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Editor's Introduction: New Interpretations of Medieval Chinese Literature

Zhang Yue 張月
Associate Professor of Department of Chinese Language and Literature, University of Macau, Macau, China
bnuzhangyue@gmail.com

The development of academic research largely depends on new materials and innovative research methodologies. In this special issue, scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and the US apply new approaches to the study of medieval Chinese literature. The articles in this issue focus on influential poets, such as Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 [ca. 365–427], Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 [385–433], Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037–1101], and Li Qingzhao 李清照 [1084–1155], as well as vernacular poetry and fiction, such as "bamboo branch lyrics" [*zhuzhici* 竹枝詞] and the *Water Margin* [*Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳]. The significance of these articles is that they not only investigate the literary merits of medieval Chinese literature but also situate them in their larger cultural context. These articles approach medieval Chinese literature from a variety of multidisciplinary perspectives, such as ethnography, history, law, philosophy, and psychology. Using these different lenses, these articles collectively develop an innovative and rich understanding of Chinese literature.

In "Reinterpretation of Tao Yuanming's Thirteen Poems: A Zhuangzian Perspective," Xu Yan 徐豔 and Zhang Qinming 張秦銘 question the biographical reading of Tao Yuanming's poems by explaining the significance of the poems in the context of Daoism, in particular, the philosophy of Zhuangzi 莊子 [ca. 369–ca. 286 BCE]. Xu and Zhang use thirteen of Tao's poems to focus on existing commentaries on Tao's poetry. Based on their analysis of the intertextual connections between Tao's poems and the *Zhuangzi*, they find that many of Tao's poems are filled with allusions to the received *Zhuangzi* text that have not been properly addressed, interpreted, or understood from a Daoist perspective. Therefore, their article aims to fill this gap by linking the philosophy of Zhuangzi to Tao's poems and, in so doing, to shed new light on the impact of Daoism on this important poet and to reveal the profound

meaning conveyed through Tao's poetry, which is often concealed by his seemingly plain literary style.[1]

In a change of direction, Stephen Roddy looks at vernacular poetry in his article, "A Love of Labor: The Ethnographic Turn of *Zhuzhici*." He examines *zhuzhici* and its development from an ethnographic perspective, with an emphasis on "water labor."[2] Roddy explores representative *zhuzhici* writers from the Tang [618–907] to the Qing [1616–1911] dynasties: Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 [772–842], Bai Juyi 白居易 [772–846], Yang Weizhen 楊維帧 [772–842], and Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 [1629–1709] – focusing on the historical development and conscious and unconscious transformation of the genre. During the Tang and Song [960–1279] dynasties, *zhuzhici* mainly reflected the daily life and somber mood of laborers working along the Yangzi River, its tributaries, and nearby lakes. From the Yuan [1206–1368] to the Qing era, *zhuzhici* began to favor a more refined style, depicting various lakeshore scenes. Many of the protagonists of that era of *zhuzhici* are women, rather than men, and the poems emphasize the concerns of women about the security of men, not the circumstances of water labor. The complaints of women and female bitterness are the two most frequent topics of these poems. Poets after Zhu Yizun continued to use *zhuzhici* for both lyrical entertainment and ethnographic purposes.

Whereas Xu and Zhang reinterpret Tao's poems from a Daoist perspective, in "Contemplating 'Return': Xie Lingyun's 'Hillside Garden'," Wang Ping 王平 investigates another well-known poet in the Eastern Jin [317–420] dynasty, Xie Lingyun, and places his works in the context of such important classics as the *Classic of Poetry* [*Shijing* 詩經] and the *Classic of Changes* [*Yijing* 易經].[3]

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1 For representative Chinese scholarship on Tao Yuanming, see Zhong Shulin 鍾書林, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu xueshu dang'an* 陶淵明研究學術檔案 [*Academic Archive of Tao Yuanming Studies*] (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014). For a survey of Anglophone scholarship on Tao, see Wu Fusheng 吳伏生, *Yingyu shijie de Tao Yuanming yanjiu* 英語世界的陶淵明研究 [*Tao Yuanming Studies in the Anglophone World*] (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2013); Zhang Yue 張月, "Ou Mei jinqi Tao Yuanming yanjiu zongshu, fenxi yu zhanwang 歐美近期陶淵明研究綜述、分析與展望 [Summary and Analysis of Recent Studies on Tao Yuanming in Europe and America]," *Gudian wenxian yanjiu* 古典文獻研究, no. 2 (2017).

2 Roddy has published articles on *Zhuzhici*, such as "Bamboo Branches out West: *Zhuzhici* in Xinjiang," *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese* 現代中文文學學報 15, no. 2 (2018); and "Cong minzu zhi shijiao kan *zhuzhici* 從民族志視角看竹枝詞 [Examining Bamboo Lyrics from an Ethnographic Perspective]," *Minzu wenxue yanjiu* 民族文學研究, no. 6 (2018).

3 Wang has another recent article on Xie Lingyun: Wang Ping 王平, "Fengliu yiwu Xie Kangle: Shanshui, shanju, dili shuxie yihuoshi zhengzhi biaoshu 風流遺物謝康樂：山水、山居、地理書寫抑或是政治表述 [Xie Lingyun: A Relic of the Past]," in *Zhonggu wenxue zhong de shi yu shi* 中古文學中的詩與史 [*The Interrelation between Poetry and History in Medieval Chinese Literature*], ed. Zhang Yue 張月 and Chen Yinchi 陳引馳 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2020), 189–207.

This article provides scholarly translations to examine the literary and philosophical implications of the trope of "returning" in Xie's poems. When Liu Yu 劉裕 [363–422] rose to become the de facto ruler of the Eastern Jin dynasty, Xie delicately expressed his complicated emotions, appearing to obey and praise Liu but, in fact, denouncing Liu's behavior. To achieve this effect, Xie adopts images and allusions from previous important works and carefully selects his poetic persona and gestures.[4]

Yang Xiaoshan 楊曉山, in "Dream, Memory, and Reflection: Transfigurations of Su Shi's Qiuchi Rock in Song Poetry," switches the focus from Six Dynasties to Song dynasty poetry, examining the changing meaning of Su Shi's Qiuchi 仇池 rock from the perspectives of aesthetics and traumatic memory. Yang's article continues his academic interest in literati culture in the Song dynasty demonstrated in his book, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song Poetry*.[5] This article analyzes the various meanings of rocks in Su Shi's three long poems written in response to requests from friends. Su initially manifested an unusual possessiveness about and affinity for external items. He then became a commentator, exploring the meaning of rocks with Buddhist allusions and the technique of negation. This rhetorical strategy was a manifestation of his effort to break away from his possessive craving for external objects. Moreover, the Qiuchi rock represents Su Shi's isolation and his equanimity during his experience of withdrawing from the government and subsequent exile. This article concludes with a discussion of the afterlife of Su Shi's rock in Song poetry and the fact that Song poets, especially after the Northern Song [960–1127] dynasty, tended to assign grave outcomes to the desire for material objects in Su Shi's poems.

The next article, "Beefy Outlaws: Beef Consumption in *Water Margin* and Its Song-Yuan Antecedents," by Isaac Yue 余文章, also focuses on vernacular literature. Yue, who specializes in late imperial literature, examines one of the most famous vernacular novels in Chinese literature from the perspective of food culture. Beef consumption is an important motif in the *Water Margin*. Scholars have long placed this motif within the context of strict laws regarding cattle slaughter and the sale of beef during the Northern and Southern Song dynasties and have usually concluded that this motif represents the outlaws' deliberate disobedience to edicts, legislation, and rules. However, this article

4 In "Cultural Memory and Xie Zhan's Poem on Zhang Liang," I discuss responses to Liu Yu's rising power by members of the Xie family, focusing on Xie Zhan and his contemporaries' poems on historical sites. For details, see Yue Zhang, *Lore and Verse: Poems on History in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022), 97–120.

5 Yang Xiaoshan, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003).

questions that premise, exploring the legal issues around beef consumption, the economics of beef, and the precedents for this motif. Moreover, the article provides historical background on the problem of illegal beef. This article concludes that, considering the many distortions and falsifications in the *Water Margin* around the consumption of beef during the Song dynasty, its author likely intended the beef consumption in the novel to reflect and reveal culinary taste and economic options, rather than an act of rebellion against authority.

Finally, Zhang Yue 張月, in his interview with Ronald Egan, "Recent Developments in Medieval Chinese Literary Research and Pedagogy," investigates the problems of researching and teaching medieval Chinese literature in broad terms. This interview adopts a comparative perspective in examining four main topics: reception studies and its application to medieval Chinese literary studies, writing premodern Chinese literary history in the West and China, the translation of Chinese primary sources into English and Anglophone scholarship on Chinese literature into Chinese, and teaching premodern Chinese literature in the US.[6] In our discussion, Egan weighs in on a wide range of issues connected with the methodology in Chinese literary studies, strategies in writing literary history, and the pedagogy of Sinology. Egan draws examples from his long experience in researching and teaching Chinese literature. This interview describes the many current trends in Chinese literary studies in the West.

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6 On the use of reception studies to teach Chinese literature, see Yue Zhang, "Teaching Classical Chinese Poetry through Reception Studies," *ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts* 26, no. 1 (2019).

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A Reinterpretation of Tao Yuanming's Thirteen Poems from a Zhuangzian Perspective

Xu Yan 徐豔
Professor of Research Center for Ancient Chinese Literature,
Fudan University, Shanghai, China
xyan@fudan.edu.cn

Zhang Qinming 張秦銘
Ph.D. candidate, Research Center for Ancient Chinese Literature,
Fudan University, Shanghai, China
18110100009@fudan.edu.cn

Abstract

Although some scholars have successfully challenged the traditional biographical reading, which considers an author's biography an important reference and proposed proper reinterpretations of many of Tao Yuanming's poems, we still find its dominance in the interpretation of words and sentences, even the structure and theme in Tao's poems. In light of this issue, this article reinterprets thirteen of Tao's poems based on our detailed investigation of all the existing notes on them. Most biographical readings, shaped by the ideal image of intellectuals portrayed in the *Analects*, obscure the substantial connections with the *Zhuangzi* in Tao's poetry. Our reinterpretation focuses on the intertextual relationship between Tao's poems and the *Zhuangzi*. We can see that the influence of the *Zhuangzi* on Tao's poetry is more extensive and far-reaching than previously considered. This can help us reveal the connection between Tao's poetry and the metaphysical institution in the Eastern Jin dynasty, which took its view of life from the *Zhuangzi*, instead of taking Confucianism as the only source.

Keywords

intertextual reading – reinterpretation – Tao Yuanming's poems – *Zhuangzi*

A detailed comparison of all the existing notes on the poems of Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 [ca. 365–427] suggests a wide divergence of interpretations. For example, the disagreements in China in recent annotations by Lu Qinli 逯欽立 [1910–1973], Wang Shumin 王叔岷 [1914–2008], Gong Bin 龔斌, and Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈[1] on about thirty poems are not just at the general semantic level but also reflect the tendency, intentional or unintentional, to adopt the canonized image of Tao in the biographies of him. The gap between the image of Tao in these biographies and the image of him from his poetry often acts as a trigger for different interpretations to bridge this gap.[2] The primary biographic materials on Tao include "Eulogy for Scholar Tao [*Tao zhengshi lei* 陶徵士誄]," by Yan Yanzhi 顏延之 [384–456], a biography by Xiao Tong 蕭統 [501–531], and official biographies in the *History of the Song* [*Songshu* 宋書], the *History of the Jin* [*Jinshu* 晉書], and the *History of the Southern Dynasties* [*Nanshi* 南史]. They all adopt the formulaic writing commonly used in eulogies [*lei* 誄] and biographies, highlighting Tao's persona as a virtuous Confucian hermit and a loyalist to the Jin dynasty [266–420]. Although this nicely echoes the ideal

1 Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, *Tao Yuanming ji* 陶淵明集 [*The Works of Tao Yuanming*], annot. Lu Qinli 逯欽立 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979); Wang Shumin 王叔岷, annot., *Tao Yuanming shi jianzhenggao* 陶淵明詩箋證稿 [*Annotation of Tao Yuanming's Poetry*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007); Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian* 陶淵明集校箋 [*The Works of Tao Yuanming: Proofread and Annotated*], annot. Gong Bin 龔斌 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011); Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈, annot., *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu* 陶淵明集箋注 [*Annotation of Tao Yuanming's Works*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011). There are nine four-word poems with around 40 reading disagreements and 115 five-word poems with around 207 reading disagreements in the four annotations.

2 In addition to the poems reinterpreted in this paper, many other poems that can support this claim. For example, disagreements over the theme of poems often center on whether the poem refers to a specific event in Tao's real life, particularly concerning the fall of the Jin [266–420]. Regarding "Nigu 擬古 [Imitation of Ancient Poems IX]," Lu Qinli, Wang Shumin, and Gong Bin all take it as an allegory of the Jin overthrow, while Yuan Xingpei disagrees. Regarding "Yong ershu 詠二疏 [Singing of the Two Shu]," Gong, following Wang Yao's 王瑤 ideas, noted that the poem meant to mourn for Zhang Yi 張禕, who drank the poisoned wine himself, rather than serve it to Sima Dewen 司馬德文 [r. 418–420], the last Jin emperor, but Yuan thinks otherwise. Regarding "Imitation of Ancient Poems II," Gong thinks it shows Tao's aspiration to follow Tian Chou's 田疇 [168–214] example in showing his loyalty to the Jin; Yuan believes that Tao means to attract people to rally around him by his virtue and build a *taohua yuan* 桃花源 [Peach Blossom Paradise]. Regarding "Imitation of Ancient Poems, III," as Lu and Wang see, by portraying the swallow's nostalgia for its nest, Tao expressed his attachment to the Jin dynasty. Yuan thinks it shows Tao's determination to be a recluse. Except for the fall of the Jin, Tao's relationship with the Bailian she 白蓮社 [White Lotus Society], a Buddhist community, is another kind of concrete events with which annotators like to connect Tao's poems. Lu and Gong both relate poems such as "Imitation of Ancient Poems, VI," it to an anecdote about Tao and Bailian she, but Wang and Yuan disagree.

image of intellectuals in the *Analects*, it is far from an honest reflection of Tao's real life, let alone his poetry. Thus the traditional biographical readings can easily lead to a misinterpretation and divergence of interpretations of Tao's poetry. What is more, the four Chinese annotations we mentioned above have a similar interpretation of some poems that is dictated by biography, all potentially obscuring a more reasonable reading.

Although it is difficult for us to trace the original meaning of Tao's poetry, we can at least understand the biographical reading and its dominance, that is, to reveal how the current interpretation influenced by a canonized image in the biographies has prevailed over a more reasonable but neglected interpretation. Modern scholars have made great efforts with regard to this issue.[3] However, we still find that the interpretation of words and sentences, and even the structure and theme, of some of Tao's poems is largely influenced by the ideal image of Confucian scholars in biographies of Tao, obscuring the substantial connections with the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 in Tao's poetry to different degrees.[4] Consequently, it affects our comprehension of how the voice of the *Zhuangzi*, such as the thoughts on freedom, benevolence, righteousness, and accomplishments, echoes in Tao's poems.

In light of these issues, this article reinterprets thirteen of Tao's poems based on our detailed investigation of existing notes on them. Our reinterpretation focuses on the revelation of an intertextual relationship between Tao's poems and the *Zhuangzi* and focuses on three aspects: the joy of drinking, the pain of reality, and worldly concerns. These are three main themes in both Tao's poetry

3 In addition to the Chinese annotations mentioned above, scholarly works in English also made considerable contributions in this respect. For example, A. R. Davis pointed out the remarkable difference between Tao's works and biography, see A. R. Davis, *Tao Yuanming, His Works and Their Meaning* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Other significant works include James Hightower, trans., *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); Xiaofei Tian, *Manuscript Culture: The Records of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005); Robert Ashmore, *The Transport of Reading: Text and Understanding in the World of Tao Qian (365–427)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010).

4 Most scholars admit that Tao's works are greatly influenced by the *Zhuangzi*. According to Zhu Ziqing's 朱自清 [1898–1948] statistics, Tao's poems appropriate the *Zhuangzi* the most, counting up to 49 times; the *Analects* the second, counting up to 37 times. See Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, "Taoshi de shendu 陶詩的深度 [The Depth of Tao's Poetry]," in *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian* 陶淵明研究資料彙編 [*The Collection of Study Materials about Tao Yuanming*], ed. Beijing daxue zhongwenxi jiaoshi tongxue 北京大學中文系教師同學 and Beijing shifan daxue zhongwenxi jiaoshi tongxue 北京師範大學中文系教師同學 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 1:288. As far as the latest published monographs are concerned, Wendy Swartz explores the intertextual relationship between Tao's poems and *Zhuangzi* taking some of his poems as examples, in "The 'Spontaneous' Poet Tao Yuanming as an Intertext," in *Reading Philosophy, Writing Poetry, Intertextual Modes of Making Meaning in Early Medieval China*, ed. Wendy Swartz (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

and his biographies. Through an analysis of examples of these different tropes, we demonstrate that interpreting Tao's poems through a Zhuangzian lens can bring his poems into clearer focus than a Confucian lens can.[5]

1 The Joy of Drinking

There is no doubt that drinking has great significance for Tao and his poetry,[6] but the function of drinking is subject to argument. Xiao Tong made a highly influential remark: "As I see, drinking is not the real goal of Tao, but only the vehicle to express Tao's personality ideal."[7] This commentary shares the same syntactical structure with Su Shi's 蘇軾 [1037–1101] later words, "Poetry is not the real goal of Tao Yuanming, but only the place where he lodges his personality ideal."[8] Both remarks lead to the same idea: the exploration of Tao's high-minded and reclusive personality in his drinking and poetry is the most important issue. Ever since, this has greatly affected understanding of Tao's poems.

For example, Tao's master work "Drinking Alone in Consecutive Wet Days [*Lianyu duyin* 連雨獨飲]" adopts some Zhuangzian terms, such as *wangtian* 忘天 [remove Heaven from my mind] and *renzhen* 任真 [follow the True] to express the feelings of detachment in drinking. Our discussion focus on *minfu* 僶俛, another word in the *Zhuangzi* at the end of the poem, and elucidate how the canonized image influences the interpretation of even a word. The last four lines of the poem read:

自我抱茲獨	Since I began to embrace my solitude,
僶俛四十年	Forty years flew away so fast, just all at once.
形骸久已化	My form has been transformed as time goes by;

5 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are those of the authors.

6 The earliest biography of Tao in *The Song History* recorded an anecdote: When Tao served as magistrate of Pengze 彭澤 District, he commanded that sorghum be planted in all public fields for winemaking. This anecdote was also included in the biography written by Xiao Tong, who added a statement by Tao: "If I can often get drunk in wine, I'll be well satisfied" [吾常得醉於酒足矣], in Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 420. What is more, in the preface to *Tao Yuanming ji*, Xiao Tong edited, he noted that, "It is said that every piece of Tao's poems mentions drinking" [有疑陶淵明詩篇篇有酒], in Yuan Xingpei *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 422.

7 吾觀其意不在酒，亦寄酒為跡焉。Xiao Tong's preface to *Tao Yuanming ji*; Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 422.

8 陶淵明意不在詩，詩以寄其意耳。As quoted in Chao Buzhi 晁補之, *Jilei ji* 雞肋集 [*The Works of Chicken Ribs*], *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, vol. 33.

16 心在復何言[9] My heart still enjoys full freedom from being changed,
And what more is there to say?

Almost all existing annotations interpret *minfu* as "striving."[10] By doing so, readers could see the poet's outstanding character based on his unchanged persistence in his life's ideal for forty years,[11] which is somehow correlated with the interpretative tradition that treats drinking as "the place where Tao lodges his personal ideal." In other words, Tao expresses his aspiration through poems about drinking.

僶俛 has two meanings: one is "striving," and the other is "a brief moment." The evidence for the first meaning comes from the *Book of Poetry* [*Shijing* 詩經], in which it is written as *minmian* 黽勉, not *minfu* 僶俛.[12] *Minmian* 黽勉 can sometimes be interchanged with *minmian* 僶俛, so *fu* 俛can also be pronounced as *mian*. But *minfu* 僶俛 has another meaning, "a brief moment," in which 俛 is the same as its homophone 俯 and is pronounced *fu*. This meaning of *minfu* was often used in Tao's time. Yan Yanzhi, a friend of Tao's, also used *minfu* in this sense. His "A Song of Qiu Hu [*Qiu Hu shi* 秋胡詩]" was included in the *Selections of Refined Literature* [*Wenxuan* 文選]:

孰知寒暑積 Who said the change from winter to summer can slow down?
僶俛見榮枯[13] we just see trees rapidly thrive and wither again

9 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 87.

10 For example, Hightower translated line 14 as "I have struggled through forty years" in *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien*, 71. Yuan Xingpei noted, "It means that since I embraced my solitude and insulated myself against any external thing, I have been struggling for 40 years," in *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 90.

11 Such as Gong Bin's gloss: "The immortal riding cloud-high crane can reach the eight limits in an instant, but I do not admire him because I know the illusion of it. In solitude I cling to my aspiration of authenticity, and have strived for 40 years without change." See Gong Bin, *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian*, 119. In this interpretation, we can tell what the poet's ambition is from "have strived for 40 years without change" which reads *minfu* as "striving."

12 "Gu feng 谷風 [Wind from the Valley]," "Shiyue zhijiao 十月之交 [The Beginning of the Tenth Month]," "Yunhan 雲漢 [Galaxy]," see Kong Yingda 孔穎達, comm., *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 [*Corrected Interpretations of Maoshi*], in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經註疏 [*Notes and Commentaries on the Thirteen Classics*], ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, 1980), 91, 409, 662.

13 Xiao Tong 蕭統, ed., Li Shan 李善, Lü Yanji 吕延濟, Liu Liang 劉良, Zhang Xian 張銑, Lü Xiang 呂向, and Li Zhouhan 李周翰, annot., *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan* 六臣註文選 [*The Selections of Refined Literature, Annotated by the Six Ministers*], *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, vol. 21.

Li Shan 李善 [630–689] noted: "*Minfu* means a short moment between looking up and down."[14] Lü Xiang 呂向 [d. 742] glossed: "*Minfu* is as an instant."[15] Tao uses *minfu* three times in his existent works, all meaning "a short moment." The other two cases are as follows:

結髮念善事	Since childhood I have kept righteousness in my mind.
俛俛六九年[16]	Fifty-four years flew away so fast, just all at once.
俛俛辭世，使汝等幼而飢寒。[17]	Soon I resigned the office, and caused you in your childhood to suffer hunger and cold.

Almost all annotators interpret these two instances of *minfu* as "striving," too,[18] but it seems to be incoherent in the context and introduces a new topic into the work. In the first case, the theme of the poem is bewailing the uncertainty of fate and frustration in one's lifetime. The two lines look back on the rapid passage of fifty-four years to demonstrate how transient life is, which constitutes a coherent part of the poem. In the second case, Tao told his sons that he resigned from office very quickly. As a result, he did not earn enough money and caused them to suffer hunger and cold in their childhood. So, here *minfu* should refer to the short time in office.

In addition, it is unsurprising that, in the first case, *minfu* is used with a similar meaning and even in a similar semantic structure as it is in "Drinking Alone in Consecutive Wet Days." This resemblance, as a remnant of oral characteristics, is common in the poetry of early medieval China, when poems usually have some formulaic words from the existing repertoire with very limited change.[19] Moreover, another four lines in Tao's "Fire in the Sixth Month of

14 俛俛，猶俯仰也。Li Shan and Liu Liang 劉良 also glossed *minfu* in Lu Ji 陸機, "Wenfu 文賦 [Fu on Literature]," in *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan* as *fuyang* 俯仰 [look up and down], vol. 17.

15 俛俛，猶須臾也。Xiaotong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, vol. 21.

16 "Yuanshi chudiao shi Pang zhubu Deng Zhizhong 怨詩楚調示龐主簿鄧治中 [A Lament in the Chu Mode for Registrar Pang and Secretary Deng]," in Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 76.

17 "Yu zi Yan deng shu 與子儼等疏 [A Letter to My Sons, Yan and the Others]," in Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 363.

18 For the first case, see Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 79; Hightower, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien*, 64. For the second case, see Davis, *Tao Yuanming*, 228; Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 367.

19 Stephen Owen argued that most poems of early medieval China were created from a shared poetic repertoire. See Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006).

Wushen Year [*Wushen sui liuyue zhong yuhuo* 戊申歲六月中遇火]" are quite similar to the four lines quoted above from "Drinking Alone in Consecutive Wet Days":

	總發抱孤念	Since youth I have held solitary disposition,
	奄出四十年	Forty years flew away so fast, just all at once.
	形跡憑化往	My body has decayed over time,
16	靈府長獨閑[20]	Yet my soul solely remains peaceful.

The two poems seem to paraphrase each other. They have almost identical meaning with a little change of expression and even use a similar grammatical structure. For example, in the third line in both cases, the meaning is similar, with an equivalent subject and predicate – "my form" equals "my body," and "transformed as time goes by" is no different from "has decayed over time." Based on the similarity of the two cases in terms of meaning and structure, we can infer that here *minfu* has the same meaning as *yanchu* 奄出, its counterpart, which means that time flies all at once.

The transience of life implied by *minfu* is the main theme in Zhuangzian thought, although the *Zhuangzi* did not use this word directly. It is sometimes demonstrated together with two other points in the *Zhuangzi* – the relationship between *xing* 形 and *xin* 心 and forgetting words. These two points are seen in the last four lines of Tao's poem "Drinking Alone in Consecutive Wet Days" and have been noted by previous scholars.[21] What I add, though, is that the three points, including the transience of life, are demonstrated together and in the same sequence in both the *Zhuangzi* and these last four lines in Tao's poem:

> Man's life between heaven and earth is like the passing of a white colt glimpsed through a crack in the wall – whoosh! – and that's the end. Overflowing, starting forth, there is nothing that does not come out; gliding away, slipping into silence, there is nothing that does not go back in.
>
> Having been transformed, things find themselves alive; another transformation and they are dead. Living things grieve over it, mankind mourns. But it is like the untying of the Heaven-lent bow-bag, the unloading of the Heaven-lent satchel – a yielding, a mild mutation, and the soul

20 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 154.

21 See Gu Zhi 古直, annot., *Tao Jingjie shijian* 陶靖節詩箋 [*Annotation of Tao Jingjie's Poetry*] (Taiwan: Guangwen shuju, 1999), 53; Gong Bin, *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian*, 119; Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 91; Tian, *Manuscript Culture*, 139; Swartz, *Reading Philosophy*, 207.

> and spirit are on their way, the body following after, on at last to the Great Return. The formless moves to the realm of form; the formed moves back to the realm of formlessness. This all men alike understand. But it is not something to be reached by striving. The common run of men all alike debate how to reach it. But those who have reached it do not debate, and those who debate have not reached it. Those who peer with bright eyes will never catch sight of it. Eloquence is not as good as silence. The Way cannot be heard; to listen for it is not as good as plugging up your ears. This is called the Great Acquisition.
>
> 人生天地之間，若白駒之過郤，忽然而已。注然勃然，莫不出焉；油然漻然，莫不入焉。
>
> 已化而生，又化而死。生物哀之，人類悲之。解其天弢，墮其天袭。紛乎宛乎，魂魄將往，乃身從之。乃大歸乎！不形之形，形之不形，是人之所同知也，非將至之所務也。此衆人之所同論也。彼至則不論，論則不至；明見無值，辯不若默；道不可聞，聞不若塞：此之謂大得。[22]

The three points of correspondence between the last four lines of the poem and the above-quoted text are presented in the following order: (1) *Minfu* in line 14 of the poem resonates with the transitory process of life emphasized in the first paragraph of the quote; (2) The phrase *yihua* 已化 and the word *xing* 形 are used both in the quote and line 15 of the poem. The concern about transformation of form is just a matter for ordinary people, not for the people who have reached the Way ("those who have reached it") in the quote, because "transformation happens on the outside but not on the inside" for these people,[23] that is, the outside form changes along with external things, whereas the heart inside remains peaceful and unchanged. This is exactly what the phrase *xinzai* 心在 in the last line of the poem refers to. (3) *Fuheyan* 復何言 in line 16 of the poem embeds the textual element from the end of the quotation about the harm that words do to the Way.

These three points are readily observable throughout the *Zhuangzi*. The faster the transformation of form is, the more difficult it is for the heart to remain peaceful. Therefore, those who manage to transcend this transformation can obtain more and reach a free state called Great Acquisition, as put forward in the passage. Under this state of the Way, both the peaceful heart and the

22 "Zhi beiyou 知北遊 [Knowledge Wandered North]," in Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 181–82. In this paper, all the English translations of *Zhuangzi* are adapted from Watson's translation.

23 Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 186.

recondite Way refuse debate. It was based on a thorough comprehension of the *Zhuangzi* that the poet used *minfu* to summarize his forty years of life, together with the other two points in the same sequence in the poem. The transience of life is vividly illustrated in the quotation in detail. The word *minfu* in Tao's poem might naturally remind Tao's intellectual contemporaries who were familiar with *Zhuangzi* texts of these kinds of images of the fleeting of life, such as "the passing of a white colt glimpsed through a crack in the wall" described in the *Zhuangzi*.

In contrast, interpreting *minfu* as "striving" would make this poem inconsistent with the characteristics of the Way, which is described in the *Zhuangzi* as naturally doing nothing and following the way of Heaven, instead of personal striving. This argument is reiterated in "Knowledge Wandered North [*Zhi beiyou* 知北遊]": "[He who follows along with the Way] will be wielding his mind without wearying it, responding to things without prejudice."[24] Both "without wearying it" and "without prejudice" are the opposite of striving for a definite ambition. What is more, the opposite of "transformation happens on the outside but not on the inside" is "transformation happens on the inside but not on the outside."[25] As Guo Xiang 郭象 [252–312] noted, the reason for this condition is "wearing the body to serve the heart's desire."[26] Therefore, if *minfu* is interpreted as striving, in this context, *xin* at the end of the poem becomes the ideal of life. This *xin* produces a desire to wear the body, degrading the theme of the poem and making it contrary to the characteristics of the Way in the *Zhuangzi*. In Tao's poems, *xin* is often a free heart, "the mind moving freely" [*youxin* 遊心] that the *Zhuangzi* reiterates,[27] rather than an obsession with life's ideal.

In addition to the kind of interpretation of words such as *minfu*, some annotations go further and regard drinking as an allegory of important political events to match Tao's canonized image as a Jin loyalist. If it is true that the poem "An Account of Wine [*Shujiu* 述酒]" contains some expressions that are incomprehensible to later readers,[28] which creates conditions for interpreters to apply allegorical reading, then another poem by Tao, "The Day of the Zha

24 其用心不勞，其應物無方。Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 180.

25 內化而外不化。Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 181, 186.

26 以心使形。Guo Xiang 郭象, annot., Cheng Xuanying 成玄英, comm., *Zhuangzi zhushu* 莊子註疏 [*Annotation and Commentaries of Zhuangzi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 407.

27 "Renjianshi 人間世 [In the World of Men]," in Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 28.

28 Xiaofei Tian reinterpreted "Shujiu 述酒 [On Account of Wine]" and pointed out that this poem is oblique only to readers of later generations, but for readers contemporaneous to Tao, the wording is actually clear. See Xiaofei Tian 田曉菲, *Chenji lu: Tao Yuanming yu shouchaoben wenhua yanjiu* 塵幾錄：陶淵明與手抄本文化研究 [*The Record of*

Sacrifice [*Zhari* 蜡日]," which is often paired with "An Account of Wine" and read as a political allegory, seems very plain and lucid even to today's readers:

風雪送餘運　Wind and snow push the last turn of the run of a year,
無妨時已和　But cannot impede the smooth coming of the mild season.
梅柳夾門植　The gate is flanked by plums and willows,
一條有佳花　Among which there is a branch with beautiful flowers.
我唱爾言得　I sing and you echo in agreement;
酒中適何多　So much agreeableness we can get in drinking!
未能明多少　How much exactly we don't know;
章山有奇歌[29]　Just like immortal pleasure of magical songs in Mt. Zhang.

If read with the expectation of finding profound implications of political events in writing about drinking, this poem becomes oblique and complicated in the eyes of commentators. Wu Qian 吳騫 [1733–1813] situated this poem in the turmoil at the end of the Jin dynasty and searched line by line for political references.[30] This commentary became quite influential for later scholars. Wang Shumin, for example, supported this line of investigation.[31] Qing dynasty [1616–1911] scholars Tao Shu 陶澍 [1777–1839] and Qiu Jiasui 邱嘉穗 [fl. ca. 1717] claimed that this poem was so cryptic that they gave up on paraphrasing it as they also tried to reveal its political relevance.[32] However, setting aside these comments, we find this poem very plain – just a description of the joy of drinking at the end of the year, and there is no convincing evidence of any allegory in it.[33] Even the last line of the poem, which causes the most confusion, is not hard to explain: "Mt. Zhang" is a celestial mountain recorded in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* [*Shanhai jing* 山海經],[34] thus "the magical song in

a Dusty Table: Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 219–50. This reinterpretation is not included in the earlier English edition.

29 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 216.

30 See Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:217–18.

31 See Wang Shumin, *Tao Yuanming shi jianzhenggao*, 371.

32 See Tao Shu 陶澍, annot., *Jingjie xiansheng ji* 靖節先生集 [*The Works of Mr. Jingjie*], annot. Tao Shu 陶澍, 1840 block-print edition, vol. 3; Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:218.

33 Davis, Hightower, and Yuan Xingpei mentioned that this poem is just about the pleasure of drinking at the end of the year, and there is no need to look for allegories. See Hightower, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien*, 167–68; Davis, *Tao Yuanming*, 114–15; Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 218.

34 See Wang Yao 王瑤, annot., *Tao Yuanming ji* 陶淵明集 [*The Works of Tao Yuanming*] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1957), 88.

Mt. Zhang" refers to the song by immortals, and people chant it just to show that drinking makes them feel like immortals.

Along with the tendency to see this poem as a political allegory, the echoes of the *Zhuangzi* are overlooked here. In the opening lines, the poet depicts scenery to illustrate the state of ease when he forgets the seasons. Just as "The Great and Venerable Teacher [*Da zongshi* 大宗師]" in the *Zhuangzi* states, "He who looks for the right time is not a worthy man,"[35] "the right time" refers to both natural seasons and social opportunities. It means a worthy man should forget about time and suit himself. In the poem, wind and snow "cannot impede the smooth coming of the mild season" and cannot stop the poet from appreciating the plum blossom and drinking with his friends. It is a joy similar to forgetting about time in the *Zhuangzi*. As for the amount of joy mentioned in lines 6–7, we can also find a textual refence in "The Great and Venerable Teacher": "He goes along with what is right for things, and no one knows his limit."[36] As nothing fails to be right for him, he has no limit. The *Zhuangzi* often ignores objective measures, such as time and amount. Only by abandoning such measures and limits can one reach the state of real joy and freedom, which is the essence of the Way.

As in these two poems, the joy of drinking often constitutes the substance of Tao's poems, as it gives him an extreme sense of freedom. This sense enables him to gain insights into life and time, which is difficult to achieve without wine. Correspondingly, the *Zhuangzi* often uses wine to reach the state of the Way. In "Mastering Life [*Dasheng* 達生]," getting drunk is described as a way to reach the state of the "whole spirit" [*shenquan* 神全], when one can forget about "life and death, alarm and terror" and enjoy the freedom of keeping himself whole.[37] Tao's "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XIV [*Yinjiu* 飲酒]" reveals this function of wine directly:

	不覺知有我	No longer feel about my own existence,
8	安知物爲貴	How could I tell the value of other things?
	悠悠迷所留	Carefree and leisurely, I am lost in where I stay,
	酒中有深味[38]	And steeped in the profound taste of wine.

35 天時非賢也。Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 43.

36 與物有宜，而莫知其極。Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 43.

37 死生驚懼。Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 146. Although drunkenness is not what the *Zhuangzi* is after, it was merely a way of explaining the sage's condition that "there is nothing that can do him harm." [莫之能傷。]

38 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 188.

"The profound taste of wine" at the end of the poem refers to the feeling of freedom, the state of the "whole spirit" in the *Zhuangzi*, as opposed to the virtues lodged in drinking as praised by Xiao Tong. A comment by Bai Juyi 白居易 [772–846] on Tao's poems on drinking is very incisive: "Every poem urges me to drink, other than this nothing else is said."[39] This can be regarded as the perfect rebuttal to the search for virtue in Tao's poems by Xiao Tong and his followers, and "nothing else is said" is also the state of reaching the Way without words.

In addition, the frequent allusion to the *Zhuangzi* and the reflection on the principles of life in Tao's poems show the influence of metaphysical poetry at that time. Mountains and waters are frequently used images in metaphysical poetry. The wine in Tao's poems has the same function as these images, through which the poet can achieve the Way. Therefore, understanding of the function of wine in Tao's poetry can help us discover the similarity between his poetry and metaphysical poetry [*xuan yan shi* 玄言詩].[40]

2 Pain in Reality

When Tao is in a state of drunkenness, the *Zhuangzi* delights him with the prospect of unlimited freedom. But when Tao is sober, as with his contemporary intellectuals, the ideals in the *Analects* constitute his chief ambition.[41]

39 篇篇勸我飲，此外無所云。Bai Juyi 白居易, "Xiao Tao Qian ti shi shiliu shou 效陶潛體詩十六首 [Sixteen Poems in Imitation of Tao Qian's Style, XII]," in *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 1:20.

40 Sun Chuo 孫綽 [314–371], Xu Xun 許詢 [fl. 371], Yu Liang 庾亮 [289–340] and Huan Wen 桓溫 [312–373] are the representatives of metaphysical poetry, as Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 [ca. 468–518] commented in his "Grades of Poetry" [*Shipin* 詩品]. While its features as highly intellectualized, full of abstract argumentation and thus characterized as "moral argument" by Zhong Rong are highlighted, there are still many poems which are less abstract, describing more real life, such as the works of Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 [385–433], of which the substantial relationship with metaphysical poetry is neglected. But in fact, they share the common trends with metaphysical poetry, featured by frequent allusion to Zhuangzi, aiming at reaching the Way by means of experiencing things in daily life, and reflecting the principles of life in the feeling process. The ambiguous boundary of "metaphysical poetry" needs to be rethought, as the term "metaphysical poetry" was given by later scholars. Zhu Ziqing is one of the earliest modern scholars who used this term, based on Zhong Rong's comments that we mentioned above. See Zhu Ziqing, *Shiyanzhi bian*, 36.

41 Shen Deqian 沈德潛, *Gushi yuan* 古詩源 [*The Source of Ancient Poem*] comments, "Allusions from the *Analects* are Mr. Tao's favorite. Among scholars from Han dynasty to Song, only Yuanming could be regarded as a real disciple of the sage." [陶公事專用《論

Nevertheless, ideals often conflict with reality. In this case, it is still the *Zhuangzi* that provides a way for him to rethink the ideals in the *Analects*. Tao's poems have many references to the *Analects* and the *Zhuangzi*. Sometimes, the absorption of the thinking in the *Zhuangzi* in Tao's poems does not take the normal form of explicit allusions; rather, it blends into the inner texture of the work and is easily overlooked. This kind of expression is conducive to a biographical reading that adheres to the ideals in the *Analects*, while ignoring the implications of the *Zhuangzi*. In this way, the ambivalence in the poem is likely to go unnoticed if one sticks to the positive and decisive image of Tao.

2.1 *"Firmness in Adversity," "Engaging in Farming," "Fame after Death"*

Tao's "Biography of Master Five Willows [*Wuliu xiansheng zhuan* 五柳先生傳]" is considered autobiographical and is mentioned in all the biographies of him.[42] The difficult circumstances of Yan Hui 顏回 in *Analects* 6.11 are reproduced in this "autobiography," and Master Five Willows shares Yan Hui's content and joyful attitude:

> His house is extremely small and crude, even not able to shelter him from wind and sun. His clothes are coarse and shabby with patches; his rice bin and water gourd are usually empty. Nonetheless, he is still content and joyful.
>
> 環堵蕭然，不蔽風日，短褐穿結，簞瓢屢空，晏如也。[43]

According to this, readers tend to interpret the feeling about poverty in Tao's poems as "content and joyful" and thus ignore the pain in it, let alone the implications of the *Zhuangzi*.

In "To My Cousin Jingyuan, Written in the Middle of the Twelfth Month of Year Guimao [*Guimao sui shieryue zhong zuoyu congdi jingyuan* 癸卯歲十二月中作與從弟敬遠]," the poet is also in a state of poverty similar to that of Yan Hui; however, instead of following Yan Hui's moral model, he is apparently unable to endure such hardship, as shown in line 12 of the poem: "Nothing could

語》，漢人以下，宋儒以前，可推聖門弟子者，淵明也。] In *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 1:201.

42 There is a significant inheritance relationship between the "Biography of Master Five Willows" and the biography of Yang Xiong 揚雄 in the *Hanshu* 漢書 [*History of the Han Dynasty*].

43 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 344.

make me feel even one shred of pleasure."[44] Qiu Jiasui and Fang Zongcheng 方宗誠 [1818–1888] read this poem as meaning that Tao never felt any remorse or distress over his lack of wealth, obviously overlooking the lament over the predicament in the poem and regard the equanimity and enjoyment in Tao's biography as main source. Along with this kind of annotation, the wisdom in the *Zhuangzi*, which gives the poet consolation when the ideal of the *Analects* is of no help, is ignored. The last four lines of this poem offer this salvation:

	平津苟不由	If the level ford cannot be followed,
	棲遲詎爲拙	How could it be inferior to live as a hermit?
	寄意一言外	I lodge my thoughts beyond these words,
20	茲契誰能別[45]	Who can identify my principle?

Expressing a similar emotion, "The Sign of Virtue Complete [*Dechongfu* 德充符]" in the *Zhuangzi* reads:

> If you look at them from the point of view of their differences, then there is liver and gall, Chu and Yue. But if you look at them from the point of view of their sameness, then the ten thousand things all are one. A man like this doesn't know what his ears or eyes should approve – he lets his mind play in the harmony of virtue. As for things, he sees them as one and does not see their loss.
>
> 自其異者視之，肝膽楚越也；自其同者視之，萬物皆一也。夫若然者，且不知耳目之所宜，而遊心乎德之和；物視其所一而不見其所喪。[46]

This notion of leveling all things and eliminating the gain and loss, the main notion in the *Zhuangzi*, provides a kind of extreme freedom, in which people no longer need to offer their approval or worry about their losses. If we take "the point of view of their sameness," as the *Zhuangzi* suggests, the difference between "the level ford" and "living as a hermit" in Tao's poem disappears – they converge into one thing. In this case, the poet does not need to know which to confirm and which he has failed. He will obtain freedom of mind despite his difficulties in reality. Unlike the otherworldly freedom

44 了無一可悅。Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 146.
45 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 146.
46 Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 34.

demonstrated in Tao's poems about drinking, it is worldly freedom that can lead him to the state of freedom even when he is stuck in real life; as *Zhuangzi* says, "You may go and play freely in the imprisoned bird cage."[47] "The imprisoned bird cage" refers to troubles in reality. This attitude is reiterated in Tao's poem "Idly Stay at Home on the Double Ninth Festival [*Jiuri xianju* 九日閑居]": "Living in seclusion is truly delightful,/it doesn't mean resting in retirement equates with no achievement."[48] As shown in these lines, the poet gains self-satisfaction by ignoring the difference between "resting in retirement" and striving for achievement, and this kind of difference is the main element in weaving "the imprisoned bird cage" that prevents people from playing freely. This is also what *yiyanwai* 一言外 and *ziqi* 茲契 in the last two lines of "To My Cousin Jingyuan" refer to.[49]

In poverty, Tao not only felt depressed but also turned to farming [*gonggeng* 躬耕]. This is also against the *Analects* precept that "exemplary people make their plans around the Way and not around their sustenance."[50] "Meditating on Ancients in the Early Spring of Year Guimao at My Farm, II [*Guimao suishi chun huaigu tianshe* 癸卯歲始春懷古田舍]" expresses Tao's thoughts on this issue:

	先師有遺訓	The ancient Master has left a precept:
	憂道不憂貧	Be concerned for the Way, not poverty.
	瞻望邈難逮	I look up to it but it's far away and out of my reach;
4	轉欲志長勤	So I turn to take constant toil as my present goal.
	秉耒歡時務	Holding my plow, I rejoice in seasonal farming;
	解顏勸農人	With smile I encourage fellow farmers.
	平疇交遠風	The plain field encounters wind blowing from far away;
8	良苗亦懷新	Even good seedlings embrace freshness.

47 "In the World of Men," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 25.

48 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 50.

49 In previous annotations, *ziqi* has often been interpreted as understanding between Tao and his cousin Jingyuan. But this makes the line mean that they need others to understand their accordance, which is unintelligible in the context of the entire poem. In our opinion, here *qi* 契 should be construed as "principle." Our evidence is as follows: in the Jin dynasty, Yuan Hong 袁宏 [ca. 328–76], "Sanguo mingchen xu zan 三國名臣序贊 [Preface and Hymn to the Famous Officials of Three Kingdoms]," writes, "So high-level intellectual has a command of the principle." [故達識攝其契。] Zhang Xian 張銑 noted that "*Qi* means principle." [契, 義也。] See Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, vol. 47.

50 君子謀道不謀食。 Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine, 1998), 190. In this paper, all the English translations of the *Analects* are adapted from Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont's translation.

雖未量歲功 Although the annual harvest has not been estimated,
即事多所欣 Approaching of most things makes me happy.
耕種有時息 In plowing and planting, I take a rest from time to time;
12 行者無問津 No passerby to ask about the ford.
日入相與歸 At sunset I return home with fellows,
壺漿勞近鄰 And offer wine to refresh neighbors after work.
長吟掩柴門 Closing my rustic gate and chanting poetry,
16 聊爲隴畝民[51] I may just as well settle to be a farmer.

Although scholars such as Huang Wenhuan 黃文煥 [1598–1667] commented on this poem, claiming that farming never hindered Tao from following Confucius and Yan Hui's examples, the phrase *miaonandai* 邈難逮 in line 3 clearly indicates the poet's divergence from the sage's teaching. What is more, as in "To My Cousin Jingyuan," Tao addressed this contradiction with the idea from *Zhuangzi* to level all things. But unlike "To My Cousin Jingyuan" in which Zhuangzian thought only relieves the pain of the poet, in this poem the gist of the *Zhuangzi* brings much happiness to the poet under adverse conditions because according to the *Zhuangzi*, when one forgets the difference between gain and loss, one can possess everything even after losing everything. As the chapter "Constrained in Will [*Keyi* 刻意]" in the *Zhuangzi* reads: "At ease in the illimitable, where all good things come to attend."[52] Lines 5–14 in this poem depict so many "good things" [*zhongmei* 眾美] on the farm, everybody and everything are happy, embodying the state of being "at ease in the illimitable." Now, the poet is free of the need to conform with a certain code of conduct proposed in the *Analects* and thus can go along with things jubilantly and let his mind move freely.

"Meditating on Ancients at My Farm, II," is a masterpiece of pastoral poetry. It is worth noting that the pastoral scenery and lifestyle here are not simply realistic writing; they are "good things" that signify the life state of being "at ease in the illimitable," which is the state of achieving the Way. From this perspective, the pastoral scene and lifestyle depicted in Tao's poetry, together with drinking discussed above, play a role similar to that of mountains and waters, the main images in his contemporary metaphysical poems, which are metaphors for the Way. This can broaden our view about the influence of metaphysical poems at that time.

People who maintain "strength in adversity" [*guqiong* 固窮] usually earn an honored name. When it comes to desiring a posthumous name, the view

51 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 144.
52 澹然無極而眾美從之。Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 121.

in the *Analects* is the opposite of that of the *Zhuangzi*. The *Analects* 15.20 says, "Exemplary persons despise the thought of ending their days without having established a name,"[53] while the *Zhuangzi* advises, "Do not be an embodier for fame,"[54] and lists several conditions of "penned-in things," including "men of haggard-hermit looks reach out for fame,"[55] to blame those who remain impoverished for their entire life just for the sake of their reputation. When Tao reflected on the value of "fame after death" [*shenhou ming* 身後名] in "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XI," and "A Lament in the Chu Mode for Registrar Pang and Secretary Deng [*Yuanshi chudiao shi Pang zhubu Deng Zhizhong* 怨詩楚調示龐主簿鄧治中]" from the perspective of the *Zhuangzi*, most commentators instead paid attention to the influence of the *Analects*. For example, Tang Han 湯漢 [1202–1272] and Wen Runeng 溫汝能 [1748–1811] praised Tao's indifference to fame in "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XI," according to the belief that Tao attaches importance to the same aspiration held by Yan Hui and Rong Qiqi 榮啟期 [595–500 BCE], two paragons admired by Confucius for their firmness in adversity.[56] Wen Runeng reviewed "A Lament in the Chu Mode" as a temporary feeling, instead of real indifference to posthumous fame, because Confucians resent the thought of ending their days without having made a name for themselves.[57] Zhang Zilie 張自烈 [1597–1673] pointed out that Tao cannot ignore posthumous fame in this poem.[58] Whether or not they admit that Tao foresaking posthumous fame, most of them deny Tao's real bitterness toward being *kugao* 枯槁 [bleak and withered] because of their belief in Tao's constant aspiration to "be at ease in poverty and delighting in the Way" [*anpin ledao* 安貧樂道], an important principle in the *Analects*.

Tao's reflection on the *Analects* and approval for the *Zhuangzi* is especially notable in the following lines from "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XI":

	顏生稱爲仁	Gentleman Yan is praised for being righteous,
	榮公言有道	Master Rong is said to conform with the Way.
	屢空不獲年	The former with food bin often empty died young;
4	長飢至於老	The latter suffers hunger through his long life.
	雖留身後名	Although they leave behind honored names,

53 君子疾沒世而名不稱焉。Ames and Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius*, 188.

54 無為名尸。"Ying diwang 應帝王 [Fit for Emperors and Kings]," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 59.

55 枯槁之士宿名。"Xu Wugui 徐無鬼," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 203.

56 In "Tianrui 天瑞篇 [The Chapter of Good Omen from Heaven]" of *Liezi* 列子, Confucius praises Rong Qiqi for his ease in poverty.

57 Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:75.

58 Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:74.

一生亦枯槁　Their lifetime is indeed bleak and withered.
死去何所知　After death nothing can they know;
稱心固爲好[59]　Gratifying one's heart's desire is always the best.

Lines 3–6 illustrate the image of Yan and Rong, ideal images of humility in Confucian terms. But this kind of intellectual image is similar to those "men of haggard-hermit looks reaching out for fame" in the *Zhuangzi*. What is more, by choosing the expression *chenxin* 稱心 in line 8, which resembles the word *youxin* reiterated in the *Zhuangzi*, the poet defines his Zhuangzian position in opposition to that of intellectuals who chase posthumous fame.[60] This attitude is also seen in "A Lament in the Chu Mode for Registrar Pang and Secretary Deng," in which Tao bemoans that fame after death does not help with his present bitterness:

夏日長抱飢,　In summer daytime I always suffer hunger;
寒夜無被眠.　In winter night I sleep without a quilt to warm me.
造夕思雞鳴,　By dusk I long for cocks' crow;
及晨願烏遷.　At dawn I yearn for ravens' departure.

As a result,

吁嗟身後名,　the fame after death,
於我若浮煙.[61]　to me means nothing but floating mist.

Unlike the biographical readings that purify and elevate the themes of Tao's poems to match the ideal of intellectuals in the *Analects*, some readers acknowledge Tao's anxiety about poverty in his poetry. Unfortunately, these comments are usually questioned and ultimately rejected by the mainstream. The reading of Tao's poetry by Du Fu 杜甫 [712–770] is a prominent example. Two statements by Du Fu in his poem "Getting out What Stirred Me [Five Poems] III [*Qian xing* 遣興]" were widely refuted: Tao "wasn't necessarily able to achieve the ideal state of the Way,"[62] and "He hated his life being bleak and withered."[63] Unwilling to accept the fall of an icon such as Tao, many later readers gradually

59 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 183.
60 In "Twenty Poems After Drinking Wine II", contrary to XI, Tao praised Rong's posthumous fame from the standpoint of the *Analects*.
61 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 76.
62 未必能達道。
63 頗亦恨枯槁。Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, annot., *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳註 [*Detailed Gloss on Du's Poetry*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe,1992), 226.

came to interpret *kugao* in Du Fu's poem as a poetry style.[64] Because the style of *kugao* is the main thing that makes Tao "the leader of the real poets,"[65] they thought Du Fu's commentary was apparently wrong.

These traditional biographical readings, though persistent and widespread, have been reflected upon by many later scholars. Following Du Fu's observation, they further noted in Tao's poems the concern for poverty and the ambivalent attitude toward the ideal of intellectuals in the *Analects*.[66] But from another perspective, Tao's poems express more than ambivalence – the poet often resolves the conflict between reality and ideals in the *Analects* through the spirit of the *Zhuangzi*. The thoughts in the *Zhuangzi* about how to enjoy freedom even when one is stuck in real life helped Tao to change with the times. This can help us discover the connection between Tao's poetry and the metaphysical institution in the Eastern Jin dynasty, which sought a view of life from the *Zhuangzi*, instead of taking Confucianism as the only source.

2.2 *"Benevolence and Righteousness"*

In the *Analects*, benevolence and righteousness are the highest ideals for intellectuals. They take first priority and thus are regarded as being even more important than individual life. Under this principle, giving up one's life for the sake of benevolence and righteousness is always the ideal choice for a resolute intellectual, although it is against human nature. Tao expresses his reflection on this issue in some poems, such as "Singing of the Three Good Men [*Yong sanliang* 詠三良]" and "Singing of Jing Ke [*Yong Jingke* 詠荊軻]," which are often read as political allegory to show Tao's own loyalty to the Jin dynasty.[67] Tao Shu related "Singing of the Three Good Men" to the specific historical event

64 Su Shi once called Tao's works "dry and bland" [枯澹], saying "the exterior is dry, but the interior is saturated; it seems to be bland but actually flavorful." [外枯而中膏，似澹而實美。] See Su Shi 蘇軾, "Ping Han Liu shi 評韓柳詩 [Commentary on Poetry of Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan]," in *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 1:30. Accordingly, the Southern Song dynasty [1127–1279] scholar Zeng Hong 曾紘 [fl. 119] described Tao's poetry as follows: "the surface is seemingly bleak and withered, yet the inside is full of joy." [外若枯槁，中實敷腴。] Zeng Hong's remark is cited in Li Gonghuan 李公煥, annot., "Jianzhu Tao Yuanming ji 箋注陶淵明集 [Notes on Tao Yuanming's Works]," in *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 1:50.

65 真詩人之冠冕。Zeng Hong's remark.

66 Many achievements of the study on Tao have noted this point to different degrees. For example, Robert Ashmore in *The Transport of Reading* argues that Tao's writing is related to the *Analects* by having a conversation with it and inviting readers to join this conversation, instead of simply using allusions from the *Analects*.

67 In the official biographies, Tao appears to be loyal to the Jin. But this image has been widely challenged by later generations. For example, see Yuan Xingpei, "Tao Yuanming yu Jin Song zhiji de zhengzhi fengyun 陶淵明與晉宋之際的政治風雲 [Tao Yuanming and

at the end of Jin when Liu Yu 劉裕 [363–422] plan to kill the Jin emperor with poisoned wine and believed the poem was meant to mourn for Zhang Yi 張禕 [d. 421], who chose to drink the poisoned wine himself, rather than serve it to the emperor.[68] Modern exegetes, Wang Yao, Wang Shumin, and Gong Bin, all agree with Tao Shu's idea.[69] Liu Lü 劉履 [1317–1379], Jiang Xun 蔣薰 [ca. 1610–1693], and Qiu Jiasui suggested that "Singing of Jing Ke" expressed Tao's hope for revenge after the Jin dynasty was usurped by Liu Yu.[70] There are also some different voices. Yuan Xingpei pointed out these inferences are untenable because of a lack of evidence, and he saw "Singing of the Three Good Men" as just "an imitation of old style" and "Singing of Jing Ke" as illustrating Tao's bold and unrestrained character.[71] However, whether they approved or disapproved the political reading, they all overlooked Tao's sober and sharp reflection on the fate of three good men [*sanliang* 三良] and Jing Ke 荊軻 [d. 227 BCE] in the poems from the standpoint of the *Zhuangzi*.

By choosing as the poetic subject "three good men," who were buried alive after the death of Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 [d. 621 BC], Tao carries on a writing tradition that goes back from Jian'an 建安 all the way to the *Classic of Poetry*. However, in our contention, Tao's dealing with this conventional subject takes a new direction that particularly showcases his connection with the *Zhuangzi*. All four previous poems highlight the fear and anguish of people who were "approaching the coffin pit":

臨其穴	Approaching the coffin pit,
惴惴其慄[72]	I shiver with fear.
攬涕登君墓	Wiping tears, I mount your tomb,
臨穴仰天歎[73]	Approaching the coffin pit I look up to Heaven and draw a sigh.

Political Conditions between the Jin and Song Dynasties]," *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學, no. 2 (1990).

68 See Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:281–82.

69 In addition to citing Tao Shu in the "Collection of Commentaries," in *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian*, Gong Bin also dated this poem to 421, when the poisonous wine incident happened, in the "chronology" he edited. See Wang Yao, *Tao Yuanming ji*, 93; Wang Shumin, *Tao Yuanming shi jianzhenggao*, 467; Gong Bin, *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian*, 350, 552.

70 See Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:283–85.

71 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 264, 267.

72 "Huangniao 黃鳥 [The Yellow Bird]," in *Shijing*, see Kong Yingda, *Maoshi zhengyi*, 502.

73 Cao Zhi 曹植, "Sanliang shi 三良詩 [A Poem on the Three Good Men]," in *Xianqin hanweijin nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 [*Poems of the Pre-Qin Period, and Han, Wei, Jin, the Northern and Southern Dynasties*], ed. Lu Qinli 逯欽立 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 455.

臨穴呼蒼天　Approaching the coffin pit I cry out for the heaven,
涕下如綆縻[74]　tears run down incessantly.
低頭闚壙戶　I look down at the entrance of the coffin pit,
仰視日月光[75]　look up and see the glow of sun and moon.

Moreover, it is hard to figure out whether the action of "approaching the coffin pit" is that of the "three good men" or other people who pitied them, perhaps including the poets.[76] This uncertainty comes in part from the absence of a subject in the lines portraying the act of "approaching the coffin pit," which is common in the grammar of ancient Chinese poetry. In this circumstance, the poets seem to share the fear and distress with "the three good men." Or, in other words, they are on the same side. However, Tao's poem is in contrast to all the earlier ones, as shown in lines 15–16:

臨穴罔惟疑　They approached the tomb without hesitation,
16 投義志攸希[77]　As sacrificing for righteousness should be their aspiration.

First, it highlights the resolution of the "three good men" to sacrifice without fear or anguish; second, the identity of the people who "approach the coffin pit" is clearly "the three good men." Those who approached the grave unhesitatingly and claimed that the sacrifice was in keeping with their aspirations can only be martyrs, not bystanders or poets. That is, Tao is describing the feelings of the three good men in face of sacrifice from the perspective of a third party, which makes it possible for him to express disapproval of this feeling and choice. Tao's description of the tragic fate of "the three good men" can easily remind us of the rational inspection and criticism toward benevolence and righteousness in the *Zhuangzi*: "not being part of man's true form" [*fei renqing* 非人情], "destroys men's constant naturalness" [*shi qi chang* 失其常] and "confuses the world" [*shi tianxia huo* 使天下惑].[78]

74 Wang Can 王粲, "Yongshi shi 詠史詩 [A Poem on History]," in *Xianqin hanweijin nanbeichao shi*, 364.

75 Ruan Yu 阮瑀, "Yongshi shi 詠史詩 [A Poem on History]," in *Xianqin hanweijin nanbeichao shi*, 379.

76 Commentators hold different opinions about it. For example, in the annotations to "The Yellow Bird," Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 [127–200] suggested that it is other people in the Qin [770–207 BCE] who approach the coffin pit (see Kong Yingda, *Maoshi zhengyi*, 501–2), while Zhu Xi 朱熹 [1130–1200] suggested it should be "the three good men" (see Zhu Xi 朱熹, ed., *Shi ji zhuan* 詩集傳 [*The Collection of Glosses of Shi*] [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011], 98–99). Similar debates take place over the other three poems.

77 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 264.

78 "Pianmu 駢拇 [Webbed Toes]," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 61–62.

Zhuangzi uses "a sixth finger" to symbolize that benevolence and righteousness is, in many cases, an excessive requirement that surpasses human nature but demands that the whole world live up to this standard. This requirement is unattainable, creating a lot of unnecessary worries for people, thus it is "not part of man's true form." The "three good men" had to sacrifice their own lives by being buried alive with the dead lord. This is too much to ask of any individual and is far beyond men's innate nature, so it caused great pain for the "three good men" and those around them. Therefore, "not part of man's true form," the characteristic of benevolence and righteousness, is best embodied in this tragic story.

Moreover, from the perspective of the *Zhuangzi*, using benevolence and righteousness to regulate men's behavior is no different from using tools such as a compass and square to make something right or cords and glue to make something firm – all "destroy men's constant naturalness." Now we can understand why Tao's poem highlights the resolution by the "three good men" to sacrifice without fear or anguish, unlike other poems that highlight their fear and anguish. It is to show that benevolence and righteousness altered their naturalness – the basic human instinct to value one's own life totally disappeared at this point.

In addition, the belief of benevolence and righteousness confuses and drives people to dash headlong into pursuing accomplishment to the point of death. This point in Zhuangzian thought is also embodied in Tao's "Singing of the Three Good Men," as lines 1–10 read:

	彈冠乘通津	We dusted our caps and took the thoroughfare of official career,
	但懼時我遺	Only feared being left out by the right opportunities.
	服勤盡歲月	We served diligently and devotedly throughout the years,
4	常恐功愈微	Often dreading that it was not remarkable enough.
	忠情謬獲露	Our loyalty seized chances to be revealed;
	遂爲君所私	We gained special favor from the lord eventually.
	出則陪文輿	Accompanying his ornate carriage when he went out,
8	入必侍丹帷	Waiting upon him beneath red curtain inside the palace.
	箴規嚮已從	Our counsel and advice were always accepted,
	計議初無虧[79]	Our plans and admonitions were totally adopted.

79 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 264. For the latest research achievement about Tao's poems on history, see Yue Zhang, *Lore and Verse: Poems on History in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2022), 73–96.

Tao highlighted their diligence, loyalty, and the consequent great success – that is, the special favor from the lord. They were always busy seeking opportunities to assert themselves, as "only feared" in line 2 and "often dreading" in line 4 vividly portray. Therefore, they are under the same pressure as the men described in the *Zhuangzi* who are "not happy" [*bule* 不樂] without the chance to demonstrate their abilities.[80] This aspiration for accomplishments and the realization of their ambition, including special favor from the lords, foreshadow the misfortune to come. In this respect, the miserable fate of the three good men is similar to that of loyal ministers Bi Gan 比干 [d. ca. 1047 BCE], whose heart was cut out, and Wu Zixu 伍子胥 [559–484 BCE], whose eyes were plucked from their sockets, which the *Zhuangzi* bemoans.[81] Regardless of whether they were willing or forced to die, their misfortune was due to loyalty. We can tell that they were so deeply confused by benevolence and righteousness that they "sacrificed their lives" for it without fear,[82] because "external things," such as benevolence and righteousness, as well as the pursuit of accomplishments driven by it, can cruelly devour "internal things," the true nature of men, to which the *Zhuangzi* always sticks. In some degree, the "three good men" are the epitome of people who strive for "external things," so Tao's lament in the poem points not only to the "three good men" but also to the group that shares the same fate.

From Tao's perspective, Jing Ke is in the same group as the "three good men." Lines 19–20 give the key statement in Tao's poem "Singing of Jing Ke":

心知去不歸　He was well aware that this journey had no return,
且有後世名[83]　But his name would be remembered by later generations.

Tao believes that Jing Ke sacrificed himself just for posthumous fame, which invites a pointed question here: is it worth it? From the perspective of the *Zhuangzi*, "intellectuals risk[ing] death for the sake of fame"[84] is little different from "petty men risk[ing] death for the sake of profit,"[85] as both intellectuals and petty men chase "external things," whether fame or profit, which go against

80 "Xu Wugui," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 203.

81 "Bi Gan's heart was cut out; Wu Zixu's eyes were plucked from their sockets – loyalty brought them this misfortune." [比干剖心，子胥抉眼，忠之禍也。] See "Daozhi 盜跖 [Robber Zhi]," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 261.

82 以身爲殉。"Webbed Toes," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 62.

83 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 267.

84 士則以身殉名。

85 小人則以身殉利。"Webbed Toes," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 62.

their true nature or "internal things." Thus, Jing Ke in this poem, which echoes the "three good men" in the preceding poem, is among the sort of people who "sacrific[e] their lives for external things" criticized by the *Zhuangzi* and Tao.

It is worth noting that Tao highlighted the strong and wide influence of benevolence and righteousness in this poem to demonstrate his deep reflection on this issue. This influence is criticized in the *Zhuangzi* as "confusing the world." Jing Ke's sacrifice was entirely his own choice, and he headed to his death bravely and fearlessly, as shown in lines 21–24:

	登車何時顧	Getting on the carriage, he never once looked back;
	飛蓋入秦庭	With flying canopy, he ran in full speed to the court of Qin.
	凌厲越萬里	Being brave and fierce, he dashed ten thousand *li*;
24	逶迤過千城[86]	Along winding paths, he passed through a thousand towns.

The implicit judgment here is that the more bravery Jing Ke displayed, the more enslaved he appeared to be by the rules of benevolence and righteousness. Tao reveals the moral basis for Jing Ke's bravery in line 5: "Exemplary persons should die for their understanding friend";[87] then he concludes that this was a failure in lines 27–28: "But what a pity, his swordsmanship was imperfect, / Then the astonishing feat was not accomplished."[88] This description echoes the kind of criticism of benevolence and righteousness in the *Zhuangzi*. According to the *Zhuangzi*, the behavioral principles of Jing Ke, among the important criteria of benevolence and righteousness, is nothing but "tales handed down from ages past, retold by the ages that follow. They show us that the gentleman who is determined to be upright in word and consistent in conduct will, as a result, bow before disaster, will encounter affliction."[89] Jing Ke's sacrifice set a good example for other intellectuals, but, at the same time, he went to the end of his days tragically and never returned. On the basis of this judgment, the stress on Jing Ke's resolution in these four lines show how deeply he is enslaved by "external things." Correspondingly, Tao begins the poem with "Dan of Yan is famous for gracious hospitality for warriors,"[90] which points out that Jing Ke's sacrifice is not for himself but for others who support him. The *Zhuangzi* called

86 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 267.
87 君子死知己。
88 惜哉劍術踈，奇功遂不成。Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 267.
89 此上世之所傳，下世之所語，以爲士者正其言，必其行，故服其殃，離其患也. "Robber Zhi," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 262.
90 燕丹善養士。

people like Jing Ke "servants to circumstance and things."[91] All these elements, including posthumous fame, a code of conduct, the Dan of Yan, that cause Jing Ke to sacrifice himself are "circumstance and things"; and Jing Ke acts like a servant in this situation, which means that, when the moment comes that he can put his talents to use, he cannot keep from acting, so he is spurred on desperately to demonstrate his incomparable courage in the event of peril.

In addition, the bigger tragedy is that benevolence and righteousness can exert their influence far beyond Jing Ke. When Jing Ke started off on his journey to sacrifice, "those who attended were all heroes," as line 12 claims.[92] "All heroes" implies that they embrace the same ambition and courage to realize their ambitions as Jing Ke. "Jianli struck the lute with a melancholy tone, / Songyi sang in a high-pitched voice."[93] Their musical performance is a metaphor showing that they share the same values, so they can understand each other's music tunes, that is, they are Jing Ke's bosom friends, or, in other words, *zhiyin* 知音 [a friend keenly appreciative of one's talents].[94] Not only did the people of the time aspire to the same goal, but, a thousand years later, Jing Ke's deeds are still admired [suggested in lines 29–30]. We can detect the deep sadness of Tao in these sentences, as, although benevolence and righteousness are against human nature, they have such powerful and everlasting power as to lure people to blindly sacrifice themselves for it.

2.3 *Accomplishment*

Tao's reflection in his poems concerns not only benevolence and righteousness, which is the primary principle advocated by Confucius, but also the accomplishments pursued in real life by Confucius and his followers, sometimes including Tao. "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XX" is a typical example:

91 勢物之徒。"Xu Wugui," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 204.

92 四座列群英。

93 漸離擊悲筑，宋意唱高聲。Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 267.

94 Gao Jianli 高漸離 and Song Yi 宋意 are both hangers-on of Prince Dan 太子丹. Gao Jianli's heroic action is similar to Jing Ke's. It is recorded in the *Shiji* that Emperor Qin [259–10 BCE] heard he was good at playing the lute and called him to his court. He tried to assassinate Emperor Qin but failed and was killed. As for Song Yi, Zhang Shoujie's 張守節 commentary cited "Yan taizi pian 燕太子篇 [The Chapter on the Prince of Yan]": "As I observed, among the hangers-on of Prince Dan.... Song Yi's bravery shows in his veins, so his face turns blue in rage.... Jing Ke's bravery shows in his spirit, so his face stays unchanged in rage." [竊觀太子客， ... 宋意，脉勇之人，怒而面青 ... 荆軻，神勇之人，怒而色不變。] See Sima Qian 司馬遷, "Cike liezhuan 刺客列傳 [The Section Devoted to Assassins]," in *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*], comm. Pei Yin 裴駰, Sima Zhen 司馬貞, and Zhang Shoujie 張守節 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), 2530.

羲農去我久 Fuxi and Shennong's time is far away from mine,
舉世少復真 Now in the whole world few can return to the Truth.
汲汲魯中叟 In his endless seeking, the old gentleman from Lu,
彌縫使其淳 Tried to patch up those holes and recover its simplicity.
鳳鳥雖不至 Though the auspicious phoenix did not come,
禮樂暫得新 Rites and music got renewed for the time being.
洙泗輟微響 River Zhu and Si lost the subtle echo from his teaching,
漂流逮狂秦 Drifting and dashing, they flowed to the age of mad Qin.
詩書復何罪 What is the fault of *The Odes* and *The History*?
一朝成灰塵 But burned to ashes in just one day.
區區諸老翁 Those elderly men are so sincere,
爲事誠殷勤 Devoting themselves to the cause of teaching.
如何絕世下 Why since the end of Han dynasty,
六籍無一親 Nobody has close affection with the Six Classics?
終日馳車走 All day long rushing about in a carriage following Confucius,
不見所問津 We failed to find the way of our pursuit.
若復不快飲 If I do not hurry with my drinking,
空負頭上巾 In vain I would disappoint my headcloth for wine filtration.
但恨多謬誤 I just feel sorry that I made many mistakes,
君當恕醉人[95] You are supposed to forgive such a drunken man.

Obviously, lines 15–16 are based on a famous allusion to the phrase "Chang Ju and Jie Ni plowed the field side by side,"[96] in which hermits Chang Ju 長沮 and Jie Ni 桀溺 show their different attitude toward reality from Confucius, who is rushing to save the world. The existing reading mainly takes the subject of lines 15–16 as the common people criticized in lines 13–14, and interprets lines 15–16 as saying that, although some people rush about in carriages, what they are pursuing is fame and fortune, and no one cares any longer about where the ford is, as Confucius did. In this way, the poet regards himself as a hermit, like Chang Ju and Jie Ni.[97] But, referring to the source text, obviously Chang Ju and Jie Ni have never lamented that no one asks about the ford. What they bemoaned is the futility of asking about the ford. The implication

95 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 197.
96 長沮、桀溺耦而耕。See Ames and Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius*, 213–14.
97 Such as the comments from Tang Han and Yuan Xingpei. See Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:196; Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 199.

of this interpretation is the need to maintain the perspective of the poet as a follower of Confucius (caring about where the ford is like Confucius did), even when, by contrast, the poet is seen as Chang Ju and Jie Ni, who never agree with Confucius.

According to the source text, *Analects* 18.6, it is Confucius and his disciples who rush about in a carriage all day long to seek a way to save the world. Correspondingly, the subject of lines 15–16 in the poem should also be considered Confucius and his disciples, possibly including the poet himself,[98] rather than the ignorant common people, as argued by the previous interpretation. It manifests Tao's doubt in the ambition to save society following in the footsteps of Confucius, as they failed to find the path for their pursuit. Under this circumstance, indulging in drink may be a better choice for him. But the abovementioned reading views the poet's denial of the effect of Confucius and his successors' cause as a lamentation that no one has taken up Confucius' cause.

Unlike the Confucian ambition, the *Zhuangzi* often expresses disappointment about the world. It argues that Confucius' enthusiasm for saving the troubled world is not only meaningless for the world but also harmful to himself, so it is fiercely criticized by Zhi 跖, a thief:

> This "Way" you tell me about is frantic, endless seeking, crafty, vain, hypocritical affair, not the sort of thing that is capable of preserving the truth within. How can it be worth discussing?
>
> 子之道，狂狂汲汲，詐巧虛偽事也，非可以全真也。奚足論哉。[99]

What calls for special attention here is that in line 3, robber Zhi uses the word *jiji* 汲汲 [endless seeking] to criticize the Confucian Way; we can then realize the implication of a similar criticism in line 3 of Tao's poem when he uses the same word *jiji* to describe Confucius. Following this clue, the content in lines 2 and 4 of the poem about how Confucius tried to restore the world to the truth, can also be read in reference to the criticism by Zhi that Confucius's Way is "not the sort of thing that is capable of preserving the truth within." Then we can distinguish Tao's suspicion about Confucius in this poem. The

98 "Yong pinshi 詠貧士 [In Praise of Impoverished Gentlemen, II]": "My retirement is not like Confucius' crisis in Chen, / but I cannot help complaining about poverty like his student Zilu." [閑居非陳厄，竊有慍見言。] See Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 254. Here Tao also compared himself to Confucius' disciple.

99 "Robber Zhi," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 258.

Zhuangzi has other negative description of Confucius and his followers that are similar to "endless seeking," such as "sweating and laboring to the end of their days and never seeing their accomplishment, utterly exhausting themselves and never knowing where to look for rest" – which is a great pity, for it was totally against the nature of truth.[100] Lines 3, 11–12, and 15–16 of the poem, which highlight the hardship of Confucius and his followers, including the "elderly men" who were devoted to education in the Confucian classics in the Han dynasty [206 BCE–220], express pity rather than praise, echoing the negative description in the *Zhuangzi*.

In addition, the *Zhuangzi* suggests that when the times are not agreeable and bring the greatest adversity to the world, the only thing that people should do is to "rest and wait."[101] Other parts of the poem, including lines 1–2, 7–10, 13–14, also echo the complaint in the *Zhuangzi* to reveal that the turbulent days were against the pursuit of Confucius and his followers and thus made all their efforts futile. From this perspective, we can understand why drinking, suggested in the last four lines of the poem, is a better choice under the circumstances – the poet meant to heed the advice in the *Zhuangzi* to "rest and wait," which is the only way to "preserve the truth within" in adverse conditions.

Nevertheless, the *Zhuangzi* and drinking do not always alleviate the poet's stress and anxiety concerning accomplishment in reality. Tao's "The Tree in Bloom [*Rongmu* 榮木]" structures another peculiar combination of the ideal in the *Analects* and drinking, which leads to disputes about their interpretation. The disagreement mainly occurs in stanza 4:

	先師遺訓	The ancient Master left a precept,
	余豈云墜	How could I possibly betray it?
	四十無聞	If one at forty is still obscure,
4	斯不足畏	Then there is no need to stand in awe of him.
	脂我名車	Grease my luxury carriage,
	策我名驥	Whip my rare horse.
	千里雖遙	Albeit that a thousand *li* is far indeed,
8	孰敢不至[102]	How can I dare not to drive there!

100 終身役役而不見其成功, 薾然疲役而不知其所歸。"Qiwu lun 齊物論 [Discussion on Making All Things Equal]," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 9.

101 See "Shanxing 繕性 [Mending the Inborn Nature]," in Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 124.

102 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 9.

Lines 3–4 are based on *Analects* 9.23. This standard of achievement proposed by Confucius is ingrained in the poet's mind, so when he reaches old age he feels ashamed to be without fame, as the preface to this poem claims: "I learned about the Way since my hair was tied up as a child, but nothing have I achieved even though my hair turned white now."[103] The same feeling is expressed in stanza 3:

	嗟予小子	Alas, my humble self,
	稟茲固陋	Is endowed with such ineptness.
	徂年既流	The passing years flowed away,
4	業不增舊	But nothing has added to my accomplishment.
	志彼不捨	Though I never give up my original ambition,
	安此日富	Meanwhile indulging myself with drink, and its illusions of being rich and even proud of my treasures.
	我之懷矣	Oh, my heart,
8	怛焉內疚[104]	painfully feels guilty.

The poet was in a state of depression in Stanza 3 as in Line 3–4 of stanza 4, but surprisingly, in the last four lines of stanza 4, the tone turned sharply confident. In addition, it is quite confusing that, given his old age, as suggested in the preceding stanzas, he is still able to drive a luxury carriage with a rare horse, which normally symbolizes great talent and strength, in order to go on a long journey so as to heed Confucius' advice. To address this inconsistency, Lu Qinli contended that, here, the poet cited the precept in the *Analects* in a sense that is the opposite of its original meaning: "It questions whether, even if at forty, one has not become renowned, it really means that he deserves no awe. These two lines [lines 3–4 in stanza 4] are saying that, despite the poet's current age, he still has time to become famous."[105] But this explanation does not make much sense, because the preceding lines already made it clear that the poet means to follow Confucius' teaching, rather than questioning it or even reversing its meaning. The Song dynasty [960–1279] scholar Zhao Quanshan 趙泉山 speculated that the last four lines indicated Tao's decision to withdraw from the world.[106] Zhao's speculation is also untenable because the narrative about heading somewhere farther than a thousand *li* with *mingche* 名車 [a luxury carriage] and *mingji* 名驥 [a rare horse], in the context of that time,

103 總角聞道，白首無成。
104 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 9.
105 Tao Yuanming, *Tao Yuanming ji*, 17.
106 Cited in Li Gonghuan, *Jianzhu Tao Yuanming ji*, 2:2.

is a common formula for glory and achievement.[107] In contrast, retiring is often symbolized by stopping the carriage and putting away the whip, instead of driving afar.[108] Therefore, neither Lu Qinli's approach to interpreting stanza IV as the determination to get ahead in life nor Zhao Quanshan's viewing it as a declaration of retirement is reasonable in the context of the poem. Both readings are related more to the ethics and personality of the canonized image of Tao.

As we see, *rifu* 日富 in line 6 of stanza 3 is the key word in this poem. *Rifu* refers to the allusion in "Xiao Yuan 小宛" in the *Classic of Poetry*, in which drunken people are criticized as "those benighted and foolish ones, / are easy to get drunk and thus feel themselves growing richer and complacent."[109] They are exactly the opposite of "the wise men alike sage / who can restrain in drinking."[110] With this allusion the last four lines of stanza 4 finally make sense: the poet is just flaunting wealth while drunk, as ignorant and benighted people do. In other words, only in a drunken illusion can the poet follow the sage, but this illusion has no hope of being realized. This is a response demonstrating circumlocution in the first two lines in stanza 4, from which we can see the deep desperation in the poem.

In Wei [220–265] and Jin [265–420] dynasties, it is common for metaphysical institutions to turn to the *Zhuangzi* as a method of reflection on the restraints on the principles of life on intellectuals in the *Analects*. Tao's poems expressing pain in reality are greatly influenced by this trend. However, when later readers downplayed the implications of the *Zhuangzi* and rehighlighted the gist of the *Analects*, understanding of the poems naturally led to the opposite meaning. This is the main reason that the above-mentioned poems are the most likely to be interpreted with the opposite connotation.

3 Worldly Concerns

The above-mentioned poems by Tao focus on his internal world, including the joy of drinking and the pain in reality; another kind of important content in his poetry concerns his relationship with others and the external world. In

107 Such as Lu Ji, "Menghu xing 猛虎行 [Ferocious Tiger Ballad]": "Getting the carriage ready, I strictly obey the ruler's command; / with a whip in hand I am about to travel far in quest of my goal." [整駕肅時命，杖策將遠尋。] Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, vol. 28.

108 There are quite a few related examples in Tao's poems, such as "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine X": "I was afraid it was not a wise plan, / so I stopped my carriage and retire to rest at home." [恐此非名計，息駕歸閑居。] Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 181.

109 彼昏不知, 壹醉日富。

110 人之齊聖，飲酒溫克。 Kong Yingda, *Maoshi zhengyi*, 870.

"Biography of Master Five Willows," Tao's self-image appears to be unworldly.[111] After he was included in *The Section Devoted to Hermits in the Official History* [*Yinyi zhuan* 隱逸傳], his unworldly characteristics are further highlighted. Based on this, later commentators often simplify his complicated attitude toward the earthly world and his Zhuangzian reflection on this issue in poetry.

The purpose of this simplified interpretation is especially significant in the annotation of the last four lines in "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, VIII":

	提壺掛寒柯	Hanging my wine jug on the winter branch,
8	遠望時復爲	I look far into the earthly world from time to time.
	吾生夢幻間	Living amid illusory dreams,
	何事紲塵羈[112]	Why should I stay trammeled by dusty bonds?

Line 8 has a variant of *shifuwei* 時復爲, which is *fuhewei* 復何爲 [why do it any longer?]. Obviously, the two phrases lead the line to opposite meanings: the former means looking afar sometimes, whereas the latter means looking afar no more. But what is intriguing is that, regardless of whether one chooses *shifuwei* or *fuhewei*, the annotations all construe the line in the same way, that is, to express Tao's unworldly feelings in seclusion. Why is that so? The key lies in how the poet regards distant places. Those who adopt *fuhewei* regard distant places as part of the earthly world. Those who adopt *shifuwei*, on the contrary, regard distant places as somewhere secluded, far from the earthly world.[113] By changing the type of places that *yuanwang* 遠望 [look far] refers to, commentators attempt to read the line as an embodiment of Tao's unworldly feelings. It is astonishing what a decisive role his image as a peaceful hermit plays in annotations.

We choose *shifuwei*, as most editions do, to fill in the text, but contend that a "distant place" refers to an official career and the earthly world, as in most of Tao's poems, instead of somewhere secluded. Similar metaphors can be found in his poems such as "Miscellaneous Poems V [*Zashi* 雜詩]": "My

111 The image of Tao as a peaceful hermit has encountered some challenge. For example, the Japanese scholar Okamura Shigeru 岡村繁 argued that Tao was a very worldly and ambitious figure, citing Tao's frequent communication with officialdom after his retirement. See Okamura Shigeru 岡村繁, *Tao Yuanming Li Bai xinlun* 陶淵明李白新論 [*Innovated Opinion about Tao Yuanming and Li Bai*], trans. Lu Xiaoguang 陸曉光 and Li Zheng 笠徵 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 90–101.

112 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 178.

113 Only Gong Bin asserts the former, see Gong Bin, *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian*, 242; scholars who support the latter include Huang Wenhuan and Wu Zhantai 吳瞻泰 [Qing dynasty], see Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:178.

ferocious ambition is beyond the four seas, / fluttering the wings I attempted to soar afar";[114] and "Passing Qu'a on My Way to Assume the Office of Adviser to General Zhenjun [*Shizuo zhenjun canjun jing Qu'e* 始作鎮軍參軍經曲阿]": "Didn't I travel somewhere remote? / I have trudged up and down for more than a thousand *li*."[115] Therefore, line 8 should be read as saying "I look far into the earthly world from time to time," showing the poet's concern about worldly affairs. Because of this, at the end of the poem, the poet blames himself for being trammeled by dusty bonds, from which we see the ambivalent attitudes of the poet toward the earthly world.

Alongside the poet's ambivalence toward the earthly world, he sometimes expresses expectations of powerful friends. But this level of worldly concern has been overlooked in previous interpretations. One prominent example is "In Praise of the Impoverished Gentlemen I [*Yong pinshi* 詠貧士]":

	萬族各有托	All species have their own reliance,
	孤雲獨無依	Only the lonely cloud is without support.
	曖曖空中滅	Dimming, it fades away in the sky,
4	何時見餘暉	When can it behold afterglow of the grace of the sun?
	朝霞開宿霧	When morning glow breaks through the overnight mist,
	眾鳥相與飛	Flocks of birds fly out together;
	遲遲出林翮	Only one bird leaves the forest quite late,
8	未夕復來歸	And returns early before dusk.
	量力守故轍	Coming back hometown owing to limited ability,
	豈不寒與飢	Unavoidably he suffers from cold and hunger.
	知音苟不存	But if an understanding friend does not exist,
	已矣何所悲[116]	Then let it be – no need to grieve.

This poem laments the sad fate of impoverished gentlemen who are dying. As indicated in the last two lines, their tragedy is mainly due to the absence of an understanding friend. As we see here, the lonely cloud that has no chance to behold the sun's afterglow is a metaphor for the impoverished gentleman's failure to meet a powerful friend who can appreciate him. However, in previous annotations, *yuhui* is normally interpreted as the glow emitted by a lonely cloud and indicates an "impoverished gentlemen with no hope of glory and

114 猛志逸四海，騫翮思遠翥。

115 我行豈不遙，登降千里餘。Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 241, 128.

116 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 252.

wealth," as Liu Liang's 劉良 [fl. ca. 718] glossed about this poem in *Wenxuan*.[117] This interpretation portrays the sad fate of Tao and other impoverished gentlemen, which is the result of their high-minded personality and their constant aloofness, especially with influential officials. In this way, the interpretation matches Tao's canonized image in biographies as a great recluse. But it is problematic, because commonsense indicates that a cloud has no "glow" [*hui* 暉], let alone an "afterglow" [*yuhui*]; and the glimmer of a cloud is the result of reflecting light from the sun, which is often a metaphor for the utmost political power. In fact, the use of *yuhui* here is similar to that in "The Epitaph of Chu Yuan [*Chu Yuan beiwen* 褚淵碑文]," written by Wang Jian 王儉 [452–489] in the Southern Qi dynasty [479–502]: "So warm as the afterglow that he could never forget."[118] Interestingly, Liu Liang, the same annotator mentioned above, correctly noted *yuhui* here as "the emperor's grace upon him."[119] In addition, in lines 5–6 of Tao's poem, following the line with *yuhui*, flocks of birds chase the morning glow, which normally symbolizes political power,[120] forming a sharp contrast with the lonely cloud, which has no access to *yuhui*. From this correspondence we can also infer that *yuhui*, like the morning glow, is a metaphor for political power.

Expecting powerful friends but being disappointed is a recurrent motif in Tao's poetry, and we can tell that he suffered deeply from this problem. In "Imitation of Ancient Poems, VIII [*Nigu* 擬古]," the poet expressed melancholy, which is analogous to that in the preceding poem, but this point has also been overlooked:

	少時壯且厲	In youth I was strong and firm,
	撫劍獨行游	Holding a sword, I traveled alone.
	誰言行游近	Who said I traveled near home?
4	張掖至幽州	The route was from Zhangye to Youzhou.
	飢食首陽薇	When hungry I ate Shouyang fern;
	渴飲易水流	When thirsty I drank water from the Yi River.
	不見相知人	I hadn't seen any understanding friend,
8	惟見古時丘	But only the remains of ancient grave mounds.
	路邊兩高墳	Among which two high tombs stood by road,

117 貧士無榮貴之望。Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, vol. 30.

118 曖有餘暉，遙然留想。

119 天子恩光及之。Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, vol. 58.

120 Wang Yao thought the content in lines 5–6 "is a metaphor for the courtiers fawning upon rulers after the change of dynasty." See Wang Yao, *Tao Yuanming ji*, 68. We do not think it is a specific reference to the Jin dynasty being overthrown by Song but agree to interpret "the morning glow" as "powerful people."

伯牙與莊周　They belong to Boya and Zhuangzhou.
此士難再得　Understanding friends are hard to find again,
12 吾行欲何求[121]　What shall I expect to seek if I keep going on?

This poem makes allusions to several ancients: Bo Yi 伯夷, Shu Qi 叔齊, Jing Ke, Yu Boya 俞伯牙, Zhong Ziqi 鐘子期, Zhuang Zhou 莊周, and Hui Shi 惠施. Dispute over its interpretation mainly focuses on to whom *cishi* 此士 [these gentlemen] in line 11 refers. Previous commentators hold different opinions. Some commentators, such as Tang Han, believe that *cishi* refers to Boya and Zhuang Zhou. According to the *zhiyin* story that, after the death of their *zhiyin* Zhong Ziqi and Hui Shi, Boya and Zhuangzi both stopped showing their excellent talent, the annotator Tang Han argued that, by comparing himself to Zhong Ziqi and Hui Shi, Tao Yuanming claimed to be able to appreciate Boya and Zhuangzi, but worthies like them no longer existed.[122] In this notion, the purpose of the poet's long journey is to find worthies and make himself a good judge of their talent. But this is obviously at odds with what the poem means, because the opening of the poem makes it clear that the poet travels to seek glory and fame for himself,[123] not just to appreciate someone else's talent. Another interpretation holds that *cishi* refers to Bo Yi, Shu Qi, and Jing Ke or includes Bo Yi, Shu Qi, Jing Ke, Boya, and Zhuangzi. It is even more far-fetched than the earlier one.

As we see, here *cishi* refers to understanding friends, that is, *xiangzhiren* 相知人 mentioned in line 7. In other words, line 11 means the same as line 7. Boya and Zhuangzi both stopped showing their talent after losing their understanding friends and ultimately died with unfulfilled ambition. Now, they are buried by the side of the road. This is the sad ending for people with unrecognized talent. In this case, even if "I" am as steadfast and fearless as Bo Yi, Shu Qi, and Jing Ke, there is no future worth expecting. And, inferring from the opening lines that depict the poet's travel in pursuit of fame and glory, there is no reason to reject the reading that the understanding friend for which he yearns should be a powerful figure. Thus, we draw the conclusion that this poem is a lament for the absence of a powerful friend, too.

Based on this clarification, we can now understand Tao's Zhuangzian reflection on the significance of powerful friends, because this issue tortured him too much in his life. Unlike the miserable, impoverished gentlemen without

121 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 232.

122 See Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:241.

123 As Lu Qinli noted, here, the long journey is a metaphor for the poet's eagerness to go into service for glory and fame. See Tao Yuanming, *Tao Yuanming ji*, 114.

support, as mentioned above, "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XVII" is about the lucky one who receives favor from the powerful:

幽蘭生前庭 The valley orchid grows in the courtyard,
含熏待清風 Containing perfume, it awaits refreshing breeze.
清風脫然至 Till refreshing breeze comes and liberate its fragrance,
4 見別蕭艾中 It is distinguished from inferior plants.
行行失故路 Going on and on, I lost my old track,
任道或能通 Just following the way, I might go through.
覺悟當念還 Awake from the dream, I have to consider returning;
8 鳥盡廢良弓[124] The good bow is cast aside once the birds are gone.

In the first four lines, an outstanding talent who used to live in the mountains finally obtained support from a powerful friend and an opportunity to display his ability, thus distinguishing himself from shallow and vulgar people. This meaning becomes clear in connection with an allusion to Confucius that might be involved here and has not been noticed by previous commentators: Confucius returned to Lu from Wei, and on the way he saw a valley orchid and sighed, "orchids give off their perfume for the sake of the king. Now this orchid flourishes here alone, accompanied by weeds. It is just like worthies at the wrong time who are surrounded by petty men."[125] In this context, *qingfeng* 清風 refers to a powerful king – it is the favor of the king that enables the talent of a worthy to come into play.

However, *qingfeng* here was usually interpreted as a friend who supported Tao's seclusion. For example, Tang Han thought it symbolized a friend who could understand why Tao stayed away from the world.[126] Similarly, Wang Shumin believed that *qingfeng* could make the perfume of the orchid grow stronger, highlighting the poet's transcendent spirit.[127] Most existing annota-

124 Yuan Xingpei, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 191.

125 蘭當爲王者香，今乃獨茂，與眾草爲伍，譬猶賢者不逢時，與鄙夫爲倫也。It is from "Cao on Marvelous Orchid [*Yilan cao* 猗蘭操]" in *Qincao* 琴操 ostensibly written by Cai Yong 蔡邕 [133–192] and is partly cited in the Chen dynasty [557–589], in Zhijiang 智匠, *Gujin yuelu* 古今樂錄 [*Records of Music Poetry from Ancient to Modern Times*]. See Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩, ed., *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 [*Anthology of Music Bureau Poetry*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2017), 839. It is also partly cited in Lu Ji 陸璣, *Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏 [*Explanation for Plants, Trees, Birds, Beasts, Insects and Fish in Maoshi*], suppl. Mao Jin 毛晉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 1 in the Wu dynasty [229–280].

126 Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 2:191.

127 Wang Shumin, *Tao Yuanming shi jianzhenggao*, 327.

tions of *qingfeng* are based on Tao's canonized image as an eminent hermit and overlook his reflection on the role of a powerful friend in the poem.

Moreover, another Confucius anecdote in the *Zhuangzi*, perhaps echoing the allusion mentioned above in which Confucius sighed over a valley orchid, looms in this poem. Reading the poem along with this anecdote might provide a more reasonable interpretation. In "The Great and Venerable Teacher," Confucius said to his disciples that "we are dreaming and haven't awakened yet,"[128] for they are still bound by the rules of common decency and thus unable to see the truth of life and death. It is also the case for the "valley orchid" in Tao's poem: the opportunity to display its talents or to "give off their perfume for the sake of the king" as in the allusion above, is attained only through "dreaming and not awakening yet," that is, being lost in a dream. Then lines 5–6 in the poem can be seen as describing the state of being lost and unable to control oneself in a dream.

Lines 1–6 in this poem also remind us of another dream in the *Zhuangzi* about "awakening" that involves a butterfly:

> Once Zhuang Zhou dreamed, he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up, and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou.
>
> 昔者莊周夢爲胡蝶，栩栩然，胡蝶也，自喻適志與。不知周也。俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也.[129]

In Tao's poem, a worthy obtaining the opportunity to display his talents is analogous to the butterfly in the dream "being happy with himself and doing as he pleased." The depiction in line 5 of the poem, "lost my old track" as the "valley orchard" originally lives in the mountains and woods but now moved to the courtyard,[130] is similar to "he didn't know he was Zhuang Zhou," which means losing oneself. As for line 7, it could be seen as the process of finding oneself again, as written in the *Zhuangzi*, "Suddenly he woke up, and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou." So, Tao's poem is only another version

128 其夢未始覺者邪。Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 51.

129 Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 18.

130 According to Xie Xuan's 謝玄 [343–388] biography in *The History of the Jin*, the orchid that grows in the courtyard refers to an outstanding talent who is a member of a prominent family.

of the butterfly dream in the *Zhuangzi*. Maybe we can call it the dream of the valley orchid.

With implication of "awakening" in the *Zhuangzi* [in line 7 of the poem], here the poet expresses his reflection on his success in having powerful friends to appreciate his talents. In "dreams," a powerful friend is a "refreshing breeze." It is what the "valley orchid" with perfume was waiting for and also the key to success in life. From this perspective, the "valley orchid" is no different from the "lonely cloud" in the preceding poem that expects an afterglow, both manifesting the poet's wish to see a powerful friend who understands him. But after you wake up, the powerful friend, who used to be a "refreshing breeze," might turn out to be cruel and discard you as soon as your help is no longer required; as the saying goes, "the good bow is cast aside once the birds are gone." Therefore, unlike the above-mentioned poems that show the expectation of powerful friends, this poem represents the poet's rational insight into powerful friends. It is essentially the same as Tao's reflection on accomplishments in reality as we mentioned before, which also allude to the spirit of the *Zhuangzi*.

4 Conclusion

This paper reinterprets the following thirteen poems: "Drinking Alone in Consecutive Wet Days," "The Day of the Zha Sacrifice," "To My Cousin Jingyuan, Written in the Middle of the Twelfth Month of the Year Guimao," "Meditating on Ancients in the Early Spring of the Year Guimao at My Farm, II," "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XI," "Singing of the Three Good Men," "Singing of Jing Ke," "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XX," "The Tree in Bloom," "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, VIII," "In Praise of Impoverished Gentlemen, I," "Imitation of Ancient Poems, VIII," and "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine, XVII."

Through reinterpretation, we see that the influence of the *Zhuangzi* on Tao's poetry is more extensive and far-reaching than has been disclosed in extant annotations. As the gist of the *Zhuangzi* is often the opposite of the gist of the *Analects*, our reinterpretation, focusing on implications of the *Zhuangzi* that have been neglected, differs from the existing biographical narrative centering on the *Analects* and sometimes reveals a meaning contrary to that claimed in existing readings.

Our reinterpretation can further the rethinking of the position of Tao's poetry in literary history. Tao's supreme status in literary history is largely based on people's esteem of his personality and virtue and his breaking of the style of metaphysical poetry that prevailed in the Eastern Jin dynasty. However,

our reinterpretation focuses on revealing the difference between Tao's poetry and his canonized image, based on biographies of him, and on clarifying the depth of the resonance with the *Zhuangzi* in Tao's poetry. On this basis, we can see more clearly the connection between Tao's poetry with metaphysical institution and the related poetry style in the Eastern Jin dynasty, which took its view of life from the Zhuangzi, rather than taking Confucianism as its only source. What's more, the pastoral lifestyle and drinking depicted in Tao's poetry display as a similar role as mountains and waters, the main images in his contemporary metaphysical poems, which are metaphors for the Way. In this sense, our reinterpretation can encourage a reflection on the canonization of Tao's poems in the mainstream narrative of literary history.

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A Love of Labor: The Ethnographic Turn of *Zhuzhici*

Stephen Roddy
Professor of Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures,
San Francisco University, San Francisco, CA, USA
roddys@usfca.edu

Abstract

From the mid-Tang through the Qing dynasty, poets employed the short-lyric form known as *zhuzhici* [bamboo branch lyrics] to write, first and foremost, about ordinary people going about their daily lives in China and elsewhere in the Sinosphere. This article explores how early developments in this genre prepared the ground for what later emerged as an arguably proto-ethnographic mode – that is, both poetry and accompanying prose annotations based on poets' direct observations of and even immersive "fieldwork" within discrete localities. I focus specifically on poems about "water labor," by which I mean those that describe and give voice to vocational groups and communities along lakes, levies, and channels of the Yangzi River basin. It was partly thanks to this history of reporting about local lives and conditions, I argue, that *zhuzhici* eventually came to adopt a more information-intensive and increasingly empirical orientation during the later stages of their development. Moreover, this mode of what might even be identified tentatively as affective or lyrical ethnography prefigures efforts by contemporary social scientists to recalibrate ethnography in spatially affective modes, and I conclude with some observations on how its example might inform future efforts in these directions.

Keywords

affect – empiricism – ethnography – oar songs – *zhuzhici*

1 Ethnography, Affect, and Lyricism

In the early twentieth century, ethnography took shape as an empirically oriented, avowedly scientific mode of sociocultural analysis championed by key

figures in the emerging professions of anthropology and sociology. Pioneers such as Bronislaw Malinowski [1884–1942], Franz Boas [1858–1942], and E. E. Evans-Pritchard [1902–1973] distinguished this emergent genre from the writings of missionaries, historians, and explorers by stipulating that it be based on authors' sustained observation of and immersive experience in the sociocultural contexts of its subjects and detached from utilitarian or other interests or preconceptions. Although direct observation remains a sine qua non for the form, poststructuralism and other trends have brought the once-vaunted ideal of scientific, disinterested objectivity under increasing scrutiny and debate. The organizational behaviorist Silvia Gherardi, among others, has called attention to the need for "affective attunement" with ethnographic subjects that results in "performative texts" invoking "tacit, implicit, and embodied" forms of knowledge.[1] Closely paralleling such embodiment within and through texts is the desideratum that ethnography be firmly rooted in geographic space. "The focus of an affective ethnography becomes," Gherardi writes, "the degree of affective intensity that composes the geography of organizing and the inclusion and exclusion practices materialized in a space.... To experience a place means to learn to be affected by place, and therefore also placeness becomes a resource for conducting an affective ethnography."[2] This emplacement emphasizes the body's "resonance" with materiality, both animate and inanimate, in collective spaces. Other writers have likened resonance quite literally to sonority, what some call an in-betweenness that mediates between and among multiple beings and states, a free-floating "music of the world at the local level – a complex polyphonic, polyrhythmic surround."[3]

It is one thing to call for recognizing and recalibrating the positionality and methodology of the ethnographer but quite another to retool the relatively dispassionate prose styles generally favored in academic writing into vehicles suitable for articulating qualities of affective resonance, sonority, and attunement.[4] Some scholars have attempted to achieve this end by

1 For an overview of arguments that advocate the insertion of the embodied subject into academic writing by "tack[ing] between the analytical and the sensible" and between "embodied form as well as disembodied logic," see Paul Stoller, *Sensuous Scholarship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), xiii and 2–24.

2 Silvia Gherardi, "Theorizing Affective Ethnography for Organization Studies," *Organization* 26, no. 6 (2019): 745–54.

3 Lone Bertelsen and Andrew Murphie, "An Ethics of Everyday Infinities and Powers: Félix Guattari on Affect and the Refrain," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 146.

4 For a relatively early and influential exposition of these themes, see James Clifford and George Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 1–26. More recently, anthropologists such as Kirin Narayan have

incorporating various modes of emotionally evocative literary discourse into more conventional professional discourse, including experimenting with poetic forms. The anthropologist E. Valentine Daniel, who has authored one such effort in the form of an epic poem modeled on the classical Tamil canon, writes that there is a "truth in verse that could not be conveyed in prose.... I believe that most prose in the social sciences in particular does not merely overshadow or repress this affective truth in its secondary status, but may even kill it."[5] Whereas verse forms per se have yet to be taken up widely by professional ethnographers, lyricism in the more abstract sense of nonnarrative, emotionally freighted rhetorical registers has been invoked to redraw the contours of social ethnography and even of the presentation or status of propositional knowledge in general. Andrew Abbott, for one, has looked to Heian-era [795–1185] Japanese lyrical forms, both poetry (*tanka*, thirty-one-syllable poetry) and prose narrative (*monogatari*, or tales), as inspiration for a processual sociology that bridges gaps and levels hierarchies between ethnographic researchers and their informants.[6]

If Abbott had been better acquainted with East Asian literature, he might have also cited the literary tradition to which many Heian writers looked for inspiration – that of China in the Tang [618–907] and Song [960–1279] dynasties – and especially its lyrical genres. One in particular, *zhuzhici* 竹枝詞 [bamboo branch lyrics], beginning as early as the late eighth century, functioned as an instrument for recording descriptions of human and natural geography, so much so that imperial officials eventually encouraged submissions in this verse form to the bureaus charged with compiling regional gazetteers.[7] The convergence of empirical knowledge with lyrical expression in *zhuzhici* offers a potentially instructive model for how premodern intellectuals applied poetic forms to the articulation of knowledge derived from close observation of the daily lives of human communities, including their interactions with their physical environment. Eminent scholar-officials such as Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 [772–842], Su Zhe 蘇轍 [1039–1112], Zha Shenxing 查慎行 [1650–1727],

discussed the merits of consulting and borrowing from literary exemplars to rethink and reshape ethnographic writing. See Kirin Narayan, "Chekhov as Ethnographic Muse," in *The Anthropologist as Writer: Genres and Contexts in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Helena Wulff (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 163–79.

5 E. Valentine Daniel, "The Coolie: An Unfinished Epic," in *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 67–114.

6 Andrew Abbott, "Against Narrative: A Preface to Lyrical Sociology," *Sociological Theory* 25, no. 1 (2007): 69–72, 98.

7 Sun Jie 孫杰, *Zhuzhici fazhanshi* 竹枝詞發展史 [*History of the Development of Bamboo Branch Lyrics*] (Shanghai: Shiji chubanshe, 2014), 151.

Ji Yun 紀昀 [1724–1805], and Zhao Yi 趙翼 [1727–1814] are famous for their lyrical evocations of place through the medium of *zhuzhici*, which typically, though not exclusively, took the form of quatrains consisting of twenty-eight characters. Thanks in part to their efforts, *zhuzhici* evolved over the course of a millennium into a hybrid amalgamation of affective lyricism and empirically based description. By the late imperial period (after ca. 1550), they were typically written in sequences of dozens or sometimes even hundreds of poems, many accompanied by extensive prose glosses, with the explicit aim of surveying the topography, ecology, archaeology, architecture, and sociocultural conditions, inter alia, of discrete geographic regions and various social, ethnic, or vocational groups within them.[8]

This article traces the historical rise of ethnographic *zhuzhici* through one subset of these poems: those that foreground the laborers toiling along the lakes, levies, and channels of the Yangzi River basin. Lyrical invocations of labor, and the affective resonance expressed by poets toward their subjects, I argue, provided a critical element of the foundation, even a keystone, for the rise of descriptively rich *zhuzhici*, including prose annotations and colophons, which characterized the genre in the late Ming [1368–1644] and Qing [1616–1911] dynasties. What, we might ask, made this particular form attractive to poets and scholars who chose it to document their observations of local conditions under their jurisdiction as officials, along their routes of travel or in places of either temporary or permanent residence? Can the empirical turn of this genre during its final flowering in the Qing be traced to its early history in the Tang and Song? I answer these questions by providing a cursory overview of this poetic lineage from the Tang and Song to the Ming and Qing, and address whether this legacy could inform future efforts by social scientists, as Japanese *waka* poetry already has, to recalibrate ethnographic scholarship in spatially emplaced, affectively attuned modes that result in "performative texts" invoking "tacit, implicit, and embodied" forms of knowledge.[9]

8 A considerable proportion of the Chinese classical poetic canon addresses similar or even identical themes, such as the everyday lives of plebeian folk and, more broadly, human and natural geography, and the formal similarity of *zhuzhici* to other heptasyllabic quatrains meant that the boundaries of this genre were somewhat blurry. Nonetheless, the adoption of such local voices, which can be likened to a sonority that "mediates between and among multiple beings and states" (including the considerable use of local dialecticisms), is the single most important feature distinguishing the body of *zhuzhici* from other poetry. For examples that demonstrate these differences, see Stephen Roddy, "Bamboo Branches out West: *Zhuzhici* in Xinjiang, ca. 1740–1890," *Modern Chinese Literature in Chinese* 16, no. 2 (2018): 23–26.

9 The ethnographic writings of Origuchi Shinobu [1887–1953] and, to some extent, those of his mentor Yanagita Kunio [1875–1962] prefigured the contemporary affective turn of

2 Waterborne

Premodern literati as well as contemporary scholars have posited various historical and geographic origins of *zhuzhici*, but most take the early poets Liu Yuxi, Bai Juyi 白居易 [772–846] and others at their word. Liu and Bai both claim to have been moved to compose their poems as lyrics to songs that they heard while traveling through or being posted within (what were then still) remote regions in the mid- to upper Yangzi River basin.[10] In the late Tang and then the Song and Yuan [1206–1368] dynasties, their successors, such as Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 [1045–1105], Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037–1101],Yang Wanli 楊萬里 [1127–1206], and Wang Yun 王惲 [1227–1304], explicitly emulated Liu Yuxi's attempts to capture the folk authenticity, especially the local distinctiveness of the subjects and regions about which they wrote. Poets took to crafting scenes and vignettes of the quotidian lives of farmers, fishermen, craftsmen, street vendors, prostitutes, and other humble residents along the river and its tributaries, inscribing what could be called affective cartographies of both rural and urban landscapes. Many poems as well as commentaries on them note the tragic tone said to characterize the folksongs after which they were modeled; although the poems generally encompass a much wider range of emotional registers, poems addressed to or in the voices of humble laborers typically give expression to the toll taken on them by the vicissitudes and unpredictability of their environments, both natural and societal.[11]

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ethnography, most obviously in his extensive use of the Nara and early Kamakura-era poetry anthologies *Manyōshū* and *Shinkokinshū* in tracing the origins of contemporary linguistic, literary, and sociocultural practices. See Mochida Nobuko 持田叙子, *Uta no ko shi no ko, Origuchi Shinobu* 歌の子詩の子、折口信夫 [*The Child of Song, the Child of Poetry: Origuchi Shinobu*] (Tokyo: Yōgi shobō, 2016), 117–42.

10 Theories about these origins include the non-Han ancient kingdom of Yelang 夜郎, the mid-Yangzi area of Chu, including Qu Yuan's 屈原 [340–278 BCE] *Nine Songs*, and the Ba 巴 region of Sichuan. See Sun Jie, *Zhuzhici fazhanshi*, 7–9. A later commentator, Mao Guiming, claims that Liu Yuxi's references to the exotic local customs of the people from whom he first heard these songs can be identified definitively as Miao, such as their "dancing to the moon and at annual festivals." See Mao Guiming 毛貴銘, "Qian miao zhuzhici 黔苗竹枝词 [Bamboo Branch Lyrics of Guizhou Miao Nation]," in *Zhonghua zhuzhici quanbian* 中華竹枝詞全編 [*Complete Bamboo Branch Lyrics of China*], ed. Qiu Liangren 丘良任, Pan Chao 潘超, Sun Zhongquan 孫忠銓, and Qiu Jin 丘進 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2007), 7:71.

11 The rise of *zhuzhici* in giving voice to the suffering of humble laborers was anticipated by ballads [*yuefu* 樂府] in the late Han through the Tang dynasties; in fact, *zhuzhici* were often subsumed by critics under this rubric. The term "oar songs" can be found in poems and prose as early as the Former Han dynasty, and poems under this title have

As noted, *zhuzhici* were born in the mid- to upper reaches of the Yangzi River; most of the earliest surviving *zhuzhici* by Gu Kuang 顧況 [725–814], Liu Yuxi, Bai Juyi, and other mid- to late Tang and early Song poets explicitly refer to the Yangzi River and to the people, flora, and fauna of the Three Gorges 三峽 and Jingzhou 荊州 areas in present-day Sichuan and Hubei Provinces. By the late Tang, the geographical center had already begun to shift downstream toward the lower Yangzi, where they soon took hold and flourished across the landscapes of the Jiangnan delta. Many of the Jiangnan poems are named for a particular "lake" [*hu*] along the river or its tributaries; many of these lake songs also employ an alternative term for them, the "oar song" [*zhaoge* 棹歌]. These poems are replete with alluring visions of multiple flora and fauna, the lingering physical traces of historical figures and events, and, most of all, the quotidian joys and sorrows of the residents who toil along their shores, ranging from oarsmen and boat pullers, fishermen, and lotus-gathering maidens, to entertainers at lakeside and floating teahouses and other establishments. References to water abound in the entire surviving corpus of *zhuzhici* (numbering over 100,000 poems); one could even say that more than "bamboo" or any other physical features, watery environs remained the primary topos of this genre throughout its history. And I argue that the earliest examples of their fascination with the ways in which communities used and depended on water and other natural resources for their survival prefigure the discernibly ethnographic turn of *zhuzhici*, which reached its full maturity in the mid- to late Qing dynasty.

As Huang Tingjian explains in a comment on Liu Yuxi's poems, these lyrics "channel local customs without being rustic," and whereas poets throughout its history regularly invoked its earliest associations with the mid-Yangzi River, the imperative to record the conditions of specific localities meant that toponyms, customs, flora and fauna, and other topics varied significantly among poems produced across vast swathes of China and its neighbors. Moreover, this "channeling" often involved the motif of travel along the water, even in regions in which water transportation or even bodies of water were less ubiquitous than in the Yangzi basin.[12] Those who made travel over the water possible – boatmen – were the subjects of special interest and, indeed, "tapping the boat" [*kouxian* 扣舷], the rhythmic accompaniment to watermen's singing, served as

been preserved from the Liang dynasty and the early and mid-Tang, preceding the earliest *zhuzhici* of Liu Yuxi and Bai Juyi. See Sun Jie, *Zhuzhici fazhanshi*, 32.

12 Zheng Yan 鄭豔, *Minsuxue shijiaoxia de zhuzhici yanjiu: Yi Jing Jin zhuzhici weili* 民俗學視角下的竹枝詞研究：以京津竹枝詞為例 [*Studies of Bamboo Branch Lyrics from the Perspective of Ethnology: Taking Bamboo Branch Lyrics of Beijing and Tianjin as Examples*] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2017), 17.

a metonym for composing or reciting *zhuzhici*. This is most evident in poems that explicitly imitate the singing and chanting of those who rowed, pulled, steered, or otherwise operated watercraft and often assume the voices of these men. Yang Wanli's seven *Bamboo Branch Songs* [*Zhuzhige* 竹枝歌] and accompanying colophon, for example, directly acknowledge the poet's debt to the laborers of the Zhenjiang 鎮江 region who ferry him across the water:

> We left the Danyang [Zhenjiang] government offices in the evening, and at the fifth watch reached Danyang County. The boatman and his pullers kept up their banter the whole evening, singing and joking to spur one another on. I could make out the gist of what they were saying, such as "Brother Zhang, Brother Li, everyone, let's pull hard together" or "One rest-rest, two rest-rest, over how many prefectures does the crescent moon shine?" Their voices were sadly beautiful, as they chanted in unison in response to the leader. I have refashioned and standardized them into these *zhuzhige*.
>
> 晚發丹陽館下，五更至丹陽縣。舟人及牽夫終夕有聲，蓋謳吟嘯謔，以相其勞者。其辭亦略可辨，有云：「張哥哥，李哥哥，大家著力齊一拖。」又云：「一休休，二休休，月子彎彎照幾州。」其聲凄婉，一唱眾和。因檃括之為《竹枝歌》云。
>
> How many prefectures does the crescent moon illuminate?
> How many homes are joyous, and how many sorrowful?
> The moon's phases have something to do with people's sorrows,
> Where there's a place to let up, we'll let up. (fifth of seven poems)
>
> 月子彎彎照幾州
> 幾家歡樂幾家愁
> 愁殺人來關月事
> 得休休處且休休（其五）.[13]

The colophon indicates that their vernacular singing and spirited patter kept up these pullers' morale and esprit de corps during the undoubtedly arduous task of pulling Yang's party toward their destination through the night. He inserts the men's phrase "letting up" [*xiuxiu* 休休] seemingly as a local colloquialism,

13 Wang Liqi 王利器, Wang Shenzhi 王慎之, and Wang Zijin 王子今, *Lidai zhuzhici* 歷代竹枝詞 [*Bamboo Branch Lyrics of Multiple Eras*] (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2003), 1: 18–19.

but the educated reader would no doubt recognize its overlap with the lexicon of classical and literary sources, ranging from "Crickets [*Xishuai* 蟋蟀]" in the *Classic of Poetry* [*Shijing* 詩經] to dynastic histories such as the *History of the Former Han* [*Hanshu* 漢書], to a famed essay about reclusion by Sikong Tu 司空圖 [837–908], "The Resting Pavilion [*Xiuxiuting ji* 休休亭記]." By employing locally inflected speech that simultaneously evokes associations with literary and historical sources, the poem fulfills Huang Tingjian's desideratum, echoed by many later critics, that *zhuzhici* not be merely "rustic" [*li* 俚]. These poems "refashioned" (*yinkuo* 檃括, lit. "straightened," a term used in this period for revising prose or other works so that they could be sung to music), as Yang puts it, the raw material of their humble subjects by selectively distilling elements of the speech of oarsmen into a more elevated medium.[14]

Another example of oarsmen's songs that inspired both observation and emulation by literati passengers is a series of twelve poems by Wang Yun, who writes that he "matched" poems to songs he heard while being rowed northward from Fujian through Zhejiang:

> Returning north from Fujian, as our boat passed through Changxiu, I listened, reclining, to the oarsmen's songs. I was very much pleased by them and wrote three rhyming verses to each of their opening lines. Inquiring about their lyrics, I discovered that they were shallow and rustic, not at all like my matching verses' cheery brightness. I thus reworked them into twelve poems that speak of their hardships conveying people and messages back and forth. This was also Liu Yuxi's intention in composing *zhuzhici*.
>
> 余自閩中北還，舟行過常秀間臥聽櫂歌，殊有愜余心者。每一句發端以聲和之者三。扣其辭語敷淺而鄙俚，曾不若和聲之驩亮也。因變而作十二闋，且道其傳送艱苦之狀，亦劉連州竹枝之意云。[15]

14 In another sequence of ten poems, titled "Weidingci shijie 圩丁詞十解 [Dike Men's Ten Lyrics]," Yang Wanli extolls the achievements of farmers who tamed local waters to irrigate their fields in the Jiangnan region through complex networks of dikes and levees that require their constant care and attention, but allow them to enjoy abundant harvests year after year without fear of flooding. In the last poem, he concludes: "Atop the levees, men pull, while on the water, they navigate / From the front, they inspect the myriad fields of grain and mulberry." Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:20. On the use of the term *yinkuo*, see Wu Chengxue 吳承學, "Lun Songdai yinkuo ci 論宋代檃括詞 [Refashioned Lyrical Songs of the Song Dynasty]," *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產, no. 4 (2000); also Yue Zhang, *Lore and Verse: Poems on History in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2022), 121–152.

15 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:27.

The poems range widely about the enervating work of rowing as well as the reasons that these rowers struggle to survive:

> Zhejiang and Jiangsu are packed with people, their lives not easy,
> Even a slightly bad harvest turns them into refugees.
> This year, Suzhou and Changzhou have been suffering,
> Selling their sons to make a living doesn't raise much cash. (third of twelve)
>
> 兩浙人稠不易安
> 少罹兇慊即流遷
> 今年苦惱蘇常地
> 易子營生不計錢.（其三）
>
> [Official] business in Jiangnan is plentiful,
> Officials passing back and forth resemble gliding shuttles.
> It is because of this that we labor from morn to night,
> Alas, this has turned into a song of lament. (tenth of twelve)
>
> 幹當江南有許多
> 往還冠蓋似擶梭
> 因茲力役無朝暮
> 欸乃翻成懊惱歌.（其十）[16]

Like Yang Wanli's poem cited earlier, Wang also "reworks" materials, but in this case the process is the reverse of Yang's: he reconfigures his original cheerful response poems to better match the somber mood of the laborers' songs, a mood he had failed to appreciate until someone explained the lyrics to him. In a sense, he acts as an investigator, perhaps even an "ethnographer," who overcomes his misunderstanding of local conditions and potential elite blindness (as one of the "hatted officials" [*guangai* 冠蓋] benefiting from this labor) to fashion a more faithful rendition of the laborers' voices. And he explains his efforts as following the path forged by Liu Yuxi's foundational lyrics, which channeled the thoughts and feelings of the humble residents of Langzhou 朗州, Wushan 巫山, and adjacent regions from which Liu drew his materials into literary forms that made them accessible to audiences beyond these geographic confines.

16 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:27–28.

3 Turning toward Elegance, Infusing Knowledge

Wang Yun wrote in the early Yuan era, and although references to rowing, pulling, and the oars and ropes employed by laborers retained their centrality in the repertoire of motifs employed by poets, a subtle but significant transformation in the representation of life on and along the water took place over the following century. This is most evident in the collection titled *Collection on Bamboo Branch Lyrics of West Lake* [*Xihu zhuzhiji* 西湖竹枝集], assembled by Yang Weizhen 楊維楨 [1296–1370]. Most of the over 100 poets represented there, and many who followed in their wake, favored styles and subject matter that departed from the ballad-like modes generally favored by Tang and Song poets and toward a more refined idiom depicting leisurely, materially prosperous, culturally sophisticated settings of pleasure boats and establishments along the lakeshore that were patronized by wealthy, mostly literati elites. As a mid-fifteenth century author of a preface to Yang's collection puts it, these poems are excellent for "poets who, communing with the spirits of departed worthies, sing out these lyrics while floating on the lake, inebriated and tapping on the sides of their watercraft. How pleasing!"[17] A later commentator, Chen Can 陳燦 [fl. 1760], notes that although these poets also engage in the requisite task of recording local customs, "they could not shake their habit of writing about luxurious banquets or beautiful courtesans … often employing flowery language and delicate verbiage … [which] strayed from the original intention for composing these songs."[18] And even when they did refer to the beating of oars, this familiar motif is cast in a leisurely mode, as illustrated in this poem by Zhao Yi 趙奕 [fl. ca. 1310], the son of the painter and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 [1254–1322]:

> At the head of the lake, waves glisten daily in the sun,
> Pairs of young ladies of Wu pass by, oaring.
> Separated by stands of lotuses, they smile without recognizing one another,
> While still singing Wu songs to one another.
>
> 湖頭日日水光波
> 兩兩吳娃打槳過

17 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:66.

18 Chen also quotes a poem by Huang Zhouxing 黃周星 [1611–1680] that expresses a desire to overcome Yang Weizhen's influence over Ming poets and to restore the simplicity of *zhuzhici*. Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1256.

笑隔芙渠不相識
向人猶自唱吳歌.[19]

If anything, rowing by young women becomes an exercise in sensual enchantment for the poet cum voyeur, largely divorced from the labor of oars, as in this poem by Yan Gong 嚴恭 [fl. 1360] from *Xihu zhuzhiji*:

Maidens in the lake do not relieve sorrow,
In threesomes, they paddle out to the Hundred Flower Isle.
Gazing greedily on pairs of butterflies among the flowers,
They don't realize that some have flown onto their jade hairpins.

湖中女兒不解愁
三三盪槳百花洲
貪看花間雙蛺蝶
不知飛上玉搔頭.[20]

Referring to the small craft aboard which the classic beauty Xishi 西施 drifted around the region with her lover, Fan Li 范蠡, female rowers – and virtually all the other female voices in West Lake poems – are typecast as waiting patiently (or not) for an absent, often faithless man, as in this poem by Zhang Shouzhong 張守中 [fl. 1360]:

The maiden of West Lake resembles Xishi,
Singing of bamboo branches aboard a melon-skin skiff.
My man's heart, like the moon, is sometimes black,
My body is like the mountain, which never moves.

西湖女兒似西施
瓜皮小船歌竹枝
郎心如月有時黑
妾身如山無動時.[21]

As in the oarsmen's songs, oarswomen also sing enchantingly, but, instead of lamenting the rigors of carrying literati over long distances for meager

19 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:45.
20 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:83.
21 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:105.

sustenance, they glide along the lotus-covered West Lake on light skiffs with few, if any, passengers, to alight on flowery isles dotting the lotus-covered waters. And even when these poems assume the voices of humble working fishermen and women, more often than not they speak of the unrequited desire of their female personae or the latter's anxiety over the safety of men who must fish or travel in distant parts, rather than the labor conditions. Lovelorn lyrics are indeed common throughout the history of *zhuzhici*, beginning in Liu Yuxi's surviving poems, but this motif assumes even greater prominence from the late Yuan through the Ming and early Qing periods, thanks in part to the influence of Yang Weizhen's collection. As the aforementioned comment by Chen Can notes, although such poems may also treat another form of labor – the work of the courtesans and other entertainers of West Lake and elsewhere – they tend to revisit romanticized images of female labor, such as weaving, spinning, and gathering, which emphasize immobility and thus separation from peripatetic fishermen, rowers, and other male laborers for whom their female admirers long.

Thus over the following several centuries, the "original intention" of *zhuzhici* attributed to Liu Yuxi and his heirs – that of recasting the bittersweet folksongs in Sichuan into a literary medium that preserved its "simplicity" [*zhi* 質] – was partially supplanted by the elegant, sometimes recondite modes that generally elided the voices of humble laborers. As noted, the poems in Yang Weizhen's collection in particular tended to revolve around the themes of unrequited desire and to assume a feminine voice swearing devotion to a fickle lover, rather than venting complaints about the sorts of issues raised by Wang Yun or Yang Wanli. Such female personae lament their fate not of poverty or lowly status but of dependence on the whims of others – first and foremost of men. At the same time, however, the outpouring of poetry about Hangzhou's West Lake that continued throughout the Ming dynasty had the effect of intensifying scrutiny of its historical and cultural geography, horticulture, and distinctive social customs. Poems about this and other lakes in the region or beyond devote considerable attention to their geographic specificity – in other words, their "placeness."[22] The fascination with the minutiae of local conditions grew even stronger in the early Qing, just as *zhuzhici* experienced an unprecedented wave of popularity and widespread dissemination to regions

22 Sun Jie traces the development of this rootedness to place (what he calls "standing firmly in the land and soil of a place") to the Yuan and primarily to poems from the Jiangnan region. Sun Jie, *Zhuzhici fazhanshi*, 118–19.

across all of China and even beyond it to Japan, Ryūkyū, and other foreign lands.[23]

Such an interest in "placeness" became especially evident in the proliferation of annotations to poems by their authors, a tool conducive to documenting the local conditions alluded to in poems both more systematically and much more comprehensively than had been possible before the advent of this practice. It is no accident that the Kangxi 康熙 reign [1661–1722] also witnessed the rise of what eventually came to be called evidential learning [*kaozhengxue* 考證學], the scholarly movement first characterized by Hu Shih 胡適 [1891–1962] and many others since his time as the definitive birth of empiricism, comparable to that of the European Enlightenment. That the fluorescence of *zhuzhici* was influenced directly by this intellectual transition is confirmed by the fact that many leading evidential learning scholars, including the aforementioned towering figures Zhao Yi and Ji Yun, left dozens or even hundreds of such poems. Even more tellingly, the single most influential *zhuzhici* poet in the Qing dynasty, Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 [1629–1709], was one of the seminal exponents and practitioners of evidential learning during its formative phase.

Renowned nearly equally for both his scholarship and his poetry, Zhu Yizun wrote a series of a hundred poems, *Oar Songs of Mandarin Duck Lake* [*Yuanyanghu zhaoge* 鴛鴦湖櫂歌], which was cited by many who wrote in its wake as having set the standard for *zhuzhici* series about localities identified by bodies of water. Far more than poems in previous eras, Zhu's work inspired generations of successors to emulate his lyrics' combination of stylistic elegance and detailed descriptions of folk customs, historical landmarks, topographical features, and, increasingly, the livelihood of farmers, artisans, and multiple other humble occupations. Zhu's poems are supplemented by laconic but informative annotations that provide additional facts or sources concerning the human geography of the region in which they are set (in Jiaxing 嘉興 Prefecture, Zhejiang Province). At least one later commentator went so far as to claim that the poems not only equaled but, in some cases, exceeded local

23 Examples of *zhuzhici* sequences that have been gained renown as sources of information about localities include two about Yangzhou, *Yangzhou zhuzhici* 揚州竹枝詞 (1740), by Dong Weiye 董偉業 [1694–1767], and *Hanjiang sanbai yin* 邗江三百吟 (1808), by Lin Sumen 林蘇門 [1748–1809], the latter discussed and partially translated in Roland Altenburger, "Observations of a Changing World: Lin Sumen's Bamboo-Branch-Style Songs Three Hundred Poems of Hanjiang (*Hanjiang sanbai yin*, 1808)," in *Yangzhou, A Place in Literature: The Local in Chinese Cultural History*, ed. Roland Altenburger, Margaret B. Wan, and Vibeke Børdahl (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 173–89; and discussed in Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou: A Chinese City, 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 284–93.

gazetteers in the breadth and exactitude of their scholarship; the fact that the Jiaxing gazetteer in the Kangxi era failed to include them was "a source of deep regret for those pursuing evidential learning."[24]

Consistent with his poems' literary polish, Zhu's empiricism typically takes the form of an erudite pursuit of often-obscure textual sources for clues to understanding the human and physical features of the landscape at the time of writing [1671–1673]. Many later series also make considerable use of written materials about local conditions, so-called *fengtu* 風土 but they also widen the scope of their sources by relying more heavily on firsthand, on-the-ground observations of the everyday lives of their residents. As the colophon to one such series set in Beijing [ca. 1790] puts it, "by expanding the scope of poetry to also include the vulgar and the common, [this genre] has been made far greater."[25] However, such sociocultural inclusivity, which, as we have seen, characterized many Tang and Song poems, is conjoined with and mediated through the refined styles that, as noted, were the enduring legacy of the West Lake poetry in the Yuan and Ming inherited by Zhu Yizun. Zhu's contribution was to dexterously fuse these seemingly contradictory impulses, inspiring subsequent generations of what we might tentatively call "poet-ethnographers" precisely because, more than almost any previous figure, he had managed to combine information-rich, empirically based descriptions of human and physical geography with a polished, elegant literary medium.[26] His successors both affirmed and further developed Zhu's model of artfully weaving verbal tapestries of lyrically inflected facts on – and of – the (watery) ground.[27]

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24 Wang Chutong 王初桐, *Jinan zhuzhici* 濟南竹枝詞 [*Bamboo Branch Lyrics of Jinan*], in *Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1566.

25 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1584.

26 As a preface to another collection of oar songs, *Hanjiang zhaoge* 韓江櫂歌 [*Oar Songs of the Han River*], by Yue Jun 樂鈞 [1766–1814], puts it, "The trend of oar songs that were rooted to place seem to have begun in [Xin Qiji's nine oar songs of Wuyi]. When they came to *Yuanyanghu zhaoge* [Oar Songs of Mandarin Duck Lake], by Zhu Yizun, which he likened to both *zhuzhi* and *langtaosha* [Waves Washing the Sand] modes, he did not only speak of the lake, nor only of rowing. They are both encyclopedic in scope and beautiful. This is its apogee." Quoted in Sun Jie, *Zhuzhici fazhanshi*, 35.

27 Yan Qiyan 嚴奇岩 states that Zhu's work was singularly responsible for inaugurating the trend to attach annotations with factual information about local conditions (in *Zhuzhici zhong de Qingdai Guizhou minzu shehui* 竹枝詞中的清代貴州民族社會 [*The Ethnic Society of Qing-Era Guizhou in Bamboo Branch Lyrics*] [Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2009], 2–3), but some influential works predate his by decades or more: examples include *Dianhai zhuzhici* 滇海竹枝詞, by Yang Shen 楊慎 [1488–1559], and *Moling zhuzhici* 秣陵竹枝詞, by Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 [1585–1645]. See Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:253, 300–306.

Stylistically, Zhu Yizun's series largely resembles the elegant register of his Yuan and Ming predecessors' poems; thematically, too, he develops the inquisitiveness about local culture, language, and conditions that had been evident in some of the later Yuan and Ming poems set on the West Lake and elsewhere, excavating and foregrounding information about the linguistic, historical, and other features of the people and places that he describes in and around the lakes in Jiaxing. Through the sweep of its hundred poems (which, according to Zhu's preface, have no particular order [*yu wu quanci* 語無詮次]), the physical and human contours of this landscape emerge into comprehensive view. We can glimpse these multifaceted features in a single example, Poem #69:

> My home is by the head of the Qin Creek,
> When days are long, I love to wash the boats of Heng Lake.
> The flowers east of Zhanyun temple have burst into bloom,
> It's a good time for a spring stroll south of the Righteous Woman's Embankment.
>
> Heng Lake and Zhanyun Temple are both to the east of Banluo. Righteous Woman's Embankment is the grave of Lü Rong, wife of Xu Sheng, who died in the Yellow Turban Rebellion during the Han. Prefect Mi collected money to bury her. Today, this is mistakenly thought to be the grave of Lü Meng.
>
> 阿儂家住秦溪頭
> 日長愛濯橫湖舟
> 霑雲寺東花已放
> 義婦堰南春可遊
>
> 橫湖、霑雲寺俱在半邏東。義婦堰，漢許昇妻呂榮冢，死黃巾之亂。糜府君斂錢葬之。今譌為呂蒙冢。[28]

In each of its four lines, the poem brings up a single physical landmark, either natural or manmade, through the voice of a young woman reveling in the neighborhood's vernal delights. The relatively brief gloss tells the tale that has given the last reference, the embankment (or weir), its name, and ends by noting its "mistaken" identification with Lü Meng 呂蒙. The word "mistaken" occurs with some regularity in the annotations, often registering the author's objection to local lore that strays from the historical record. This fidelity to fact and the

28 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:824.

culling of inaccuracies was, according to a preface by Ye Feng 葉封 [1623–1687], one of Zhu's principal motivations for writing the series.[29] Many other poems and their glosses recount legends and beliefs that have become associated with particular sites, but similarly note their "errors" or simply consign them to apocryphal status. We would expect precisely such exacting standards from the author of the monumental *Study of the Meanings of the Classics* [*Jingyikao* 經義考] (in 300 *juan*), one of the most significant bibliographical compilations in the Qing and a formative influence on subsequent textual scholarship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was his rigorous commitment to sorting fact from fiction that, together with the literary polish of the series, earned Zhu's work the respect of generations of later poets.

4 Returning to the Plain and Ordinary

In the more than two centuries of the Qing dynasty that followed Zhu Yizun's series, numerous *zhuzhici* poets, especially those who wrote in the subgenre of lake/oar poems, acknowledged his methods as the model and inspiration for their own work. While adhering to the general principle of identifying "errors" and meticulously tracing historical genealogies of places, people, and practices, many incorporate increasingly vernacular language and content. As one author, Chen Qi 陳祁 [fl. 1780], put it, "For matters of the past, I occasionally look to Zhu [Yizun's] ten lines; For rustic speech, I randomly imitate Xie [Yong's 'Twelve Rustic Word'] poems."[30] It is unclear whether Xie Yong's 謝鏞 [1719–1795] poems under that title still survive and thus how truly "rustic" they were, but these two references hint at how Zhu's successors applied the textually based empirical methods pioneered by Zhu to the more demotic domains of folk customs, language, and beliefs.

According to a preface by his nephew (Sun Erzhun 孫爾準), Yang Lun 楊掄 [fl. 1778] wrote his hundred-poem series, *Oar Songs of Lotus/Hibiscus Lake* [*Furonghu zhaoge* 芙蓉湖櫂歌] (in Jiangyin 江陰, Jiangsu) in explicit imitation of Zhu Yizun's work. He identified them as oar songs in homage to Zhu as well as in acknowledgment of the genre's plebeian roots and character:

> Today's poems record the circumstances of the locality, including what has been passed down from old, customs that can be seen and heard, ordinary men and fisherwomen – in other words, what can be learned

29 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:822.

30 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1445.

> and understood with ease. The oarsmen drum tap on the sides of their boats and drum with their oars, singing these songs amid the waves and mist, thus making "oar song" an appropriate name for them.
>
> 今詩因地紀事，凡古老所流傳，習俗所聞見，黃郎漁婢，習而易知。相與鼓栧，發唱於煙波杳靄之際，則名之以櫂歌為宜。[31]

According to Sun, Yang's descriptions of temple festivals, games, village customs, proverbs, and other localisms are more fully expressive of the genre's plainspokenness [*zhipu* 質樸] than are Zhu Yizun's recondite poems tracing forgotten events in the past [*yishi* 逸事]. Its poems are arranged sequentially over the four seasons, beginning with the New Year and Lantern Festivals, and ending with preparations for starting the cycle all over again. "Plain and ordinary" is indeed an apt qualifier for the Lotus Lake poems: their register is folksy, bragging about local products (e.g., multiple varieties of chestnuts) and talented citizens (e.g., an exceptionally dexterous barber), but also lamenting the endemic poverty of the residents:

> Temple drummers noisily announce preparations for harvest festivities,
> But how many families can celebrate with a full bin of grain?
> They only lament the sight of grain merchants' sails and masts,
> As of old, families have no rice to last beyond the next meal.
>
> After the harvest, much of the rice leaves the district. The price cannot be stabilized.
>
> 社鼓鼕鼕報賽忙
> 幾家能夠慶穰穰
> 只愁估客帆檣過
> 依舊家無隔夜糧
>
> 秋收後，米多出境，價不能平。[32]

In a slightly later hundred-poem series about a district in Jiaxing, *Danghu zhuzhici* 當湖竹枝詞, by Lu Gongdou 陸拱斗 [fl. 1790], local colloquialisms and humorous descriptions of harvest festivals figure prominently, too:

31 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1372.
32 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1383.

Golden stalks blanket a thousand fields,
As autumn nears, their ears have already ripened evenly.
Temple drummers announce the festival in every village,
After listening to the gods' songs, the hogs' trotters disperse.

芃芃黃茂遍千畦
時近秋分已秀齊
社鼓村村同報賽
神歌聽罷散豚蹄.[33]

A preface to Lu's work by his friend Li Zongchuan 李棕川 [fl. ca. 1800] lauds the pivotal role of Zhu Yizun's series in stimulating the subsequent outpouring of *zhuzhici*, but notes that many of his later imitators strayed into "sensuality and flowery verbiage, which had nothing to do with the essential purpose of describing local customs and the ways of the humble folk." Only Lu's work has "deeply absorbed [Zhu's] original intention in writing oar songs."[34] In a still later sequence, *Weitang zhuzhici* 魏塘竹枝詞 (Weitang is also in Jiaxing), the preface (by Ying Hu 應鵠, dated 1837) praises the author, Cao Xinxian 曹信賢 [fl. ca. 1800], for his fidelity to Zhu Yizun's work and lists several other poets who also followed closely in Zhu's footsteps. Their poems, including Cao's, are all in the format of identically rhymed [*heyun* 和韻] series, which, in the words of another preface (by Huang Antao 黃安韜 [fl. ca. 1830]), can supplement Zhu's poems by "recasting new materials" in the mold of the original work.[35] More so than either of the two series discussed above, the contents of this series introduce an earthy, sometimes lusty poetic mode along with a generous infusion of geographic and historical knowledge. We observe this in the poem that corresponds (using the same two rhyme words, *zhou* 舟 and *you* 游) to number 69 in Zhu's sequence quoted above:

Your heart is as hard as Rock Man's Head,
When you leave town, you're as aimless as Untethered Boat.
How many Bridges to Flourishing Fortunes have you skirted,
To drift instead into the muddied Depths of Depravity?

33 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1485.
34 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1473.
35 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1543.

Rock Man's Head is in Ba'nan District; Untethered Boat is the inscription on a plaque over a room in the Qian family's Guest Garden; Flourishing Fortune Bridge is in Qianshan Township; Depths of Depravity is in Baoxi District.

郎心硬似石人頭
出外渾如不繫舟
多少興隆橋畔路
偏從敗落蕩中游

石人頭在八南區，不繫舟係錢氏客園中室上顎。興隆橋在遷善鄉。敗落蕩在保西區。[36]

This poem brings up toponyms in each of its four lines, just as Zhu's verse does, but cleverly uses their literal meanings in a breezier, more colloquial style. Here, instead of a putatively chaste maiden gazing demurely over flowery hillsides, the poetic voice rails theatrically against the "depravity" of her lover, echoing the refrain in hundreds of Yuan and Ming *zhuzhici* that men had a habit of straying toward "wild mandarin ducks" [*ye yuanyang* 野鴛鴦 aka prostitutes]. Although this particular poem lacks the historical or other learned references that are so prominent in Zhu's notations, the series as a whole retains some of the erudite style typical of Zhu's poems and includes extensive annotations for a significant number of its entries.

5 Fragrant Flowers, Bitter Roots, and Weighty Bricks

Peng Shu 彭淑 [1748–1808], the author of yet another hundred-poem series (*Changyang zhuzhici* 長陽竹枝詞), offers an especially effusive encomium to Zhu, praising the "surfeit of loveliness" in his descriptions of people and places and self-deprecatingly referring to his own poems as clumsy imitations that have "assumed a rustic tone to speak of everyday affairs."[37] True to this self-portrait, he lards his sequence about a district along the south bank of the Yangzi River in western Hubei with local folk wisdom about how to survive

36 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1440.

37 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1218. Peng Shu was a member of the Tujia ethnic group, which is concentrated in this region. See Kong Xiangru 孔相如, "Lun Qingdai Tujiazu shiren Peng Qiutan Changyang zhuzhici 論清代土家族詩人彭秋潭長陽竹枝詞 [On Bamboo Branch Lyrics by the Qing-Era Tujia Poet Peng Qiutan]," *Minzu wenxue yanjiu* 民族文學研究, no. 3 (1985).

a famine, bargain for fish at the market, convey New Year's greetings tardily, or sing love songs convincingly, and quotes from ditties that poke fun at self-important officials. His annotations are confined mainly to descriptions of live performances of song or opera, some of which he attended. In a note to a poem commemorating a banquet where an ensemble of singers identified as ten "sisters" performed tragic love songs, he says that such sincere, moving expressions of feeling are "the true meaning" [*zhenyi* 真意] of *zhuzhici*. And in the poem, he explicitly identifies the progenitors of their singing style as the young women of Ba whose bamboo branch songs had inspired Liu Yuxi to write his poems a thousand years before:

> The ten sisters' singing is all too tragic,
> The girl who is leaving stamps her feet and wets her clothes with her tears.
> Ning Township is near the Wu Mountain gorge,
> This singing resembles [that of] the girls of Ba who sang of bamboo branches.
>
> 十姊妹歌歌太悲
> 別娘頓足淚沾衣
> 寧鄉地近巫山峽
> 猶似巴娘唱竹枝.[38]

Invoking the tragic intensity of these forerunners, Peng draws a genealogical line directly from his own work to that of Liu Yuxi. Even though overall the tone of his sequence is far from bleak, he locates the essence of the genre in examples that were drenched in the heartrending tears of a jilted woman, which, as we have seen, remained a predominant thread in such poetry for several hundred years.

Aside from the ubiquity of tears of longing and loneliness, another word frequently intoned in *zhuzhici*, whether for romantic or other reasons, is "bitterness" [*ku* 苦]. In another contemporary sequence that not only invokes but is actually set partially in the Ba region, *Flowing Bamboo Branches* [*Yan zhuzhi* 演竹枝], its author Tan Cui 檀萃 [fl. 1761] is said to be overwhelmed by the bitterness of his fate, so much so that it has made him "mute." Tan was assigned the arduous task of supervising a shipment of Yunnan copper down the Yangzi River from Chongqing to Yangzhou and, from there, along the Grand Canal to Beijing. His hundred poems describe a cornucopia of local Sichuan legends in the voice of a seductively beautiful maiden of Wushan, who, after marrying

38 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1219.

him as a concubine, comforts the poet, now rendered mute by his bitterness about this physically and psychologically ruinous assignment (forced on him by a vindictive superior):

> I pity you for having tasted bitterness for over a year,
> And now you've set anchor in [the bitter] Canker Root [Huanglian] Harbor.
> Reports say the flowers in the river garden are coming into bloom,
> I will go ahead and pick some fragrant sprigs for you.
>
> 憐郎喫苦已經年
> 又向黃連港泊船
> 報導江園花正發
> 為郎前去摘芳鮮.[39]

Alongside these sentimental outbursts, the annotations (written in the poet's own voice) provide meticulously detailed accounts of shipping routes, different types of watercraft, prices and overall business conditions, and the historical, geographic, and climatic conditions in the regions through which the poet and his companions travel. Although this marriage between (feminine-voiced) lyrical expression and (masculine-inflected) empirical commentary is awkward in places, especially compared to the spare elegance of Zhu Yizun's work (which is not credited as an influence in the notes or prefatory remarks), the gendered juxtaposition of emotionally fraught lyrics with matter-of-fact observations about local conditions is singularly ingenious. That the author was a native of Anhui (in Wangjiang 望江, Anqing 安慶), the home of many of the most influential evidential scholars in his lifetime during the movement's heyday in the High Qing [1723–1820], may be far from incidental to these features in his sequence.

Such efforts to fashion a synthesis between lyrical expression and empirical observation continued well into the nineteenth century, such as in two sequences written sometime in the last century or so of the Qing. Lin Zhongqi's 林中麒 [fl. ca. 1790] *Zhapu zhuzhici* 乍浦竹枝詞 is set in Zhapu, the booming port just south of Jiaxing, which, by the late eighteenth century, had surpassed Ningbo 寧波 as the hub of trade with Japan and Southeast Asia.[40] In his erudite preface written in parallel prose, Lin pays brief homage to Zhu as the model

39 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1173.

40 Matsuura Akira, "Shindai Sekkō Saho ni okeru Nihon bōeki to enkai bōeki no kanren 清代浙江乍浦における日本貿易と沿海貿易の連関 [The Relationship between

for his work, noting that he had striven to remain faithful to the sequence by writing the full hundred poems. The significance to Lin of Zhu's work is further emphasized in the first poem, in which he begins his description of Zhapu by noting that the "city today is a dense hive of 10,000 households, far more than during the time of the Scribe of Golden Pavilion [Zhu Yizun's sobriquet]." The attached gloss then quotes a regulated verse poem by Zhu, *Inscription for the Ruixiang Monastery* [*Ruixiang sengshe tici* 瑞祥僧舍題詞], which describes Zhapu as a lonely hamlet clinging to the coastline, with a mere "eight or nine households."[41] This gesture seems to indicate not only how far the town has come since Zhu's time but also, by implication, that this poetry, too, had adapted to the current prosperity of the region. And, indeed, Lin's poems and glosses provide a thorough yet judiciously concise balance between historical geography and lyrical expression. As if needling Zhu Yizun because of his condescension, Lin lavishes attention on Zhapu's thriving maritime commerce, such as in this poem, which traces the town's commercial importance all the way back to the coastal trade in jasmine during the Northern Song [960–1127]:

> The flower market is next to the Hall for Mapping the Ocean to its east,
> Hurry up and buy me a fragrant bunch!
> So lovely will they make me, standing in the breeze,
> The seven sprigs at my waist will give off wafts of jasmine fragrance!
>
> [Zhou Mi's] "Record of the Qianchun Reign": When jasmine first blooms, women stuff their waists with up to seven sprigs, which cost them tens of rolls [of coins]. The merchants from Fujian and Guangdong who come to sell flowers at Zhapu bring orchids and jasmine in the greatest amounts. Their prices are not particularly high.
>
> 花市東鄰籌海堂
> 催郎盡與買群芳
> 粧成愛殺當風立
> 七插吹來茉莉香
>
> 《乾淳歲時記》: 茉莉初出，婦人簇帶多至七插，所值數十卷。閩廣商人販花至乍，蘭與茉莉最夥，價不甚穹。[42]

Trade with Japan and Coastal Trade in Zhapu, Zhejiang during the Qing]," *Higashi Ajia bunka kōshō kenkyū* 東アジア文化交涉研究, no. 1 (2008): 143–50.

41 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1763.

42 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1774.

Oar Songs of Pingchuan [*Pingchuan zhaoge* 平川櫂歌], about another township just northeast of Jiaxing, was composed between the late Qianlong and the Jiaqing period but not published until the early 1920s. Its author, Xu Han 徐涵 [1730–1813], wrote some of the annotations for his fifty-eight surviving poems, but the majority were added by at least three later writers (or possibly the same writer using three different pen names). These notes are especially useful, because Xu's poems cover an astoundingly wide range of topics: local tax rates, beekeeping techniques, boat construction, women's headgear, poultry and other animal husbandry, cormorant fishing, local crab varieties, Suzhou-bound ferry schedules, local school financing, cotton prices, physical geography, historical lore, and more. For example, he writes of the brickmaking sideline that farmers take up during their slack days in spring:

> Fertile, level fields stretch out for 100 li,
> Returning home with our animals in the evening, we sing short songs.
> Our low-lying watery lands are laden with moisture,
> Mud bricks too numerous to count weigh down the passing boats.
>
> Note by Wan:[43] Many locals produce mud bricks to sell for cash on spring days when they take a break from planting. These mud bricks are unfired.
>
> 平疇百里沃饒多
> 晚牧歸來唱短歌
> 漫說水鄉卑濕甚
> 泥坯無數重舩過
>
> 萬注：按鄉人於春耕休息日，多製泥坯以貨錢。泥坯乃磚瓦之未經火煉者。[44]

Of all the sequences that I have covered, Xu's lyrics are without doubt the most comprehensive in surveying the everyday lives of their unassuming subjects. As such, *Pingchuan zhaoge* might be regarded as having most fully realized the potential of this genre for marrying lyrical expression with empirical observation: applying well-honed powers of description to the here-and-now of quotidian life, supplemented where appropriate by learned textual sources, in an aesthetically pleasing form. In this respect, it is representative of the late Qing dissemination of *zhuzhici* in nearly every corner of the empire and

43 No information is available about any of the three commentators of Xu's poems.
44 *Wang Liqi, Lidai zhuzhici*, 2:1738.

the larger Sinographic world, where they both lyricize and convey detailed information about multiple societal, vocational, geographical, and cultural contexts to their readers across this cultural sphere who increasingly sought out such knowledge.

6 Writing Poetry, Writing Ethnography

If the germ of this proto-ethnographic poetic mode can be traced back to the formative stages of *zhuzhici* in the Tang and Song dynasties, one might nonetheless ask whether its full flowering was preordained or to any degree inevitable.[45] Given the pivotal role of Zhu Yizun in setting the course for the final phase of *zhuzhici*, one could argue that such a development was far from clear in the surviving examples from the Tang and Song. Moreover, Zhu's model of rigorous empiricism, heavily weighted toward historical and textual sources, led some poets to look elsewhere for demotic modes, as attested to by the remarks by Lu Gongdou and others cited above. In addition, we can also point to ethnographically descriptive poems and annotations about non-Han ethnicities, beginning in Yunnan in the mid- to late Ming (*Diannan zhuzhici* 滇南竹枝詞, *Dianzhong zhuzhici* 滇中竹枝詞, and especially the *Translated Bamboo Branch Lyrics of Different Nations in the South of Yunnan* [*Diannan zhuyi yiyu zhuzhici* 滇南諸夷譯語竹枝詞]) and extending to other areas of the empire and even beyond in the Qing. In fact, the genealogy invoked by commentors such as the abovementioned Mao Guiming, who, along with many, argued for a non-Han origin of the genre (which Liu Yuxi's description of *zhuzhici* songs as *cangning bukefen* 傖儜不可分 [crude and unintelligible], words he elsewhere used for the "barbarians" of Sichuan, seems to support), places this function – of rendering a cultural or geographic "other" more comprehensible – at the core of its historical trajectory after the seventeenth century.

Nonetheless, in the poems of the Tang, Song, and Yuan, we can discern early signs of these trends, first and foremost the genre's affective attunement with the rhythms of everyday life in surrounding landscapes, whether musical, biological, or geographical. Such resonance is evident in Liu Yuxi's foundational

45 For examples of *zhuzhici* that were included in practical collectanea for their perceived value in illustrating agricultural and sericultural customs and practices, see Zhou Anbang 周安邦, "You Mingdai riyong leishu *Nongsangmen* zhong shoulu de cansang zhuzhici tanjiu Wu zhong diqu de canye huodong 由明代日用類書《農桑門》中收錄的蠶桑竹枝詞探究吳中地區的蠶業活動 [Investigating Sericultural Activities in the Wu Region through the Bamboo Branch Lyrics Collected in the Ming-Era Encyclopedia *Agriculture and Sericulture*]," *Xingda renwen xuebao* 興大人文學報 55 (2015).

poems, whose arresting images of singing, flowing waters, howling gibbons, or broken hearts, inter alia, reverberated throughout the poetry of the subsequent millennium:

> The waters churn noisily through the twelve shoals of Qutang Gorge,
> This route has been difficult since ancient times.
> I have long lamented that men's hearts are inferior to water,
> They stir up waves on flat land, for no reason at all.
>
> 瞿塘嘈嘈十二灘
> 此中道路古来難
> 長恨人心不如水
> 等閒平地起波瀾.[46]

Indeed, the continuity of the motifs, themes, and even language of *zhuzhici* over time and space is quite striking, especially to readers who are unfamiliar with the profound sensitivity to literary and historical precedents that have shaped Chinese cultural expression throughout the imperial era and even today. As we have seen with Zhu Yizun's poems, the desire to testify to and to "perform" their writers' affective engagement with their surroundings often went hand in hand with an almost archaeological excavation of an observed environment in order to discover not only the traces of the past but of the resonance of that past with the present as well. It is perhaps this antiquarian bent that might inhibit *zhuzhici* from being plumbed for models to apply to ethnographic writing and research in the present.[47]

Regardless of these caveats, however, social scientists might still discover that *zhuzhici* have something valuable to offer to ethnographers in this time of aesthetic, sociopolitical, and epistemological ferment. As Kent Maynard and Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor write about the poetry of ethnography and vice

46 Wang Liqi, *Lidai zhuzhici*, 1:3.

47 In his survey of travel and geographical writing over the span of Chinese imperial history, Richard Strassberg observes the enduring tendency for such works to assume a "miniaturistic," lyrical orientation, which following Yu-kung Kao, he attributes to the centrality of the literati lyric tradition, in contrast to the "novelistic tendency of modern Western travel writing," in *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 48. *Zhuzhici* certainly conforms to these general trends, which Cordell Yee argues have played a dominant role in the development of Chinese cartography, as well. See Cordell D. K. Yee, "Chinese Cartography among the Arts: Objectivity, Subjectivity, Representation," in *The History of Cartography*, ed. J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2:2.150–69.

versa, the fusion of these two modes of writing requires multiple competencies and modes of knowing, through which to articulate an "artful reality":

> A poet may write more to what one does not yet know; an ethnographer (at least in the classic and positivist sense) writes more to what one already knows. The ethnographic poet and the poetic ethnographer must do both. That is, like the author of historical fiction, the ethnographic poet must try to be faithful to external historical experience, while reaching beyond or through it to an equally true, artful reality.[48]

Needless to say, artistry is central to the practice of poetry of any kind, including ethnographically informative, "reality-based" *zhuzhici*. Moreover, poetry "shares a cultural function with myth, performance, and ritual, promoting ways of being that are not instructional but, instead, are performative, relying on the enactment and re-enactment of the verse itself, rather than on argumentation" to impart insights to its readers.[49] It is this possibility for re-enactment, a "refrain" that, in Félix Guattari's analysis, makes this and other aesthetically centered discourse potentially "creative alternatives to scientific rationality."[50] From multiple disciplinary perspectives, be they organizational behavior, anthropology, sociology, or psychology, the research for and construction of ethnographies is increasingly being reconfigured in ways that make room for the poet or, more generally, the lyrical ethnographer attuned to "polyphonic, polyrhythmic surround" in "the world at the local level."[51] Their exquisitely refined sensitivity to geographic particularities, to both love and labor experienced locally, makes *zhuzhici* surprisingly relevant to present-day efforts to revamp ethnography in these directions.

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48 Kent Maynard and Melissa Cahnmann-Taylor, "Anthropology at the Edge of Words: Where Poetry and Ethnography Meet," *Anthropology and Humanism* 35, no. 1 (2010): 12.

49 Gasi Islam and Michael J. Zyphur, "The Sweetest Dreams That Labor Knows: Robert Frost and the Poetics of Work," *Management Decision* 44, no. 4 (2006): 527.

50 Bertelsen and Murphie, "An Ethics of Everyday Infinities and Powers," 151.

51 Bertelsen and Murphie, "An Ethics of Everyday Infinities and Powers," 146.

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Contemplating "Return": Xie Lingyun's "Hillside Garden"

Wang Ping 王平
Associate Professor of Department of Asian Languages and Literature, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA
pingw@uw.edu

Abstract

Xie Lingyun was the first of China's great nature poets. As the most celebrated poet in fifth-century China and a histrionic scion of the illustrious Xie clan of the Eastern Jin, he had cultural influence that extended beyond the literary into religion and philosophy. This article examines Xie's poetic exploration of the concept of "return" – an important rhetorical trope throughout the history of Chinese literature. By close reading, annotating, and analyzing a selection of Xie's poems, the article sheds light on the poet's obsession with instability in the meaning of "return" and argues that beneath the compliant poetic surface lies a saliently dissenting voice. Xie's distinctive imagery and ideation emerge from an intricate deployment of earlier texts, among which the *Classic of Changes* is of paramount importance.

Keywords

poetry – return – Xie Lingyun – *Yijing*

Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 [385–433] came from one of the most distinguished aristocratic families of the Eastern Jin [317–420]. The Xie ancestral home in the north was in Yangjia 陽夏 County, Chen 陳 Commandery, in present-day Taikang 太康, Henan. The family moved south after the fall of the Western Jin [265–317]. They established an estate in the area of Guiji 會稽 (present-day Shangyu, Zhejiang, east of Shaoxing).[1]

1 會稽 is often mistakenly pronounced "Kuaiji." I use "Guiji," which is the correct pronunciation according to the *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典 [*Mandarin Dictionary*] (Taipei: Shangwu

The most accomplished member of the Xie clan was Xie An 謝安 [320–385], who at the climax of his career thwarted the attempted invasion by Fu Jian 苻堅 [338–385] in the Fei 淝 River Battle in 383.[2] Xie An, as a cultural hero, triumphed not through brute force but moral and spiritual excellence. Michael Rogers posits: "Xie An's legend does not depict an isolated great man, hurling challenge into the teeth of fate and commanding the tides of history; his heroics are of gentler order, and seem to be predicated of him more as a member of a collectivity than as an individual.... they convincingly dramatized a great cultural ideal the Southern Dynasties: the inevitable triumph of spirit over brute force."[3] Xie An was the perfect embodiment of what Charles Holcombe calls a "new cultural balance" admired by the Eastern Jin literati.[4] The new ideal personhood, adopting terms from the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 such as the "divine one" [*shenren* 神人][5] or the "true man" [*zhenren* 真人],[6] cuts across the boundaries of so-called Confucian ethics, Daoist philosophy, and Buddhist-Daoist spiritual mysticism.[7] At the heart of this new idealism is the virtue of passivity and quietism. Xie was the most outstanding figure in the fourth century, and his

yinshu guan, 1959), 3.1388. See also *Ci hai* 辭海 for an explanation of the pronunciation Guiji and how Kuaiji, the erroneous pronunciation, was initially introduced in the notes to *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 [*Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*], by Hu Sanxing 胡三省 [1230–1302], who used *gong* 工 and *wai* 外 as the *fanqie* 反切 for 會.

2 For a biography of Xie An, see Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 et al., *Jin shu* 晉書 [*History of the Jin*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 79.2072–77. For a study of the image of Xie An, see Jean-Pierre Diény, *Portrait anecdotique d'un gentilhomme chinois Xie An (320–385), d'après le Shishuo xinyu* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1993).

3 Michael Rogers, "The Myth of the Battle of the Fei River," *T'oung Pao* 54.1 (1968): 71–72.

4 Charles Holcombe, "True Man," in *In the Shadow of the Han* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 126.

5 The term *shenren* 神人 appears throughout the *Zhuangzi* text, but most prominently in the first chapter. See Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, annot., *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 [*Annotated Collection of the Zhuangzi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 1.17. I translate *shen* 神 as "divine," which denotes god or a godlike figure.

6 The term *zhenren* 真人 does not denote a separate category than *shenren*. It is a different name for the same thing. Another term *zhiren* 至人, also referring to the same godlike figure, appears in the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi* together with *zhenren* and *shenren*. The chapter "Da Zongshi 大宗師 [The Great and Most Honored Master]" has an extended discussion of *zhenren*, i.e., godlike figure from antiquity. See Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 3A.226–35.

7 See my "Fengliu yiwu Xie Kangle: shanshui, shanju, dili shuxie yihuo shi zhengzhi biaoshu 風流遺物謝康樂：山水、山居、地理書寫抑或是政治表述 [The Eccentric and Untrammeled Style of Xie Lingyun: Landscape Writing, Mountain Dwelling, or Political Discoursing]," in *Zhonggu wenxue zhong de shi yu shi* 中古文學中的詩與史 [*Poetry and History in Early Medieval Literature*], ed. Zhang Yue 張月 and Chen Yinchi 陳引弛 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2020).

"returning/retiring" [*gui* 歸] to the Eastern Mountains 東山 made him the living example of Eastern Jin ideal personhood.[8]

The Eastern Mountains in Guiji came to embody the monumental merit of "yielding" [*rang* 讓], for which the Xie clan would be remembered.[9] Xie Lingyun wrote two poems praising Xie An and An's nephew Xie Xuan 謝玄 [343–388], who was Xie Lingyun's grandfather and the commander-in-chief in the Fei River Battle.[10] Their retirement in the Eastern Mountains, shortly after having triumphed and saved the Jin, recalls the heroic conduct and moral rectitude of the high-minded recluses in the Zhou dynasty [1046–256 BCE].[11] Politically and militarily, the Xie descendants could not replicate the success of Xie An and Xie Xuan. Yet, through literary excellence, the cultured way of the Xie clan was propagated. The virtues of passivity and quietism as embodied in the concept of "return" were articulated the most eloquently in Xie Lingyun's poetry.

In this article, we look closely at a few of Xie Lingyun's poems and focus on the instability of the meaning of "return." We argue that beneath the compliant poetic surface of "return" is a saliently dissenting voice that is critical of the military court that replaced Jin. Xie's distinctive imagery and ideation about "return" emerge from an intricate deployment of earlier texts, among which the *Classic of Changes* [*Yijing* 易經], the *Classic of Poetry* [*Shijing* 詩經], and the *Zhuangzi* are of paramount importance in creating meaning.

First, a brief word on the life and career of Xie Lingyun before his 422 exile is in order. Known to his contemporaries as Duke Kangle 康樂公, Xie arrived in the capital Jiankang 建康 (present-day Nanjing) at the age of fifteen. He became a legendary figure whose "picturesque" life and "flamboyant and unrestrained" style made him the ultimate eccentric in the fifth century.[12] When he first entered court service, Xie Lingyun followed his uncle Xie Hun 謝混 [381–412], the youngest of Xie An's grandsons, who was married to an imperial princess. Unfortunately, Xie Lingyun soon lost his powerful ally as, in 412, Liu

8 Xie An spent his early years as a retired gentleman in the mountains. When he accepted office as the later usurper Huan Wen's 桓溫 [312–373] sergeant-at-arms, Xie An was past forty. Shortly after the Battle of the Fei River, Xie An and other members of the Xie clan withdrew from court.

9 See Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Nan shi* 南史 [*History of the Southern Dynasties*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 19.546.

10 See Xiao Tong 萧统, comp., Li Shan 李善, annot., *Wen xuan* 文選 [*Selections of Refined Literature*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 19.912.

11 Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 19.912.

12 See J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream: The Life and Works of the Chinese Nature Poet Hsieh Ling-yün (385–433), Duke of K'ang-Lo* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), 9.

Yu 劉裕 [Emperor Gaozu 高祖, r. 420–422] rose to power and put Xie Hun to death.[13] Xie Lingyun's life was probably spared on account of his usefulness in decorating and legitimizing Liu Yu's power and ambition to the throne.[14] In April 413, Liu Yu appointed Xie Lingyun as the imperial librarian – a sinecure that had no significant advisory duties.[15] From the beginning, Xie Lingyun seemed recalcitrant in his services to Liu Yu, who nevertheless tolerated the young man, perhaps reserving him for ceremonial roles.[16] In the winter of 416, Liu Yu embarked on a northern campaign, for which he commissioned Xie Lingyun to compose a *fu* poem. Instead of properly singing praises of Liu Yu, the laudatory message in Xie Lingyun's *fu* is mostly about Xie An.[17] Whether Xie Lingyun deliberately missed the mark on this important commission is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say here that our poet's literary design cannot be called transparent or superficial.

In 418 Liu Yu hosted a large gathering at his military base in Pengcheng 彭城 (present-day Xuzhou, Jiangsu) to celebrate the victory of the northern campaign. By then, he had been made the Duke of Song 宋公. Liu Yu rewarded court officials by conferring on them new titles and positions. Xie was appointed the gentleman attendant at the palace gate and gentleman councilor of the

13 Fang Xuanling, *Jin shu*, 79.2079. See also Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, 10–18.

14 Cynthia Chennault notes the roles and functions of Eastern Jin elite families during the frequent changes in political authorities. According to Chennault, they positioned themselves at "center stage, prepared to carry out functions of large symbolic moment – such as presenting the imperial regalia at a new ruler's investiture, memorializing 'on behalf of the hundred officials' to urge a usurper to the throne, and so forth." Cynthia Chennault, "Lofty Gates or Solitary Impoverishment? Xie Family Members of the Southern Dynasties," *T'oung Pao* 85.4–5 (1999): 257.

15 Shen Yue 沈約, *Song shu* 宋書 [*History of Liu-Song*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 67.1743; Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, 18. Xie Lingyun's title at the time was administrator to the commander in chief and assistant director.

16 Chennault posits Liu Yu's tolerance of Xie Lingyun in the following terms: "[In] patiently planning for the day when he would himself take the throne, Liu Yu realized that brute force was insufficient to his purpose. He would need to cultivate some measure of acceptance from the old guard families who populated the bureaucracy, from its middle ranks up" (Chennault, "Lofty Gates," 271). Still, as Chennault points out, "Xie Lingyun's headstrong temperament is always a source of worry for Liu Yu" (273, n62).

17 This "panegyric" *fu* was apparently considered an important political service Xie Lingyun rendered for Liu Yu and was later included in Xie Lingyun's official biography. For the Chinese text, see Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 67.1744–53; for a translation, see Tian Xiaofei, *Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 287–340; for a study, see Jui-lung Su 蘇瑞隆, "Lun Xie Lingyun de *Zhuan zheng fu* 論謝靈運的《撰征賦》[On Xie Lingyun's *Zhuan zheng fu*]," *Wen shi zhe* 文史哲, no. 5 (1990).

inner court, entrusted with ceremonial duties and functions.[18] The Pengcheng celebration anticipated Liu Yu's ascension to power. A reading of two of the poems commissioned for the occasion shed light on some of the subtler feelings Xie Lingyun might have harbored about Liu Yu's imminent usurpation of the Jin throne. Expressions of concern and reservation are couched in a poetic exposition on the theme "return" from multiple perspectives.

> On the Double Ninth Day, Attending the Farewell Assembly Hosted by the Duke of Song at the Cavalry Terrace in Honor of Secretariat Director Kong [*Jiuri cong Songgong ximatai ji song Kongling shi* 九日從宋公戲馬臺集送孔令詩][19]
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | 季秋邊朔苦 | In the last month of autumn, winds on the northern border are bitter and harsh;[20] |
> | 旅鴈違霜雪 | Migrating geese are flying against the onslaught of frost and snow. |
> | 淒淒陽卉腓 | Wilted and withered, all plants turn sallow under the sun;[21] |

18 See Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 67.1753.

19 For the text, see Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.960–61; for a translation, see Wu Fusheng, *Written at Imperial Command: Panegyric Poetry in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2008), 79–80.

20 The last month of autumn is the ninth lunar month. The northern border refers to Pengcheng, which was located on the northern frontier of the Eastern Jin.

21 This line alludes to *Mao shi* 204/2 ("Si Yue 四月 [The Fourth Month]"): "The autumn days were bitterly cold; / All plants and grasses withered. Turmoils and troubles made me ill; / Where can we return?" [秋日淒淒，百卉具腓。亂離瘼矣，爰其適歸。] The theme of "turmoils and troubles" is born out with a scenery of the late autumnal deterioration. My translation of the line is influenced by Satō Masamitsu who makes the following observation. Xie Lingyun coined the phrase *yanghui* 陽卉 by replacing "autumnal" with "sunny" and creating a concrete sense of warmth and brightness. This allows the reader to imagine the encroaching cold autumn air. Satō Masamitsu 佐藤正光, "Xie Zhan, Xie Lingyun de wenxue yu tamen de zhouwei: dui Pengcheng Xima tai zhi yanyou ji zuopin de kaocha 謝瞻、謝靈運的文學與他們的周圍——對彭城戲馬台之宴遊及作品的考察 [The Literary Writings of Xie Zhan and Xie Lingyun with a Focus on Historical Background: An Examination of the Banquet Hosted at the Cavalry Terrace and the Literary Works Composed for the Occasion]," in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao wenxue lunji* 魏晉南北朝文學論集 [*Collection of Studies of Wei-Jin and Southern Dynasties Literature*], ed. Nanjing daxue Zhongguo yuyan wenxue xi 南京大學中國語言文學系 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1997), 359. See also Mao Heng 毛亨, comm., Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, annot., Lu Deming 陸德明 phonetic commentary, and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, coll., "*Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 [*Rectified Interpretation of the Mao's* Book of Songs]," in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 [*Annotations and Commentaries of the Thirteen Classics*], ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 13.442b.

皎皎寒潭絜	Bright and brilliant, the deep pool shimmers in the cold.[22]
良辰感聖心	On this fine day, his sagacious mind is moved;[23]
雲旗興暮節	Cloud-pennants are hoisted to celebrate the late-season festival.[24]
鳴葭戾朱宮	The sound of reed pipes arrives at the vermilion palace;[25]
蘭卮獻時哲	Fragrant ale is presented to the savant of our day.[26]
餞宴光有孚	The banquet is hosted to inspire confidence and trust;[27]
和樂隆所缺	Harmonious conviviality fortifies the lost principle binding lord and vassal.[28]
在宥天下理	"Letting Be" – All-under-heaven is in order;[29]

22 Note that the phrase *hantan* 寒潭, antithetical to *yanghui*, evokes a semantic sense of unfathomable mystery or contemplation. If *yang* denotes the generative energy, then the cold depth of a pool is *yin*, dark and unknowable like the human mind. Cf. the phrase *tansi* 覃思 or 潭思, Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 [*History of the Former Han*], annot. Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 87B.3575. *Tan* is a Chu dialect word for a "deep pool." See Paul Kroll, *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 442. The "deep pool" foreshadows the "sagacious mind" in line 5.

23 *Shengxin* 聖心 is a eulogistic reference to Liu Yu. The adoption of the word *sheng* may suggest "emperor" or "imperial." Although Liu Yu was yet to ascend the throne, the "Nine Bestowals" [*jiuci* 九錫] ceremony had effectively made it a matter of formality. See Xiao Tong 萧统, ed., *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan* 六臣注文選 [*Six Vassals' Commentary of the Selections of Refined Literature*], *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, 1904, 20.29a.

24 *Yunqi* 雲旗 are flags decorated with patterns of clouds. See Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, 20.29a.

25 *Zhugong* 朱宮 is the traveling palace at the Cavalry Terrace. See Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, 20.29a.

26 *Lanzhi* 蘭卮 is alcoholic drink scented with powdered thoroughwort [*lan cao* 蘭草]. See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 22.1064. *Shizhe* 時哲 [savant of our day] refers to Kong Jing 孔靖 in whose honor the banquet was held.

27 This line alludes to *Classic of Changes*, Hexagram 64 "Weiji 未濟," 6/5 (Fifth Yin) & 9/6 (Top Yang). For a translation, see Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 549–50.

28 This line alludes to *Mao shi* 161, "Lu Ming 鹿鳴 [Deer Cry]," which is a feast poem that celebrates the comity and loyalty between lords and vassals. The phrase *hele* 和樂 comes from the line that reads "In harmonious conviviality we indulge." [和樂且湛。] The phrase appears also in the "Lesser Preface" to *Mao shi* 177, "Liu Yue 六月 [Sixth Month]": "When 'Lu ming' was abandoned, harmonious conviviality was lost." "Liu yue" is a poem about King Xuan of Zhou's 周宣王 [r. 828–782 BCE] northern campaign against the Xianyun 獫狁 tribe. See Mao Heng, "*Mao shi zhengyi*," 12–2.1a.

29 This line alludes to chapter 11 of the *Zhuangzi*, "Zai You 在宥 [Letting Be]," the opening lines of which read: "I have heard of letting the empire be, but I have not heard of governing the empire." Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 11.364.

吹萬群方悅	"Breezing the Myriad" – people from all borders are delighted.[30]
歸客遂海隅	The "returning sojourner" follows the river course to the edge of the ocean;[31]
脫冠謝朝列	Taking off his cap, he bows out of the ranks at court.[32]
弭棹薄枉渚	Curbing the oars, his boat is moored by the winding sandbars;[33]
指景待樂闋	Looking at the shadow of the sun, he waits for the music to announce the end of the banquet.[34]
河流有急瀾	The currents of the river rush forth rapidly;

30 This line alludes to chapter 2 in the *Zhuangzi*, "Qiwu Lun 齊物論 [The Adjustment of Controversies]," which is the *locus classicus* of the concept of *chuiwan* 吹萬 [Breezing the Myriad] – the sage ruler spreads his beneficence like the gentle breezing, reaching all beings, nourishing yet without damaging them. See Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 1B.50. The third century commentator Sima Biao 司馬彪 [240–306] explains the concept in the following terms: "The climate is gentle and breezy; myriad beings are being nourished and supplicated; the phenomenal world exhibits an unusual sight. [The sage king] allows each living being to have natural way and then that is where he would stop." See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.960. The two *Zhuangzi* references suggest a harmonious and non-interfering government.

31 The phrase *guike* 歸客, unattested in texts composed before Xie Lingyun's time, is arguably a case of neologism. It was to become an iconic concept in the Chinese cultural memory. In the *Wen xuan*, there are two occurrences of the phrase. *Sui* 遂 "watercourse" in this line is used in a verbal sense. I have emended 嵎 "mountain nook" to 隅 "corner, outlying place, border" following the *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan* 20.29b. This reading has been accepted in most of the *Wen xuan* editions except the Li Shan 李善 edition of the *Wen xuan*. See Gu Shaobo 顧紹柏, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu* 謝靈運集校注 [*Redacted and Annotated Collection of Xie Lingyun*] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1987), 25.

32 *Tuoguan* 脫冠 refers to the resigning or retiring from one's official post. This is another neologism, unattested in texts composed before Xie Lingyun's time. There is only one occurrence of this phrase in the *Wen xuan*. See Zhang Xie 張協, "Unpinning my hair, loosening my robe / with hair untied, I shall return to the edge of the ocean," [抽簪解朝衣，散髮歸海隅。] in Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 21.994.

33 This line alludes to the *Chu ci* 楚辭 [*Songs of the Chu*], adopting its terminology and imagery. The phrase *mizhao* 弭棹 "curbing the oars" derives from *mijie* 弭節 "curbing the pace," which first appears in *Chu ci* for five times, before becoming a stock phrase in the Han and post-Han prose and poetry. Here Xie Lingyun replaces "pace" with "oars," which specifies the feature of a journey by river. *Wangzhu* 枉陼(渚) "winding sandbars" also alludes to "She jiang 涉江 [Crossing the Yangzi River]," in *Chu ci*, 4.130. Cf. "Xiang Jun 湘君 [The Lord of Xiang]," which contains the line: "At dusk, we curb the pace and moor at the northern sandbar." [夕弭節兮北渚。] See Hong Xingzu 洪興祖, annot., *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補註 [*Annotated Chuci with Supplementary Commentaries*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 2.63.

34 See Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, 20.29b.

浮驂無緩轍	Roving chariots do not slow down on their tracks.[35]
豈伊川途念	How can I only be contemplating our ways parted?[36]
宿心愧將別	It is the cherished aim, to my chagrin, that I have now gone against.[37]
彼美丘園道	That marvelous Way of the Hillside Garden![38]
喟焉傷薄劣	Alas! How I bemoan my paltry virtue and lame pursuit![39]

As the title suggests, this poem was composed for a celebratory banquet on the Double-Ninth Festival of the fourteenth year of the Yixi 義熙 period [405–418] (October 24, 418) in honor of Kong Jing 孔靖 [347–422], a long-time councilor and supporter of Liu Yu.[40] Kong Jing had served as a councilor and libationer for the army in Liu Yu's campaign to recover the northern capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang.[41] For his contributions, Kong Jing was promoted to director of the Imperial Secretariat [*shangshu ling* 尚書令]. Instead of accepting the position, Kong Jing asked to "retire/return" to his estate in Guiji, which was granted. In order to honor Kong Jing's retirement, a banquet was held at Xima tai 戲馬臺.[42]

35 *Fucan* 浮驂 in this line refers Liu Yu's entourage. Line 17 describes Kong Jing's boat journeying off speedily along the course of the river. Together these two lines present a scene of the retired gentleman parting ways with the rest of Liu Yu's entourage. *Fu* 浮 is glossed as *xing* 行 in *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan* 20.29b.

36 This line contains a post-positioned verb, which is an important feature in Xie Lingyun's poetry. Such inversion of word order sometimes impresses upon the reader as contrived and could be a factor leading to the critical view on Xie Lingyun's poetic style being *fanfu* 繁複 or "intricate and complex." The sentence's syntax may be described as follows: *Qi* 豈 adverb serving as rhetorical question marker, *yi* 伊 adverb as modifier, *chuantu* 川途 compound noun as pre-positioned object, *nian* 念 verb as post-positioned predicate.

37 About this line, Li Shan explains: "Kong Jing retires to dedicate himself to 'cultivating simplicity' *yangsu* 養素 and yet I [Xie Lingyun] am ashamed for being still attached to the official position." *Suxin* 宿心 refers to the intention to embrace simplicity and part with fame and gain. See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.960.

38 *Qiuyuan dao* 丘園道 alludes to the *Classic of Changes*, Hexagram 22 "Bi 賁," 6/5, "This is Elegance as from a hillside garden, so bundles of silk increase to great number. If one is sparing, in the end, there will be good fortune." See Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 276–77.

39 *Bolie* 薄劣 alludes to Pan Yue's 潘岳 [247–300] "Xianju Fu 閒居賦 [*Fu* on Leisurely Living]," the coda of which contains the line: "Surely my use is paltry and my talent is meagre." [信用薄而才劣。] See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 16.706.

40 Kong Jing, who was a native of Shanyin 山陰 of Guiji, had backed Liu Yu with military and financial support in putting down the coastal rebellions in 401 and eradicating the usurper Huan Xuan 桓玄 [365–404] in 404. For Kong Jing's biography, see Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 54.1531–1532.

41 Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 54.1532.

42 Located in Pengcheng, this terrace was associated with Xiang Yu 項羽 [232–202 BCE], the famous Chu general who contended with and lost to the Han founder Liu Bang 劉邦 [256–195 BCE]. Kong Jing's biography in the *Song shu* mentions his mystical prowess in

Kong Jing's "returning" recalls Xie An's voluntary renunciation of power, and it invites an interpretation with more than one dimension. Could Kong Jing's demurral of service imply disapproval of Liu Yu's power grab and, therefore, a refusal to pay loyalty to the general-*cum*-usurper?[43] *Gui* 歸 [to return] appears in early classical texts to denote "loyalty." To "return/retire" implies a rejection [*qi* 棄] of the reigning ruler, who is deemed unsuitable or unbenevolent.[44] As a literary theme, "to return" as a potential expression of political dissent can be traced back to the *Classic of Poetry* and culminated in the literary works in the *Selections of Refined Literature* [*Wenxuan* 文選].[45] The prevalent use of *gui* (a word that is inherently multivalent), however, may also have blunted its politically jarring message. Laments to "return" would develop in the direction of praise of the natural landscape, that is, a pristine world far away from the entangled network of society and politics.

The ceremonial farewell gathering may have been a savvy move by Liu Yu to thwart any unpleasant implication of Kong Jing's retirement. Commenting on the occasion, the *History of Liu-Song* [*Songshu* 宋書] states: "[Kong Jing] declined the appointment to return east. The emperor hosted a banquet to bid him farewell at the Cavalry Terrace. All officials [were asked] to compose a verse to praise this."[46] This official account, referring to Liu Yu as Emperor Gaozu, speaks to the intended function of the Xima tai banquet, that is, to enforce and ensure a unifying narrative about Kong Jing's "return/retirement" by laying out a pretext for "praising" Liu Yu, the soon-to-be usurper.

In the following discussion, we first look at Xie Lingyun's poem, which through intertextual references presents a complex and complicated interpretive space of "return." By presenting the sophisticated textual map of signification, we determine whether the poet fulfills his prescribed compositional purpose, that is, to offer "praise" to Liu Yu.

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subduing the malevolent spirit of Xiang Yu, which speaks to an extent the sacrificial function Kong Jing performed in Liu Yu's military exploits. See Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 54.1532.

43 For a detailed discussion on the background of this politically-charged literary occasion and a list of attendee-writers at the banquet, see Satō Masamitsu, "Xie Zhan, Xie Lingyun de wenxue," 349–53; see also Wu Fusheng, *Written at Imperial Command*, 75–77.

44 The *Mencius* contains various examples supporting this reading. For example, "Now you [Mencius] have rejected/abandoned this Solitary One and return/retire." [今又棄寡人而歸。] Zhao Qi 赵岐, annot., Sun Shi 孙奭, coll., "Mengzi zhushu 孟子注疏 [Annotations and Commentaries of Mencius]," in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 [*Annotations and Commentaries of the Thirteen Classics*], ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 4B.82–2.

45 The first notable example is likely *Mao shi* 36. In the *Wen xuan*, *gui* as a literary motif is all too common.

46 辭事東歸，高祖餞之戲馬臺，百僚咸賦詩以述其美。Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 54.1532. *Qi mei* 其美 here refers to the moral values of Kong Jing's "return."

Collected in the *Selections of Refined Literature* under the category of "Lord's Feast," Xie Lingyun's poem shares some characteristics of "Lord's Feast" [*gongyan* 公讌] poetry.[47] For example, the opening stanza (lines 1–4) describes the season and scenery as an introduction to the poetic occasion, which, in this case, is a grand gathering in a bordertown in desolate autumn. They mention images from nature that are conventionally constructed as indices of human emotions in responding to social-political events. Late autumn in line 1 might suggest a decline in the "kingly way," that is, humane government.[48] Frost and snow might denote hardship endured by soldiers in the campaign [*zhengfu* 征夫]. Migrant geese and withering grass are "evocative imagery" [*xing* 興] associated with displacement and death.[49] The backdrop as described in the first stanza obliquely refers to Liu Yu's recent northern campaign, and yet the poetic tone can hardly be described as laudatory. Line 3 touches on the theme of "return" by alluding to "The Fourth Month [*Si yue* 四月]," number 204 in *Mao's Book of Songs* [*Maoshi* 毛詩], which is a lament about "turmoils and troubles" [*luanli* 亂離]. One could argue that it lacks explicit criticism. But ambiguity alone is sufficient to alert a reader who is accustomed to subtle suggestions.[50] To the educated elite, this poem would call to mind the familiar cry of woe by a displaced soldier: "Alas, to where can we return?"[51]

In the *Classic of Poetry*, a trooper's complaint, together with related types of scenes, such as "distressed/deserted wife" [*sifu* 思婦, *qifu* 棄婦], "[yearning] to return" [*sigui* 思歸], and "hardship on the road" [*xinglu nan* 行路難], constitute the most striking expression of the Zhou experiences with war. For example, "Eastern Mountain [Dong shan 東山]," poem 156 in *Mao's Book of*

47 The "Lord's Feast" follows a poetic convention of offering flattering remarks to the lord or the host of a banquet. There are four poems in the section that celebrate a banquet hosted by Cao Pi 曹丕 [187–226] upon his promotion to the Leader of Court Gentlemen for Miscellaneous Uses [*wuguan zhonglangjiang* 五官中郎將]. These Jian'an compositions are early models of poetry written at imperial command. See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.943–973.

48 See Ma Ruichen 馬瑞辰, *Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi* 毛詩傳箋通釋 [*General Commentary of the Mao's Book of Songs with Zheng Xuan's Subcommentary*], coll. Chen Jinsheng 陳金生 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 21.683. When the full bloom of summer is over, decline and deterioration begin. After that, what comes is chaos.

49 For a discussion of *xing*, an important literary trope from the *Classic of Poetry* tradition, see Pauline Yu, *The Reading Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1987), 44–47.

50 For a discussion of the thematic signification and structuring through imagistic analogy in the *Classic of Poetry*, see C. H. Wang, "The Theme," in *The Bell and the Drum: Shih Ching as Formulaic Poetry in an Oral Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 98–125.

51 爰其適歸。For a grammatical and philological discussion of the line, see Ma Ruichen, *Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi*, 21.685.

Songs, is a lyrical account of the Duke of Zhou's 周 three-year campaign to the east of the Taihang 太行 mountains from the soldier's perspective.[52] Also, a slate of poems sings of the campaigns carried out by King Xuan of Zhou 周宣王 [r. 828–782 BCE]: #167 "Cai wei 采薇," #168 "Chu che 出車," #169 "Di du 杕杜," #177 "Liu yue 六月," #178 "Cai qi 采芑," #179 "Che gong 車攻," #234 "He cao bu huang 何草不黃,"[53] etc. Most of these poems are traditionally interpreted as praise of King Xuan's military achievements, which helped restore the way of early Zhou founders. Xie Lingyun's choice of poem 204 in *Mao's Book of Songs*, intertextually speaking, is interesting if not somewhat surprising, as it seems to indicate a critical instead of eulogistic overtone.

Poem 204 is the fourth in a suite of ten poems with poem 201, "Valley Wind [*Gufeng* 谷風]," a motif for wife's complaint, as the title piece.[54] Commenting on the purpose of the poem, the preface reads: "This is to criticize King You of Zhou 周幽王 during whose reign the customs of the world worsened and the way of conviviality and friendship declined."[55] As such, line 3 could be read as an indirect comparison of Liu Yu to one of the most notorious ancient kings at a declining age. The image of a deep pool in line 4 is important, as it denotes the contemplative mind. Is this the reflective mind of a poet whose innermost thoughts are at the same time hidden and manifest, depending on the audience?

The second stanza of the poem describes the banquet scene. The use of "sagacious mind" [*shengxin* 聖心] in line 5 is a reference to the host Liu Yu. Commentators have noted that *sheng* is usually reserved for describing the king or emperor. Does this suggest that, at the time of composition, Liu Yu's imperial ambition had already been acknowledged and accepted? The answer is most likely yes, as the same reference is used in another poem written for the same occasion.[56] The author was Xie Lingyun's cousin, Xie Zhan 謝瞻 [387–421].[57] The poem by Xie Zhan, also titled "On the Double Ninth Day, Attending

52 Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shijing quanshi* 詩經詮釋 [*Annotated Classic of Poetry*] (Taipei: Lianjing, 1999), 271.

53 Qu Wanli, *Shijing quanshi*, 295.

54 For a discussion of "valley wind" as "wife's complaint," see Wang, *The Bell and the Drum*, 103–6.

55 See Mao Heng, *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13–1.1a. Although modern scholars have done away with this reading, the fifth-century audience would associate this with the last depraved king of the Western Zhou. See Wang, *The Bell and the Drum*, 104.

56 See Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, 24.

57 For a biography of Xie Zhan, see Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 56.1557–59. See also David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, ed., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide* (Leiden: Brill, 2012–14), 3:1636–39; Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, 8. For a discussion

the Farewell Assembly Hosted by the Duke of Song at the Cavalry Terrace in Honor of Secretariat Director Kong," is a shorter piece of eighteen lines.[58]

風至授寒服	Autumn winds arise – it is time to distribute cold-season clothes;[59]
霜降休百工	Winter frost descends – all works are paused.[60]
繁林收陽彩	The dense forest ceases its bright gleam;
密苑解華叢	In the lush garden, flower clusters are withering.
巢幕無留鷰	On the nests built on tents no swallows dally;[61]
遵渚有來鴻	Following the sandbars, there are geese arriving from afar.[62]
輕霞冠秋日	Wisps of rosy clouds crown the autumn sun;
迅商薄清穹	Swift gusts from the west flit by the ethereal firmament.[63]
聖心眷嘉節	The sagacious mind turns affectionately toward this fine seasonal festival;
揚鑾戾行宮	Riding in the chariot, he arrives at the traveling palace.[64]
四筵霑芳醴	For guests sitting on four sides, fragrant ales are served;[65]
中堂起絲桐	In the middle of the hall, music arises from the silk and paulownia instrument.[66]

of Xie Zhan and his poems, see Yue Zhang, *Lore and Verse: Poems on History in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2022), 97–120.

58 For the text, see Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.956–57.

59 This line alludes to *Mao shi* 154/1 ("Qi Yue 七月 [The Seventh Month]"): "In the seventh month, the fire star appears; in the ninth month, cold-season clothes are distributed." [七月流火，九月授衣。]

60 Lü Yanji 呂延濟 [fl. 718] comments: "With the arrival of the first frost, adhesives and paints become hardened and they can't be used to work on tools or vessels." See Xiao Tong, *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, 20.25b.

61 This line alludes to the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 [*Zuo Commentaries*], "*Xianggong* 襄公二十九年," in which *chaomu* 巢幕 describes the precarious position an official finds himself in when serving an unstable or temporary regime. Here it refers the powers that had been vanquished by Liu Yu.

62 This line alludes to *Mao shi* 159/2, "Jiu Yu 九罭 [The Fishnets]": "The wild geese fly along the sandbars." [鴻飛遵渚。]

63 *Xunshang* 迅商, according to Li Shan, refers to the swift autumn wind arriving from the west. See *Wen xuan* 20.957.

64 *Yangluan* 揚鑾 literally means "raising high the chariot bells." It is derived from *yangbiao* 揚鑣 "raising high the horse's cheek-bar." Cf. the phrase *yangbiao feimo* 揚鑣飛沫, *Wen xuan*, 17.508.

65 *Siyan* 四筵 [four sitting mats] is a metonymy for the guests sitting at the banquet.

66 *Sitong* 絲桐 is a synecdoche for the zither.

扶光迫西汜	When the light of the sun presses on toward the western shore;[67]
歡餘讌有窮	Our joy lingers while the feast draws to an end.
逝矣將歸客	Departing now! The returning sojourner!
養素克有終	In cultivating the unadorned virtue, he will be able to Culminate.[68]
臨流怨莫從	Facing the stream, I regret not being able to follow;[69]
歡心歎飛蓬	With a convivial heart, I lament the flying tumbleweed.[70]

Xie Zhan's third stanza corresponds to Xie Lingyun's second stanza in describing the banquet with similarly decorated vocabulary typical of the "Lord's Feast" genre. *Sheng* is used to refer to Liu Yu – likely a requirement for the commissioned literary presentation. Throughout the poem, Xie Zhan maintains an unequivocally eulogistic tone. The piece opens by alluding to "Seventh Month [*Qiyue* 七月]," poem 154 – a song of praise to the Duke of Zhou – one of the most venerated political figures in the Chinese tradition.[71] Further, Xie Zhan's allusion to the *Zuo Commentaries* [*Zuo zhuan* 左傳] in line 5 lauds Liu Yu's

67 *Fuguang* 扶光 is the light of *Fusang* 扶桑, the legendary tree from which the sun rises. *Si* 汜 is *Mengsi* 濛(蒙) 汜 [Murky Shore]. See Hong Xingzu, *Chuci buzhu*, 3.88: "It emerges from Scorching Vale and halts at Murky Shore." [出自湯谷，次于蒙汜。]

68 *Yangsu* 養素 derives from the *Laozi* line "exemplify simplicity, embrace the uncarved block." [見素抱樸。] See Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 82. *Zhong* 終 means "to end" or "to die." Here it implies a "good end" [*shanzhong* 善終] and a "death that fulfills the heavenly ordained terms" [*zhong tiannian* 終天年]. The English word "culminate" – with senses of "exalted," "summit," and "reaching a point of highest development" – is an appropriate equivalent for *zhong*. This alludes to *Classic of Changes*, Hexagram 15 "Qian 謙 [Modesty]," 9/3, "Diligent about his Modesty, the noble man has the capacity to maintain his position to the end, and this means good fortune." [勞謙，君子有終，吉。] Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 231.

69 *Linliu* 臨流 alludes to *Chu ci*, "Chou Si 抽思 [Expressing Emotions and Thoughts]," 4.139, "Facing the stream, I heaved a long sigh." [臨流水而太息。] In early medieval poetry, *linliu* is a literary trope on homesickness, yearning or longing for friends and relatives, and nostalgia for ancient times of benevolent rule. Cf. Tao Yuanming's 陶淵明 line "Facing the stream, I bid farewell with friends." [臨流別友生。] Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 26.1235.

70 Li Zhouhan 李周翰 [fl. 718] reads the line as Xie Zhan expressing regret for not being able to travel with Kong Jing and that they will be separated and follow their respective unpredictable journeys ahead like the tumbleweed. Within a few years, Xie Zhan, Kong Jing, and Liu Yu would all pass.

71 See Mao Heng, *Mao shi zhengyi*, 8–1.7a: "The poem lays out the Zhou kings' enterprise. Duke of Zhou encountered calamity. The poem lays out the path by which former kings of Zhou, beginning with Lord Millet, had conducted their transformative rule to demonstrate the hardship of the Zhou kings' enterprise." [陳王業也。周公遭變，故陳后稷先公風化之所由致，王業艱難也。]

campaign for wiping out illegitimate and unstable regimes that had plagued the north. The geese imagery in line 6 is associated with servicemen's submission to Liu Yu, instead of their struggle, as is the case in Xie Lingyun's line 2. In sum, Xie Zhan's poetic praise of Liu Yu is uncomplicated and unreserved. His celebratory tone culminates in the imagery in lines 7 and 8: "Wisps of rosy clouds crown the autumn sun; / Swift gusts from the west flit by the ethereal firmament." Needless to say, heaven and the sun both refer to Liu Yu as the highest power. Xie Zhan concludes the poem with appropriately congratulatory remarks to honor Kong Jing's retirement. Overall, it was competent and uncontroversial.[72]

In comparison, Xie Lingyun's poem, to which we now return, invites nuanced readings through its use of opaque allusions. The most intriguing feature of Xie Lingyun's poetry is his intertextual reference to the *Classic of Changes*.[73] They are critical for decoding the ambivalent tone in this piece. For example, line 9 refers to Hexagram 64, "Ferrying Incomplete [*Weiji* 未濟]" as follows: "The banquet is hosted to inspire confidence and trust." *Youfu* 有孚 [to have/inspire confidence] alludes to the Fifth Yin [六五 or 6/5] and Top Yang [上九 or 9/6] of Hexagram 64. The statement for the Fifth Yin reads: "Rectitude brings good fortune. No regret. The light of the nobleman evokes confidence. Good fortune."[74] The statement for Top Yang reads: "With confidence, we drink. There is no blame. Yet one might get his head wet. For the one evoking confidence, in this, he missteps."[75] The intertextual background suggests a conditioned "confidence and trust," as "misstep" due to arrogance or self-indulgence may be imminent. Hence a tone of caution in line 9.[76] The Commentary on the Image [*xiangzhuan* 象傳] of 9/6 further supports this reading: "In drinking, one gets his head wet. This is not knowing propriety."[77] Call

72 Li Shan, quoting the *Song shu*, reports that Xie Zhan's composition was ranked the better of the two poems composed among the invited guests. See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.956.

73 See Wendy Swartz, *Reading Philosophy, Writing Poetry: Intertextual Modes of Making Meaning in Early Medieval China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), 222–58.

74 貞吉，无悔，君子之光，有孚，吉。Translations of the *Classic of Changes* passages quoted are mine, unless otherwise noted. See Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚, annot., *Zhou yi jijie* 周易集解 [*Collected Annotations of the Changes*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016), 12.387; see also Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 549.

75 有孚于飲酒，无咎，濡其首，有孚，失是。See Li Dingzuo, *Zhou yi jijie*, 12.388; see also Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 549–50.

76 See Zhang Yinan's study of the pattern and style of Xie Lingyun's use of hexagrams in poetry, Zhang Yinan 張一男, "Xie Lingyun shiwen huayong *Yi* dian fangshi yanjiu 謝靈運詩文化用《易》典方式研究 [On the Methodology of Xie Lingyun's Use of the *Changes*]," *Yunnan daxue xuebao* 雲南大學學報, no. 2 (2011): 99.

77 "飲酒濡首"，亦不知節也。See Li Dingzuo, *Zhou yi jijie*, 12.388; see also Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 550.

for prudence is noted also in the Commentary to Judgment [*tuanzhuan* 彖傳] and Commentary on the Image of Hexagram 64. The former reads: "The little fox has almost ferried across. He is not yet out of water."[78] The latter says: "Fire is positioned above water: this constitutes the image of Ferrying Incomplete. The nobleman [ought to] carefully distinguish among things and situate them in their correct places."[79] The overall message through Hexagram 64 is caution, which could have been Xie Lingyun's assessment of Liu Yu's ending of Jin. Still, Liu Yu may or may not have picked up on the message.[80]

The use of hexagrams gives Xie Lingyun's piece an intriguing depth and complexity.[81] As Zhang Yinan points out, the poet is inclined to use the *Classic of Changes* to establish correlations between events in real life and their principles as indicated in the image [*xiang* 象].[82] As such, the text and its imagery served as a practical guide in challenging and compromising situations. After all, it was through pragmatism, as Cynthia Chennault has posited, that the Xie clan had realized their speedy ascension to the top.[83] For the thorny yet unavoidable question whether to serve [*chuchu* 出處] – that is, "whether to advance or withdraw" [*jintui* 進退] – the Hexagrams, with their Images and Commentaries, would have offered a reasoned if not always efficacious remedy.

In addition to Hexagram 64, Xie Lingyun alludes to Hexagram 22, *Bi* 賁 [Grace], in the penultimate line of his poem: "That marvelous Way of the Hillside Garden!" The term "hillside garden" [*qiuyuan* 丘園] is from the Judgment of the Fifth Yin [六五 6/5] of *Bi*: "This is the Grace of Hillside Garden. Bundles of silk. Meager. Ending is good."[84] Medieval commentators offered further insights into the image of Hillside Garden as indicating a good serviceman losing his position and yet it promises an "auspicious ending."[85] In classical texts, an "ending" [*zhong* 終] refers saliently to death. "Auspicious ending" suggests that a timely

78 See Li Dingzuo, *Zhou yi jijie*, 12.384; see also Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 545.

79 The upper trigram is *li* 離, signifying fire; the lower trigram is *kan* 坎, signifying water. See Li Dingzuo, *Zhou yi jijie*, 12.385; Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 550.

80 Wu Fusheng, *Written at Imperial Command*, 76.

81 For a systematic analysis of Xie Lingyun's use of the hexagram, see Zhang Yinan, "Xie Lingyun shiwen huayong yi dian fangshi yanjiu," 94–101.

82 Zhang Yinan, "Xie Lingyun shiwen," 99.

83 "Generally speaking, it was through an ability to adapt to changes in the court's power structure that Xie males of the Southern Dynasties reached the upper ranks. Those whose careers were both accomplished and long-lasting possessed, among other practical talents, a political acumen that helped them surface on the victor's side after contests for leadership, and the well-spoken wit to extricate themselves from compromising situations." Chennault, "Lofty Gates or Solitary Impoverishment," 261.

84 賁于丘園，束帛戔戔，吝，終吉。See Li Dingzuo, *Zhou yi jijie*, 5.153; Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 276.

85 See Li Dingzuo, *Zhou yi jijie*, 153.

retirement has the benefit of avoiding a violent death. Through Hexagram 22, Xie Lingyun praises Kong Jing's "return" with a palpably envious tone. The poem ends with possibly conventional laments over one's own "paltry virtue" and "lame pursuits," but the poet's true concern seems to be his inability to "return" in time and therefore avoid the unthinkable.

In April 422, Liu Yu's health took a bad turn. Within two months, he would pass away. The power vacuum that was left resulted in the ousting of Xie Lingyun at the hands of the powerful minister of education, Xu Xianzhi 徐羡之 [364–426]. Xie was banished to the remote Yongjia 永嘉 (present-day Wenzhou, Zhejiang). The official account of the turn of the events reads as follows:

> Xie Lingyun by nature was obdurately adamant. On various occasions, he violated rules and rituals. The court [of Liu Yu] only employed him on account of his literary talent and did not entrust him with significant duties in accord with his position. Xie Lingyun thought his talents would make him fit for participation in essential decision making. Since he was not appreciated, Xie Lingyun harbored resentment and indignation. Liu Yizhen, Prince of Luling, had been fond of writings and documents since a young age. He and Xie Lingyun were on better terms than usual when the Young Emperor [Liu Yu's elder son, Yizhen's elder brother] ascended the throne. Power lay with [certain] ministers. Xie Lingyun [was accused of having] formed cliques, influenced the opposing sides, and denigrated those in service. The minister of education, Xu Xianzhi, and others found him a calamity and then demoted him to the remote town of Yongjia.[86]

The prospect of going to Yongjia would have seemed daunting for Xie Lingyun, who had spent much of his adult life in the capital. He may have intentionally delayed the trip, and, when he finally was ready to embark on this distant journey, Xie Lingyun wrote the following poignant poem as a farewell note to his friends and relatives. In this piece, titled "Neighbors Sending Me Off at the Block Hill [*Linli xiangsong fangshan* 鄰里相送方山]"[87] we catch a further glimpse of the poet's view on "return," which could mean a matter of life and death for the early medieval courtier serving in arguably the darkest time in history.

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86 Shen Yue, *Song shu*, 67.1753.

87 Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.980–81. Block Hill was located 50 *li* (16 miles) east of the capital. One of the four major fords in the vicinity of Jiankang, the Block Hill was named after its shape resembling a square seal. Protruding out of the river, it was also known as the Mount Tianyin 天印山.

祇役出皇邑	On account of an assignment, I now depart the imperial town;
相期憩甌越	A date is set for my respite in the Ou and Yue regions.[88]
解纜及流潮	Untying the cord, I will travel away with the tides;
懷舊不能發	Thinking of my old friends, I can't bear to leave.
析析就衰林	Soughing and sighing, the desolate forest is my company;
皎皎明秋月	Bright and glistening, the autumn moon shines on me.
含情易為盈	Harboring various feelings, I become easily overwhelmed;
遇物難可歇	Encountering all matters, I can hardly find any relief.
積痾謝生慮	For long I have suffered ill health and withdrawn from life's concerns;
寡慾罕所闕	My desires are few and seldom do I have wants.[89]
資此永幽棲	From now on, I shall forever dwell in seclusion;
豈伊年歲別	How is this parting a matter of mere months?
各勉日新志	Let us each strive daily for renewal in virtue;[90]
音塵慰寂蔑	A message or a visit from you will be much consolation in my muffled oblivion.[91]

It is somewhat ironic that now Xie Lingyun was the one being "sent off," although not voluntarily. Instead of relying on opaque and obscure intertextual references, as seen in the "Double Ninth," this farewell poem relies primarily on direct expressions for meaning. Xie Lingyun begins by referring to his departure from the capital and referring to his exile as a "respite" [*qi* 憩]. The second stanza conveys a mournful poetic mood through an effective depiction of desolate scenery. The soughing and sighing from a forest of withered trees seem to sympathize with the sad traveler. The bright moon, with its overflowing light, portrays the poet's brimming emotions. In a heavy and yet restrained tone, the

88 Ou 甌 and Yue 越 are ancient names for modern southern Zhejiang and parts of Fujian.

89 Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, ed., *Laozi jiao shi* 老子校釋 [*Redacted and Annotated Laozi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 75.

90 *Rixin* 日新 alludes to *Classic of Changes*, hexagram 26 "Daxu 大畜 [Great Domestication]." The Commentary on the Judgment of "Daxu" reads: "In *Daxu*, we find the hard and strong and the sincere and substantial gloriously renewing their virtue with each new day." See Wang Bi 王弼, annot., Kong Yingda 孔穎達, coll., "Zhouyi zhengyi 周易正義 [The Correct Meaning of the Books of Changes with Subcommentary]," in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 [*Annotations and Commentaries of the Thirteen Classics*], ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 139–40.

91 *Yinchen* 音塵 alludes to a line from Lu Ji 陸機, "Sigui Fu 思歸賦 [Yearning to Return]": "Obliterated are my voice and traces by the banks of Yangzi." [絕音塵於江介。] See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 13.602, 20.981.

poet speaks of his intention to retire in lines 9–12, and the poem ends with an allusion to "Yearning to Return [*Sigui fu* 思歸賦]," by Lu Ji 陸機 [261–303].[92]

In surmising the impact of Xie Lingyun's demotion and exile, Frodsham calls it the "turning point" when the "gay roisterer, the dashing man about town died forever."[93] The contemplative and morose tone of the farewell poem recalls the poet's obsession with "return," as seen in the Kong Jing piece. His envy of the old vassal's timely "return," which would allow him to live out his heavenly ordained years in the mountains of Guiji, would probably have become even stronger at this point in his life. His wish to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors to leave behind the treacherous changes in regimes seemed ever more unattainable. We detect a sense of desperation and despair in another parting poem written around the same time, and it has an unusually detailed title: "On the Sixteenth Day of the Seventh Month of the Third Year of the Yongchu Reign, I Set Out from the Capital to Travel to the Commandery [*Yongchu sannian qiyue shiliu ri zhijun chufadu* 永初三年七月十六日之郡初發都]."[94]

述職期闌暑	By the end of summer, I have accepted my appointment;
理棹變金素	When I ready the oars, the season is in its metal phase.[95]
秋岸澄夕陰	The autumnal shore is lucid in the evening light;
火旻團朝露	The Great Fire star shines like the morning dew forms.[96]
辛苦誰為情	Travails of life, to whom shall I relate such pain?[97]
遊子值頹暮	A traveler meets his fate in this despondent late season.
愛似莊念昔	"Loving his own kind," Zhuangzi yearns for his homeland;[98]
久敬曾存故	"With a long-term admiration," Zengzi cherishes his old friends.[99]
如何懷土心	What about this mind that longs for home!
持此謝遠度	Harboring these thoughts, I bid farewell and embark on the far journey.

92 See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 20.981.

93 Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, 32.

94 See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 26.1236–38. The date in the title translates to August 19, 422.

95 "Metal phase" refers to autumn.

96 The fire star is Antares, which is considered the harbinger of autumn.

97 This line alludes to a lament by Lu Ji upon leaving his hometown to take up an office in the northern capital Luoyang: "such bitterness and hardship, no one understands." See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 24.1147, 26.1229.

98 This alludes to a story in the *Zhuangzi* about an exile from the Yue state who grows ever more homesick. See Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 8B.821.

99 See Li Shan's commentary in Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 26.1236.

李牧愧長袖	Li Mu was ashamed about his dangling sleeves;[100]
卻克慙躠步	Xi Ke was embarrassed for his lame gait.[101]
良時不見遺	Encountering good times, they were not abandoned by the court;
醜狀不成惡	In spite of their deformed conditions, no harm was done to them.
曰余亦支離	I am also impaired in this body;[102]
依方早有慕	For long I have yearned to return to my home state.
生幸休明世	To be born into the enlightened age is my good fortune;
親蒙英達顧	In person I have received kind regards from the peerlessly perspicacious.
空班趙氏璧	With no merit, I have a place among those who can retrieve Zhao's jade disk;[103]
徒乖魏王瓠	Useless, I am but a misfit like King of Wei's gourd.
從來漸二紀	It's been two decades since I joined the service;
始得傍歸路	Only now am I able to embark on the road home.
將窮山海迹	My traces will obliterate in mountains and lakes;
永絕賞心晤	Forever, I part with my close friends whom I shall see no more.

In this poem, Xie Lingyun states in no uncertain terms his wish to retire from court service and "return" to the mountains. The opening couplet, in keeping with poetic convention, describes the occasion with a description of seasonal change. The second couplet depicts striking autumn scenery. In line 3, the riverbank, due to receding water, reveals a fresh outline in the light of dusk. The verb *cheng* 澄 here means to "purify," referring at the same time to what water does to the riverbank and the effect of the evening light on everything in the vicinity. Heaven and earth connect through water – the essential element of the universe, whose incessant transformation becomes particularly evident to

100 Li Mu 李牧 [d. 229 BCE], a famous general from the state of Zhao, had short arms, but that did not prevent him from achieving military successes against both the *Xiongnu* and the state of Qin. See Liu Xiang 劉向, *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 [*Intrigues of the Warring States*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 1:289.

101 Xi Ke 卻克 [d. 587 BCE], a grandee of the state of Jin, walked lamely and was jeered by members of the Qi household. See Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 26.1237.

102 Zhili 支離 is the name of a recluse with deformed body who was nevertheless able to live out his heavenly ordained years. Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 2B.180.

103 This alludes to Lin Xiangru 藺相如 [fl. 279 BCE], the resourceful and courageous minister of Zhao who secured the return of the priceless jade disk known as Mr. He's Jade [*Heshi bi* 和氏璧]. See Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 [*Classic of History*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), 81.2439–41.

a poet who is sensitive to his surroundings after having experienced a sudden and life-changing event. As cold weather approaches, water particles coalesce at night to form dew drops, whose shimmering light reflects the shining Great Fire star. This wonderful sight saddens the exiled courtier. The poet speaks of his yearning for like-minded friends with textual references to Zhuangzi 莊子 [369–286 BCE] and Zengzi 曾子 [505–435 BCE] and comments on his banishment with two historical examples.[104] The two farewell poems impressed the reader as emotive. The poet's contemplation of "return" also seems to deepen in them.

On his river journey to serve in remote Yongjia, Xie Lingyun stopped by the Xie clan's "old mountains" in Guiji and wrote a poem vowing to return before too long, "Passing through the Shining Estate [*Guo shining shu* 過始寧墅]."[105]

束髮懷耿介	Since hair-binding age, I have harbored an uncompromising sense of rectitude;
逐物遂推遷	Driven by worldly matters, I have since followed their transferences.
違志似如昨	Deviating from my original aim, it happened like yesterday;
二紀及茲年	Two decades are gone, and here I am.
緇磷謝清曠	Besmirched and bruised, I am less than pure or unperturbed;
疲薾慙貞堅	Tired and spent, I have not exactly stayed unwavering.
拙疾相倚薄	Clumsy and ill in health, I have sometimes gone with the current;
還得靜者便	Upon returning, I hope to find quietude and peace.
剖竹守滄海	Holding the official tally, I am to guard the glaucous coast;
枉帆過舊山	Bending my sail, I stop at my old mountains;
山行窮登頓	Ascending and descending, the mountain path comes to an end;
水陟盡洄沿	Whirling and then falling, the river course is exhausted.

104 One puzzling point is the poet's use of the phrase Zhili, which is the name of a recluse with deformed body in the *Zhuangzi*. Is Xie Lingyun speaking of his own deformity in a literal or metaphorical sense? This question, unfortunately, cannot be answered. No commentaries offer any suggestions on this.

105 For the text, see Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, 41–44; Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, 26.1238–39. For translations, see Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, 1.118; Stephen Owen, "The Librarian in Exile: Xie Lingyun's Bookish Landscapes," *Early Medieval China* 10–11, no. 1 (2004): 214–15.

巖峭嶺稠疊	Cliffs pierce into the sky, peaks pile on high;
洲縈渚連綿	Sandbars winding, islets extend on and about.
白雲抱幽石	White clouds embrace a dark rock;[106]
綠篠媚清漣	Green bamboo leaves frolic over limpid ripples.[107]
葺宇臨迴江	A thatched eave overlooks the twirling stream;
築觀基曾巔	A belvedere is constructed with its foundation on a high peak.
揮手告鄉曲	Waving goodbye, I part with my townsmen;
三載期歸旋	In three years, I will return.
且為樹枌榆	Make sure to plant some elm and catalpa trees for me;
無令孤願言	Do not let my wish go unfulfilled.

When reading this poem, the reader might detect an ever-more salient theme of "return." The poet expresses regret for having been caught up in worldly matters and now wishes to "return," which goes beyond the conventional notions of "leaving court service and retiring." Xie Lingyun's "return" denotes the unattainable modest wish for a "good ending," that is, to live out one's heaven-ordained years and not to die prematurely or violently. After all, death is considered the "ultimate return" [*dagui* 大歸] and the final reversal to nature and the Way of nature.[108] The image of elm and catalpa [*fenjia* 枌榆] trees, the raw material for the coffin, in the penultimate line suggests a natural ending in the Guiji mountains. Unlike Kong Jing, whose timely and wise withdrawal from Liu Yu's court secured his person and posthumous reputation,[109] Xie Lingyun, as we know, unfortunately, could not avoid the fate of dying a violent and ignoble death in one of the darkest centuries of Chinese history.[110]

106 This line alludes to Zuo Si's 左思 "Zhao Yin 招隱 [Summoning the Recluse]": "White snow lingers on a dark ridge," [白雲停陰岡。] in *Wen xuan* 22.1027. Unlike Zuo Si, Xie Lingyun personifies nature by using a transitive verb.

107 About Xie Lingyun's use of the word *mei* 媚, Rur-Bin Yang who posits that *mei* was aesthetically preferred among the cultured elite in the fifth century Jiangnan that Xie Lingyun was a leading member. Yang reads *mei* as representing "facial features; the radiance of face and eye(brows) that are lovely and fresh." Yang concludes that *mei* signifies "radiant outward beauty" that "manifests the Way." Rur-Bin Yang 楊儒賓, "Shanshuishi yeshi gongfu lun 山水詩也是工夫論 [On Landscape Writing as Self-Cultivation]," *Zheng da zhongwen xuebao* 政大中文學報 22 (2014): 17–20.

108 See Wang Chong 王充, "Lun Si 論死 [Statement on Death]," in *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋 [*Redacted and Annotated Lun heng*], annot. Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 871–73.

109 Gu Shaobo, *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, 44.

110 For a discussion of Xie Lingyun's death, see Timothy Chan, "Xie Lingyun on Awakening," in *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic Representation* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 127–58.

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Dream, Memory, and Reflection: Transfigurations of Su Shi's Qiuchi Rock in Song Poetry

Yang Xiaoshan 楊曉山
Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures,
University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN, USA
xyang@nd.edu

Abstract

The present study traces the changing meanings of Su Shi's Qiuchi rock in Song poetry. As an aesthetic artifact, the rock may be gifted and exchanged through literati social interactions. At a more personal level, the rock reminds Su of a mysterious dream and symbolizes a place of retreat, described as his homeland in Shu, a Daoist grotto heaven, and a utopia that is superior to Peach Blossom Spring. The rock also serves as Su's most faithful companion in the dark days of his exile to the far south. In the poems of Southern Song poets, who experienced the trauma of the fall of northern China to the Jurchens, the rock turns into a nostalgic object but also prompts acute reflections on petrophilia as a morally and philosophically problematic passion.

Keywords

dream interpretation – literati interaction – petrophilia – Su Shi

1 The Rock and Su Shi's Dream of Qiuchi

In 1092, while Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037–1101] was serving as prefect of Yangzhou 揚州, his cousin Cheng Zhiyuan 程之元 [fl. 1095] brought him a gift of two rocks from Yingzhou 英州.[1] The gift is featured in Su's "Twin Rocks, with a Preface [*Shuangshi bing xu* 雙石並敍]":

1 Yingzhou was under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Circuit of Guangnan 廣南東路, of which Cheng Zhiyuan had been the judicial commissioner [*tixing* 提刑].

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> After I arrived in Yangzhou, I acquired a pair of rocks. One of them, green in color, had a long range of mountain peaks, with a cave extending from front to back. The other is so immaculately white that it reflects like a mirror. I soaked them with water in a basin and set them up on a stand. All of a sudden, I recalled that when I was in Yǐngzhou,[2] I once dreamed that someone asked me to reside at a government office, whose plaque read "Qiuchi." Upon waking up, I recited from Du Fu's poem: "Ageless is the cave of Qiuchi, / That connects underground to the Lesser Heaven." So, I playfully wrote this little poem to give my colleagues and friends a laugh.
>
> 至揚州，獲二石，其一綠色，岡巒迤邐，有穴達於背；其一正白可鑑。漬以盆水，置几案間。忽憶在潁州日，夢人請住一官府，榜曰仇池。覺而誦杜子美詩曰：萬古仇池穴，潛通小有天。乃戲作小詩，爲僚友一笑。
>
> 夢時良是覺時非　It felt so real in the dream, so false when awake;
> 汲水埋盆故自癡　Drawing water to set them in a basin, I indulged in my foolishness.
> 但見玉峰橫太白　Now I see the jade peaks stretching across Mount Taibai;
> 便從鳥道絕峨眉　Then, following the bird route, I pass over Mount Emei.
> 秋風與作烟雲意　Autumn wind brings forth mist and cloud;
> 曉日令涵草木姿　Morning sun conjures up grasses and plants.
> 一點空明是何處　That dot of void with light coming through – where does it lead?
> 老人真欲住仇池　Now this old man really wants to live in Qiuchi.[3]

Du Fu's 杜甫 [712–770] couplet cited in Su Shi's preface is from the fourteenth poem in the *Miscellaneous Poems from Qinzhou* [*Qinzhou zashi* 秦州雜詩]:

> 萬古仇池穴　Ageless is the cave of Qiuchi,
> 潛通小有天　That connects underground to the Lesser Heaven.
> 神魚人不見　No one sees the divine fish,

2 To avoid confusion with 英州, I romanize 潁州 as Yǐngzhou. Su Shi's half-year stint as prefect of Yǐngzhou started in the intercalary eighth month of 1091.

3 Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* 蘇軾全集校注 [*Collations and Annotations on the Complete Works of Su Shi*], annot. Zhang Zhilie 張志烈, Ma Defu 馬德富, and Zhou Yukai 周裕鍇 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2010), 6:35.3971–72.

福地語真傳	But it is veritably recorded as a Blessed Site.
近接西南境	It sits close to the southwest border,
長懷十九泉	Making me constantly think of its nineteen springs.
何時一茅屋	When will I, in a thatched cottage,
送老白雲邊	Spend my old days on the edge of the white clouds?[4]

Located southwest of Xihe 西和 County in present-day Gansu, Mount Qiuchi 仇池 derived its name from a lake [*chi* 池] on its summit. During his short stay in Qinzhou 秦州 in 759, Du Fu never visited Qiuchi, which was located about two hundred *li* southwest. According to Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲 [1638–1717], the first six lines of Du's poem are paraphrases of various accounts [*ji* 記] of Qiuchi.[5] However, no record is found before Du about the cave of Qiuchi connecting to the Lesser Heaven, also known as the Lesser Heaven of Pure Vacuity [*Xiaoyou qingxu zhitian* 小有清虛之天] in Daoist mythology.[6] Later sources only reference Du as the authority on this connection,[7] in addition to the designation of Qiuchi as a Blessed Site.[8] Nonetheless, Du's poem established two major themes that predominate in Su Shi's writings. The first is that Qiuchi is a Daoist transcendent realm, and the second is that it is a place to which to retreat in old age.

Su Shi's poem starts with a play between opposites, namely, dreaming [*meng* 夢] versus awakening [*jue* 覺], and reality [*shi* 是] versus falsehood [*fei* 非]. In making devotional objects out of the rocks, he simultaneously mocks and flaunts his "foolishness" [*chi* 癡]. The second couplet is adapted from one of Li Bai's 李白 [701–762] in "The Road to Shu Is Hard [*Shudao nan* 蜀道難]": "To the west, over Mount Taibai, there is a bird route, / Whereby one can cut across to the summit of Mount Emei."[9] Su's adaptation adds depth and complexity.

4 Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 et al., coll., *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 [*Complete Poetry of the Tang Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 225.2419.

5 Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, *Du shi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳註 [*Detailed Annotations on Poems of Du Fu*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 7.584.

6 This is the cave of Mount Wangwu 王屋 (in present-day Henan), one of the Ten Great Grotto-Heavens [*shida dongtian* 十大洞天]. See Zhang Junfang 張君房, *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 [*Cloudy Satchel with Seven Bamboo Markers*], ed. Li Yongsheng 李永晟 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 27.609.

7 See, e.g., Ge Lifang 葛立方, "Yunyu yangqiu 韻語陽秋 [Comments on Poetry]," in *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話 [*Remarks on Poetry from Various Dynasties*], comp. He Wenhuan 何文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 13.583; Rolf A. Stein, *World in Miniature: Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

8 Qiuchi does not belong in the Seventy-two Blessed Sites in Zhang, *Yunji qiqian*, 27.618–31. For a narrative collection of traditional sources on Qiuchi, see Li Zuhuan 李祖桓, *Qiuchiguo zhi* 仇池國志 [*Records of the Kingdom of Qiuchi*] (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1986).

9 可以橫絶峨眉巔，西當太白有鳥道。Peng Dingqiu, *Quan Tang shi*, 162.1681.

First, in terms of colors, Emei (Moth Brows – a cliché metaphor for women's eyebrows painted in dark green) matches the green rock presented to him by Cheng Zhiyuan, while Taibai [Supreme White] finds its counterpart in the white rock. Second, Emei and Taibai are both prominent Daoist mountains. Their juxtaposition in Su's poem reinforces the motif already introduced in Du Fu's couplet. Finally, the two mountains hold special personal significance for Su. Taibai is located in Fengxiang 鳳翔 (in present-day Shaanxi), where Su started his official career in the twelfth month of 1061. Emei, however, represents his native land of Shu, to which he constantly expressed his desire to return. Although Su was from Meishan 眉山 and never visited the nearby Emei, he frequently referred to Emei as his home.[10] Thus, Taibai and Emei may have respectively represented service to the government and retreat to private life. Of the two rocks, Su clearly preferred the green one. The last couplet of the poem focuses on the cave, which appears to represent a Daoist grotto heaven such as Qiuchi. It was in this rock that Su found the embodiment or emblem of what Qiuchi meant in his dream. Indeed, it was this rock that Su named Qiuchi.[11]

In the preface to "Twin Rocks," Su Shi presented the dream interpretation as a purely private experience. Upon waking, he immediately comprehended the dream's significance. A different account is found in Su's note in "Matching Tao's 'Reading *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*' [*He Tao Du* Shanhai jing 和陶讀《山海經》]," written in 1095, during his exile to Huizhou 惠州. According to that account, he was at first puzzled by the dream: Qiuchi was the ancient site of Wudu 武都 of the Di 氐 people, under the protection of Yang Nandang 楊難當.[13] "How could I live there?" Su wondered. The next day, when he asked his guests about the dream, Zhao Lingzhi 趙令畤 [1061–1134], notary of the administrative assistant [*qianpan* 簽判] of Yĭngzhou 潁州 at the time, told him about Qiuchi being a blessed site and quoted from Du Fu's poem. In other words, it was Zhao who connected Su's dream to Du Fu's description of Qiuchi. As we shall see, at least one more person contributed to the interpretation of Su's dream. Su continued to obsess over his dream and repeatedly refers to it in his writings.[14]

10 On Emei in Su Shi's writings, see James M. Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 42–43.

11 See Shan Guoqiang 單國強, *Gu shuhua shi lunji* 古書畫史論集 [*Essays on Ancient Calligraphy and Paintings*] (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2001), 413; Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 8:45.5322n9.

12 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:39.4644.

13 Yang Nandang ruled the Later Qiuchi Kingdom of Di ethnicity from 429 to 442.

14 For discussions, see Curtis Dean Smith, "The Dream of Ch'ou-ch'ih: Su Shih's Awakening," *Hanxue yanjiu* 18, no. 1 (2000); Ronald C. Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thoughts and Pursuits in Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 221–24.

2 The Journey of the Rock from the Capital to the Far South

It is generally assumed that Su Shi wrote "Twin Rocks" in Yangzhou. There are, however, two reasons for believing that it might have been composed after he returned to the capital in the ninth month of 1092. First, the poem makes no mention of Cheng Zhiyuan. This oversight would have been perceived as rude if Cheng had been around when Su composed the poem. Second, and more important, it appears that the "colleagues and friends" whom Su meant to amuse were those in the capital, rather than those in Yangzhou, as evidenced in his "Upon Being Presented with the Poems Matching 'Qiuchi' [*Jian he Qiuchi* 見和仇池]," one of the "Four Poems Matching the Rhyme Words of the Poems by Qian Mufu, Jiang Yingshu, and Wang Zhongzhi [*Ciyun fenghe Qian Mufu, Jiang Yingshu, Wang Zhongzhi shi sishou* 次韻奉和錢穆父、蔣穎叔、王仲至詩四首]."[15] As the poem uses the same rhyme words as "Twin Rocks," it may be inferred that the poems by Qian Xie 錢勰 (*zi* Mufu, 1043–1097), Jiang Zhiqi 蔣之奇 (*zi* Yingshu, 1031–1104), and Wang Qinchen 王欽臣 (*zi* Zhongzhi, 1034–1101) used the same format in response to "Twin Rocks."[16]

During Su Shi's one-year stay in the capital, he frequently socialized with Qian Xie, Jiang Zhiqi, and Wang Qinchen. They were known as the Four Friends of Yuanyou [*yuanyou siyou* 元祐四友]. Su showed them some, if not all, of the poems he had composed in Yangzhou. He also told them about his dream. In response, Wang Qinchen mentioned his personal experience with Qiuchi during an official mission: "There one can escape the world, just like in Peach Blossom Spring."[17] As we shall see, the idea of Qiuchi as a utopia figures prominently in Su's poems to Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 [ca. 365–427] after he was exiled to Huizhou.

The exchanges among the foursome must have created a stir in the high society of the capital. Wang Shen 王詵 (*zi* Jinqing 晉卿, ca. 1048–ca. 1103), an imperial in-law and legendary connoisseur of the finer things in life, heard

15 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4108–9.

16 At least one of the four poems matched by the three friends, "Jiuyue shiwuri guanyue tingqin Xihu shi zuoke 九月十五日，觀月聽琴西湖示坐客 [Composed on the Fifteenth Day of the Nineth Month, Shown to Guests Who Were Seated While We Watched the Moon and Listened to the Zither at West Lake]," *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:34.3740, was written in 1091, when Su Shi was in Yingzhou. This indicates that the three friends also composed poems to match the rhyme words of poems composed by Su Shi before he arrived at the capital. In other words, "Twin Rocks" could have been written in Yangzhou.

17 可以避世，如桃源也。Su Shi, preface to "He Tao 'Taohua yuan' 和陶桃花源 [Matching Tao's 'Peach Blossom Spring']," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:40.4751. For a translation and discussion of the preface, see Zhiyi Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity: The Aesthetics and Ethics of Su Shi (1037–1101) in Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 148–51.

about it and sent a poem asking to borrow the rock for viewing.[18] The request resulted in three long response poems by Su Shi.[19] The first is titled "The Qiuchi Rock That I Have Kept Is the Rarest Treasure of All Times. In a Short Poem, Wang Jinqing Tried to Borrow It for Viewing. His Intention Is to Seize It from Me. I Would Not Dare to Refuse to Lend Him the Rock, but I Send Him This Poem First [*Pu suocang Qiuchi shi xidai zhi bao ye Wang Jinqing yi xiaoshi jieguan yi zaiyu duo pu bugan bujie ran yi cishi xianzhi* 僕所藏仇池石希代之寶也王晉卿以小詩借觀，意在於奪。僕不敢不借，然以此詩先之]":

海石來珠宮	The ocean rock comes from the dragon's palace;
秀色如蛾綠	Its charming color recalls the green brow-pigment.
坡陀尺寸間	Between the inches of its undulation,
宛轉陵巒足	There is enough space for hills and peaks to curve.
連娟二華頂	Twisting and slender: the peaks of the Two Huas;[20]
空洞三茅腹	Vacuous and hollow: the belly of the Three Maos.[21]
初疑仇池化	At first I thought it was a transformation of Qiuchi;
又恐瀛洲蹙	Then I felt it was a condensation of Yingzhou.[22]
殷勤嶠南使	It was kind of the Commissioner of Qiaonan,
餽餉淮東牧	To present it to the Prefect of Huaidong.[23]

18 Wang Shen married the second daughter of Emperor Yingzong 英宗 [r. 1064–1067], sister of the reigning Emperor Shenzong 神宗 [r. 1067–1085].

19 The three poems are translated and discussed in my *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects on Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard Asia Center, 2003), 179–95. They are retranslated here with substantial revisions. The discussion draws largely on my original discussion in the book. The three poems are also discussed in Egan, *Problem of Beauty*, 218–36; Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 112–16. Egan approaches the exchange from the perspective of art collecting and its discontents in the Northern Song. Yang explores how Su legitimizes his passion for objects while granting them a degree of agency.

20 The Two Huas are Mount Taihua 太華 and Mount Shaohua 少華 (in present-day Shaanxi).

21 The Three Maos here refers to Mount Gouqu 句曲 (in present-day Jiangsu). The name derives from Lord Mao 茅君, a Daoist transcendent who resided in the mountain. He was joined by his two brothers who abandoned their official career and families. See Ge Hong 葛洪, *Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi* 神仙傳校釋 [*Annotations on the Lives of Immortals*], ed. Hu Shouwei 胡守為 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 5.182–84.

22 Yingzhou is one of the five fabulous mountain islands in the eastern ocean. See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 [*Collected Explanations on the Liezi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 5.151–52. In Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*], comm. Pei Yin 裴駰, Sima Zhen 司馬貞, and Zhang Shoujie 張守節 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 6.247, it is listed as one of the three immortal islands in the ocean.

23 Qiaonan refers to Lingnan 嶺南. The commissioner is Cheng Zhiyuan. Huaidong refers to the Eastern Circuit of Huainan 淮南東路. Its seat was Yangzhou, of which Su Shi was the prefect.

得之喜無寐　Getting it made me so happy that I couldn't fall asleep;
與汝交不瀆　In dealing with it, I wouldn't be arrogant.[24]
盛以高麗盆　In a basin from Koguryŏ I placed it,
藉以文登玉　Strewing around its base jade pebbles from Wendeng.[25]
幽光先五夜　Its glimmering light resembles that preceding the night's fifth watch;[26]
冷氣壓三伏　Its chilly ether suppresses the midsummer's heat.
老人生如寄　My life as an old man is like a temporary lodging;
茅舍久未卜　For a long time I have been unable to decide on a cottage.
一夫幸可致　Fortunately, just one man was able to bring it to me;
千里常相逐　A thousand miles it has always followed me.
風流貴公子　You, a gallant noble lord,
竄謫武當谷　Once scurried in banishment to the valley of Wudang.
見山應已厭　You must tire of the sight of mountains now –
何事奪所欲　Why would you want to seize what I desire?
欲留嗟趙弱　I want to keep it but sigh over being weak like Zhao;
寧許負秦曲　It would be better to agree and let Qin shoulder the burden of being wrong.[27]

24 See Wang Bi 王弼, annot., Kong Yingda 孔穎達, coll., "Zhouyi zhengyi 周易正義 [The Correct Meaning of the Book of Changes with Subcommentary]," in *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 [*Annotations and Commentaries on the Thirteen Classics*], ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 8.362–63: "A gentleman does not cringe in dealing with his superiors or show contempt in dealing with his inferiors." [君子上交不諂，下交不瀆。]

25 Su Shi collected hundreds of those pebbles in 1085, during his short stay in Wendeng (in present-day Shandong) for less than a month. See Su Shi, "Wendeng Penglaige xia shibi qianzhang wei hailang suo zhan shi you suilie taosa suijiu jie yuanshu ke'ai turen wei ci danziwo ye qu shubaimei yi yang shichangpu qie zuoshi yi Chuicitang laoren 文登蓬萊閣下，石壁千丈，為海浪所戰，時有碎裂，淘灑歲久，皆圓熟可愛，土人謂此彈子渦也。取數百枚，以養石菖蒲，且作詩遺垂慈堂老人 [Below the Penglai Pavilion of Wendeng, There Were Stone Cliffs of a Thousand Fathoms. Assaulted by the Ocean Waves, Chips Broke Off. After Being Washed for Ages, They Became Charmingly Round and Smooth. Locals Called Them Pellet Nests. I Collected Hundreds of Them to Spread around My Calamus. I Also Wrote a Poem to Present to the Old Man of Extending Charity Hall]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 5:31.3451.

26 The fifth is the last of the five watches of the night.

27 After King Huiwen 惠文 [r. 299–266 BCE] of Zhao obtained the famous He's jade disk [*Heshi bi* 和氏璧], King Zhao 昭 [r. 306–251 BCE] of Qin proposed exchanging the jade disk of He for fifteen of Qin's cities. Lin Xiangru 藺相如 [fl. 279 BCE], a minister in Zhao, advised King Huiwen to agree to the proposal because "Qin is strong while Zhao is weak." When King Huiwen asked what if Qin took the jade disk without giving the cities, Lin responded that Zhao would be wrong to refuse Qin's proposal and that Qin would be wrong not to give Zhao the cities in return. Between the two options, "it would be better to

傳觀慎勿許　Please don't grant any request to pass it on for viewing;
間道歸應速　And be quick to return it via a shortcut.[28]

Su Shi acutely observes that Wang Shen's "intention" in "borrowing" the rock was to "seize" it. His suspicion was not unfounded, for Wang was known to be an unscrupulous borrower.[29] Su's acquisition of the rock as the result of voluntary gift giving contrasts with Wang's violent intention to "seize" it from him. The hyperbole about the rock as "the rarest treasure of all times" foreshadows Su's reluctance to part with it and sets the stage for the dramatic conflict between two rock fanciers. Su describes himself as the weaker party and reinforces the idea of his weakness by speaking of himself as an "old man" vis-à-vis Wang as a "noble lord." This apparent imbalance of power seems to foreshadow Su's eventual acceding to Wang's request. At the same time, however, the allusion to intrigue between Qin and Zhao hints at a different outcome, with the weaker triumphing over the stronger.

Su Shi presents his quarrel with Wang Shen as a clash of desires. Paradoxically, the legitimacy of his desire is based on his possession of a miniature mountain against Wang's erstwhile grand, although only visual, possession of Mount Wudang. The reference to Wang's exile to Junzhou 均州 (where Mount Wudang sits) is somewhat uncanny, for it was his financial, social, artistic, and literary ties with Su that led to Wang's exile following the Crow Terrace Poetry Trial [*Wutai shi'an* 烏臺詩案].[30] At the end of the poem, Su mentions two phrases related to lending: no further circulation and an expeditious return. This miserly gesture is a far cry from his usual magniloquence about transcending attachment to physical objects. It also significantly differs from the positions and postures he takes in the next two poems.

Su Shi's poem to Wang Shen was also sent to Qian Xie, Wang Qinchen, and Jiang Zhiqi. Although none of their response poems are extant, the gist of their arguments is recorded in the extremely lengthy title of Su Shi's second poem, "Wang Jinqing Showed Me His Poem, Intending to Seize My Ocean Rock. Qian Mufu, Wang Zhongzhi, and Jiang Yingshu All Wrote Poems in the Same Rhyme

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agree and let Qin shoulder the burden of being wrong." See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 81.2440. For a detailed discussion of the story in connection with Lu Chen's 盧諶 [ca. 285–ca. 351] "Langu 覽古 [Poem on Surveying the Ancient History]", see Yue Zhang, *Lore and Verse: Poems on History in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2022), 126–31.

28 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4123–24.

29 See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 183–84.

30 For Wang Shen's involvement in the case, see Charles Hartman, "Poetry and Politics in 1079: The Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Su Shih," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 12 (1990): 20. For Su Shi's own reference to his implicating Wang Shen, see Su Shi, "Ti Wang Jinqing shi hou 題王晉卿詩後 [Postscript to Wang Jinqing's Poems]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 19:68.7645.

Scheme, Lords Mu and Zhi Thought That I Should Not Agree. Only Yingshu Thought Otherwise. Today Yingshu Paid Me a Visit, and upon Seeing for Himself the Marvel of the Rock, Regretted What He Had Said. But I Thought Jinqing Was Not the Kind of Person Whose Request Could Be Denied for Long. I Would Give the Rock to Him If He Would Exchange for It a Painting of Two Loose Horses by Han Gan. Therefore, I Wrote Another Poem with the Same Rhyme Words as the Previous One [*Wang Jinqing shi shi yu duo haishi Qian Mufu Wang Zhongzhi Jiang Yingshu jie ciyun Mu Zhi ergong yiwei bu kexu du Yingshu buran jinri Yingshu jianfang qindu cishi zhimiao suihui qianyu pu yiwei Jinqing qike zhongbi buyuzhe ru neng yi Han Gan er sanma yizhi zhe gai kexu ye fuci qianyun* 王晉卿示詩，欲奪海石，錢穆父、王仲至、蔣穎叔皆次韵。穆、至二公以爲不可許，獨穎叔不然。今日穎叔見訪，親睹此石之妙，遂悔前語。僕以爲晉卿豈可終閉不予者，若能以韓幹二散馬易之者，蓋可許也。復次前韵]":

相如有家山	Xiangru had a mountain at home,
縹緲在眉綠	Distant and hazy, on the green brows.
誰云千里遠	Who said it is a thousand miles away?
寄此一顰足	One knitting of the brows moved it here.
平生錦繡腸	For his whole life he had a heart for intricate things,
早歲藜莧腹	But in his early years there were but wild vegetables in his belly.
從教四壁空	He allowed his walls to go empty on all sides,
未遣兩峰蹙	But would not let go of the knitted peak-like brows.
吾今況衰病	Now, as I get weaker and more sickly,
義不忘樵牧	I won't forget the principles of rustic life.
逝將仇池石	Determined I am to take the Qiuchi rock,
歸泝岷山瀆	To return upstream to the river by Min Mountain.
守子不貪寶	Not greedy of other treasures, I only guard you,
完我無瑕玉	To keep intact my impeccable jade.[31]
故人詩相戒	Two old friends admonished me in their poems;
妙語予所伏	I admired their marvelous words.
一篇獨異論	Another one argued differently,
三占從兩卜	But I followed the guidance of two divinations out of three.
君家畫可數	In your home there are numerous paintings,
天驥紛相逐	On which herds of heavenly steeds chase one other.
風騣掠原野	Their windy bristles sweep across the plains and fields;

31 Lin Xiangru undertook the mission to Qin with the jade disk and was able to bring it back intact after Qin renegaded on the deal of exchange, see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 81.2440–41.

電尾捎澗谷 Their lightning tails whisk over valleys and vales.
君如許相易 If you should be willing to exchange,
是亦我所欲 That would also be what I desire.
今朝安西守 Today the Commander of Anxi
來聽陽關曲 Came to listen to the parting song "The Yang Pass."[32]
勸我留此峰 He advised me to keep these peaks,
他日來不速 "The day of their return wouldn't be too soon."[33]

The poem starts with an allusion to the story of Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 [179–118 BCE] and his wife Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君 [175–121 BCE]: "Wenjun had a delicate appearance. The color of her brows was like that of mountains viewed from afar."[34] After the couple eloped, they were in such dire straits that "they had nothing in their house but bare walls on all four sides."[35] As the images of rock, mountain, and belle become mutually referential, a homology emerges: the rock is to Su Shi what Zhuo Wenjun was to Sima Xiangru. However, the husband-wife metaphor soon turns out to be faulty. Despite his forceful declaration to "keep intact my impeccable jade," Su proves himself only too ready to deal, as he makes a more practical counteroffer of exchanging the rock for a painting.

It is possible that Su Shi was making a genuine exchange proposition as the exchange of aesthetic artifacts was common in the collecting culture of the Northern Song [960–1127]. Trading such artifacts was a more acceptable and elegant form of transaction than buying them with, or selling them for, money. Wang Shen had once exchanged a horse painting by Han Gan 韓幹 [706–783] for a piece of calligraphy in Mi Fu's 米芾 [1051–1107] collection.[36] Su's counterproposal could also have been a tactic to frustrate Wang, an avid collector of paintings. In his seemingly reasonable proposition of a painting-rock

32 In the tenth month of 1092, Jiang Zhiqi was appointed prefect of Xizhou 熙州 (the old headquarters of Anxi Protectorate 安西都護府 in the Tang). See Li Tao 李燾, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 [*Extensive Compilation of Materials for Continuation of Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979–1995), 487.11389.

33 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4132–33.

34 文君姣好，眉色如望遠山。Liu Xin 劉歆, *Xijing zaji jiaozhu* 西京雜記校注 [*Collations and Annotations on Miscellanies of the Western Capital*], comp. Ge Hong 葛洪, coll. Xiang Xinyang 向新陽 and Liu Keren 劉克任 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), 2.82.

35 家居徒四壁立。Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 117.3000.

36 Mi Fu 米芾, "Huashi 畫史 [History of Paintings]," in *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記 [*Complete Brush Notes of the Song Dynasty*], ed. Zhu Yian 朱易安, Fu Xuancong 傅玄琮 et al. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2006), 2:4.281.

exchange, Su was furtively giving Wang a dose of his own medicine. His message is subtle but clear: Do not take from me what you would not give away yourself. Interestingly enough, in a commemorative essay about Wang's collection of paintings and calligraphies, written some sixteen years earlier, in 1077, Su made one of his best-known statements about the dangers associated with the possessiveness of the collector and the need to cultivate the ability to enjoy aesthetic objects without being engrossed in or obsessed with them.[37] In the present situation, however, both Su and Wang seem to be mired in the sin of possessiveness against which Su had so eloquently warned.

Su Shi's proposal of trading his rock for a horse painting by Han Gan may have unwittingly brought up the traumatic memory of Wang Shen's exile to Wudang, already indirectly mentioned in Su's first poem. In 1069, during a brief visit to the capital, Su was invited by Wang to a meeting (their first one) outside the city. (The fact that the meeting took place outside the capital reflects the politically charged atmosphere at the time.) The next day, Wang sent Su a painting of twelve horses by Han Gan (in six scrolls) and asked him to write a colophon. During the Crow Terrace Poetry Trial, Su's verse colophon was cited as evidence of his flaunting his talent and attacking those in power for ignoring it.[38]

If Su Shi's counteroffer was meant as a ploy, then the ruse certainly worked. The proposition was flatly rejected by Wang Shen, as clearly indicated in the title of Su's third poem, "I Wanted to Exchange My Rock for a Painting. Jinqing Blamed Me for That. Mufu Wanted to Take Both the Rock and the Painting. Yingshu Wanted to Burn the Painting and Break the Rock. Therefore, I Wrote a Poem with the Same Rhyme Words to Explain the Meaning of My Previous Two Poems [*Shi yu yi shi yi hua Jinqing nanzhi Mufu yu jianqu erwu Yingshu yu fenhua suishi nai fuci qianyun bing jie ershi zhi yi* 軾欲以石易畫晉卿難之穆父欲兼取二物穎叔欲焚畫碎石乃復次前韻並解二詩之意]":

春冰無真堅	Ice in spring does not have true firmness;
霜葉失故綠	Leaves in frost lose their original green.

37 Su Shi, "Baohuitang ji 寶繪堂記 [An Account of Hall of Treasured Paintings]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 11:11.1122–23.

38 Peng Jiuwan 朋九萬, "Dongpo Wutai shian 東坡烏臺詩案 [Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Dongpo]," in *Su Shi ziliao huibian* 蘇軾資料彙編 [*Compendium of Materials on Su Shi*], comp. Sichuan daxue Zhongwenxi Tang-Song wenxue yanjiushi 四川大學中文系唐宋文學研究室 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 587. For Su Shi's colophon, see Su Shi, "Shu Han Gan *muma tu* 書韓幹《牧馬圖》[Superscription on Han Gan's *Painting of Pasturing Horses*]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 3:15.1466–67.

鶉疑鵬萬里	The quail doubts that Peng flies ten thousand miles;[39]
蚿笑夔一足	The centipede laughs at Kui for having only one foot.[40]
二豪爭攘袂	As two valiants roll up their sleeves in argument,
先生一捧腹	One elderly bursts his sides with laughter.
明鏡既無台	If the bright mirror has no pedestal;[41]
淨瓶何用蹙	Why kick over the pitcher for handwashing?[42]
盆山不可隱	A mountain in a basin cannot be a hermitage;
畫馬無由牧	Horses in a painting cannot be herded.
聊將置庭宇	I may just as well place it in my courtyard –
何必棄溝瀆	Why abandon it to ditches and gutters?
焚寶真愛寶	Burning the treasure shows your true love for the treasure;
碎玉未忘玉	Breaking the jade shows you cannot forget about the jade.
久知公子賢	I have long known you to be wise;
出語耆年伏	In my old age, I admire what you uttered.
欲觀轉物妙	Desirous to observe the miracle of turning objects round,
故以求馬卜	I tried to find it by asking for the horses.
維摩既復捨	Vimalakīrti let them go after receiving them,
天女還相逐	Though the heavenly maidens wanted to stay.
授之無盡燈	He taught them about the Inexhaustible Lamp,

39 The Peng bird can soar 90,000 miles high. The quail, content with flying up and down within a small space, laughs at Peng. See Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, "Xiaoyao you 逍遙遊 [Roaming at Ease]," in *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 [*Collected Annotations on the Zhuangzi*], comp. Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 1A.14.

40 For the dialogue between Kui 夔 (a one-footed animal) and Xian 蚿 (a worm with a myriad of feet), see Guo Qingfan, "Qiushui 秋水 [Autumn Floods]," in *Zhuangzi jishi*, 6B.592–93.

41 This is a rewriting of a line in a famous gatha by Huineng 慧能 [638–713]. The idea is that enlightenment is a matter of seeing or realizing one's true nature, which is pure and clear in itself. See Huineng 慧能, *Tanjing jiaoshi* 壇經校釋 [*Collations and Annotations on the Platform Sūtra*], coll. and trans. Guo Peng 郭朋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 8.18.

42 When Huaihai 懷海 [720–814] was about to send Lingyou 靈祐 [771–853] to be the abbot at Mount Wei 溈, Hualin 華林 was upset because he considered himself better qualified. Huaihai said that whichever of them could make an apt response to his question would be given the job. Pointing at a pitcher for hand washing, Huaihai asked what they would call it if they were not allowed to call it a "pitcher for hand washing." Hualin would call it a "stump"; Lingyou kicked the pitcher over without saying a word. See Daoyuan 道原, *Jingde chuandeng lu yizhu* 景德傳燈錄譯注 [*Translations and Annotations on the Records of the Transmission of the Lamp during the Jingde Era*], trans. and annot. Gu Hongyi 顧宏義 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2010), 9.556.

照此久幽谷　Shedding light on this eternal dark valley.
定心無一物　A serene mind does not fixate on a single object;
法樂勝五欲　The delight in the Dharma overcomes the Five Desires.[43]
三峨吾鄉里　Three Es are my homeland;[44]
萬馬君部曲　Ten thousand horses are under your command.
臥雲行歸休　In my retiring place I will sleep among the clouds,
破賊見神速　As you break the enemy with divine swiftness.[45]

In this third and final poem, Su Shi retreats as a participant in the ongoing wrangling and metamorphoses into an outside commentator, as his attitude toward or, rather, rhetoric about the rock waxes eminently philosophical. In the first poem, he shows the typical mindset of a collector as he defines the rock as the object of his intense desire. Unwilling to part with his treasure and anxious about its safe and timely return, he carefully negotiates the lending terms with Wang Shen. In the second poem, the possessive collector grows more sensible with the proposal of an exchange. In the third poem, the savvy dealer of aesthetic artifacts puts on the mask of a transcendental poet-philosopher, who, in glossing over his previous positions, dazzles his readers with illuminating banalities about detaching one's mind from physical things.

Entrenched in a series of allusions to Buddhist scriptures and hagiographies, Su Shi's new position is articulated through the rhetoric of negation, of which the most prominent component is the repeated use of the word "nothing" or "nothingness" [*wu* 無] (in lines 7, 10, and 23). In the opposition between the real and the simulacrum, the rock and the painting lose their value as a

43 Bodhisattva Ruler of the World [*chishi* 持世] was once approached by the devil Papiyas 魔波旬 in the guise of the god, accompanied by twelve thousand heavenly maidens. The devil offered the maidens to the bodhisattva, who refused. Vimalakīrti told the devil he would accept the maidens. After the maidens were enlightened, Vimalakīrti told them that they should take delight in the Dharma and reject the pleasures of the Five Desires (i.e., those aroused by the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch). When the devil asked for the maidens to be returned to him, Vimalakīrti agreed. The maidens asked how they could stay in the devil's palace. In response, Vimalakīrti told them to learn about the Dharma-gate [*famen* 法門] called the Inexhaustible Lamp. See Xu Wenming 徐文明, trans. and annot., *Weimojie jing yizhu* 維摩詰經譯注 [*Translations and Annotations on the Vimalakīti Sūtra*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 4.67.

44 Mount Emei is called Three Es because of its three peaks: Da E 大峨 [Big E], Zhong E 中峨 [Middle E], and Xiao E 小峨 [Little E].

45 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4137. In a note to the last line, Su writes that Wang Shen is the descendent of a general. Wang's ancestor Wang Quanbin 王全斌 [908–976] was a famous general in the early Song. His grandfather Wang Kai 王凱 [996–1061] was also an accomplished general.

miniature mountain and a pictorial representation of real horses, respectively. Su envisions a return to the "real" with him going back to Emei in his homeland and Wang Shen commanding "ten thousand horses" to break the enemy.

In the true Buddhist sense, however, even real mountains and real horses belong to the illusory realm. Indeed, Su Shi's philosophical negation is more about the folly of human desires [*yu* 慾] than the artificiality of physical objects. The metamorphosis of Su's poetic persona correlates closely with the different contexts in which *yu* appears in line 30 of each poem. In the first poem, his reluctance to accede to Wang Shen's request is rooted in his own intense desire to maintain possession of the rock; in the second, his desire is counteracted by the hard-nosed savvy of an art dealer and is reoriented to the more pragmatic realm of material exchange; in the third, the spell of desire is broken, as Su becomes a veritable Buddhist adept. To maintain the philosophical high ground where he has repositioned himself, Su redefines his proposal of a rock-painting exchange as an exercise in observing "the miracle of turning objects around." The allusion here is to a sermon by Buddha: all living beings "lose themselves in the pursuit of objects" [*miji weiwu* 迷己為物] as they "are turned around by objects" [*weiwu suozhuan* 為物所轉]; however, they can be like the Tathāgata if they can "turn the objects around" [*zhuanwu* 轉物].[46] At the same time, as he engages in the high-flown rhetoric of transcending "objects," Su leaves little doubt that he will keep his rock after all.

Qian Xie, Wang Qinchen, and Jiang Zhiqi were not the only contemporaries involved in the wrangle between Su Shi and Wang Shen. Qin Guan 秦觀 [1049–1100] also joined the fray with "Matching Zizhan's 'Twin Rocks' [*He Zizhan 'Shuangshi'* 和子瞻雙石]," which uses the same rhyme words as Su Shi's three poems:

天鑱海濱石	Heaven carved the oceanside rock,
鬱若龜毛綠	Luxuriant, like a green-shelled turtle.
信爲小仇池	Truly a miniature Qiuchi,
氣象宛然足	With all of the mists and shapes.
連巖下空洞	Vacuous holes under the overlapping cliffs,
鼎張彭亨腹	The belly of a tripod vessel.
雙峰照清漣	Twin peaks reflected in clear ripples,
春眉鏡中蹙	Voluptuous brows knitted in the mirror.

46 Lai Yonghai 賴永海 and Yang Weizhong 楊維中, annot. and trans., *Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經 [*Śūraṅgama Sūtra*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 2.54.

疑經女媧鍊　It appears to be forged by Nüwa;[47]
或入金華牧　Or come from the herd of Jinhua.[48]
鑪熏充雲氣　A burning incense burner emits clouds and mists;
研滴當川瀆　Drops on inkstone form valleys and ditches.
尤物足移人　An extraordinary thing can stir a person;[49]
不必珠與玉　It does not have to be pearl or jade.
道旁初無異　There was nothing odd about what lay by the roadside,
漢將疑虎伏　But the Han general thought it was a crouching tiger.[50]
支機亦何據　What was the story about the support of the loom?
但出君平卜　It was only told by Junping.[51]
奇礓入華林　When the fantastic rock was moved to Hualin Park,
傾都自追逐　The entire capital followed along with it.[52]
我願作陳那　I wish to become Dignāga,
令吼震山谷　With a roar that shakes hills and vales.[53]

47 In primordial times, the sky once broke so that there was a deluge caused by incessant rain. Nüwa forged five-colored rocks to mend the sky. See Liu Wendian 劉文典, *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解 [*Collected Annotations on the Great Elucidation by Prince of Huainan*], coll. Feng Yi 馮逸 and Qiao Hua 喬華 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 6.206–7.

48 Huang Chuping 皇初平 [b. 328], a native of Jinhua, was a shepherd turned Daoist master who could turn white rocks into sheep. See Ge Hong, *Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi*, 2.41.

49 The term *youwu* 尤物 originally refers to a beautiful woman who can stir men's dangerous passions. See "Zhaogong 昭公 [The Duke of Zhao]," in Hong Liangji 洪亮吉, *Chunqiu zuozhuan gu* 春秋左傳詁 [*A Glossing of the Zuo Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals*], annot. Li Jiemin 李解民 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 18.786. From the mid-Tang onward, the term was often used in reference to fantastic rocks. See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 115n57.

50 While hunting, the Han general Li Guang 李廣 [d. 119 BCE] saw a rock among tall grasses. Thinking it was a tiger, he shot it with such power that the arrowhead penetrated deep into the rock. See Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 [*History of the Former Han Dynasty*], annot. Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 54.2444.

51 A man once walked along a river and saw a woman washing silk. The woman told him it was the River of Heaven 天河 [Milky Way] and gave him a rock. Later, Yan Junping 嚴君平 [86–10 BCE] told him that the rock was used to support the loom of the Weaving Maid in heaven. See "Jilin 集林 [Forests of Collections]," in *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 [*Compendium for Imperial Perusal Compiled during the Taiping* [*Xinguo*] *Era*], ed. Li Fang 李昉 et al., annot. Xia Jianqin 夏劍欽 and Wang Xunzhai 王巽齋 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 1:8.75.

52 Dao Gai 到溉 [477–548] had a giant rock in his garden. On the day it was moved to the Hualin Park inside the palace compound, the entire population of the capital came out to watch. See Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Nanshi* 南史 [*History of the Southern Dynasties*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978), 25.679.

53 Kapila 迦毗羅仙 was afraid of dying and asked Maheśvara 自在天 for advice. The latter told him that eating the amala 余甘子 of Mount Pinda [Pândava] 頻陀山 would prolong

一拳既在夢　That fist-sized rock was an apparition in your dream;
二駒空所欲　Those two foals were what you desired in vain.[54]
大士捨寶陀　The Great Being gave up Mount Baotuo;[55]
仙人遺句曲　The immortals left Mount Gouqu.[56]
惟詩落人間　Only your poems stay in the human realm,
如傳置郵速　Spreading faster than orders from posting stations.[57]

The title of Qin Guan's poem suggests that he was responding to Su Shi's "Twin Rocks," quoted earlier. However, the thematic orientation and the rhyme scheme of Qin's poem both make it clear that he was matching Su's three long poems discussed above. The opening four lines of Qin's poem offer further evidence that Qiuchi was the name given to Su's green rock. The following description consists of several allusions that could be used in any poem with a rock as its subject. In the last eight lines, Qin Guan, however feebly, tries to admonish Su against possessiveness and urges him to follow the examples of religious sages and worthies. Qin does not seem to be alluding to a specific source in describing Guanyin 觀音 [Avalokiteśvara] giving up his residence at Potala or the three Mao brothers [*san Maojun* 三茅君] leaving Gouqu 句曲. Qin's general point is that the truly enlightened do not attach themselves to physical things (not even their homes). Just as Guanyin left Mount Baotuo and the Mao brothers left Mount Gouqu, Su should give up his miniature mountain. According to Qin, Su has a more valuable and enduring asset: his poems.

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his life. After eating the amala, Kapila turned into a huge rock. When unenlightened people had questions, they would inscribe them on the rock. Bodhisattva Dignāga denounced this practice. After he wrote a gatha on the rock, the rock cracked. In another account, the rock sweated. Then, with a roar, it cracked into pieces that flew into the sky. For discussion of "roaring rock" [*houshi* 吼石], see Xiang Chu 項楚, "Du bian sui zha 讀變隨劄 [Casual Notes Taken while Reading Transformation Texts]," in *Xin shiji Dunhuang xue lunji* 新世紀敦煌學論集 [*Collected Essays on Dunhuang Studies in a New Era*], ed. Xiang Chu 項楚 and Zheng Acai 鄭阿財 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2003), 546–48.

54 The "two foals" refers to Han Gan's painting of two loose horses in Wang Shen's possession for which Su Shi wanted to exchange his Qiuchi rock.

55 The Great Being [Mahāsattva] here refers to Guanyin 觀音 [Avalokiteśvara], said to reside at Mount Potala 寶陀巖.

56 The allusion is to the Mao brothers. See note 21.

57 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學古文獻研究所, ed., *Quan Song shi* 全宋詩 [*Complete Poetry of the Song Dynasty*] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1991–98), 1057.12087. The last line alludes to a saying attributed to Confucius in *Mencius* 3.1: "The spread of virtue is faster than setting up posting stations for orders to be delivered." [德之流行，速於置郵而傳命。]

Qin Guan's admonition apparently fell on deaf ears. Su Shi did not give up his rock but, rather, kept it with him for the rest of his life. About a year after the Wang Shen episode, Grand Empress Dowager Gao 高太后 [1032–1093] died. With Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 [r. 1085–1100] assuming control of the government, a political reversal was soon underway. In the fourth month of 1094, Su was banished to Yingzhou (which happened to be the origin of his Qiuchi rock). Two months later, he was further demoted by being sent to Huizhou. His journey of exile led him to Hukou 湖口 (in present-day Jiangxi). There, he came across a rock that immediately struck his fancy. He named it Mount Jiuhua in a Gourd Bottle [*huzhong Jiuhua* 壺中九華] and thought about buying it to provide a "mate" [*ou* 偶] for his Qiuchi rock; however, circumstances en route prevented him from clinching the deal.[58]

Su Shi arrived at Huizhou in the tenth month of 1094. While in Huizhou, he devised a plan to match all the poems by Tao Yuanming.[59] These matching poems have many references to Qiuchi. It should be clarified, however, that in these cases, Qiuchi stands for a place to which Su Shi hopes to return or claims to have returned, rather than the green rock given to him by Cheng Zhiyuan. Two significant aspects of Qiuchi should be mentioned here.[60] First, it represents a synthesis of the Daoist pursuit of longevity and a return to a simpler way of life, as seen in "Matching Tao's 'Reading *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*.'" In this poem, Su describes himself as totally acclimated to Huizhou. He then presents his exile as a blessing in disguise: "There is a road back to Qiuchi; / How could I have come to Luofu in vain?"[61] Mount Luofu 羅浮 (located in Huizhou) was where Ge Hong 葛洪 [283–363] attained immortality through Daoist cultivation and alchemy. Su's exile to Huizhou is thus transformed into a return to the Daoist realm of the immortals. At the end of the poem, Su declares that he will hold the hands of Ge Hong and Tao Yuanming so that they may return together.

Second, Qiuchi is described as a superior utopia. In a note to "Matching Tao's 'Peach Blossom Spring' [*He Tao 'Taohua yuan'* 和陶桃花源]," Su Shi mentions Wang Qinchen's comparison of Qiuchi to Peach Blossom Spring. He positively

58 Su Shi, "Huzhong Jiuhua 壺中九華 [Mount Jiuhua in a Gourd Bottle]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:38.4355.

59 Incidentally, Su started composing matching poems to Tao when he was in Yangzhou, around the time when he received the Qiuchi rock.

60 For the name Qiuchi as a "composite symbol" with a wide range of meanings, see Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 118.

61 仇池有歸路，羅浮豈徒來。Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:39.4644. For translation and discussion of the poem, see Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 118.

depicts how the inhabitants of Peach Blossom Spring live in harmony with nature, as they rely on the fertile land for tilling and consume fruits and plants associated with longevity, yet the famed utopia still pales in comparison to the ideal of Qiuchi: "They can't compare with my Qiuchi; / How many more years will pass before I retire?"[62] Further, those who fled the Qin for Peach Blossom Spring are not his "true kindred spirits" [*zhenqi* 真契] because they were still fearful [*youwei* 有畏].[63]

Su Shi's southern exile did not end in Huizhou. In 1097, he was further banished to Hainan Island. Three years later, he was pardoned and allowed to return to the mainland. He arrived at Hukou in the fourth month of 1101. There, he learned that Mount Jiuhua in a Gourd Bottle had been acquired by someone else.[64] In a commemorative poem, Su Shi lamented the loss of the rock but took comfort in the thought that he still had his beloved Qiuchi rock: "Fortunately, I have a copper basin as a rock altar, / Where Qiuchi's green jade keeps sparkling."[65] In its loneliness, the Qiuchi rock shines both literally and figuratively. It remains Su Shi's most faithful and reliable companion as he readies himself to retire from government service.

3 The Afterlife of Su Shi's Rock

Su Shi, however, would not enjoy the companionship of his Qiuchi rock for long. He died about three months after he left Hukou. A quarter of a century after his death, the Northern Song capital fell to the Jurchens. Su Shi's beloved rock, which presumably found its way into the imperial collection, was abandoned, as were other palace treasures. It was later salvaged by Zhao Shiyan 趙師嚴 (*zi* Youyi 有翼), an imperial clansman. Zhao carried it across the Yangzi

62 不如我仇池，高舉復幾歲。Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:40.4751.

63 For discussion of the poem, see Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 151–54.

64 The rock was purchased by Guo Xiangzheng 郭祥正 [1035–1113] in 1099. See Chao Buzhi 晁補之, "Shu Li Zhengchen guaishi shi hou 書李正臣怪石詩後 [Postscript to Poem on Li Zhengchen's Fantastic Rock]," in *Quan Song wen* 全宋文 [*Complete Prose of the Song Dynasty*], ed. Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006), 126:2723.139.

65 賴有銅盆修石供，仇池玉色自璁瓏。Su Shi, "Yu xizuo *Huzhong Jiuhua shi* qihou banian fuguo Hukou ze shi yiwei haoshizhe quqi naihe qianyun yi zijie yun 予昔作《壺中九華詩》，其後八年，復過湖口，則石已為好事者取去，乃和前韻以自解云 [In the Past I Wrote a *Poem on Jiuhua* in a Gourd-Bottle. Eight Years Later, When I Passed Hukou Again, the Rock Had Already Been Taken Away by a Curiosity-Lover. Therefore, I Matched My Earlier Poem for Self-Consolation]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 8:45.5320.

River to the south. In 1162, he brought it to Huzhou 湖州, after being appointed its vice prefect [*tongpan* 通判].[66] In Huzhou, he joined the Club for Sincerity and Spontaneity [*Zhenshuai hui* 真率會] organized by Zeng Xie 曾協 [1119–1173].[67] Shen Qingchen 沈清臣 (*zi* Zhengqing 正卿, *jinshi* 1157) was also a club member.[68] Poetic exchanges among the three were routine.[69] Zhao's rock was the topic of one such exchange. Shen started with a poem that no longer exists, which used the rhyme words of Su Shi's three long poems. Zeng joined in with "Composed about Zhao Youyi's Qiuchi Rock, Matching Shen Zhengqing's Poem Using Academician Su's Rhyme Words [*Fu Zhao Youyi Qiuchi shi ci Shen Zhengqing yong Su Hanlin yun* 賦趙有翼仇池石次沈正卿用蘇翰林韻]":

貪夫居奇貨	The greedy man stocks up rare objects;
什襲藏結綠	Jielü hides in a wrapping of ten layers.[70]
寧知十五城	Who would have expected that fifteen cities
不救卞和足	Could not save Bian He's feet?[71]
豈如嗜石人	How can he compare with that rock addict,
丘壑在胸腹	Who cherished hills and ravines in his chest?
不知連城價	Not caring for the value of many cities,
但賞數峰蹙	He only relished the few peaks pressed together.

66 For Zhao Shiyan's appointment, see Li Xinchuan 李心傳, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 [*An Annalistic Record of Important Events since the Jianyan Era*], coll. Hu Kun 胡坤 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 176.3372.

67 On this club (which was active between 1162 and 1165), see Pang Mingqi 龐明啟, "Nan Song zhongqi zhenshuaihui kao 南宋中期真率會考 [An Essay on the Club of Sincerity and Spontaneity in the Mid-Southern Song]," *Zhongguo kuangye daxue xuebao*, no. 4 (2016): 84–85. I follow Wang Kexi 王可喜 in dating Zeng's birth year as 1119, in "Zeng Dun Zeng Xie kao 曾惇、曾協考 [An Essay on Zeng Dun and Zeng Xie]," in *Liang Song ciren congkao* 兩宋詞人叢考 [*Essays on Authors of Song Lyrics in the Northern and Southern Song Periods*], ed. Wang Zhaopeng 王兆鵬, Wang Kexi 王可喜, and Fang Xingyi 方星移 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 142–43.

68 For biographical notes on Shen Qingchen, see Lu Xinyuan 陸心源, *Yigutang ji* 儀顧堂集 [*Collection of Hall of Following Gu*], coll. Zheng Xiaoxia 鄭曉霞 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2015), 13.261–62.

69 Quite a number of poems addressed to Zhao and Shen can be found in Zeng's extant works.

70 *Jielü* [hardened green] was one of the legendary jade treasures; see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 79.2405.

71 Bian He presented an unworked piece of valuable jade to two successive kings of Chu, each of whom judged it to be worthless and punished him with a foot amputation for his deception. See Wang Xianshen 王先愼, *Han Feizi jijie* 韓非子集解 [*Collected Annotations on the Han Feizi*], coll. Zhong Zhe 鐘哲 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 4.101. As noted above, Qin proposed exchanging fifteen cities with Zhao for Bian He's jade.

長公仙去後	Soon after Su the Elder Lord left to join the immortals,[72]
朔馬遂南牧	Northern horses invaded southward.[73]
尤物落何許	Where did the extraordinary thing fall?
心知委溝瀆	The love of his heart was abandoned in a ditch.
何期超世賢	Who would have expected such an outstanding worthy
愛石不愛玉	To love rocks but not jade?
夜半負之走	He carried it away in the middle of the night;
包裹隨竄伏	Wrapped up, it followed him in his fleeing and hiding.
一朝返窗几	Once it was returned to a table by the window,
時清端可卜	A time of peace is thereby known to have arrived.
李虎初平羊	Li's tiger and Chuping's sheep,[74]
案上紛相逐	One chasing the other on the stand.
崢嶸幸無恙	Delighted that the lofty peaks are safe and sound,
不問牛馬谷	He does not care about valleys of cattle and horses.[75]
趙侯天機異	Lord Zhao's heavenly impulse is different;
閱世輕嗜欲	Throughout his life, he has no addictive desires.
好奇與嗜利	Love of curiosities and addiction to profit –
達觀均一曲	Both are partialities in the eyes of the wise.
正恐便棄置	I am afraid it will be abandoned again;
就賞君宜速	If you want to view it for pleasure, do it fast.[76]

Zeng Xie's description of the physical attributes of Zhao Shiyan's rock is not detailed enough for us to be certain that this is Su Shi's original rock, but that hardly matters. What is of interest to us here is Zeng's perspective on petrophilia as a form of addiction [*shi* 嗜]. At the beginning of the poem, the contrast between general greed and single-minded addiction to rocks reflects a standard form of apologia in the petrophile's discourse that has been used since the ninth century.[77] In the wake of the fall of the Northern Song, such apologia lost much of its effectiveness. The dynastic catastrophe was attributed to, among other things, Emperor Huizong's 徽宗 [r. 1100–1126] legendary

72 Su the Elder was Su Shi, the eldest son of the family. He was appointed Hanlin academician [*hanlin xueshi* 翰林學士] in 1086, hence the reference to him as Academician Su in the title of the poem.

73 I adopt the textual variant *shuo* 朔 over *bing* 兵 here, as recorded in Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*.

74 Li is Li Guang, and Chuping, Huang Chuping. See notes 48 and 50.

75 Wushi Luo 烏氏倮 [third century BCE] was so rich that his (or her – some believe Wushi Luo was a woman) horses and cattle were measured by the valleys they occupied. See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 12.3260.

76 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*, 2047.23003–4.

77 See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 106–43.

indulgence in sensual pleasures, as exemplified in the construction of Genyue 艮嶽 Park.[78] To decorate the park, fantastic rocks were gathered from all over and transported to the capital at great cost with the infamous Fleet of Flowers and Rocks [*huashi gang* 花石綱]. When the capital was ransacked, these rocks were all abandoned.[79] This national trauma cast a long shadow over the discourse on petrophilia in the Southern Song [1127–1279].

Zeng Xie's poem alternates between praise and admonition. Su Shi's petrophilia is at first presented as a lofty passion, reflecting his love of "hills and ravines" and separating him from greedy people in general. Such a lofty passion is problematized, however, in the conspicuous (and seemingly gratuitous) reference to what happened shortly after Su's death (i.e., the southern invasion of "northern horses" and the abandonment of his rock).

The same shift can be observed in Zeng Xie's description of Zhao Shiyan's recovery of the rock. Zhao was a seventh-generation descendant of Zhao Dezhao 趙德昭 [951–979], the second son of Emperor Taizu 太祖 [r. 960–976]. As an imperial clansman, he apparently could not and did not do anything to save the collapsing dynasty. All he managed to do was rescue a piece of rock that was, at the time, associated with the hedonistic lifestyle of an emperor who was held responsible for the dynasty's downfall. It is true that returning the rock to where it properly belongs – a scholar's table – is celebrated in Zeng's poem as a sign of returning to "a time of peace." At the same time, however, it is clear that, although the rock is "safe and sound," the Song empire is by no means intact, having lost its northern territories to the Jurchens. Furthermore, the peace enjoyed by the Southern Song was extremely fragile. For example, in the ninth month of 1161 (about a year before Zeng Xie formed the Club of Sincerity and Spontaneity), Wanyan Liang 完顏亮 [1122–1161] led an army of 600,000 to invade and conquer the Southern Song. For a moment, the threat of another Jingkang 靖康 disaster loomed large. Although the Jurchen invasion soon ended in failure, the memory of this ominous event not long before must have been fresh in Zeng's mind when he wrote about Zhao's rock.

There is also a flip side to Zeng Xie's praise of Zhao Shiyan for his lack of "addictive desire" for otherworldly possessions and his "heavenly impulse" that sets him apart from the common run of humanity. The allusion here is to the *Zhuangzi* 莊子: "When a man's addictive desires are deep, his heavenly impulse is shallow."[80] However, as Zeng emphatically asserts, a "love of curiosities" is

78 For a discussion in English of why the Genyue was built, what it looked like, and what purposes it served, see James M. Hargett, "Huizong's Magic Marchmount: The Genyue Pleasure Park of Kaifeng," *Monumenta Serica* 38 (1988–89).

79 See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 144–48.

80 其耆欲深者，其天機淺。"Da zongshi 大宗師 [Grand Master]," in Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 3A.228.

ultimately not different from an "addiction to profit," which are both manifestations of partiality. The distinction between "the greedy man" and "the rock addict" at the beginning of the poem dissolves at the end. In the last couplet, Zeng Xie seems to offer a moral compromise: Zhao could view the rock for aesthetic pleasure but should not try to keep it permanently.

Zeng Xie wrote from the perspective of an observer of petrophilia. There is no evidence that he was a rock lover himself. The poems of Zeng Ji 曾幾 [1085–1166] are close to a petrophile's confession. By his own account, Zeng's petrophilia was nothing short of an obsession. His extensive rock collection came from all corners of the country. Among them was a piece of Ying rock (i.e., the same type as Su Shi's Qiuchi rock), which prompted Shen Zuozhe 沈作喆 (*zi* Mingyuan 明遠, *jinshi* 1135) to compose a poem that used the same rhyme words as Su Shi's three long poems.[81] In that poem, Shen apparently questioned Zeng's moral and philosophical wisdom as a rock collector. In response, Zeng wrote two poems. The first is titled "Instructor Shen Mingyuan Used the Rhyme Words of Dongpo's Poems about His Qiuchi Rock to Write about the Ying Rock That I Have Kept. I Used the Same Rhyme Words in My Poem [*Shen Mingyuan jiaoshou yong Dongpo Qiuchi shi yun fu yu suo xu Yingshi ci qi yun* 沈明遠教授用東坡仇池石韻賦予所蓄英石次其韻]":[82]

維南有絲溪	In the south, there is the Silk Stream;[83]
溪石如水綠	Its rocks are green as its water.
瞻相百里間	A hundred miles were surveyed;
抱負一夫足	One man was enough to carry them away.[84]
聲名作災怪	Fame brought disaster:
攻取及背腹	Quarrying reached its front and back.
在者略無奇	The remainders have nothing fancy about them;
溪神爲顰蹙	Thereupon the stream goddess knits her brows.
蠻煙瘴雨地	Of that land of barbarian mist and miasmic rain,
故舊實州牧	My old friend is the Prefect.
坐令數峰青	It was he who made the several blue peaks,

81 For biographical notes on Shen Zuozhe, see Lu Xinyuan, *Yigutang ji*, 13.258.

82 Dongpo 東坡 was the style name of Su Shi.

83 Artificial lakes were built in the Genyue Park to represent Dongting 洞庭, Hukou 湖口, Sixi, and Qiuchi. See Zhao Ji 趙佶 [1082–1153], "Genyue ji 艮嶽記 [Account of Genyue]," in *Quan Song wen*, 166:3630.383–84. Modern scholars have generally followed Chen Zhi 陳植 and Zhang Gongchi 張公馳 in taking Sixi as referring to Sishui 絲水 in Rizhao 日照, Shandong (in *Zhongguo lidai mingyuan ji xuanzhu* 中國歷代明園記選注 [*Selected Accounts of Famous Gardens from Various Dynasties*] [Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe, 1983], 63). However, Zeng Ji's poem clearly indicates that it is in Yingzhou.

84 The precise meaning of the couplet is not clear.

飛過大江瀆	Fly over great rivers and valleys.
何嘗說向人	Never have I talked to others about it,
恐類和氏玉	For fear that it would be like He's jade.
公然遭奪攘	Seized in broad daylight,
不使得藏伏	With me unable to hide it.
廣文到吾廬	The Master of Erudition came to my cottage,
索隱妙蓍卜	Skillful at finding the hidden through divination.
東坡韻險艱	Dongpo's rhyme words are rare and hard,
句句巧追逐	With ingenuity he matches them line by line.
幽人所好山	"The mountain beloved by you, a recluse,
已占一林谷	Already occupies a wooded valley.
又兼小崢嶸	You have also annexed Little Cliff;[85]
無乃太多欲	Isn't your desire too excessive?"
端如耐久朋	"They are like long-lasting friends,
相與會心曲	Companions who understand my heart.
大勝輕薄兒	Far superior to those flippant fellows –
浮雲變何速	How fast they change like floating clouds!"[86]

The exact date of Zeng Ji's poem is hard to determine. Sometime around 1059, Shen Zuozhe was appointed instructor of the prefectural School of Confucianism [*Ruxue jiaoshou* 儒學教授], also known as master of erudition [*guangwen xiansheng* 廣文先生] (or simply *guangwen* 廣文, as used in Zeng's poem). Based on this information, Bai Xiaoping 白曉萍 dates the poem to approximately the same time.[87] Internal evidence in Zeng's response poems suggests that they were probably written between the sixth month of 1060, when he moved from Suzhou 蘇州 to Shaoxing 紹興 (where his eldest son was the vice prefect), and the tenth month of the following year, when he fled to Taizhou 台州 to seek refuge from the advancing Jurchen army. In other words, it was written during his sixteen-month stay in Shaoxing (around the same time as Zeng Xie wrote about Zhao Shiyan's Qiuchi rock).

85 Judging from the context, Little Cliff was the name conferred upon Zeng's Ying rock. The same name was given to a piece of Taihu 太湖 rock presented to Zeng by He You 何侑 (*zi* Deqi 德器), as recorded in Zeng's "He Deqi zeng Taihushi 何德器贈太湖石 [On the Taihu Rock Presented by He Deqi]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510. The term Little Cliff had been used by Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 [1045–1105] to describe a strange rock painted by Su Shi. See Huang Tingjian, "Ti zhushi muniu 題竹石牧牛 [Inscribed on Bamboo, Rock, and Herd Boy]," in *Quan Song shi*, 987.11381.

86 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*, 1652.18501.

87 Bai Xiaoping 白曉萍, "Song nandu chuqi shiren qunti yanjiu 宋南渡初期詩人群體研究 [A Study of the Poet Groups in the Early Years When the Song Crossed the River to the South]" (Ph.D. diss., Zhejiang University, 2006), 117.

The first eight lines of the poem describe how the ruthless quarrying to satisfy the craze for Ying rocks devastated the natural environment in the area. In Zeng Xie's poetic fancy, even the stream goddess knits her eyebrows in displeasure. This dark side of petrophilia had been exposed by earlier Song poets. For example, Wei Xiang 韋驤 [1033–1105] described, in vivid detail, how commercial quarriers continuously cleaved rocks from a mountain until it became totally bare.[88] Still, Zeng's description is remarkable in that it appears in a poem about his own love of rocks and thereby implicates himself. However, his primary regret is not so much the destruction of nature as it is the general poor quality of rocks that remained in the area.

The last eight lines of Zeng Xie's poem should be understood as a dialogue. In this dialogue, Shen Zuozhe voices his objection to Zeng's possessive desire as a rock collector, rather than his petrophilia. Zeng already had access to a grand mountain (i.e., Guiji 會稽 Mountain near Shaoxing) that occupied a "wooded valley," but he still "annexed" a miniature mountain in the form of a rock. This, in Shen's view, reveals a possessive desire that borders on excessive. Zeng's collection was indeed quite extensive. In addition to rocks from Yingzhou,[89] it included those from Taihu 太湖,[90] Lingbi 靈壁,[91] Daozhou 道州,[92] Nanxiong 南雄,[93] and Kunshan 崑山.[94] Shen must have viewed at least some of Zeng's impressive collection of rocks when he wrote about the Ying rock. Some, if not all, of those rocks came into Zeng's possession before this particular piece of Ying rock. The Kun 崑 rock, for example, was presented to

88 Wei Xiang 韋驤, "Guan pishi 觀劈石 [Observing the Cleaving of Rocks]," in *Quan Song shi*, 727.8414. For a detailed discussion, see Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 121–23.

89 In addition to the piece that occasioned Shen Zuozhe's poem, Zeng's collection included at least another piece of Ying rock, presented to him by Cheng Youzhi 程祐之. See Zeng Ji 曾幾, "Cheng Jilao fugan yi Ying shi jianyi cengdie ke'ai bao zhi yi ci 程吉老撫幹以英石見遺層疊可愛報之以此 [Prefectural Assistant Cheng Jilao Presented Me with a Ying rock, Which Looks Lovely with Its Layers. I Thank Him with This Poem]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1657.18569.

90 Zeng Ji, "On the Taihu Rock," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

91 Zeng Ji, "Wu Sheng yi Lingbi shi yi shi huan zhi 吳甥遺靈壁石以詩還之 [With a Poem, I Thank My Eldest Nephew, Who Presented Me with a Piece of Lingbi Rock]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

92 Zeng Ji, "He Deqi ji Daozhou guaishi 何德器寄道州怪石 [He Deqi Sent Me a Fantastic Rock of Daozhou]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1655.18538.

93 Zeng Ji, "Nanxiong junshou zhi guaishi sizhu 南雄郡守致怪石四株 [The Prefect of Nanxiong Sent Me Four Pieces of Fantastic Rocks]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1655.18538.

94 Zeng Ji, "Ji Kunshan Li zai mi shi 寄崑山李宰覓石 [Sent to Magistrate Li of Kunshan to Ask for a Rock]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

him by Li Geng 李庚 [*jinshi* 1135] in 1155.[95] Zeng does not explain why he would maintain such a large collection. Instead, he shifts the argument by asserting that his rocks provide constant companionship, which is lacking in capricious human relations.

In addition to the devastation of the natural environment from the process of harvesting the rocks, transporting them required a tremendous amount of human labor. This particular problematic aspect of petrophilia is largely ignored in Zeng Ji's first poem, but it conspicuously appears in his second, "Matching the Poem with the Rhyme 'Lü' [*Ci 'lü' zi yun* 次綠字韻]":

舍前南山青	In front of my house, the south mountain is green;
舍後北山綠	Behind it, the north mountain is verdant.
捫蘿涉其巔	I grab the vines to climb to their peaks;
策杖遶其足	With a staff, I circle their feet.
中間奇絕處	At the most wondrous spots in between,
表裏見心腹	Views and sights are had from all around.[96]
登臨豈不佳	Isn't it great to ascend for fine views?
老境日以蹙	But old age is pressing on me day by day.
誰知怪石供	Who would expect that an altar to a strange rock,
能坐我郊牧	May be set up in my wilderness house?
政應索幽遐	I just want to seek some quiet leisure;
何憚越川瀆	Why worry about crossing rivers and streams?
嶔崟庾嶺南	South of the lofty Yu Ridge,
美者色蒼玉	Beautiful rocks look like green jade.
賞音無東坡	With no Dongpo to appreciate them,
尤物多跧伏	Most of these extraordinary things have lain hidden.[97]
今年致書求	This year I sent letters to request one,
屢以可否卜	Asking time and again whether it could be had.
故人爲遣送	An old friend presented one to me,
健步遠相逐	A sturdy runner carried it from afar.
雖非古仇池	It may not be the ancient Qiuchi rock,
要是好崖谷	But it does have fine cliffs and valleys.
似爲天所矜	Heaven seems to take pity on me,
此段獨從欲	Indulging my desire with this piece.
深慚舁致重	I feel deep shame about its heavy transportation;
路轉知幾曲	How many twists and turns were there on the roads?

95 See Bai Xiaoping, "A Study of the Poet Groups," 111.

96 The exact meaning of this couplet is unclear.

97 The original note to the line states that the Qiuchi rock came from the south of Song Mountain. The character 嵩 *song* is most likely a typographical error for *ling* 嶺.

安得滄海神　How can I get the god of the blue ocean,
鞭笞使之速　To whip it to speed up its journey?[98]

The poem relates Zeng's petrophilia to the circumstances of his life. As old age pressed upon him, mountain climbing was no longer viable. However, if he could not go to the mountain, then the mountain had to come to him; setting up and viewing fantastic rocks indoors provided an experience equivalent to roaming around the mountains. Indeed, his love of rocks was an extension of his love of the mountains: "With my love of mountains already an obsession, / My love of rocks has turned into another obsession."[99] However, satisfying his obsession required considerable labor, not only in harvesting but also in transporting the rock. Whereas his first poem exposes the negative side of quarrying, this one problematizes rock transportation.

There is a profound irony in the fact that Zeng Ji's achievement of "quiet leisure" relied on the work of a "sturdy runner" in transporting the rock over a great distance from Lingnan 嶺南 to his "wilderness house." Instead of glibly describing, as he did in the first poem, his rock as "fly[ing] over the great rivers and valleys," here he lets his moral anxiety bubble to the surface in confessing his "deep shame" about the "heavy transportation" of the rock. In the end, he could find no moral solution other than fantasizing, somewhat flippantly, about divine assistance. The last couplet in the poem alludes to the following legend. The First Emperor of Qin 秦始皇 [r. 221–210 BCE] wanted to cross the ocean to see where the sun rose, so he built a rock bridge, whose columns were erected by the ocean god. The emperor was also helped by a magician, who could drive rocks into the sea. If the rocks did not move fast enough, the magician would whip them.[100]

In Zeng Ji's first poem, the rock is described as a gift from an "old friend," who happened to be the prefect of Yingzhou. In the present poem, it becomes clear that it was Zeng who repeatedly wrote letters of request. Indeed, in his retirement, Zeng Ji frequently sent such letters: "In my idle life, I have written hundreds of letters, / All for nothing but a piece of rock."[101] These letters were often addressed to ranking officials of regions where the rocks were mined – a

98 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*, 1652.18501.

99 愛山已成癖，愛石又成癖。Zeng Ji, "On the Taihu Rock Presented by He Deqi," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

100 See Fu Chen 伏琛, "*Sanqi lüeji* 三齊略記 [*Brief Accounts of Tales of Sanqi*]," in *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 [*Literary Collectanea Arranged in Categories*], comp. Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, coll. Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1965), 79.1347.

101 閒居百封書，總爲一片石。Zeng Ji, "With a Poem, I Thank My Eldest Nephew," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510. See also "Sent to Magistrate Li," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510; "On the Taihu Rock," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

fact that he frequently mentioned in either the titles or the texts of his poems. In addition to the Ying rock that prompted Shen Zuozhe's poem, there is mention of four "fantastic rocks" [*guaishi* 怪石] that were sent by a prefect [*junshou* 郡守] of Nanxiong and a Kun rock that was obtained from the magistrate [*zai* 宰] of Kunshan. Zeng was famed for his impeccable moral integrity in his long government service: "His career brought him to Lingnan thrice, and yet there was not a single southern curiosity in his house."[102] In his later years, however, his scruples seem to have given way to his petrophilia.

4 Concluding Remarks

I conclude by summarizing the shifting meanings of Su Shi's Qiuchi rock in Song poetry. Initially, in Yangzhou, for unknown reasons, the rock reminded Su Shi of a strange dream about Qiuchi. The interpretation of that dream was a collaborative process. Zhao Lingzhi connected the dream to Du Fu's poetic imaging of Mount Qiuchi as a Daoist realm of retreat. By naming the rock Qiuchi, Su turned it into an emblem of his dream world and what that world represented.

In the capital city Bianjing 汴京, Su Shi's rock became entwined in the urbane exchanges in high society, where tensions occasionally flared. The rock turned into a transferable and tradable item, even as Su portrayed it as his inseparable companion and as a miniature replica of his native land to which Su longed to return. In the back and forth between Su and his friends, the rock's connection to the dream about Qiuchi was obscured: Qiuchi was merely one of several sacred Daoist mountains about which the rock reminded Su.

During Su Shi's exile to the far south, the idea of Qiuchi seeped into his poetic engagement with Tao Yuanming. Whereas Wang Qinchen had compared Qiuchi to Peach Blossom Spring in interpreting Su's dream, Su transformed Qiuchi into a superior alternative to Tao Yuanming's utopia. Su's desire to acquire a rock from Hukou as a companion for his Qiuchi rock was indicative of both his uncontrollable petrophilia and his loneliness in exile.

In matching Su Shi's three long poems, Song poets were preoccupied with the issue of the desire for material things. Qin Guan simultaneously critiqued Su's possessiveness and praised his poetry. In the wake of the collapse

102 三仕嶺外，家無南物。Lu You 陸游 [1125–1209], "Zeng Wenqinggong muzhiming 曾文清公墓誌銘 [Tombstone Epitaph Inscription for the Refined and Pure Duke Zeng]," in *Quan Song wen*, 223:4947.191. Lu You was Zeng Ji's student; his words probably should be taken with some caution.

of the Northern Song (which was attributed in part to the construction of Genyue Park, for which fantastic rocks were harvested and transported from all over the country), there was a heightened wariness about petrophilia, even among the most ardent rock lovers.[103] Zeng Xie's ostensible celebration of Zhao Shiyan's repossession of Su Shi's Qiuchi rock refuted a fundamental premise of the rock fancier's discourse, namely that petrophilia is a nobler passion than common greed. Zeng Xie equated petrophilia with attachment to more vulgar worldly things. In a semiconfessional mode, Zeng Ji exposed the serious consequences of indulging in petrophilia. In addition to displaying a lack of wisdom at the philosophical level, such indulgence caused grave harm to the natural environment and compromised the moral integrity of the rock lover.

103 The passage of time would dull this wariness, as can be glimpsed in poems about Ying rocks in later times that used the same rhyme words as Su Shi's three long poems. In one such poem, Peng Lu 彭輅 [*jinshi* 1764] celebrated how in his idle post as instructor [*jiaoyu* 教諭] of Confucian School of Yingde he obtained a piece of Ying rock. He scoffed at famous petrophiles such as Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 [780–848] and Li Deyu 李德裕 [787–850] of the Tang who had to search high and low to build up their rock collections. He then turned his thought to the Song: "A greater pity is that those in charge the Fleet of Flowers and Rocks, / Never saw this jagged valley." [更憐花石綱，未覩此岩谷。] However, the remembrance of the Fleet of Flowers and Rocks did not cause any moral discomfort as he went on to congratulate himself for being able to roam around mountains while recumbent [*woyou* 臥遊] by simply pulling out the rock from his sleeve. See Peng Lu 彭輅, "Yingshifeng ci Pogong Qiuchi yun 英石峰次坡公仇池韻 [On My Craggy Ying Rock, with the Rhyme Words of Lord Dongpo's Poem on His Qiuchi Rock]," in *Qingdai shiwenji huibian* 清代詩文集彙編 [*Collected Compilations of Poetry and Prose of the Qing Dynasty*], ed. Bianzuan weiyuanhui 編纂委員會 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 429:314. For other poems that used the rhyme words of Su Shi's three long poems, see Qian Zai 錢載, *Tuoshizhai shiji, Tuoshizhai wenji* 蘿石齋詩集 蘿石齋文集 [*Poetry and Prose Collection of the Studio of Tuoshi*], comp. Ding Xiaoming 丁小明 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 33.553–54; Qian Daxin 錢大昕, "Qianyantang shi xuji 潛研堂詩續集 [Poetry Collection of Hall of Assiduous Study: A Sequel]," in *Jiading Qian Daxin quanji, zengdingben* 嘉定錢大昕全集（增訂本）[*Complete Works of Qian Daxin of Jiading, Expanded Edition*], ed. Chen Wenhe 陳文和 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2016), 10:246, 247; Huang Yue 黃鉞, *Yizhai ji* 壹齋集 [*Collection of Studio of One*], ed. Chen Yude 陳育德 and Feng Wenxue 鳳文學 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1999), 29.563–64. (All three wrote in response to poems by friends that used the same rhyme words.) After Wu Qian 吳騫 [1733–1813] presented an inkstone to Lu Susheng 陸素生 [1756–1815] as a birthday gift, Zha Kui 查揆 [1770–1834] got hold of it with a poem of request to Lu. Zha then sent Wu a poem with the same rhyme words as Su Shi's three poems and asked Wu to compose a matching poem. Wu complied with the request. See Wu Qian 吳騫, *Wu Tuchuang riji* 吳兔床日記 [*Diaries of Wu Tuchuang*], ed. Zhang Haosu 張昊蘇 and Yang Hongsheng 楊洪升 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2015), 126.

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Beefy Outlaws: Beef Consumption in *Water Margin* and Its Song-Yuan Antecedents

Isaac Yue 余文章
Associate Professor of School of Chinese, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
isaacyue@hku.hk

Abstract

When it comes to the favorite food of the outlaws of Mount Liang, beef is the undisputed champion. The 120-chapter edition of *Water Margin* has nearly 50 scenes that depict the heroes feasting heartily on beef. The next most frequently evoked type of meat is mutton, but the number of times it is mentioned is only half that of beef and the relevant scenes are depicted with far less detail. Because cattle slaughter and the sale of beef were strictly forbidden during the Song dynasty, an expanding community of researchers considers this choice of food as a subtle reflection of the bandits' defiance of law and order. However, this school of thought has yet to sufficiently take into account several elements, including the extent to which this law was enforced during the Song dynasty, when the adventures of Song Jiang and his sworn brothers took place; society's attitude toward beef consumption during this same period; the compilation of the novel in the Ming dynasty and the author's awareness of historical facts; and the limited presence of beef in the Song-Yuan antecedents of the novel.

Taking these points into consideration, this article reexamines the motif of beef consumption in *Water Margin* and the development of this theme through a historical lens. To do so, it first focuses on the legal issues pertaining to cattle slaughter and the sale of beef during the Song dynasty. Particular attention is paid to the enforcement of relevant laws and the circulation and popularity of black-market beef during this period. Then, it highlights the discrepancies between the way in which beef consumption is presented in the Ming novel and historical facts, followed by a discussion of the portrayal of meat consumption in Yuan dramas featuring Song Jiang and his gang of outlaws. In the end, by thoroughly considering the presentation of food in the developmental history of *Water Margin*, from Yuan dramas to the Ming novel, this article sheds light on the importance of this subject as a literary motif in medieval Chinese literature.

Keywords

beef consumption – cattle slaughter – mutton – *Water Margin*

The *Songshi* 宋史 [*History of the Song Dynasty*] includes this story of Emperor Renzong 宋仁宗 [r. 1022–1063], who once stayed up all night craving the taste of roast mutton. Although it was within his power to wake up his kitchen staff at any given time, he was too considerate to do so. Instead, he tried his best to suppress his hunger and ended up with insomnia.[1] The point of this story is obviously to illustrate the virtues of the emperor as a magnanimous leader; but, at a more subtle level, the way in which it presents mutton as the ultimate irresistible food is also worth highlighting, as it reflects the uniquely high position of mutton in gastronomic culture during the Song dynasty [960–1279]. This reading is corroborated by Wang Zengyu, who notes: "Among the meat eaten by people of the Song Dynasty, lamb was notable in the north. During the Northern Song, 'the imperial kitchen only used mutton' in the palace, and in principle 'no pork should be used.'"[2] His research demonstrates that mutton simply has no equal when it comes to being the preferred protein of Chinese royalty.

Unlike the emperor, who had vast resources, ordinary people in the Song era did not have wide culinary choices. However, their unanimous preference for mutton is still indicated in contemporaneous documents, such as *Evening Remarks from a Cold Studio* [*Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話] and *Record of a Dream of Paradise in the Eastern Capital* [*Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄]. In the first text, Cheng Tianzhen 承天珍 famously declares mutton "a great delicacy that has no peer in this world."[3] In the second text, the number of lamb-based dishes listed as popular local delicacies, ranging from snacks such as steamed buns with mutton [*yangrou xiao mantou* 羊肉小饅頭] and mutton rice [*yangfan* 羊飯] to grander dishes such as oven-grilled lamb [*rulu yang* 入爐羊], far exceeds that of any other meat.[4] But perhaps nowhere is the

1 Toqto'a 脫脫, *Songshi* 宋史 [*History of the Song Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 12.250.

2 Wang Zengyu, "Food (Part 1): The Food of Song," in *A Social History of Middle-Period China: The Song, Liao, Western Xia and Jin Dynasties*, ed. Zhu Ruixin et al., trans. Bang Qian Zhu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 69.

3 Hui Hong 惠洪, *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話 [*Evening Remarks from a Cold Studio*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 10.76.

4 According to a survey by Gao Wenmin 高文敏, *Record of a Dream of Paradise in the Eastern Capital* contains a total of 183 lamb-based dishes, in "Qianxi Songdai shiyang wenhua 淺析

universal appeal of mutton revealed as clearly as in the experience of Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037–1101] while in exile in Huizhou 惠州. In a letter addressed to his brother, Su Shi writes:

> Even in the undeveloped market of Huizhou, one sheep is slaughtered on a daily basis. But I dare not compete with the local gentries for its meat, so I ask my servants to purchase only the vertebrae. There are scraps of meat stuck between the bones. Cook them in boiling water but do not overcook (Su Shi's note: if you wait too long, the meat will become mushy). For consumption, dip them in wine, sprinkle some salt on top, and lightly char their surface.[5]

Despite being poverty stricken, miserable, and in exile, Su Shi could not resist his craving for mutton even if it meant scraping meat off the bones. His inability to overcome this temptation, together with the fact that even an underdeveloped market such as Huizhou could manage to sell one lamb per day, offers a fascinating view at the degree to which lamb was embraced by Song consumers, regardless of social and financial status.

In his PhD dissertation on mutton consumption in the Song dynasty, Wang Qiping 王啟屏 not only reaffirms this observation but traces the origin of this gastronomic fascination back to the late Tang [618–907] period. However, as with many Tang customs adopted by Song society, its impact and scale of penetration in the Song era far exceeded anything experienced in the Tang period that preceded it.[6] Wang's research leaves no question regarding the status of mutton as the de facto symbol of fine dining for Song consumers. But for scholars of *Water Margin* [*Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳], this is problematic because the outlaws' preference for beef over mutton is clearly established both descriptively and quantitatively.

Water Margin, also known as *Outlaws of the Marsh*, is a vernacular novel from the Ming dynasty [1368–1644] based on the historical rebellion led by Song Jiang 宋江 against the Song government. The oldest extant edition of the novel was published in 1589, but most scholars believe it to be based on an earlier version, published in the 1520s, if not earlier. Also in question is

宋代食羊文化 [A Preliminary Analysis of the Culture of Mutton Consumption in the Song Dynasty]," *Kaifeng daxue xuebao* 開封大學學報, no. 3 (2015): 34.

5 Su Shi 蘇軾, "Yu Ziyou shu 與子由書 [Letter to Ziyou]," in *Su Dongpo quanji* 蘇東坡全集 [*Complete Works of Su Dongpo*], ed. Deng Lixun 鄧立勛 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1997), 601.

6 See Wang Qiping 王啟屏, "Songdai de shiyang wenhua 宋代的食羊文化 [The Culture of Mutton Consumption in the Song Dynasty]" (PhD diss., Taiwan Normal University, 2003).

its authorship, which is commonly attributed to Shi Nai'an 施耐庵 [1296–1372]; this is highly unlikely because of the novel's many references to cultural and historical events that postdate the Jiajing 嘉靖 [1522–1566] era.[7] The novel contains numerous scenes depicting the protagonists' diets, among which the following two are exemplary in offering a glimpse into the extent of the characters' inclination to upset the prevailing gastronomic norm.

The first scene occurs in an early episode, in which a travel-weary Wang Jin 王進, along with his mother, who is ill, wanders into the estate of Shi Jin 史進 to seek help. Shi Jin's father is a noble and generous man. Seeing how hungry and tired the travelers are, he invites them inside and offers them food and shelter. He orders his servants to prepare a meal made up of "a tray bearing four vegetable dishes and one of beef."[8] The following morning, the elderly Shi learns that Wang's mother did not sleep well because of her illness. He quickly sends someone to town to procure some medicine and insists that Wang and his mother prolong their stay as his guests. Wang ends up becoming Shi Jin's martial arts teacher and plays an instrumental role in molding the young Shi into one of Mount Liang's 梁山 most celebrated heroes. The purpose of this episode is obviously to emphasize the kindness and hospitality of the elderly Shi. His decision to present his guests with a plate of beef (rather than mutton) is worth highlighting, as it shows the degree of his reverence for this type of meat.

The second scene revolves around Lin Chong 林沖, who, under similarly desperate circumstances, walks into an inn run by Zhu Gui 朱貴 to order some food. Hungry and cold, Lin is presented with a choice of "raw and cooked beef, fat goose, and crisp fried chicken" and unhesitatingly orders "two catties of cooked beef."[9] At the time, Lin had just been given some money by Chai Jin 柴進 and has no financial concerns. His choice is therefore informed purely by his culinary preference and indicates that, like the elderly Shi, he has a very high opinion of beef.

Beyond demonstrating that the author of *Water Margin* likes to use beef as a signifier of both honor and refined taste, scholars who see beef as a symbol of defiance also point to these two scenes as evidence of the outlaws' disregard for law and order. To support this view, readers are reminded of the

7 For more information on the dating and authorship of *Water Margin*, see Andrew H. Plaks, "*Shui-hu Chuan* and the Sixteenth-Century Novel Form: An Interpretive Reappraisal," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 2 (1980).

8 Shi Nai'an 施耐庵, *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 [*Water Margin*] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 19; Sidney Shapiro, trans., *Outlaws of the Marsh* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1988), 28.

9 Shi Nai'an, *Shuihu zhuan*, 128; Shapiro, *Outlaws*, 180.

statewide ban on beef throughout the Song dynasty, which is used to reinforce the idea that these outlaws are rebels, who could not care less about the law. Zhu Yuhang 朱宇航, for example, argues that "the heroes of Mount Liang are a treacherous lot. Killing and arson are their way of life. Therefore, when it comes to their diet, beef, which is outlawed, is their only choice."[10] More recently, a similar conclusion was reached by Vincent Goossaert, who surmises that "the slaughter of bovines and the eating of beef had been a sign of rebellion or voluntary marginality."[11] Zhu and Goossaert represent an expanding group of researchers who sees beef as an intentional symbol of defiance in *Water Margin*. Other scholars who subscribe to this view include Guo Jian 郭建, Li Jianhua 李建華, and Lü Xianghua 呂祥華.[12] Because this premise is well supported by historical sources, it is necessary for us spend some time contemplating its relevance to the author's intention in *Water Margin*.

First, it should be made clear that the Song ban on beef was an important factor that contributed to the popularity of mutton. By limiting the availability of beef as an alternative source of protein, people had little choice but to embrace mutton as the only legally available red meat on the market. The *Song Dynasty Manuscript Compendium* [*Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿] and the *Collection of Grand Imperial Edicts and Decrees of the Song Dynasty* [*Song dazhaoling ji* 宋大詔令集] present more than fifty documents detailing legislators' attempts to ban the sale of black-market beef. *The Song Dynasty Criminal Law* [*Song xingtong* 宋刑統] is even more specific in stating that "any unauthorized slaughter of cattle is an offense subject to one year of imprisonment."[13] These laws exist to augment the sense of importance traditionally assigned

10 Zhu Yuhang 朱宇航, "Zaofan jiuyao chi niurou 造反就要吃牛肉 [Not Forgetting to Eat Beef during a Rebellion]," *Baike xinshuo* 百科新說, no. 12 (2008): 17.

11 Vincent Goossaert, "The Beef Taboo and the Sacrificial Structure of Late Imperial Chinese Society," in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, ed. Roel Sterckx (Basingstoke, UK: MacMillan, 2005), 245. In this chapter, Goossaert also discusses the importance of religious ideas on beef consumption, but, due to the constraints of time and space, this is not something that this present article is able to address.

12 See Li Jianhua 李建華, "Yangliu shu, tonggang bian he niurou: Shuihu zhuan suoxie santi 楊柳樹、銅鋼鞭和牛肉：水滸傳瑣屑三題 [Willow Tree, Metal Club, and Beef: Three Random Topics on *Water Margin*]," *Heze xueyuan xuebao* 菏澤學院學報, no. 4 (2017); Lü Xianghua 呂祥華, "Shuihu zhuan yanyin miaoxie yanjiu 水滸傳宴飲描寫研究 [Studies on the Descriptions of Banquets in Water Margin]" (Master's thesis, Shandong University, 2008); Guo Jian 郭建, "Liangshan haohan chi shenme rou 梁山好漢吃什麼肉 [Meat Eaten by the Heroes of Mount Liang]," in *Zhongguo fa wenhua manbi* 中國法文化漫筆 [*Random Notes on Chinese Law*], ed. Guo Jian 郭建 (Shanghai: Dongfang chubanshe, 1999).

13 Dou Yi 竇儀, *Song xingtong* 宋刑統 [*Song Dynasty Criminal Law*] (Taipei: Wenhua chubanshe, 1964), 15.483.

to cattle in China's agriculture-based economy. Emperor Zhenzong 宋真宗 [r. 997–1022], for example, made this very clear when he tried to end the illegal slaughter of cattle in 1016, stating:

> The bovine is a pastoral animal and an agricultural resource. There are already strict laws forbidding the killing of this animal, and it would be a great tragedy to kill or harm a bovine just when a bountiful harvest is within reach. It may not be a capital offense to kill or steal this farm animal, but punishment by imprisonment must still be delivered swiftly and harshly to those who commit this crime.[14]

The substantial influence of this way of thinking is also seen in the *Book of Agriculture* [*Nong shu* 農書], which states:

> Aside from its ability to pull a cart, the bovine exists strictly for the benefit of the farmer. It can be herded on the pasture or used on agricultural lands. An industrious farmer will take care of this animal, and a lazy farmer will ignore it and expose it to hunger and thirst, heat and cold, a life-threatening disease, or other physical harm. But they should know that agriculture is the foundation of the state, on which our clothing, food, economy, and other needs depend. Without the bovine, we cannot have agriculture.[15]

Given the importance of cows in agricultural work, it is easy to understand why Song authorities would want to restrict its use to the plow and not the kitchen.[16] Along with the level of gastronomic reverence for sheep, it is not difficult to see why some researchers are inclined to highlight the consumption of beef in *Water Margin* as an act of rebellion against both the contemporaneous culinary conventions and the rule of law.

Yet, as sensible as this reading may be, it paints only a partial picture. One of the problems with this reading is the fact that Song law is very specific about criminalizing cattle slaughter but is much more lenient when it comes to beef consumption. For example, in 1014, in recognition of the increasingly widespread sale of black-market beef, Emperor Zhenzong declared that "unless

14 Song Minqiu 宋敏求, *Song dazhaoling ji* 宋大詔令集 [*Collection of Grand Imperial Edicts and Decrees of the Song Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 199.736.

15 Chen Fu 陳旉, *Nong shu* 農書 [*Book of Agriculture*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956), 15.

16 For an excellent analysis on the importance of agriculture in the Song economy, see Bao Weimin and Wu Zhengqiang, "Behind the Form: A Historical Analysis of the Agriculture Encouragement System in the Song Dynasty," *Frontiers of History in China* 3 (2006).

the butchering of the bovine was premeditated, anyone who by chance purchases beef for consumption shall not be prosecuted."[17] Later, in 1037, a famine in Sichuan forced many farmers to slaughter their oxen for food. The court had no problem with offering these farmers a swift pardon.[18] These events and other similar ones show that beef consumption was not perceived as a serious offense during the Song dynasty. They also give us reasons to question whether the author of *Water Margin* truly intended the outlaws' meal choice to be an extension of their rebellious attitudes. If the author had genuinely wanted to highlight the bandits' disrespect for the law through food, why not depict them as producers of beef, rather than consumers, or both? Especially since slaughtering a cow carried a much harsher sentence than the consumption of beef?

There is no easy answer to this question, but the following must be considered thoroughly. First, was it in fact the intention of the author of *Water Margin* to use food as a symbol to reinforce the idea of rebellion? Second, did this intention originate with the Ming dynasty author of *Water Margin*, or did he/she simply inherit this motif from the novel's antecedents in the Yuan dynasty [1206–1368], when the situation was different? Third, did unfamiliarity with history and legislation lead to the mistaken belief that cattle slaughter and beef consumption were equally reprehensible during the Song dynasty?

Let us consider the first point. As stated earlier, throughout the Song dynasty, there was a universal obsession with mutton that neither social status nor wealth could relieve. When the heroes of *Water Margin* deviate from this gastronomic norm by regularly consuming beef and little else, their choice is often attributed to an authorial intention to establish a correlation between their identity as outlaws and their choice of food. However, the following scene in *Water Margin* shows at least one other possibility in explaining their choice. The scene in question depicts the initial meeting between Song Jiang and Li Kui 李逵, which is arranged by Dai Zong 戴宗. In order to celebrate their newfound friendship, the three men decide to share a meal. Dai Zong leads his companions to a beautiful riverside tavern called the Pipa Pavilion 琵琶亭. According to Dai, this place had been frequented by the Tang poet Bai Juyi 白居易 [772–846], and its name came from one of his famous poems. When the three men sit down, they each order a bowl of fish soup and some wine. Song and Dai quickly decide that they do not like the taste of the soup and

17 Dou Yi, *Song xingtong*, 483.

18 Li Tao 李燾, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編 [*Long Draft of the Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 120.2843.

decide not to finish it. Li not only gulps down his bowl of fish soup but helps himself to the leftovers of his new friends.

> Song Jiang watched Li Kui demolish three bowls of fish soup, including bones. He summoned the waiter.
>
> "I think this brother is still hungry. Bring him two catties of sliced meat. I'll pay you when you have added up the bill."
>
> "We've no beef, only mutton. You can have all the fat mutton you want."
>
> Li Kui flung the remnants of his soup in the man's face, slopping his clothes.
>
> "What are you doing?" Dai Zong yelled.
>
> "This sassy villain has the nerve to pretend I eat nothing but beef and won't give me any mutton."
>
> "I only asked," the waiter protested. "I didn't say anything."
>
> "Go slice the meat," said Song Jiang. "I'll pay."
>
> Swallowing his anger, the man sliced two catties of mutton and served it on a platter. Li Kui didn't stand on ceremony. In a twiddle of thumbs, he chomped the whole thing down.
>
> "You're a good man," Song Jiang said admiringly.
>
> "Brother Song can read my friggin' mind. Meat's much better than fish."[19]

This episode makes it clear that these outlaws do not dislike mutton. In fact, judging by Li Kui's reaction, they seem to enjoy it a great deal. So why do these outlaws not consume mutton on a more regular basis? The reason is actually disclosed in Li Kui's response to the waiter's question, which he perceives as a sense of reluctance to sell mutton to his party. Li considers it an affront because, compared to beef, mutton was prohibitively expensive throughout the Song dynasty. The waiter's demeanor suggests that he does not think Li and his friends can afford it.

Indeed, the high cost of mutton had been a problem for Song consumers since the early days of the dynasty. When the Song dynasty's founding emperor, Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 (Emperor Taizu 宋太祖, r. 960–976), passed away in 976, one of his greatest regrets was his inability to recapture the Sixteen Prefectures of Yan and Yun 燕雲十六州 from the Khitans. The loss of these sixteen prefectures put the Song state not only at a military disadvantage but also an economic one because what remained of Zhao's kingdom (vast though it was) lacked suitable and sizable grazing land for raising sheep and horses. As

19 Shi Nai'an, *Shuihu zhuan*, 453–54; Shapiro, *Outlaws*, 601.

a result, in order to procure enough mutton to satisfy the growing needs of the population, the Song had to engage in costly trade practices with the Khitans and the Tanguts (and later the Jurchens).[20] According to a proposal submitted in 1074 to centralize the buying and selling of mutton in Kaifeng, the proposed price for one catty of mutton is 130 coins. However, the actual retail price was likely to be much higher, as the goal of this proposal was to allow the government to regulate the price of mutton and make it affordable.[21] For comparison, one *dou* 斗 (approximately four pounds) of rice in the same region cost no more than eight coins.[22]

After ceding control of northern China to the Jurchens and retreating to the Southern city of Hangzhou, the increased distance from the northern grasslands resulted in a corresponding increase in the price of lamb. According to one account, the cost of one catty of mutton rose sharply to 900 coins in the early years of the southern Song period.[23] This exorbitant price prompted an unnamed official, who longed for the taste of mutton but could not afford it, to voice his frustration in a poem:

> The price of one catty of mutton in Pingjiang is 900 coins,
> Would an official with a meager salary dare make a purchase?
> The alternative is to make two meals out of fish a nd shrimp,
> And turn my stomach into a little pond.[24]
>
> 平江九百一斤羊
> 俸薄如何敢買嘗
> 只把魚蝦供兩膳
> 肚皮今作小池塘

This economic reality also explains why mutton was often listed as the centerpiece of the emperor's reward given to his armies throughout the Song

20 Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian*, 211.5136.

21 Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian*, 256.6251. In addition, in his study on the economic value of goods in the Song dynasty, Cheng Minsheng 程民生 estimates that 1 catty of mutton cost around 120 coins during the Northern Song period. Although Cheng's calculation is based on a joke by Su Shi, who did not specify which type of meat he was referring to, the number seemingly matches the one in the 1074 proposal. See Cheng Minsheng 程民生, *Songdai wujia yanjiu* 宋代物價研究 [*Studies on the Value of Goods in the Song Dynasty*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008), 170.

22 Cheng Minsheng, *Songdai wujia yanjiu*, 122.

23 Hong Mai 洪邁, *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 [*The Chronicles of Yijian*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981).

24 Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi*.

dynasty.[25] For example, in 968, Emperor Taizu "graced the calvary camp with his presence and rewarded his troops with money and mutton wine."[26] Later, in 980, Emperor Taizong 宋太宗 [r. 976–997] similarly awarded his army with tea, mutton, and wine.[27] The prohibitive cost of mutton might also explain why Pu Zongmeng 蒲宗孟 [1022–1088], who is well known for his extravagance, customarily slaughtered ten sheep on a daily basis as a way to show off his wealth.[28] Mutton was indeed a kingly gift during the Song dynasty.

By contrast, black-market beef was much more affordable during this period. According to one eyewitness report published in the *Song Dynasty Manuscript Compendium*:

> Every day, I see ignorant citizens slaughtering cattle and selling their meat for profit. Even our increasingly stringent law cannot prevent this situation. A cow costs as much as 5,000 to 7,000 coins. But each catty of beef can be sold for 1000 coins, and a cow can easily weigh as much as 200 to 300 catties. This huge margin of profit spurs many people to disregard the law and its consequences.[29]

Because of this price discrepancy between the cost of a living cow and a dead one, the same report recommends passing a law to set the price of beef at twenty coins per catty.[30] It is uncertain whether this suggestion was ever taken seriously.

Although this reality regarding the economy of beef does not preclude the correlation of beef consumption with the theme of rebellion, it certainly adds another dimension to the historicism of the novel and its portrayal of gastronomy. The fact that the majority of the scenes of beef consumption in *Water Margin* take place at "roadside inns in remote areas where government control and law enforcement are weak," as Liang Yan pointed out, shows not only the limited enforceability of Song law in rural areas but also the appeal of affordable meat in these settings.[31] In other words, the outlaws' preference for beef may have been as much a message of rebellion as a reflection of

25 For more information on how food became a coveted if expensive marker of social status in the northern Song period, see Isaac Yue, "Coarse Tea and Insipid Rice: The Politics of Food in the Northern Song Period," *Chinese Historical Review* 24 (2017).

26 Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian*, 9.204.

27 Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian*, 21.479.

28 Toqto'a, *Songshi*, 328.570–72.

29 Xu Song 徐松, *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 [*Song Dynasty Manuscript Compendium*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 52.

30 Xu Song, *Song huiyao jigao*, 52.

31 See Yan Liang, "Beef, Fish, and Chestnut Cake: Food for Heroes in the Late Imperial Chinese Novel," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 5 (2018): 123.

contemporaneous economic reality. As outlaws hunted by the government, our heroes are unlikely to have been able to afford mutton on a regular basis. This leads us to the second issue: As the novel was not compiled until the Ming dynasty, could the author of *Water Margin* have been aware of this Song economic reality so as to deliberately integrate it into the novel? If not, how did this perfect marriage of historical fact and literary motif come about?

To address this problem, let us turn our attention to the developmental history of *Water Margin* and consider the presence of beef and mutton in some of its antecedents. The oldest extant work that has a direct influence on *Water Margin* is *Old Incidents in the Xuanhe Period of the Great Song Dynasty* [*Da Song Xuanhe yishi* 大宋宣和遺事; henceforth referred to as *Xuanhe Period*]. This text is written in ten sections, with the entire fourth section devoted to the story of Song Jiang and the thirty-six heavenly spirits who are reincarnated as outlaws on Mount Liang. (Curiously, Song Jiang is not listed as one of the heavenly spirits according to this text.) It features many of the storylines elaborated further in the novel later, including the robbery of the convoy carrying Cai Jing's 蔡京 [1047–1126] birthday gifts and the death of Yan Poxi 閻婆惜 at the hands of Song Jiang. It also features an event called the Gathering of Cattle Slaughter [*shaniu dahui* 殺牛大會], where the heroes gather to celebrate their camaraderie.[32] The name of this event suggests that at least one cow is slaughtered to commemorate this occasion; and although there is no mention of what happens to the slaughtered animal afterward, we assume that its meat is more likely to end up on the protagonists' plates than to be allowed to go to waste.

As cattle slaughter was strictly prohibited by Song law, this act of slaughtering a cow conjures an unmistakable impression of the heroes' disdain for the law. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the author of *Xuanhe Period* had intended it to be read in this light, for this scene is short and its description brief. We also know that later authors did not care enough about this scene to elaborate on it or to expand it into a proper literary motif for rebellion. In fact, as can be seen in Table 1, this tradition of using cattle slaughter as a symbol of rebellion, if there ever was one, effectively started and ended with *Xuanhe Period*.[33] Not only do cows remain unharmed in Yuan dramas in the *Water*

32 *Xinkan da Song Xuanhe yishi* 新刊大宋宣和遺事 [*The New Edition of Old Incidents in the Xuanhe Period of the Great Song Dynasty*] (Shanghai: Shanghai gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1954), 43.

33 Later plays – such as "Liangshan wuhu da jielao 梁山五虎大劫牢 [A Jailbreak Organized by the Five Tigers of Mount Liang]," "Liangshan qihu nao tongtai 梁山七虎鬧銅臺 [Seven Tigers from Mount Liang Wreak Havoc at the Bronze Tower]," "Wang Aihu danao dongpingfu 王矮虎大鬧東平府 [Wang the Diminutive Tiger Causes Trouble in Dongping Prefecture]," and "Song Gongming pai jiugong baguazhen 宋公明排九宮八卦陣 [Song Jiang Sets a Trap According to the Principle of the Nine Squares and Hexagrams]" – are

Margin tradition, but the word for cattle or beef is mentioned so few times in these works that they are barely noticeable. It is evident that later dramatists had very little interest in associating the outlaws of Mount Liang with beef. Unlike *Xuanhe Period* and the later Ming novel, in these Yuan plays, Song Jiang and his sworn brothers were invariably portrayed as consumers of mutton, with little interest in beef.

TABLE 1 Beef and mutton in early *Water Margin* plays

	Author	Play title	Text
1	Gao Wenxiu 高文秀	"Double Accomplishment from the Black Hurricane [*Hei xuanfeng shuang xiangong* 黑旋風雙獻功]"	[Li Kui] "There is an entire pot of rice with mutton here. If you don't want it, I will eat it all by myself!" [一罐子羊肉泡飯。哥哥不吃，我自家吃][a] "[Song Jiang] gives order to bring out some wine and mutton. Hence begins the celebratory feast with Sun Kongmu and Li Shan'er." [竇下酒，臥番羊，與孫孔目、李山兒共做一個慶喜筵席者][b]
2	Li Wenwei 李文蔚	"Yan Qing Gambles with the Fish [*Yanqing boyu* 燕青博魚]"	"[Song Jiang] orders his men to kill the bovine, slay the horse, slaughter the lamb, and brew some wine. A celebratory feast is in order!" [一面敲牛宰馬，殺羊造酒，做一個慶喜的筵席][c]

Notes:

a Yang Jialuo 楊家駱, ed., *Quan Yuan zaju chubian* 全元雜劇初編 [*Volume One of the Complete Dramas of the Yuan Dynasty*] (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), 7:3215.

b Yang Jialuo, *Quan Yuan zaju chubian*, 7:3215.

c Wang Jisi 王季思, ed., *Quan Yuan xiqu* 全元戲曲 [*Complete Dramas of the Yuan Dynasty*] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1999), 3.132.

excluded from this study because their circulation overlapped with the compilation of *Water Margin* and as such could not have influenced the composition of the latter. For more information on the composition and dating of these dramas, see Liu Jingzhi 劉靖之, *Yuanren shuihu zaju yanjiu* 元人水滸雜劇研究 [*Studies on Yuan Dynasty* Water Margin *Dramas*] (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1990).

TABLE 1 Beef and mutton in early *Water Margin* plays (*cont.*)

	Author	Play title	Text
3	Kang Jinzhi 康進之	"Li Kui Makes Amends [*Li Kui fujing* 李逵負荊]"	[Lu Zhi'en 魯智恩 brags to Wang Lin 王林]: "My base is full of mutton wine! Let me ask my subordinates to bring you twenty to thirty sheep along with forty to fifty picul of fine wine!" [我那山寨上有的是羊酒，我教小偻儸趕二三十個肥羊，抬四五十擔好酒送你][d] [A song at the end of the play] "To have a feast in the middle of Dongping Lake; to slaughter a lamb under the flowery tree; and to purchase more wine after we are done with our current stash." [蓼兒窪裏開筵待，花標樹下肥羊宰，酒盡呵拚當再買][e]
4	Anon.	"Lu Zhishen Enjoying the Scene at the Yellow Flower Valley [*Lu Zhishen xishang huanghuayu* 魯智深喜賞黃花峪]"	[Song Jiang] "I am about to slaughter a horse and butcher an ox, in order to prepare a celebratory feast." [俺這裏敲牛宰馬，做個慶喜的筵席][f]

d Kang Jinzhi 康進之, *Yuanqu xuan: Liangshan Po Li Kui fujing zaju* 元曲選 · 梁山泊李逵負荊雜劇 [*Selections of Yuan Dramas: Li Kui of Mount Liang Makes Amends*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 16.

e Kang Jinzhi, *Yuanqu xuan*, 20.

f Wang Shifu 王實甫 et al., ed., *Guben Yuan-Ming zaju* 孤本元明雜劇 [*Unique Copies of Dramas of the Yuan-Ming Period*] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1977), 3.10.

TABLE 1 Beef and mutton in early *Water Margin* plays (*cont.*)

	Author	Play title	Text
			[Cai Jing 蔡淨 talks to a monk] "When I return, I expect you to prepare some wine and a lamb skull for me. Make sure you pluck the skull clean and braise it till the meat falls off. I would also like some duck eggs to go with the wine." [我買下些好酒兒好羊頭，退的乾淨，煮的爛著，鴨蛋買下些，我來便要吃酒][g] [What appears to be an idiom at the end of the play] "It's like a sick lamb falling into the hands of a butcher. There is just no way this will end in peace!" [病羊兒落在屠家手，咱兩個怎肯平休][h]
5	Anon.	"Three Tigers Descend the Mountain to Repay a Kindness [*Zheng bao'en sanhu xiashan* 爭報恩三虎下山]"	[Guan Sheng 關勝 talks to an attendant in a small roadside tavern] "I want you to slaughter one lamb for me and also to bring me some wine made from glutinous rice." [今日個宰肥羊斟糯酒][i]

g Wang Shifu, *Guben Yuan-Ming zaju*, 3.10.

h Wang Shifu, *Guben Yuan-Ming zaju*, 3.11.

i Yang Jialuo 楊家駱, ed., *Quan Yuan zaju sanbian* 全元雜劇三編 [*Volume Three of Complete Dramas of the Yuan Dynasty*] (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1963), 4.1531.

TABLE 1 Beef and mutton in early *Water Margin* plays (*cont.*)

	Author	Play title	Text
6	Anon.	"In Wind and Rain, the Minister Finds Himself in Prison [*Doukongmu fengyu huanlao mo* 都孔目風雨還牢末]"	"[Song Jiang] orders his men to slaughter the lamb and brew some wine for a celebratory feast." [一面殺羊造酒，做個慶喜筵席][j]
7	Zhu Youdun 朱有燉 [1379–1439]	"The Leopard Monk Decides to Return to Normal Life [*Baozi heshang zi huansu* 豹子和尚自還俗]"	[Lu Zhishen, with sarcasm] "I ate some insipid rice with astragalus herb. It is better than fatty mutton with wine!" [喫了些啖飯黃蘆，抵多少肥羊法酒][k] "[A minor character named Little Liu] sells fatty mutton." [小劉屠賣著肥羊肉][l]

j Wang Jisi, *Quan Yuan xiqu*, 3.132.

k Liao Kebin 廖可斌, ed., *Xijian Mingdai xiqu congkan: Zaju juan* 稀見明代戲曲叢刊（雜劇卷）[*Rare Dramas of the Ming Dynasty: The Scroll of Poetic Drama*] (Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin), 1.46.

l Liao Kebin, *Xijian Mingdai xiqu congkan*, 52.

Among the seven plays featured in Table 1, the Chinese word for cattle or beef [*niu* 牛] is found only in [1], [2], and [4]. In [1], the word appears twice and is used respectively as a metaphor for Li Kui's personality and a reference to an actual (living) animal. In [2], it also appears twice; the first time as part of the name of a temple [*Niuwang miao* 牛王廟] and the second time as part of the phrase "slaughter a horse and butcher an ox" [*qiaoniu zaima* 敲牛宰馬] (more on this later). The word appears several times in [4], first to describe a small path used by cattle and sheep and then two more times to describe a person's ill temper. However, the middle of the play has a scene in which Song Jiang describes his intention to "slaughter a horse and butcher an ox, in order to prepare a celebratory feast," which is almost identical to the second example in [2]. At first glance, this sentence is reminiscent of the Gathering of Cattle Slaughter depicted in *Xuanhe Period*, but it is more likely to be a popular idiom evoked by both dramatists. In another play, titled "Guan Yu Travels Alone for One

TABLE 2 "Slaughter a horse and butcher an ox"

Play Title	Text
"Lu Zhishen Enjoying the Scene at the Yellow Flower Valley"	"slaughter a horse and butcher an ox, in order to prepare a celebratory feast." [敲牛宰馬，做個慶喜的筵席][a]
"Guan Yu Travels Alone for One Thousand Li"	"slaughter a horse and butcher an ox, in order to prepare one celebratory feast." [敲牛宰馬，做一個慶喜的筵席][b]

Notes:
a *Xinkan da Song Xuanhe yishi*, 10.
b Yang Jialuo, *Quan Yuan zaju sanbian*, 1.350.

Thousand Li [*Guan Yunchang qianli duxing* 關雲長千里獨行]," written at around the same time as [2] and [4], is a line that is almost identical, as shown in Table 2.

In addition, in another play titled "Liu, Guan, and Zhang: The Tripartite Oath of Brotherhood in the Peach Orchard [*Liu Guan Zhang taoyuan sanjieyi* 劉關張桃園三結義]," a truncated version of this phrase also appears when the three brothers decide to celebrate. They declare their intention to "slaughter a horse and butcher an ox."[34] Although the origin of this phrase is unknown, its presence and similar use in all three plays suggest that the writers of [2] and [4] are simply using an idiom, rather than specifically describing the characters' penchant for beef. Further proof can be found in another scene in [4], which describes the characters' craving for mutton in a much more elaborate fashion. Although part of this scene is quoted in Table 1, to facilitate our discussion, a more detailed excerpt follows:

> [Cai Jing:] Little monk, clean my room thoroughly. I will be heading out to get myself a drink. When I return, I expect you to ready some wine and a lamb skull for me. Make sure you pluck the skull clean and braise it till the meat falls off. I would also like some duck eggs to go with the wine. If you fail to do a decent job upon my return, I am going to smack your head fifty times! Off I go now!

34 Wang Shifu, *Guben Yuan-Ming zaju*, 5.10; Wilt L. Idema and Stephen H. West, trans., *Battles, Betrayals, and Brotherhood: Early Chinese Plays on the Three Kingdoms*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2012), 35.

> [Subordinate monk:] Fine! You have given me a long list of duties, it is a good thing that I know some meat vendors. As your pupil, I shall now sweep the floor, make the bed, hang the drapes, set the table, and prepare the wine and food. What choice do I have as long as I am under your roof? However, when I cook your mutton, I am going to withhold a few pieces of bones for myself.[35]

This scene begins with Cai Jing ordering his subordinate monk to buy him some wine and a sheep's head, which represents his idea of a perfect meal. But he is not the only one with a strong craving for the taste of mutton. The subordinate monk decides that, before serving Cai Jing, he is going to keep some of the bones for himself to satisfy his own appetite. By using their desire for mutton to set up this interplay between the two characters, the dramatist's perception of mutton as having universal appeal is unmistakable. This idea is further reinforced in a song that is sung at the end of the play

> It's like a sick lamb falling into the hands of a butcher.
> There is just no way this will end peacefully![36]
>
> 病羊兒落在屠家手
> 咱兩個怎肯平休

When we view this together with the prior exchange between Cai Jing and his subordinate, it is clear that the dramatist views mutton, not beef, as the most desirable food for the characters. In the rest of the plays examined, not only is the absence of beef similarly prominent, but there also appears to be a universal predilection for making lamb the focal point of the outlaws' meals. Examples include Li Kui's interest in the pot of rice with mutton in [1] and Guan Sheng's 關勝 specific demand for an entire lamb in [5]. This attraction to mutton is an indication of the dramatists' lack of interest in the cattle-slaughter scene in *Xuanhe Period* and lack of concern about the economy of beef and mutton in the Song dynasty. More importantly, it signifies an interruption in mentions of beef consumption between *Xuanhe Period* and *Water Margin*, thus contradicting the possibility that a tradition had been, even unconsciously, passed on from the former to the latter. As for the reason for this shift in tone, the answer is once again found in the economic landscape at the time. Unlike the Song's shortage of pasture, which affected the supply of lamb, the Yuan government has no such problem, thanks to widespread

35 Wang Shifu, *Guben Yuan-Ming zaju*, 3.10–11.
36 Wang Shifu, *Guben Yuan-Ming zaju*, 3.11.

conquests by Genghis Khan 成吉思汗 [1162–1227] and his descendants. Primary material about the Yuan economy is scarce, but, according to one document excavated at Khara Khoto, one catty of mutton in China Proper cost only twenty-five coins in 1327.[37] The fact that mutton is also regularly featured in contemporaneous cookbooks, such as *Notes on Food and Drink* [*Yinshi xuzhi* 飲食須知] and *Principles of Gastronomy According to Yi Ya* [*Yi Ya yiyi* 易牙遺意], suggests that mutton had become a common food that even bandits running from the law could afford. Therefore the Yuan dramatists' decision to focus on lamb is likely just a reflection of this new economic reality.

In all the Yuan dramas examined, the portrayal of food seems to be nothing more than a simple and straightforward reflection of the contemporaneous economic/culinary landscape. Therefore, the intention to associate beef consumption with the idea of rebellion could only have originated with the writer of *Water Margin* alone. The only question is whether the author of the Ming novel could have been knowledgeable enough about the Song economy to articulate this theme in his/her writing. The answer, as indicated in Yu Yunguo's 虞云國 examination of the historicism of *Water Margin*, seems to be a resounding no. As Yu has discovered, despite having inherited its plot from Song history, *Water Margin* contains too many historical misrepresentations and inaccuracies to suggest that its compiler was a keen student of history.[38] For example, the opening chapter of the novel reads:

> That day, the third day of the third month of the third year of the Jia You period, at the third interval of the fifth watch Emperor Ren Zong mounted his throne in the imperial palace.... A prominent minister stepped forth and asked to be heard ahead of his turn. The emperor saw that it was Fan Zhongyan, his deputy premier.[39]

However, as Yu has correctly pointed out, the third year of the Jiayou 嘉佑 period is 1058, which is six years after the death of Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 [989–1052]. In other words, this meeting could not have taken place with Fan's participation if the author of the novel had paid attention to history. Similarly, in chapter 24, in which Ximen Qing 西門慶 first meets Pan Jinlian 潘金蓮, the narrator states:

37 Quoted in Li Chunyuan 李春圓, "Yuandai wujia shenbao zhidu xiaokao 元代物價申報制度小考 [A Small-Scale Study on the Value of Goods in the Yuan Dynasty and Its Reporting System]," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 中國史研究, no. 3 (2016): 123.

38 See Yu Yunguo 虞云國, *Shuihu xun Song* 水滸尋宋 [*Searching for the Song Dynasty in Water Margin*] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2020).

39 Shi Nai'an, *Shuihu zhuan*, 2–3; Shapiro, *Outlaws*, 4.

> A man was passing by. As the old saying goes: "Without coincidence there would be no story." The pole she was holding slipped and landed right on the man's head. Angrily, he halted and turned around, ready to blast. But when he saw the lissome creature standing there, he promptly cooled down. His rage went sailing off to Java, and he smiled.[40]

The destination of Ximen's rage, Java, is written in Chinese as Zhaowa 爪洼. This name comes from its Sanskrit name Yavadvipa but was not used in China until the Ming dynasty. In a Yuan dynasty geography text titled *A Concise History of the Islands of the Barbarians* [*Daoyi zhilue* 島夷志略], this place is referred to as Shepo 闍婆, which is the same name used in the *History of the Song* to describe this "kingdom located in the South Sea."[41] Therefore, had the author been scrupulous about historical facts, Shepo would have been used instead of Java. These errors lead us to conclude that the author of *Water Margin* was rather careless when it comes to history. That being the case, how can we explain the novel's accurate depiction of bandits and beef consumption during the Song dynasty?

As it turns out, there is a surprisingly straightforward answer found in Ming cuisine. In 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 [1328–1398] founded the Ming dynasty after his capture of Beijing and the Sixteen Prefectures of Yan and Yun. Afterward, the early Ming emperors made many attempts to expand the border northward, most notably, Zhu Di 朱棣 [1360–1424], who unsuccessfully launched five massive military campaigns in present-day Mongolia. After the failure of these campaigns, the Mings became more or less content with what they could control within the boundary of the Great Wall. Although control by the Ming of the lush pastoral lands of the Sixteen Prefectures of Yan and Yun ensured that it would have access to a healthy supply of horses and sheep, as its population increased, mutton was quickly re-established as a comparatively expensive commodity. According to Zhou Hui 周暉 [b. 1546], in the early Ming period in Nanjing, where some of the oldest extant editions of *Water Margin* were published, one catty of mutton cost a little more than forty coins. In the same document, Zhou also states that beef and donkey meat were also popular at the time; and at twenty coins per catty, they cost only half as much as mutton.[42] This means that although mutton had become more affordable than in the Song era, less affluent households (including bandits on the run)

40 Shi Nai'an, *Shuihu zhuan*, 280; Shapiro, *Outlaws*, 376.

41 Toqto'a, *Songshi*, 489.14091.

42 Zhou Hui 周暉, *Jinling suoshi shenglu* 金陵瑣事剩錄 [*The Last Remaining Tales of Jinling*], vol. 1 Reprint (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 2007).

are still likely to have preferred beef as their primary source of protein. And, as with their Song predecessors, Ming lawmakers' efforts to curb the illegal slaughter of cattle were futile. For example, in the eleventh month of 1469, the government reiterated its goal to combat the illegal slaughter of cattle, giving the following reason:

> Recently, ministers, officers, and civilians can be seen slaughtering cattle illegally both within and outside the boundary of the capital city. They know only greed and do not fear the law, selling beef openly and without any restraint. If they are not stopped soon, the situation will deteriorate rapidly.[43]

This quotation makes it evident that illegal beef was as big a problem for the Ming as it was for the Song. But the Ming rulers not only recognized the futility of trying to combat illegal cattle slaughter, they also appeared ready to accept it as inevitable. As observed earlier, cattle slaughter may not have qualified as a capital offense in the Song dynasty, but jail time was unavoidable. However, according to another document, written in 1424, when Emperor Yongle 永樂 [r. 1403–1424] was asked to increase punishment for those who committed this crime, he decreed that "anyone who slaughters an ox without permission shall be fined ten times the cost of the ox."[44] In other words, punishment for this offense was lowered from jail time to a fine, and in 1499, the fine for the same crime was reduced to five times the cost of an ox.[45] This decrease in the severity of punishment is not the only sign that the rulers were losing control over the situation (and recognized this to be the case). *Miscellanies of the Bamboo Islet Studio* [*Zhuyu shanfang zabu* 竹嶼山房雜部], a cookbook at the time, had several recipes with beef as the primary ingredient, ranging from hotpot to stir fry. This indicates that by then beef had become widely available and was no longer taboo, as far as cookbooks were concerned.[46] Even the *Compendium of Materia Medica* [*Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目] contains a section

43 Dai Jin 戴金, ed., *Huangming tiaofa shilei zuan* 皇明條法事類纂 [*Compilation of the Legal Code of the Imperial Ming Dynasty Arranged by Topic*] (Tokyo: Koten kenkyūkai, 1966), 30.746.

44 Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 et al., ed., *Ming Renzong shilu* 明仁宗實錄 [*Record of Emperor Renzong of the Ming Dynasty*] (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1962), 3.119.

45 Huang Zhangjian 黃彰健, ed., *Mingdai lüli huibian* 明代律例彙編 [*Compilation of Laws of the Ming Dynasty*] (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1979), 16.707.

46 Song Xu 宋詡, *Zhuyu shanfang zabu* 竹嶼山房雜部 [*Miscellanies of the Bamboo Islet Studio*] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1983), 3.150.

on beef and advises readers about which foods complement beef and which to avoid in combination with it.[47] These documents and others show the extent to which beef had become a common food for the masses to enjoy.

The shift to beef as the focal point of culinary narratives in *Water Margin* is likely a reflection of Ming food culture, rather than the result of any conscious attempt to capture the essence of Song gastronomy. The fact that the author of *Water Margin* was inattentive to historical facts offers sufficient evidence for this conclusion. In this sense, the observation of Katherine N. Carlitz on *The Golden Lotus* (also called *Plum in a Golden Vase; Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅) – that it "is nominally set in the last reign period of the Northern Song, but it was of course recognized as a chronicle of the Ming" – also applies to *Water Margin*, especially where food is concerned.[48] However, we are still left with our original question of whether the consumption of beef as part of the theme of rebellion was by design or by coincidence. The answer can be found through a comparison: specifically, the evocation of beef in *Water Margin* occurs at a much higher frequency than in other Ming dynasty novels. As Zhu Yuhang notes, among the numerous scenes of feasting in *The Golden Lotus*, beef is only mentioned once; in *Stories to Caution the World* [*Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言], which has more than twenty episodes that revolve around food and drink, only two scenes feature beef; and in *Marriage Destinies to Awaken the World* [*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳], the word "beef" does not appear at all.[49] This shows that the description of beef consumption was clearly not part of the convention of novel writing at the time. More importantly, as the sale of beef, despite its increasing popularity, remained illegal throughout the Ming dynasty, its evocation in *Water Margin* helps confirm the theory of Zhu Yuhang and Goossaert concerning the authorial intention to establish a symbolic link between its consumption and the outlaws' identity. The only caveat is that the nature of this connection is purely coincidental, rather than by design, given how the author of *Water Margin* is apparently unaware of Song history. But thankfully, enough similarities in the gastronomic landscape existed between the Song and the Ming that the portrayal of the latter can lend sufficient credence to a story set in the time of the former.

47 Li Shizhen 李時珍, *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 [*Compendium of Materia Medica*] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1983), 2.378.

48 Katherine N. Carlitz, "Family, Society, and Tradition in *Jin Ping Mei*," *Modern China* 10 (1984): 400.

49 Zhu Yuhang, "Zaofan jiuyao chi niurou," 15.

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Recent Developments in Medieval Chinese Literary Research and Pedagogy: An Interview with Ronald Egan

Zhang Yue 張月
Associate Professor of Department of Chinese Language and Literature, University of Macau, Macau, China
bnuzhangyue@gmail.com

Ronald Egan | ORCID: 0000-0003-4970-1505
Professor of Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA
ronegan@stanford.edu

Abstract

In this interview, Professor Egan and I discuss issues related to reception studies, Chinese literary history, translation, and graduate education. The interview begins with the advantages and disadvantages of applying reception studies to premodern Chinese literature and to the works of major writers in particular. We then discuss two recent Chinese literary histories written in English and compare them to mainstream literary history written by Chinese scholars in China in terms of their different audiences, purposes, and uses. As scholars and students consult these histories, this discussion led to the topic of how to teach and how to train graduate students. Egan shares his experience with effective approaches for teaching classical Chinese literature in the American academic setting. In the last section of the interview, he focuses on graduate education, the academic and intellectual preparation that students need before they begin their PhD, what they should pay attention to as students, and their job prospects after they receive their degree.

Keywords

Chinese literary history – graduate education – reception studies – translation

Ronald Egan is currently the Confucius Institute Professor of Sinology in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Stanford University. His research interests include Chinese poetry (with a focus on Song dynasty poetry), literati culture, and the social and historical context of Song dynasty aesthetics. His many books on these topics include: *The Works of Li Qingzhao* (2019), *The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China* (2014), *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (2006), *Qian Zhongshu's Reading of the Classics: An Analysis of the Underlying Principles of Guanzhui bian* (1998), *Limited Views: Essays on Ideas and Letters by Qian Zhongshu* (1998), *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (1994), and *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu* (*1007–1072*) (1984, 2009).

Zhang Yue: *Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk with you and to pose some of the questions I have had about your research. Let us start with reception studies. Your book on Li Qingzhao* 李清照 [*1084–1155*], The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China, *has received very positive feedback not only in the US but also in China.*[1] *Stephen Owen, Kang-i Sun Chang, and Grace Fong have praised your book on Li as the "last word," "brilliant," and "peerless scholarship and erudition," respectively.*[2] *Could you talk about the advantages of using reception studies to research Chinese literature?*

Ronald Egan: Because Chinese history is long and unbroken, it is a different situation from studying reception history in Western literature. In the latter, we are usually just talking about a couple of centuries, two or three centuries. Chinese literary history seems to lend itself to reception studies because of these peculiar links and continuity. I think that, obviously, many people have undertaken reception studies, but it is an approach to studying major writers that makes more sense in the Chinese context.

1 For a sample of book reviews in English, see Stephen Owen's review of *The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China*, by Ronald Egan, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 74, no. 2 (2014): 363–67; Kang-i Sun Chang's review in *Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 4 (2014): 1105–6; Grace S. Fong's review in *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 45 (2015), 402–8. For a Chinese article analyzing this book, see Zhang Yue 張月, "Wanjin Beimei Hanxue yanjiu fangfa yu wenxue shi bianzhuan guankui 晚近北美漢學研究方法與文學史編撰管窺 [On the Recent Research Methodology of North American Sinology and the Compilation of Chinese Literary History]," *Guoji hanxue* 國際漢學 20, no. 3 (2019): 185–87.

2 Owen, review of *The Burden of Female Talent*, 363; Chang, review of *The Burden of Female Talent*, 1105; Fong, review of *The Burden of Female Talent*, 402.

As you mention, the long history of Chinese literature contributes to the large amount of material from later periods on certain writers or literary phenomena, leading Chinese scholars to produce compilations of materials [ziliao huibian 資料彙編]. *For example, because there are so many studies on Tao Yuanming, scholars have compiled several* ziliao huibian.[3] *The same phenomenon occurs with other major writers. Scholars have compiled* ziliao huibian *for Li Qingzhao*.[4] *I think, to a large extent, scholars naturally want to study Chinese literature and major writers using a dynastic framework. Along with the advantages of reception studies, what kind of shortcomings does this theory have? In other words, to what should we pay attention when we attempt to apply this approach to researching literary works?*

A possible shortcoming is that it forces or could encourage the scholar just to examine the reception history and neglect the original writings. This is a possible outcome. However, in the book that I wrote on Li Qingzhao, I tried to balance the reception history and original works. I try not to consider only one or the other.

Yes, you have done a good job of achieving that balance. In the book, you place Li in her contemporary context of other female writers in the Song dynasty and autobiographical reading of her lyrics. You have chapters dedicated to the reception of her literary writings as well as those focused on a close reading of her lyrics.

Li Qingzhao's case is especially complicated because of the reception history. My argument is that such history essentially came to act as a shroud or veil: covering the original, obscuring or altering the nature of the original writing. This has probably happened to Li Qingzhao and, no doubt, to other writers. However, I think in her case, the amount of distortion was extreme.

Right, it is difficult to fully understand her works without adopting a reception studies approach, because, as you mentioned, there is a lot of misunderstanding about her works and personality. I assume this is why you adopted that approach.

3 Two examples of compilations of material on Tao Yuanming are Beijing daxue Beijing shifan daxue Zhongwen xi jiaoshi tongxue 北京大學北京師範大學中文系教師同學, ed., *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian* 陶淵明研究資料彙編 [*Compilation of Research Materials on Tao Yuanming*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962); and Zhong Youmin 鍾優民, ed., *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao xinbian* 陶淵明研究資料新編 [*A New Compilation of Research Materials on Tao Yuanming*] (Changchun: Jilin jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000).

4 Chu Binjie 褚斌杰, Sun Chong'en 孫崇恩, and Rong Xianbin 榮憲賓, ed., *Li Qingzhao ziliao huibian* 李清照資料彙編 [*Compilation of Materials on Li Qingzhao*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984).

That is right, and it took me a long time to figure out that I really had to deal with the reception history first, rather than just treating it as an afterthought. That is because, in her case, this history or the received image of her that seems to have accumulated over time became so ingrained. You cannot first deal with her works and then discuss her reception, because as soon as you start by dealing with her works, whether knowingly or not, you are already seeing them through the lens of the reception history.

I agree with your point. This is true not only of Li Qingzhao but also of other major writers: Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 *[ca. 365–427], Li Bai* 李白 *[701–762], and Du Fu* 杜甫 *[712–770].*[5] *I think it is why so many scholars, including you, have dedicated time and energy to studying their reception. With respect to reception studies, I wonder, in your view, what other writers and works are good candidates for this approach?*

I think it can be used for most major writers, probably at least most of those from – I do not know about Ming-Qing – the Tang-Song and earlier periods. This has become a major issue in how we perceive them. Thus, I think this methodology could certainly be used. Although it is not going to be equally illuminating for all writers, for some, reception studies are especially revealing.

Major writers have more influence over later periods, so there are more materials on them. For major writers, one can conduct substantial studies on these different materials and understand different moments of reception in different periods and analyze the various factors that have contributed to them.

You are right. Earlier, you mentioned *ziliao huibian*. They are enormously useful. It would be very hard to make one if I had to start from scratch. These compilations are very valuable.

Yes, especially when one thinks about when these ziliao huibian *were compiled; these scholars did not have computers at that time, let alone databases. The*

5 For reception studies on Tao Yuanming, see Wendy Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming: Shifting Paradigms of Historical Reception (427–1900)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008). For reception studies on Li Bai, see Paula Varsano, *Tracking the Banished Immortal: The Poetry of Li Bo and Its Critical Reception* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003). For reception studies on Du Fu, see Ji Hao, *The Reception of Du Fu (712–770) and His Poetry in Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). For the reception of history in Chinese literature, see Yue Zhang, *Lore and Verse: Poems on History in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2022).

achievement is stunning. Nowadays, however, we have various databases that we can use to search materials.

Yes, but you still have to be selective. You cannot rely only on an electronic search because 90 percent of the results are typically uninteresting and of no use. You still have to make traditional decisions about what to include and what to exclude.

That is a good point. Careful selection still plays an important role in understanding the texts. Turning to the origin of reception studies, what do you think of the development of this theory and its use in Sinology, as it is a Western theory? Do you believe that there has been any development of this framework? What is the future of reception studies?

I do not really have an answer to your question, except to say that the theory should be informed by Chinese literary history, because this history is well suited to the approach, as I mentioned before. If scholars of European literature knew about what you can do with this approach when it is applied to Chinese literary history, they would find it illuminating.

Additionally, I think, at least for Tao Yuanming and Li Qingzhao studies, many Chinese scholars have tried to understand these writers from a diachronic perspective, but I do not think their research has the complexity of yours.

Perhaps not. My impression is that Chinese scholarship, at least in the case of Li Qingzhao, has conventionally been quite blind to the implications of her image's changes over time.

And your book has definitely made great contributions to illuminating those implications. Let us move to the writing of Chinese literary history. You are one of the few scholars who have contributed to both the history of Chinese literature published by Columbia University Press and one published by Cambridge University Press.[6] *How have those two histories contributed to Chinese literary studies?*

6 Victor Mair, ed., *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On the characteristics of these two literary histories, see Zhang Yue, "Wanjin Beimei Hanxue yanjiu fangfa," 187–91.

I think a natural question to ask if you are thinking about those two histories is which is more traditional and which is less traditional or which is more conservative or conventional and which is less so. You might think I am going to say that the *Cambridge History* is more conventional, but, actually, I think it is the opposite. It is the *Columbia History*. I mean, in terms of the categories, and the ways of dividing up genres, in a way, the Columbia one is very traditional and conservative, whereas the *Cambridge History's* insistence on looking across genres and having one scholar writing about all the different genres coexisting with one another at the same time, I think that is quite innovative. That is probably, for better or worse, the most important structural principle of that work: the insistence on not just focusing on a single genre but taking an overarching view.

So, from this perspective, I would like to make a comparison of Chinese and Western works on Chinese literary history, as Chinese scholars, especially in recent decades, have written many works. Yuan Xingpei's premodern Chinese literary history in four volumes is probably the most popular of these works.[7] *If you compare this with its Western counterparts, what do you make of their differences? Do they examine premodern Chinese literature from different angles? Do they have different targets or audiences? I think they definitely have different audiences in mind.*

They definitely do, although there is a great irony here because in the case of the *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, probably 95 percent of the readers are reading the Chinese translation, rather than the English-language original. As a contributor, I can tell you that many of us – at least I can speak for myself in hindsight, I feel that I was writing essentially for the wrong audience. Maybe we should have known that, but we did not know that when the thing came out in English, it would be so expensive that no one would be able to afford to buy it. However, the Chinese version is affordable, so people buy it, and they read it. However, we were not writing for a Chinese readership (at least I was not). Our thinking was not clear on this issue.

About the audience, I would also like to ask another question.

Sorry to interrupt you. If I go back to your question about comparing, let us say, the *Cambridge History* with some of the standard high-quality Chinese

7 Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈, ed., *Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史 [*The History of Chinese Literature*] (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003).

literary histories, it is hard to generalize. However, if I am forced to generalize, I will make a statement that might sound very simplistic. I do not think this will surprise you to hear. I would suggest that there is generally a more skeptical attitude about traditional viewpoints, opinions, and received wisdom in the *Cambridge History* than you will find in many Chinese literary histories.

I agree. In many of the chapters of the Cambridge History, the authors make some excellent points that challenge our received wisdom about literary development. I assume that when Chinese scholars write literary histories, they tend to delineate and narrate a continuous literary tradition because they typically have a sense of cultural identity and a strong nation-state ideology. In this way, they want to construct and shape some cultural heroes.

Right. It is not only that. I agree with everything that you just said, but on top of that, Chinese scholars usually have great reverence and respect for those who came before them. So, it is much harder for them to disagree with the scholars who wrote two or three generations ago. However, for us, it is quite easy to be very irreverent (not that irreverence is always a good thing). Scholars outside China can readily be irreverent, whereas, for a scholar writing in the Chinese academic tradition, it is much harder. And I completely understand that, and I respect that.

Yes, because the contemporary generation of literary scholars shows great respect for their teacher's works.

Of course. Not only their teachers but their teachers' teachers.

Considering the other side of the coin – that is, teaching literary history – would you mind talking about what kind of materials you use when you teach, for instance, in a literary survey class or when you teach a topic in premodern Chinese literature? Could you give me some examples?

Actually, I try to avoid teaching survey classes.

So, you focus on teaching topics.

Right. Because a survey class does not work very well with American students. It is especially ill suited to American undergraduate students. They are not interested in literary surveys. Therefore, I teach topical courses, courses on specific writers, or I try to think of interesting topics. For graduate students,

you could teach surveys, but even with graduates, it is my own preference to teach more courses concentrating on topics than surveys. I also use a mixture of original sources and secondary scholarship.

So, what about your teaching approach? Do you often use close reading? I am curious about how you interact with students.

I do a lot of close reading, but in recent years, I have really been trying to force myself not to do only this, because it is very slow and does not cover much material. Therefore, I try to find some kind of mix between close reading and reading large amounts of secondary interpretive scholarship, and then have a discussion.

That format sounds effective and interesting! Your students must enjoy this combination.

When I was in graduate school, all we did was close reading, and we did not take other approaches. It is a wonderful training, but it is also very limited in a way, because the amount of text you can get through is very small. If you are focusing on all materials via close reading and are never forced as a student to think of your own ideas, then, there is something wrong with that.

By combining close reading with the analysis of secondary scholarship, students not only become familiar with the texts but also build their ability to understand those texts in a larger context, so I very much agree with this approach.

My next question is related to translation, both from English into Chinese and from Chinese into English. When we deal with Chinese literary texts in Anglophone scholarship, we have to translate these texts to make our arguments understandable. There are two approaches to this task. The first approach is literal translation that focuses on semantic meaning: translating the text word for word and then polishing it to make it publishable or "authentic-sounding" to native speakers. The second approach focuses on preserving the rhyme. In this translation approach, the translator paraphrases the work and produces a version that rhymes. What do you think of these two distinct approaches? I feel that when Chinese scholars translate poems or lyrics from Chinese into English, they tend to use the second approach, whereas American or Western scholars typically prefer to be closer to the original literary text.

Right. Very few of us who are native speakers of English even consider trying to rhyme the English translation. It just involves so much sacrifice of accuracy

that most of us throw up our hands and settle for translating the rhymed Chinese poem into unrhymed English.

So, what do you think about Chinese scholars' tendency to produce rhymed translations? Interestingly, when I read journal articles or books published in North America, I notice that Western scholars rarely use translations by Chinese scholars in China. Is it because of the language barrier or their translation style, or something else?

I think you raise a very good point. It is a delicate point, but you are actually right that leading Western Sinologists pay very little attention to translations from literary Chinese into English by scholars working in China. I think the simplest explanation is that the quality of those English translations often leaves a lot to be desired. To native speakers, it is often not of sufficient quality.

In addition to translations from literary Chinese into English, it is also worth discussing Chinese translations of secondary English scholarship on Chinese literature. For example, in recent decades, many American scholars – you, Stephen Owen, Paul Kroll – have published studies of premodern Chinese literature and culture in English, and they have been translated into Chinese.[8] *Having had this experience, what advice would you give to those translating your works from English into Chinese? What kind of challenges do they face?*

I am glad that you asked this question. It is very hard to have a good translation of academic writings either way, whether from Chinese into English or vice versa. Doing a good job requires gifted and hard-working translators. I have

8 Egan's monographs have been translated into Chinese: *Cainü zhilei: Li Qingzhao ji qi jieshou shi* 才女之累：李清照及其接受史 [*The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China*], trans. Xia Lili 夏麗麗 and Zhao Huijun 趙惠俊 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2017) and *Mei de jiaolü: Songdai shi dafu shenmei sixiang yu zhuiqiu* 美的焦慮：宋代士大夫審美思想與追求 [*The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China*], trans. Du Feiran 杜斐然, Liu Peng 劉鵬, and Pan Yutao 潘玉濤 (Shanghai: Shanghai guiji chubanshe, 2013). Almost all of Owen's books in English have been translated into Chinese, mainly by Jia Jinhua 賈晉華 and Tian Xiaofei 田曉菲: *Sheng Tang shi* 盛唐詩 [*The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High Tang*], trans. Jia Jinhua 賈晉華 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004) and *Tashan de shitou ji: Yuwen Suo'an zixuan ji* 他山的石頭記：宇文所安自選集 [*Borrowed Stone: Stephen Owen's Selected Essays*], trans. Tian Xiaofei 田曉菲 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2002). Kroll's books have recently been translated into Chinese: *Li Bai yu Zhonggu zongjiao wenxue yanjiu* 李白與中古宗教文學研究 [*Studies on Li Po and Religious Literature in Medieval China*], trans. Bai Zhaojie 白照傑 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 2017) and *Zhonggu Zhongguo de wenxue yu wenhua shi* 中古中國的文學與文化史 [*Essays in Medieval Chinese Literature and Cultural History*], trans. Tong Ling 童嶺, Yang Dufei 楊杜菲, and Liang Shuang 梁爽 (Shanghai: Zhong Xi shuju, 2020).

been approached by Chinese scholars in China several times. They write to me and say they want to translate either an article or a book that I have done. And I always ask them first to translate one or two pages and send it to me. Almost every time, I end up writing back to them, saying thank you, I am grateful for your interest, but I do not want to proceed. This is because they have not sufficiently understood the English. Sometimes, you can tell that their English reading ability is not as good as it should be, or sometimes their approach to translation is not appropriate, sticking too closely to the English words, syntax, and usage. It is difficult to get inexperienced translators to translate the meaning, rather than the words. The same problem occurs when Chinese is translated into English.

From your viewpoint, a major problem with some Chinese translations is that when you read them, you feel that they are not in fluent Chinese.

That is right.

In a sense, as you have mentioned, Chinese translations of English-language books or articles are typically strongly influenced by English-language usage, syntax, and so on. Even you have mentioned that you have to take time to understand the content of their Chinese translation. To some extent, one encounters more difficulty in reading Chinese translations than the original English-language versions.

I have now had two books of mine translated into Chinese. In both cases, I feel that I have been very fortunate because they were translated by diligent graduate students whose translations are excellent. They do not have any trouble in understanding the meaning of my original books written in English. Their translations into Chinese are fluent and idiomatic. They have worked long hours. I also insist on having final approval and being able to supervise and approve the work. All these things are very important.

You are right. I feel that the English-language academic writing style is somehow different from its Chinese counterpart. For example, academic writing in English often contains many long and complex sentences with attributive clauses, whereas academic writing in Chinese tends to have shorter sentences. So, when those graduate students translate your works, I imagine they have to break up these long sentences.

I have no objection to that.

However, I think the most difficult part is to do Chinese translations that can be easily understood by the Chinese audience and yet still reflect what you wish to say.

It is not easy. And it goes without saying that they also have to have a good grounding in the subject. They cannot just be translators; they have to have scholarly knowledge.

That is the difficulty of translating academic materials from English into Chinese and vice versa. I tend to think that North American academia has not given enough credit for translation. Is that fair to say?

Yes.

Translation is important, as it enables works to reach audiences in both the anglophone world and China, and scholars spend an immense amount of time and effort on academic translations. However, it does not seem that translation is given enough weight in the systems of evaluation or promotion, and it is difficult for scholars to spend time on translations when they receive little credit for it.

This is a constant problem. I do not know so much about Europe, but in North American academia, there is a tendency to devalue translation. It does not get you tenure and promotion. So, that is a real problem. It is directly responsible for the small number of Chinese literary translations into English.

Thanks for your insightful explanation. Since we are touching on issues in academia, I would like to briefly discuss graduate training and placement in the United States. First, what advice would you give students applying for a PhD program in the United States? If they want to study premodern Chinese literature in the US, what challenges will they face?

Anyone, especially in China, who is thinking about applying to a PhD program in this field in North America needs to understand that the two education systems are *very* different. Consequently, many of us who work with PhD students are quite reluctant to accept people straight out of Chinese universities. I will just speak for myself. I am reluctant to accept a student who comes straight from a Chinese university and has no prior experience in academia in North America. I know from experience that accepting such a student is a risky thing to do. The students do not know what they are getting into. They are going to be faced with academic shock, culture shock, and language shock,

all at the same time. And you do not want to take a risk, such as jeopardizing the student's long-term well-being (and potentially taking up one of your department's precious admission slots). So, I tend to accept students who have already completed a two- or three-year master's degree outside China.

What advice would you give Chinese students enrolled in a PhD program in the US who want to make that five- to eight-year period of study as successful as possible? What suggestions do you give when they first enter the program?

One thing I often tell them is that I hope that they will take courses not only in the East Asian Languages Department but also in the Comparative Literature Department, the History Department, and the Religious Studies Department. I want them to get more exposure to other disciplines, topics, and literary history and literature, because I think this kind of interaction with other teachers and other graduate students is very beneficial for them.

After PhD students spend so much time and energy obtaining their degrees, they then face the major challenge of obtaining an academic job in their field in North America. I want to ask you about your perspective on this challenge. The employment prospects for these young scholars are not good. In Chinese studies, most employers prioritize students who study modern literature, contemporary media, and fiction, rather than poetry. Given this situation, what suggestions do you have for doctoral students who have a long-term career goal of working in North America?

There have always been just a small number of academic jobs in our field, especially in premodern Chinese studies (literature and history alike). Actually, I am quite sure that there are more positions now than thirty years ago, even in classical Chinese literature. However, as you and I both know, there are also far more candidates for positions now, so it seems as if the number of positions is smaller. In fact, the number [of positions] has grown nearly as rapidly as the number of new PhD holders applying for those positions.

Thank you for that context. So, it seems as if there are fewer positions, but that is actually not the case?

I do not think that there are fewer positions. The number of openings has always been tiny compared to modern Chinese studies, political science, economy, and sociology. Relatively speaking, it has always been small compared to those larger fields.

To give themselves more time to prepare for their future career, some PhDs apply for postdoctoral positions. I know that Stanford has a postdoctoral fellowship available in Chinese studies every year. As a senior scholar, could you take this opportunity to explain postdoctoral fellowships, particularly the one at Stanford, for newly minted PhDs and those who are about to complete their degree? I assume that the competition is very fierce.

It is extremely competitive. I think there is one postdoc position, and [Stanford gets] over a hundred applications. One has to bear in mind that the committee is made up of people from all different fields and periods in Chinese studies. For example, if [a candidate's] project is on Chinese poetry or something like that, [that student] really has to reach out and explain why this is important, and what it is going to contribute to Chinese literary and cultural history. One has to talk about the larger implications of one's research project.

Right, appealing to scholars in different disciplines, which also makes your proposal stronger overall. Thank you very much for your time, Ron. I have learned a lot from our conversation.

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