3. From travelling out of the 'boudoir' to travelling out of the country: Shan Shili's travelogue

During its late periods, the Qing Empire carried out several reforms, and gradually opened its door to the world. Against this background, for the first time in late imperial China, a group of *literati* travelled to the outside world via various channels, such as on personal visits, as delegations sent by the Qing Court, or on diplomatic duties for the government, and so on, and their minds

[26] *Guhuanshi Shiciji,* 2: 325.
[27] *Guhuanshi Shiciji*, 2: 325.
[28] *Guhuanshi Shiciji*, 2: 325.

and views were greatly broadened. They also wrote travelogues to record their experiences in, and impressions of, the outside world. In the 1980s, the Hunan People's Publishing House and the Yuelu Press reprinted and published a set of collectanea (*congshu*) called *Forward towards the World Collecteana* (*Zouxiang Shijie Congshu* 走向世界叢書) which includes important works by these pioneers.

To list a few examples here. In 1867, the Chinese translator and reformer Wang Tao (王韜, 1828-1897) was invited by the sinologist James Legge (1815-1897) to come to Scotland to further assist in the translation of Chinese classics. Wang Tao then took a more than 40 days sea voyage departing from Hong Kong, and stopped over at Singapore, Ceylon, Penang, Aden, Messina, and Cairo, before eventually reaching Marseilles. Then, from Marseilles, he travelled on to Lyons and Paris by train, and visited famous sites and scholars in Paris. After around two weeks stay in France, he continued his journey across the English Channel, arriving in Britain. When in the UK, he visited major cities, delivered a speech in Chinese in the University of Oxford (thus being the first Chinese scholar in Oxford), and completed the translation of several classics including *Book of Songs*, *Book of Changes*, and *Book of Rites*. He wrote about his sightseeing and impressions of every place on his long journey, and collected these writings into a travelogue named *Jottings and Drawings from Carefree Travel* (*Manyou Suilu Tuji* 漫遊隨錄圖記), which is the very first travel book of long-distance overseas journey by a Chinese scholar and became widely known and extensively distributed both in China and abroad.

In 1866, just one year before Wang Tao began his long journey, the Qing government sent a delegation of young students selected from the Tributary Relations Institute (*Tongwen Guan* 同文館) to Europe to study Western culture. Bin Chun (斌椿, 19th cent.), a Manchu official, was appointed chairman of the delegation, and he composed a travel book *Jottings on Travelling by Raft* (*Chengcha Biji* 乘槎筆記), recording his travel experiences in Europe. One of the student delegates, Zhang Deyi (張德彝, 1847-1918), also wrote of his study experiences in Europe as a travel book entitled *Recounting of Remarkable Things from a Sea-voyage (Hanghai Shuqi* 航海述奇). In later years, he became a famous diplomat, and was sent as ambassador to Europe and America seven times, each time writing a travel book. After his initial *Recounting of Remarkable Things from a Sea-voyage*, he composed the *Second Recounting of Remarkable Things* (*Zai Shuqi* 再述奇), which was followed by the *Third Recounting of Remarkable things* (*San Shuqi* 三述奇) and so forth up till his *Eighth Recounting of Remarkable Things* (*Ba Shuqi* 八述奇).

In 1867, the General Administrative Government-institute (*Zongli Yamen* 總理衙門) appointed Anson Burlingame (1820-1870), who was about to retire from his position as US Minister to China and return to his home in the United States, the head of a diplomatic mission to the US and then to several

European powers. Along with Anson Burlingame, there were two Chinese ministers: Zhi Gang (志剛, 19th cent.) and Sun Jiagu (孫家谷, 1823-1888). They crossed the Pacific Ocean to visit the US, and then, crossed the Atlantic Ocean to visit several European nations including the UK, France, Italy and Russia. Anson Burlingame died in St. Petersburg in 1870, while the others accomplished a journey around the globe by continuing eastward across the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and finally back to China. Upon his return, Zhi Gang wrote about his diplomatic experiences and sightseeing in his *Records of the First Embassy to the Far West* (*Chushi Taixi Ji* 初使泰西記).

In 1876, in order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the US held the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia. The Qing Empire also participated in this exhibition and sent Li Gui (李圭, 1842-1903) as a delegate. He was deeply impressed by the splendid exhibition, and wrote his *New Records of a Journey Around the Globe* (*Huanyou Diqiu Xinlu* 環遊地球新錄) as an account of his greatly extended observations and understanding of the outside world.

During the last ten years of the Qing Dynasty, the Court implemented its final reform. One of its deeds was to send five ministers abroad to study systems of constitutional monarchy in 1905. Dai Hongci (戴鴻慈, 1853-1910), one of these five ministers, kept a diary of his overseas study experiences called *A Diary of the Diplomatic Mission to Nine Nations* (*Chushi Jiuguo Riji* 出使九國日記), which can be regarded as an informal travel report.

Among this group of pioneers travelling outside China, there was a prominent woman writer named Shan Shili (單士厘, 1863-1945). She was born in an intellectual family – both her father Shan Lihua (单棣華, 19th cent.) and her maternal uncle Xu Renbo (許壬伯, 19th cent.) were erudite scholars – in Xiaoshan, Zhejiang province, and was well educated in classics, painting and female-virtues, growing up as a gentlewomen. At twenty-nine, she married Qian Xun (錢恂, 1853-1927), who was from a prominent family, native of Wuxing, Zhejiang province, and the eldest brother of the famous scholar Qian Xuantong (錢玄同, 1887-1939). It was her husband Qian Xun who had a positive influence on Shan's later life. Qian was an open-minded scholar, and introduced modern ideas to his family. He served in the national Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in 1898 was sent to Japan, appointed supervisor of the Chinese students who studied there. The following year, 1899, Shan went to Japan to join her husband, thus, becoming the first Chinese woman to travel outside China. During the next four years, she travelled frequently between Japan and China, and took members of her family – her two sons, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law and three grandsons – to Japan, to study there at their own expenses. Therefore, her family became the first Chinese family to have female members studying abroad. When in Japan, she made friends with several Japanese female intellectuals, and quickly became fluent in the Japanese language. In 1903, Qian Xun was appointed minister to work in the Chinese Embassy in St. Petersburg.

Accompanying her husband, Shan carried out a very long journey: China, Japan, Korea, Manchuria, Siberia, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and along the journey, she wrote a travelogue entitled *Travelogue of the Year 1903* (*Guimao Lüxingji* 癸卯旅行記) which was the very first travel book by a female Chinese writer. Shan's travel was regarded as a magnificent feat, as Qian Xun wrote: "Shan travelled for over twenty thousand *li*-miles, and recorded her travels in more than thirty thousand words, this being an accomplishment that no Chinese women had ever managed before."[29]

During late Qing, China gradually went through the transformation from a traditional society to a modern one. It was a time when new culture and traditional civilization, progressive thought and conventional concepts conflicted sharply with each other, as a result of which the typical feature of that time was that new and old elements coexisted. This feature was also reflected in the activities and writings of Shan Shili. She placed great emphasis on the importance to a nation of education, especially female education. When travelling in Korea, which was then a Japanese colony, she found the local Korean people worked hard for the Japanese while mistreated by their superiors, but they were desensitized about their appalling living conditions. Shan sighed: "Without education, how ignorant these people are! And what a sorrow it is that when insulted, they have no reaction."[30] In fact, most of the Chinese people at that time were no better than their Korean contemporaries.

Shan pointed out that modern education should aim at cultivating the people as citizens for the nation, not as officials for the government – as the traditional Chinese education did. She compared China with Japan, and believed that Japan's outstanding status among the Western Powers resulted from its advanced education, while China's falling behind was to a great extent due to its overlooked civil education, and China's future was still doubtful then. In contrast with her favouring of Japan, Shan's attitude towards Russia was quite negative. Full of righteous indignation, she records Russia's invasion of China, including its occupation of some of China's territories, seizure of China's customs rights, and slaughter of Chinese people in Blagoveshchensk. She expressed insightful opinions on Russia's intention in "helping" China build a railway across southern Xinjiang by pointing out that, together with the northern railway across Yingkou (營口) and Zhangjiakou, the two railways would act as a pair of pincers threatening China eastward and westward. She also criticized the autocracy and corruption of the Russian government. For example, she noted and recorded that Russian businessmen were not permitted to trade freely, students were not allowed to read books of progressive thoughts, the general populace was less-educated and misguided by religious beliefs, and strict censorship was imposed on newspapers. In addition, it is a responsibility for the government to relieve catastrophes; however, the Russian government always

[29] *Guimao Lüxingji; Guiqianji*, Qian Xun's preface: 21.
[30] *Guimao Lüxingji; Guiqianji*, 1: 44.

boasted of its relief action as a great benevolence to the people as if the people were actually responsible for their suffering. It seems that Shan's criticism of Russia was in fact aimed at satirizing the Qing government which in truth was even worse. However, she accorded great respect to the prominent Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), and was the first female writer to introduce his enlightening novels to China.

In 1908, Shan travelled further with Qian, to Italy, and visited famous cities and historical sites. She acquired much knowledge of Western civilization, and introduced it to her compatriots in another of her works, *Writings on Returning to a Life of Seclusion* (*Guiqianji* 歸潛記), which is an academic treatise rather than simply a travelogue. It consists of several independent articles, and covers very broad topics, including detailed descriptions of famous constructions of western-style, such as St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City; aesthetic appreciations of such renowned sculptures as Laocoon and His Sons, and Apollo Belvedere; introductions to Christianity and its history and spread in China; the Jews in Kaifeng; Greek and Roman mythology; cultural communication between China and the West; and the story of the famous traveller Marco Polo among others.

Even though her journeys, travel writings, broadness of horizons and erudition were unparalleled by any earlier women intellectuals, Shan still seemed old-fashioned in some respects, which is mainly reflected in her ideas on the aims of female-education. As mentioned above, she did fully endorse the education of women and the abolition of foot-binding. She wrote *Travelogue of the Year 1903* partly for this purpose: "It can broaden the readers' horizons […]. My fellow female compatriots will perhaps conceive of taking a long-distance journey after reading it? I sincerely hope so."[31] She wanted to encourage more women to travel abroad, to open their horizons and gain knowledge. However, in her opinion, the purpose of educating women was to cultivate them as "wise wives and good mothers" (*xianqi liangmu* 賢妻良母) for the family or for their husbands, not as worthy citizens for the nation. That is to say, once well-educated, women should stay at home to do housework and support their husbands, educate their children (*xiangfu jiaozi* 相夫教子), and take better care of their menfolk, who, relieved of worries about family affairs, would therefore work better and serve the nation better. It sounds reasonable, but in fact, was still a traditional way of educating women, still confining women to their homes, and not allowing them to go out of their homes into society to take up social occupations and directly contribute to the nation. Women's playing an indirect role in society was very likely to leave them regarded as second-class citizens, and this inclined to their continued subservience to men.

Shan also approved of the traditional Chinese virtues, which forbade women going out of their homes frivolously, and associating with male strangers.

[31] *Guimao Lüxingji; Guiqianji*, Author's preface: 22.

She wrote the following words to educate her daughter-in-law after they visited the Osaka Exposition of 1903:

> Today's trip was only to expand our knowledge. Although we tramped about in the rain, we did not trespass against the rules of decorum. Moreover, you were waiting upon your mother-in-law. But when we go back to Tokyo, you must scrupulously obey the rules of your school. Do not go out frivolously. I say, China has a superior sense of womanly virtue; what is regrettable is its [lack of emphasis on] women's learning. Japanese women are able to hold to the rules of wifely virtue while increasing their learning. In this they are admirable. I often hear your father-in-law say that, whereas Western women do not lack a sense of virtue, those who break its rules are numerous. In public, such women's conversation is elegant. When they play music, paint, and dance, they display their excellence and beauty. Yet, though their display may be excellent and beautiful, inwardly they are the opposite. Beware of following their example! Contemporary discussions slander the East and praise the West. Feminine virtue is no exception. Please take pains not to be deluded by this.[32]

As Prof. Ellen Widmer has pointed out, Shan's travel was undertaken with her husband as her escort, which accorded with her gentlewomen's (*guixiu* 閨秀) genteel status.[33] Shan insists most clearly that women should "not go out frivolously" to travel alone. In fact, not only Shan, but nearly all the Chinese gentlewomen before the 20th century travelled escorted by their family members or servants, including Wang Zhenyi and Zeng Yi, mentioned above. But the case may have been a little different for Ming courtesans, who were more independent and free as they were not employed by only one man. All of these women travelled and wrote travelogues, but they mainly travelled for other matters (as in the case of Shan who travelled to accompany her husband to take up an official position in Russia), not for travel's own sake. Alternatively, they travelled merely for fun (as in the case of the Ming courtesan Wang Wei), but they seldom travelled to explore or gain knowledge of the outside unknown world, and rarely travelled to unknown lands never trodden by their predecessors. (In fact, even the Chinese nation as a whole lacked the spirit to explore the unknown outside world, let alone these slender women).

Shan disliked Western women's manner of behaviour. She admitted the elegance and beauty of the outward appearance of Western women who participated in social intercourse, but at the same time, believed "inwardly, they are the opposite". The logic of the view that the outwardly elegant and beautiful women must be inwardly the opposite surely comes from Shan's firmly held orthodox ethical belief that a clear dividing line must be drawn between men and women, and that women were inclined to become lascivious once they

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[32] The original texts: *Guimao Lüxingji; Guiqianji,* 1: 31. Here the translation: Ellen Widmer, *Shan Shili's Guimao Lüxingji of 1903 in Local and Global Perspective*.
[33] Widmer 2007.

associated with men. So she spoke very highly of Japanese women, who, in her view, achieved a balance of womanly virtue and female education. And she anticipated that, if well educated, Chinese women would be the best in the world, because they already possessed the best virtue.

We can conclude that Shan was a talented woman with the double aspects of both new and old elements reflected in her ideas and writings. Yet she was not an exception, indeed, many scholars, both male and female, had the feature of such double aspects. In general, all of the above-mentioned pioneers who travelled outside China to the international world made progressive achievements in their travels and writings. They widely recorded Western society in detail, and approved all kinds of new things, such as public facilities (especially schools, museums, libraries, zoos, botanic gardens and hospitals), factories and machines, transport, and even democracy. For example, when Li Gui was observing the great power that machines could generate, during his time in the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, he realized that China must also employ machines for production, and he also attacked the outdated belief that the employment of machines would make people cunning and lazy.[34] And when observing the female-production exhibition, which concentrated on showing women's accomplishments and was set up by women themselves, Li Gui spoke very highly of women's roles, and criticized the lack of female education in China: "There was a similar number of men and women; if only men were educated while women were ignorant, ten individuals could work only as five."[35]

But, at the same time, a number of those pioneers remained in adoration of traditional conventions, especially those concerning paying great respect to the superiors (for example, the junior must kneel down to his/her senior when they met) and social interaction between men and women (for example, when men and women were in social association, they should by no means have physical touch). They flaunted these ethics as the most advanced in the world, and boasted that Westerners could neither understand nor achieve them. In fact, these ethical rules reflected the strict hierarchy and oppression of women in China, which went against the modern trend of freedom, equality and democracy. It is regrettable that these intellectuals did not regard such ethics as a matter of shame, but instead as one of honour.

Shan's moderate ideas in favour of female education were also shared by her contemporary women educators, including the above-mentioned female traveller Zeng Yi. Zeng's thoughts on female education were concentrated in her *A Piece on Female Education* (*Nüxue Pian* 女學篇), a section of her *Collected Poems and Ci-lyrics from Ancient-joy Studio*. She discussed the harm of ignoring female education, and insisted that only by promoting education of women, could the nation lay the foundation of its prosperity. Yet according to

[34] *Huanyou Diqiu Xinlu*, 1: 26-27.
[35] *Huanyou Diqiu Xinlu*, 1: 41-42.

her argument, what women needed to study were literary classics, arts, physical training, embroidery, arithmetic, and culinary skills, all of which were regarded as "inner subjects" (*neixue* 內學), as opposed to the "outer subjects" (*waixue* 外學) such as science, engineering, economics, and politics that only men should learn. She made a clear division between the two genders, based on her belief that men and women are totally different by nature, men being suited to outdoor work while women to inner work (i. e. within the home), so both must be responsible for their respective kinds of work, and not cross beyond the confines of those two categories. She also opposed women's participation in politics, stating that "women's bounden duty is to manage housekeeping affairs, which exactly fits their nature. As for politics, that is not women's business, and women are absolutely ineligible by their nature to take it on."[36]

The ideas on female-education held by Shan and Zeng were in fact not so new. The mid-Qing scholar Zhang Xuecheng (章學誠, 1738-1801) also emphasized the education of women (*fuxue* 婦學), and praised able women, for whom, in his opinion, historians should write special biographies in the official history books. However, he insisted that women must not range beyond their boudoirs in their writings, and of course, women themselves should by no means leave the home. Thus Zhang severely criticized Yuan Mei (袁枚, 1716-1797) for Yuan's association with his women students.[37] The late-Qing Malaysian Chinese scholar Gu Hongming (辜鴻銘, 1857-1928), in his famous work *The Spirit of the Chinese People* (*Zhongguoren de Jingshen* 中國人的精神), greatly adulated the Chinese feminine ideal of the 'Three Obediences' (*sancong* 三從), and advocated women's self-sacrifice for the family.[38]

In fact, Shan and Zeng's ideas on female-education were inherited from the traditional ideal for femininity. Yet the trend of the women's liberation movement of the 20th century called for women's complete independence, freedom and equal status with men, demanding that women go out of the home and integrate into society, to take up social work ("outer work"), and even to participate in politics. If women did not have a social occupation and income, they would still depend on their husbands for a living, and so they would be unable to be truly independent but still remain a chattel of men, so would never attain equal status with men. What were they to do if they were abandoned by their husbands, or if their husbands died? The moderate concepts of female-education held by Shan and Zeng were not as reasonable as they sounded, and failed to solve many specific problems about women in China during that era. Luckily, there were more radical and progressive ideas promoting women's liberation.

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[36] *Guhuanshi Shiciji*, 1: 411.
[37] *Fu Xue*, 1: 1-18.
[38] Gu Hongming 1998, pp. 70-71.

Qiu Jin (秋瑾, 1875-1907) was a great herald for women, who devoted her whole life to the cause of saving the nation. Abandoning her playboy husband, she bravely travelled alone to Japan to study. This was quite different to her female predecessors and contemporaries, who dared to travel only when escorted. In her essay *To Tell my Sisters with Respect* (*Jinggao Zimeimen* 敬告姊妹們), she announced that women were subordinate to men, and so they were like prisoners and slaves, having no conscious longing for independence. How to improve women's status? She declared that the only way was that women must learn skills, in order then be able to take up a profitable profession, so that they could earn a living on their own and then become independent and free, even gaining respect from men.[39] The famous reformist and scholar Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873-1929) also advocated women's holding a social profession. In his essay *On Female Education* (*Lun Nüxue* 論女學), he argues from the perspective of the production and distribution of profits: if men alone have occupations, the profits they earn will have to be shared with women; but if women also have occupations, they will earn profits too, and no longer need to share the men's profits, and, there being twice the profits, the nation will accordingly become much wealthier.[40]

Conclusion

From the late Ming to the late Qing, more and more new elements were reflected in women's travel and travel writings: from the late Ming courtesans' independent travel, to the mid-Qing gentlewomen's travel to marginal areas, and recording of the folklore there, and then to the late Qing women's extensive travels into the international world, and their unparalleled travelogues, there formed a gradually progressive line: the scopes of territory extended broader and broader, and the intentions of travelling developed from playing for fun to widening horizons and attaining knowledge. However, there were still some traditional aspects maintained. These women still lacked the spirit of travelling for the exploration of the unknown outside world. In most cases, they were escorted by men, and were not completely independent. In the opinions of the talented ladies such as Shan Shili and Zeng Yi, women were permitted, or even encouraged to go out of their boudoirs and travel into the outer world, but after the travelling, they must return home to act as "wise wives and good mothers", to sacrifice themselves for the male members of the family. Therefore, there was still a long way for women to travel, from home to society.

[39] Qiu Jin 2003, pp. 378-379.
[40] Liang Qichao 2002, pp. 88-89.

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REVIEWS

Yuming He (2013), *Home and the World: Editing the "Glorious Ming" in Woodblock-Printed Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 82, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center. ISBN: 978-0674066809.

Review by Hang Lin 林航, University of Hamburg.

Historians on Chinese book commonly share the general dismissive attitude of the Siku 四庫 editors toward the book culture of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644): more than often, Ming books were notoriously condemned for their sloppy editing, their crass commercial orientation, and their shoddy print quality. Despite such scorn of Ming book culture, however, Ming printing was distinguished by the flourishing of commercial printers who made printed books inexpensive through adoption of technical innovations for woodblock carving, and produced imprints for a mass market by extending the scope of subject-matter and building up far-flung distribution networks. The boom of commercial publishing and the drastic increase in both numbers and varieties of texts published from the early sixteenth century on had a cultural impact much greater than in the Song (960-1276): declining prices of printed books enabled a wider access to knowledge; well-edited printed texts (official Confucian canons and unofficial examination aids) established a new standard of scholarly accuracy reference. Yuming He's *Home and the World* is a bold effort to "suspend judgment about what Ming books are or ought to be, and to attend instead to the clues that these books offer about the historical contexts in which they were produced and used" (p. 6). Focusing on a selection of late Ming books themselves, He aims to recapture the variety of reader-consumer interacting with book in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and to explore "how a text, picture, or book functioned for a group or groups of readers within its particular historical and cultural milieu" (p. 8).

The core of the book progresses through four chapters, appended by a list of known Ming "drama miscellanies" (*xiqu zashu* 戲曲雜書) and an interesting study of the brothel treatises known as "Classic of Whoring" (*piao jing* 嫖經). He starts his survey of the late Ming textual culture with an inquiry into the *Boxiao zhuji* 博笑珠璣 (Pearls to Evoke Laughter), a compilation of riddles and game texts, to examine the texts' range of intended use. Centering on the juxtaposition of different citation sources in the textual constellation of the Boxiao zhuji, in particular *guwen* 古文 (ancient-style writing) and *suyu* 俗語 (common speech), He aptly shows how amusing examples reflect the ways in which "Ming readers might have been encouraged to generate new meanings from long-established textual traditions" (p. 12) and how they showcase "a playful recombinative energy [that was] linked to urban space and values as well as to a

commercial impulse that shaped not only the production and circulation of texts but also their internal structure and composition" (p. 72). He concludes the first chapter with a section devoted to *Huang Ming shixuan* 皇明詩選 (Poetry Anthology of the Glorious Ming), a miniature poetry anthology that was incorporated into the *Boxiao zhuji* as its final *juan*, to outline some of the ways Ming editors and publishers utilized to create new meanings from materials already in broader circulation.

The distinctive Ming printing phenomenon known as the "drama miscellanies" is the focus of He's inquiry in the second chapter. Being printed in a unique triple-register page layout, with the top and bottom registers containing excerpts of theatrical plays and the narrower middle register filled with amusing or practical texts, these imprints represent the editors' desire to keep up to date with current fashions and to meet reader expectations. Through an investigation of "local expressions" (*fangyu* 方語), daily-use encyclopaedia, geographical texts, and cover page design, He endeavors to find out "how were these books coded and decoded by the late Ming communities of interpretation that were involved in their production and circulation" (p. 82). He forcefully suggests that these "drama miscellanies" are "inseparable from the print culture and popular urban culture of the late Ming" (p. 138) and they are perfect illustrations of interwoven roles of both book producers and readers. For He, the distinctive page layout of the "drama miscellanies" "reshaped the space of reading that turns the page into a site where ideas and practices associated with printing, text, and theater interplay" and thus "created a new theater of reading" (p. 139).

Chapter 3 tackles a particular aspect in the patterns of circulation and production of Ming woodblock printing: reuse of existing woodblocks. Of particular interest in He's examination of the dynamics of adaption and variation of elements in late Ming imprints are the complex relations between texts and illustrations. Building from specific cases including the adaption of the *Yuzhen jinsheng* 玉振金聲 (Chimes of Jade and Tones of Bronze) into the *Yugu xinhuang* 玉谷新簧 (New Reed in the Jade Valley) and the reenactment of the "Student Zhang Jumps over the Wall" episode in the *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 (Story of the Western Wing), He cogently argues that it was desirable for many Ming producers of woodblock printed books "to recycle or adapt extant material, both to keep production costs low and to take advantage of the most popular and proven materials in circulation" (p. 150), an aspect Lucille Chia has recently reminded us.[1] But instead of simply copying preexisting materials, producers often exercised great ingenuity in imparting a sense of freshness and up-to-date appeal in each new print, mainly through updating or adding new illustrations.

Chapter 4 follows the preliminary look at two illustrations in the section "various foreigners" (*zhuyi* 諸夷) in daily-use encyclopedias He makes at the end of the preceding chapter and concentrates on the *Luochong lu* 贏蟲錄 (Rec-

[1] Chia 2002, pp. 212-220.

ord of Naked Creatures), a text that was extremely popular in the late Ming and at the same time exercised immense influence on Ming and Qing people's knowledge of the foreign. The *Luochong lu* was adapted and reprinted in many late Ming encyclopedias, and a comparative study of these various versions, as He offers here, provides detailed insights into "how publishers shaped their texts to make them appealing and marketable [and] what kinds or readers and ways of reading they envisioned" (p. 236). By tracing the production and circulation routes of the pictorials in the work and examining changes in patterns of reading, He lucidly illustrates "the process through which [both popular and elite] ideas [in the late Ming] about the larger world were adapted, articulated, circulated, and read" (p. 203). For He, the *Luochong lu* is a vivid example of both the ways in which popular Ming woodblock books "domesticated the broader world for Ming readers" (p. 15) and the ways of "[interpretive] reading that were specific to this period" (p. 249).

The book is well informed by the recent eruption of interest in both Ming book culture and the penetrating effects of reading on that culture. He endeavors to represent in this book a long overdue reconsideration of the intersecting relationship between publishers and readers in an age marked by the proliferation of printed books, joined in this effort by two recent volumes devoted to the world of printing in Ming China.[2] What emerges from He's research is a much fuller picture of book production, circulation, commercial publishing, reading habits, and the tangible interplay between them in the late Ming. It shall be noted that by the end of the sixteenth century, printed texts had already deeply penetrated the lives of not only literati readers but also ordinary citizens, who had numerous opportunities to encounter printed material in quotidian life situations. Such an expanded readership casted then a deep and ongoing influence back on the editing and producing procedure of books. Thus in many respects He shares with Tian Xiaofei and Yugen Wang an interest in exploring the paths through which various aspects of textual production traveled to consumption, and vice versa.[3] Furthermore, challenging the conventional notion raised by Qing bibliophiles that most Ming books are "worthless" and "hucksterish," He persuasively demonstrates that it is indeed these seemingly shoddily produced books that "represented to their readers a complex code of social and cultural meanings" (p. 16) and the so-called "hucksterish" editing practice was "a set of strategies evolving out of market-driven imperatives to both reproduce and differentiate, imperatives that provided the driving force behind novel fashions and new cultural forms" (p. 248).

Overall, He's volume elegantly written with an engaging narrative and interlocking arguments and it also is beautifully produced, particularly in its plentiful reproductions of late Ming imprints: 56 illustrations of high quality. The editing effort of the Harvard University Asia Center is laudable, as original

[2] Brokaw and Chow 2005; McDermott 2006.
[3] See Tian 2005; Wang 2011.

Chinese characters are always conveniently given next to their transliterations and translations, including transcriptions of poems and relatively long passages. It is always exciting to read finely wrought scholarship like this book. Doubtlessly, not only historians on Chinese book, but also scholars of Chinese cultural and intellectual history, as well as those interested in the social and economic history of late imperial China in general will find intriguing observations and thought-provoking syntheses in Yuming He's *Home and the World: Editing the "Glorious Ming" in Woodblock-Printed Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.

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Pauline C. Lee (2013) *Li Zhi, Confucianism, and the Virtue of Desire*, New York: State University of New York Press.
Review by Paolo Santangelo, Sapienza University of Rome.

The book is a very valuable contribution on Li Zhi, for its multidisciplinary approach that allows a further understanding of the late Ming thinker, but also for the method of processing in her work. The author's annotations are very significant. For instance, worth of notice are the comments on the use of the term "orphaned", *gu* (孤), or on Li Zhi's reflections on death. The attention for Li Zhi's literary language and not only for the contents of his elaborations is also extremely useful and favours the understanding of important nuances. The analysis of metaphors and their use is an important tool to uncover the deeper meanings through the images of revealing and concealing. Personally, I also like the counterpoint with Nussbaum's reflections, which really offer a wider perspective in this work, and at the same time offer a view of great sensitivity in the interpretation of his life. The analysis goes even deeper by resorting to contrasting terms such as "the skills of an artisan" and "the skills of nature" (画工/化工) or descriptions of characters and personages, that allow to find the coherent main thread in the unsystematic way of writing of Li Zhi. One of the key points Pauline Lee inquires into is the concept of "genuine feeling" and the related "self-satisfaction" – the ability to sense emotional self-satisfaction, to enjoy the satisfaction of a genuine feeling as genuine. One would only expect a further reflection on the concept linking passions and desires and their legitimization. Last but not the least, the essay meritedly takes in serious account many previous studies, including the precious essay by Billeter. We are among the readers Pauline Lee has convinced that "in Li Zhi we find a thinker who is a creative source for meaningful, important, and what in many ways in our time are relatively neglected insights concerning an ethics of genuineness, the virtue of desire, the proper meaning of what our modern culture has rightly identified as 'one of the important potentialities of human life'".

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