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Abstract

Pu Songling (1640-1715) is known to the world for his *Liaozhai zhiyi*, which has come to represent the epitome of the Chinese classical tale. Yet there is also a large and lesser-known body of ballads, plays and songs attributed to him, transmitted through local manuscript and oral culture in Pu's native Zichuan, Shandong. Presenting these works in the context of the locality's textual culture, this dissertation reveals them to be informed by both literary tradition and the sights and sounds of a village world.

The first chapter introduces the vernacular oeuvre attributed to Pu Songling and the sources of this study, mainly from the Ryōsai Bunko at Keio University. It tells the early 20th century story of the collection and the discovery of Pu's vernacular works in China at the time, and analyzes aspects of Zichuan's textual culture as discernable from the collection. The second chapter focuses on Pu's *Riyong suzi* (Popular characters for daily use), a rhymed educational text in local language on the vocabularies of everyday life, belonging to a vibrant literature of vernacular primers. *Riyong suzi* mediated not only between standard script and local speech, but also the spheres of textual and living knowledge. The third chapter employs filial piety as a lens into the world of popular entertainment, focusing on ballads and plays attributed to Pu on the subject of the family. Comparing vernacular ballad against classical tale, it calls into question elements of these works which ostensibly make them "elite" or "popular," while bringing to attention the ballads' skillful evocations of a village world alive with oral exchanges and verbal duels. The final chapter is devoted to depictions of history in the play *Monan qu* (Song of tribulations) attributed to Pu and in drum ballads from Shandong. These vernacular engagements with local and dynastic history reveal a range of literati experiments with popular performance genres. Colloquial song and narrative formed a common, informal literary medium in the region, tied intimately to the classical tradition while providing alternative channels for diversion, dissent, and innovation.

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OF PU SONGLING

Zhenzhen Lu

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THE VERNACULAR WORLD OF PU SONGLING

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Zhenzhen Lu

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It is in a moment when one grasps most keenly for words that one feels most acutely the poverty of language. In the face of enormous debts of gratitude accumulated over the years to teachers, family and friends, no words can do proper justice. Despite everything, an acknowledgement is required.

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go on, reading the works of my teachers as a graduate student, I realize more and more how privileged I was to have been there with them – even if at the time I absorbed only a tiny fraction of what I saw and heard.

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ABSTRACT

THE VERNACULAR WORLD OF PU SONGLING

Zhenzhen Lu

Victor H. Mair

Pu Songling (1640-1715) is known to the world for his *Liaozhai zhiyi*, which has come to represent the epitome of the Chinese classical tale. Yet there is also a large and lesser-known body of ballads, plays and songs attributed to him, transmitted through local manuscript and oral culture in Pu's native Zichuan, Shandong. Presenting these works in the context of the locality's textual culture, this dissertation reveals them to be informed by both literary tradition and the sights and sounds of a village world.

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works which ostensibly make them “elite” or “popular,” while bringing to attention the ballads’ skillful evocations of a village world alive with oral exchanges and verbal duels. The final chapter is devoted to depictions of history in the play *Monan qu* (Song of tribulations) attributed to Pu and in drum ballads from Shandong. These vernacular engagements with local and dynastic history reveal a range of literati experiments with popular performance genres. Colloquial song and narrative formed a common, informal literary medium in the region, tied intimately to the classical tradition while providing alternative channels for diversion, dissent, and innovation.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing of his visit in the early 20th century to the grave of Pu Songling (1640-1715), lying amongst shady groves in the countryside just outside of the Pu Family Village in Zichuan, Shandong, a scholar made note of the curious discrepancy between the front and the back surfaces of the old tombstone.¹ The front side contained a formal eulogy by a friend and countryman of Pu Songling, which commemorated Pu's literary achievements in classical prose. The backside of the stone was a peculiar contrast: not only did the inscriptions seem different in style, but the characters were uneven and poorly aligned. One is able to discern from the weathered surface a list enumerating “five volumes of miscellaneous works”; “three plays”; and “fourteen varieties of popular rustic cantos.”²

If the stone embodies the literary monument built around Pu Songling after his own time, the disjunction between its front and back speaks eloquently to the divide between his famed corpus of classical tales, *Liaozhai zhiyi*, and the oeuvre of vernacular writings attributed to him little-known outside of his native region until the early 20th century. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, Pu, an obscure scholar in rural Shandong in his own lifetime, had come to be known far and wide with the printing of *Liaozhai zhiyi*. The

¹ Liu Jieping 劉階平, “Xuanzhu tiyao” 選注提要, in his *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu xuanzhu* 聊齋通俗戲曲選注 (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1970), p. 8. Liu (1906-1992), a Shandong native, was an important scholar and biographer of Pu Songling. It is not clear to me the date of his visit to Pu's grave, but it would have certainly been before 1949, when Liu left the mainland for Taiwan, and probably before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. The story of Liu and other collectors of Pu's works in the early 20th century is treated in fuller detail in Chapter 1.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4 and p. 8. See Appendix 1 for a full list of titles which appear as part of the inscriptions. Pu's tombstone was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, but a set of rubbings are preserved in the Ryōsai bunko at Keio University.

classical tales acquired commentaries and prefaces by eminent literary men, and came to be seen to represent the epitome of the genre; the stories, many on fantastical subjects, took on lives of their own in local dramas and narratives, and spread throughout the land. So Pu's *Liaozhai*, "Make-do Studio," became a household name, and with it the author's self-fashioned image as the "Historian of the Strange," sitting alone in his studio and ruminating on ghosts as the night deepens and the lamplight fails.³

For all the fame of *Liaozhai zhiyi*, Pu's name continued to be associated with a diverse body of other works in his native region – from primers and treatises on farming and sericulture to a sizeable corpus of plays, ballads, and songs of varying length and content. While many of these latter works share the subjects of Pu's elegant classical tales, they resound with the piquant flavors of spoken dialect, set in a lively village world and elaborating many shared cultural ideals – from filial piety and conjugal harmony to wealth, longevity, and success in the examinations. By the accounts of literati observers from the Qing into the 20th century, they were of great local popularity, accessible to even the most humble members of society and being greatly moving in performance. The extant manuscripts, written in hands both learned and less learned, reveal their transmission in written channels as well, forming a slice of a vibrant local manuscript culture in the area from the early Qing to the early 20th century.

³ I borrow the translation "historian of the strange" for *yishi* 異史 from Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993). As Zeitlin points out, this image as fashioned by the author in his preface to *Liaozhai zhiyi* is frequently taken to be autobiographical, while its rhetorical aspects ought to be taken more fully into account. "Liaozhai," Pu's studio name is quite difficult to render in translation – "zhai" suggests lodge or dwelling, while "liao" has the connotation of "idle," "lonely," "make-do." In this dissertation I adopt the translation of *Liaozhai zhiyi* as "Strange Tales from Make-do studio" after Victor H. Mair and Denis C. Mair, *Strange Tales from Make-Do Studio* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989).

How to reconcile these two apparently different bodies of writings – one written in elevated registers, woven with allusions and full of erudition, and another in vernacular, ostensibly intended for non-elite audiences and comprehensible to even the humblest of listeners? What sorts of connections were there between them, and were the vernacular writings in fact informed by literary tradition? What to make of their attributions to a single author, who, despite his posthumous fame, was in his own lifetime but one of many highly educated yet socially undistinguished men in the Qing? How do the extant manuscripts of the works attributed to Pu relate to other texts from the locality – what sorts of literary practices did they reveal, who wrote them and who copied them? And how would all this help us to understand, in broader terms, the character and shape of Chinese literature in premodern times?

These questions forming the starting point of this study lie on the interstices between Chinese vernacular literature and popular culture. An early study by the Chinese scholar Wang Binling had attempted to forge connections between Pu's *Liaozhai zhiyi* and folklore, while presenting his transmitted vernacular works as outstanding examples of *minjian wenxue* 民間文學 (“folk literature”).⁴ “Minjian,” however, remains a highly ambiguous term, like its associated notions of the “folk” and the “popular.” As historians have reminded us in other contexts, to conceptualize “popular culture” as a symbolically

⁴ See Wang Binling 汪玢玲, *Pu Songling yu minjian wenxue* 蒲松齡與民間文學 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1985); and more recently, Wang Binling, *Guihu fengqing: Liaozhai zhiyi yu minus wenhua* 鬼狐風情：聊齋志異與民俗文化 (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2003). In the early 20th century, Chinese scholars and intellectuals had formulated notions of *minjian wenxue* (another term used is *su wenxue* 俗文學, “popular literature”) in opposition to the literature of the learned classes, spurring the study of folklore and folk literature while also giving to the traditionally lesser literati genres of fiction and drama a newly privileged position. On these terms and their early 20th century context, see Tan Daxian 譚達先, *Zhongguo minjian wenxue gailun* 中國民間文學概論 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1980), pp. 1-13.

autonomous space or as uniformly opposed to “dominant” culture is to ignore the multiple trajectories which texts, images, stories and genres can travel.⁵ While the “popular” is variously associated with the “oral” (as distinction from the “written”), the “illiterate” (as distinct from the “literate”), and the “commoner” (as distinct from the “gentry”), each of these associations has its own set of problems in the Chinese context.⁶ Would the participants of “popular literature” include village literati, who like the official class were bearers of the Confucian tradition? Would they encompass men of the various trades and professions, who were also in degrees capable of reading and writing but engaged with the written world in different ways from those who went through the entirety of classical education?⁷ And how about officials and prominent literary men, who out of various exigencies in the Ming and Qing took deep interests in colloquial forms and collected, recorded, edited, and composed them?

Scholarship in the last few decades has provided refreshing perspectives on these issues. On the one hand, literary studies have cast light on the sophisticated realms of literati fiction, calling for re-evaluations of the relationship between vernacular literature

⁵ Roger Chartier, “Popular Appropriation: The Readers and Their Books,” in idem., *Forms and Meanings* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 83-97; see also, Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). Chartier has proposed a concept of “appropriations”: “appropriation involves a social history of the various uses (which are not necessarily interpretations) of discourses and models, brought back to their fundamental social and institutional determinants and lodged in the specific practices that produce them....” (p. 89).

⁶ On problems with dichotomies such as these, see Daniel L. Overmyer, “Review of *Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables* by Anne E. McLaren,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59.2 (1999): 629-37.

⁷ On this and the previous point, see Wilt Idema, “Review of Evelyn Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China* (1979),” *T’oung Pao* 66, 4-5 (1980): 323.

and oral storytelling.⁸ At the same time, studies of print culture in the Ming and Qing have called to attention widening reading publics with the social and economic changes which took place from the late fifteenth century onwards.⁹ Through her study of the commercial printers of Sibao in the Qing, Cynthia Brokaw has introduced a model for thinking about late imperial Chinese textual culture, in terms of a homogenizing “core” of texts constituting the shared cultural knowledge and still “specialized” local texts produced for consumption by varying local audiences.¹⁰ Such a model takes us away from preconceived notions of “popular” and “elite” to look at producers and consumers, circuits and itineraries. Meanwhile it stimulates more questions on the multiple spheres which operated within the ambit of written culture. The social positions of vernacular literature remains much to be explored, as do the mechanisms of literacy acquisition, and the interfaces between languages spoken and written, local and shared.¹¹

This study examines the vernacular writings attributed to Pu Songling with many of these questions in mind. It deals extensively with primary materials from the locality of Zichuan and elsewhere in Shandong, now preserved in various institutions in China

⁸ For an overview of differing scholarly perceptions on the issue from the early 20th century onwards, see Vibeke Bordahl and Margaret B. Wan eds., “Introduction,” *The Interplay of the Oral and the Written in Chinese Popular Literature* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2010), pp. 1-7.

⁹ Cynthia Brokaw, “On the History of the Book in China,” in Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 24-25. See also the representative essays collected in the same volume. Just when did printed books come to have widespread influence in China is a matter of debate; on commercial printing in an earlier period, see Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Centuries)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002).

¹⁰ Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), pp. 553-559. In this model, specialized local textual cultures, along with another category of books produced exclusively for highly educated readers, competed against the culturally integrative forces of the core texts produced across the empire (comprised of educational texts, how-to guides, and fiction and other texts).

¹¹ On the issues surrounding language, see Shang Wei, “Writing and Speech: Rethinking the Issue of Vernaculars in Early Modern China,” in Benjamin A. Elman ed., *Rethinking East Asian Languages, Vernaculars, and Literacies, 1000-1919* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 254-301.

and Japan, notably the Ryōsai Archive at Keio University in Tokyo.¹² With hundreds of manuscripts in the collection, from those in Pu's own hand to manuscripts from later times and spanning diverse genres, these texts provide an outstanding opportunity to study Zichuan's local textual culture, and with it the intersections between learned and local culture in a time period when specialized local textual cultures are still little understood.¹³ Whereas previous studies of Chinese vernacular literature of the period have tended to focus on print culture, the materials from Pu's native region provide a unique case of comparison as a predominantly handwritten corpus of books from a rural locale. As such, I hope my study will not only contribute to studies of Pu Songling but also to the study of Chinese vernacular literature and textual culture at large.

In the first chapter, I begin with the story of the Ryōsai Archive, introducing the collecting efforts of the Japanese doctor Hirai Masao in the 1930s and the discovery of Pu's vernacular works in China during that time. I analyze the unique aspects of the Keio collection as well as its limitations, and discuss aspects of the locality's textual culture as discernable from the motley collection. In the second chapter, I focus on Pu's *Riyong suzi* (Popular characters for daily use), a rhymed educational text in local language on the vocabularies of daily life, once widely popular in the region and the earliest of Pu's works

¹² Probably not unrelated to political reasons, the Ryōsai Archive has been largely ignored by Chinese scholars except in Ma Zhenfang 马振芳, *Liaozhai yiwén qizhong* 聊斋遗文七种 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1998). The Singaporean scholar Gu Meigao 辜美高 introduced a number of these archival texts in her monograph *Liaozhai zhiyi yu Pu Songling* (Tianjin: Tianjin guji, 1988). In Japan, Yagi Akiyoshi and Fujita Yūken have been the two major scholars who have cataloged, introduced, and studied manuscripts from the Ryōsai Archive, but to my knowledge the majority of the texts are untouched by scholarship. See Fujita Yūken 藤田祐賢 and Yagi Akiyoshi 八木章好, "Keiō gijuku shozō Ryōsai kankei shiryō mokuroku" 慶応義塾所蔵聊斋関係資料目録, *Geibun Kenkyū* 53 (1988): 118-57. I cite from this catalog throughout the study.

¹³ The original books collected by Hirai, which forms the center of the collection, is about five hundred items.

to have ever been printed. Examining the characters in *Riyong suzi*, as well as the dictionary *Zihui* from which they were adopted, I introduce the creative, varied, and often ambivalent ways in which *Riyong suzi* attempted to negotiate between purportedly standard written forms and local speech. The third chapter treats ballads and plays attributed to Pu Songling on the subject of filial piety. While adopting themes shared across much of popular literature, these locally transmitted narratives are unique in their deliberate uses of local idioms to craft domestic dramas set in a village world. Their artistry and affinity with classical tales from *Liaozhai zhiyi* point to the difficulty of identifying intended audiences on the basis of language and theme. Finally, the fourth chapter is devoted to literati experiments with prosimetric and verse narrative. Focusing on treatments of history in the longest of Pu's attributed song-narratives and drum-ballads from Shandong, I show how in the region vernacular prosimetrum served as a vehicle for poetic expression, political complaint, and literary innovation.

CHAPTER 1

From local manuscripts to a literary archive

Introduction

The year 1936 marked the birth of Pu Songling's first modern edition of collected works. Published by Shijie shuju, a major Shanghai commercial press, it boasted inclusion of nearly all the works Pu had ever composed.¹⁴ The four-volume series included a reprint of *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋志異 with over four hundreds illustrations¹⁵; the novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳, which quickly sold out¹⁶; and a two-volume anthology of writings in diverse genres, which highlighted a heretofore little known body of vernacular ballads and plays from Shandong.¹⁷

From the late 1920s public interest had gathered around the vernacular works known to have been composed by Pu Songling. In 1929 Beijing's Pu She 樸社 had published six short works under the title *Liaozhai baihua yunwen* 聊齋白話韻文 (Colloquial rhymed texts of Liaozhai) after Ma Lixun 馬立勳, a native of Pu's Zichuan, presented manuscript copies he gathered from a relative to Zhou Zuoren 周作人 and

¹⁴ See "Benji tedian" 本集特點, in *Zuben Liaozhai quanji* 足本聊齋全集, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1936), v.1, p. 1. On Shijie shuju, see Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), pp. 241-53.

¹⁵ "Benji tedian" 本集特點 tells that Shijie shuju's illustrated *Liaozhai zhiyi* is reprinted after an earlier "Tongwen" 同文 edition, which would refer to Shanghai's Tongwen Shuju 同文書局 - publisher of a popular 1886 lithographic edition of *Xiangzhu Liaozhai zhiyi tuyong* 詳注聊齋志異圖詠 in 16 *juan* with commentary by Lü Zhen'en 呂湛恩. This edition was reprinted by a number of Shanghai presses (Luo Wei 駱偉, "Liaozhai zhiyi banben lüeshu" 聊齋志異版本略述, in *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan* 蒲松齡研究集刊 3: 318).

¹⁶ See Li Hongqiu 李鴻球, "Chongyin Xingshi yinyuan zhuan yuanqi" 重印醒世姻緣傳緣起, in *Zuben Xingshi yinyuan* 足本醒世姻緣 (Taiwan: Shijie Shuju, 1953; reprint of the 1936 edition).

¹⁷ "Benji tedian," p. 1.

Qian Xuanton 錢玄同.¹⁸ By 1930 Ma had collected eleven additional ballads and plays, one of which he sent to Beijing's *Xin chenbao* 新晨報 newspaper, and he shared all of them with a fascinated Hu Shi 胡適.¹⁹ These works provided important evidence for Hu in his search for the unknown author of the Qing novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, whom he “confirmed” to be Pu Songling, on the basis of its thematic affinities with tales from *Liaozhai zhiyi* and the specialized, colloquial language which it shared with Pu's transmitted ballads and plays.²⁰ Hu's essay appeared in the 1932 first edition of the novel published by Shanghai's Yadong tushuguan, along with a long preface by the writer Xu Zhimo 徐志摩; at around the same time, Hu also published an essay investigating Pu's biography.²¹ China's literary elite had by this time a rekindled interest in Pu Songling, his

¹⁸ See Ma Lixun 馬立勳, “Yinyan” 引言, in *Liaozhai baihua yunwen* 聊齋白話韻文 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1987; reprint of the 1929 book printed by Beijing shuju). Ma Lixun had studied from 1925 to 1931 in the English department at Beijing University. The university was the center of China's folklore and folk literature movement from 1918 to the late 1920s (when it shifted south to Zhongshan University), and Zhou Zuoren was among its key figures (see Hung Chang-tai, *Going to the People: Chinese Intellectuals and Folk Literature, 1918-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies at Harvard University, 1985). I am grateful to Roland Altenburger for the biographical information on Ma. The authorship of all the works in the 1929 volume have later been called into question; they will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

¹⁹ The play published in *Xin chenbao* was *Qiangtou ji* 牆頭記. See Hu Shi 胡適, “*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan kaozheng* 醒世姻緣傳考證,” in Ouyang Zhesheng 歐陽哲生 ed., *Hu Shi wenji* 胡適文集 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), 5: 259. In a 1935 list that he compiled of titles of Pu's writings, Hu revealed manuscripts to be held by the Shanghai publishing firm Yadong Tushuguan and by Beijing's Qinghua University, and also by him and Ma Lixun, but did not give further details on the contexts of collection of these manuscripts (Hu Shi, “Ba Zhang Yuan de ‘Liuquan Pu xiansheng mubiao’” 跋張元的柳泉蒲先生墓表, which appears as an appendix to Hu Shi, “*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan kaozheng*,” in *Hu Shi wenji*, 5: 287-91).

²⁰ The Pu authorship theory of the novel has later been persuasively disputed; see, for example, Liu Jieping, “*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan zuozhe kaoyi*” 醒世姻緣傳作者考異, in *Jieping wencun* 階平文存 (Taipei: Wen shi zhe, 1980), pp. 127-137; Lu Dahuang 路大荒, “*Liaozhai quanji zhong de Xingshi yinyuan yu Guci ji de zuozhe wenti*” 聊齋全集中的醒世姻緣與鼓詞集的傳作者問題, in Lu Dahuang, *Pu Songling nianpu* 蒲松齡年譜 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1980), pp. 94-103; Chen Bingzao 陳炳藻, “Pu Songling ye shi Xi Zhou sheng ma?” 蒲松齡也是西周生嗎, *Zhongbao yuekan* 中報月刊 10 (1985): 64-70 and 11(1985): 45-48.

²¹ See Hu Shi, “Houji yi” 後記一” to “*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan kaozheng*,” in *Hu Shi wenji*, 5: 283-4; and Hu Shi 胡適, “Bianwei juli” 辨偽舉例, orig. published in *Xinyue* 新月 4.1 on March 10, 1932; see *Hu Shi wenji*, 5: 239-45.

biography, and his works – Pu who not long ago had been censured, in the midst of sieges on the classical language and classical fiction, for his *Liaozhai zhiyi*.²²

But these elite interests are only part of a much larger story of the making of an author and the establishing of his oeuvre in the modern age. The 1936 collective edition was the culmination of a series of publications of works by and attributed to Pu throughout the Republican period, supported by public interest in Pu’s newly discovered vernacular writings and made possible by the availability of older manuscripts which still floated around.²³ While Pu’s own manuscript of *Liaozhai zhiyi* would not be discovered until the mid-20th century, rumors of its travels – even images of the script – made its presence palpable and the possibility of discovery of other works tantalizingly real.²⁴ The story of Pu’s works at this time, like that of others, betrays glimpses of an era of change and possibilities – when oeuvres and canons were being assembled and defined; when books were scattered and collected, lost and preserved, forged and discovered; when local texts became incorporated into national literatures, and translations brought old books new life and new readers, with whom their fate would become inextricably intertwined.

²² Zhao Tiaokuang 趙茗狂, “Bianyu suibi 編餘隨筆,” *Zuben Liaozhai quanji*, p. 1, recounts the popularity of *Liaozhai zhiyi* at the very beginning of the Republican period and his own youthful attempts to write stories imitating the tales, which even got published in a Shanghai newspaper. He remarks on Pu’s great change in fortune when *Liaozhai zhiyi* soon became attacked and fell out of vogue, until when still another turn of events took place, and Pu became elevated again for the vernacular novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*.

²³ A partial glimpse of these publications, which took place from the beginning of the Republican period onwards, can be had from the catalog of the Keio archive, esp. under section four, “*Liaozhai zhiyi*” (Fujita Yūkenand Yagi Akiyoshi, “Keiō gijuku shozō Ryōsai kankei shiryō mokuroku,” pp. 133-36.

²⁴ The story of the *Liaozhai zhiyi* manuscripts and their dispersal in north China will be discussed later in this chapter. In the Keio collection there is a copy (catalog no. 1101) of the (now rare) 1933 *Xuanyin Liaozhai zhiyi yuangao* 選印聊齋志異原稿 edited by Yuan Jinkai 袁金鎧 (1870-1946) (at one time governor of Fengtian 奉天 province (present-day Liaoning Province) and secretary-general under the warlord Zhang Zuolin 張作霖), which made available a selection of Pu’s autograph manuscripts he borrowed from the Pu descendant Pu Wenshan 蒲文珊 in the 1930s (see Sun Renkui 孫仁奎, “*Liaozhai zhiyi yuangao zai Liaoning liuchuan shimo*” 聊齋志異原稿在遼寧流傳始末, *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan* 3 (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 1982): 284-87).

This chapter does not attempt to tell the story in full – the topic is much too vast – but it rather takes a more humble interest in tracing the provenance of a body of books presently in the Ryōsai Archive in Japan in the context of collecting efforts which took place in 1930s Shandong. I begin with the stories of several key individuals. Proceeding from their world, I examine extant books in the archive as partially capturing a locality’s book culture from the Qing and reflecting the challenges of assembling a literary archive in changing times. In the final section I focus on a smaller group of locally transmitted vernacular writings credited to Pu, forming the main subject of the following chapters, and introduce the approach and scope of this dissertation.

Scholars and collectors: an early 20th century story

In the 1930s, two Chinese scholars and a Japanese collector searched eagerly for extant works of Pu Songling in Shandong. They were Lu Dahuang 路大荒 (1895-1972), a Zichuan native and pioneering scholar of Pu Songling, who would compile Pu’s first biographical chronicle and go on to become the most important editor of Pu’s works in the 20th century; Liu Jieping 劉階平 (1906-1992) of Weixian 濰縣, Shandong, a researcher in economics and book enthusiast, later to serve as an official under the Nationalist government and move to Taiwan in 1949, where he would publish important writings on Pu Songling; and Hirai Masao 平井雅尾 (1888- ca. 1960), who collected hundreds of items in the course of his stay in Shandong as the chief of Zichuan Hospital in the years before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, materials which would later form the core of the Ryōsai Archive at Keio University in Tokyo.

Much of the materials which formed the basis of the 1936 *Shijie shuju* anthology came from Lu Dahuang.²⁵ Born in Caiyuan Village 菜園村 in Zichuan, just eight *li* from the Pu Family Village 蒲家莊, Lu had become intimately acquainted with the works of Pu Songling in his youth through his teacher Pu Guozhen 蒲國政, a Pu descendant and village schoolmaster. In his early years a patriot and local activist, and chief of the county militia until 1927, Lu also cultivated a passion for books and antiques, which would shape the course of much of his adult life. From the 1920s onwards, Lu collected manuscripts of Pu's works in Zichuan and vicinity. His publications in the early 1930s on the works of Pu in Tianjin's *Guowen zhoukan* and Beijing's *Huabei ribao* newspapers attracted the attention of major scholars including Hu Shi, Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 and Sun Kaidi 孫楷弟, with all of whom he established correspondence.²⁶ With the introduction of Wang Xiantang 王獻唐, then head of the Shandong Provincial Library, Lu would become editor of the 1936 *Liaozhai quanji* published by *Shijie shuju*, and through the next decades his life would be intimately tied to Pu Songling.²⁷

²⁵ The biographical information on Lu Dahuang in this essay comes from "Lu Dahuang" 路大荒, in Liang Zijie 梁自潔 ed., *Shandong xiandai zhuming shehui kexue jia zhuan* 山東現代著名社會科學家傳 (Ji'nan: Shandong jiaoyu, 1992), pp. 1-13; Meng Hongsheng 孟鴻聲, "Lu Dahuang xiansheng nianpu" 路大荒先生年譜, *Shandong tushuguan xuekan* 3 (2009): 146-152. Also see other essays devoted to Lu Dahuang in the same issue of the journal, and Li Shizhao 李士釗, "Pu Songling ji yu Lu Dahuang" 蒲松齡集與路大荒, in Lu, *Pu Songling nianpu*, pp. 169-187.

²⁶ Yang Hairu 楊海儒, "Shilun Lu Dahuang xiansheng zai 'Liaozhai xue' zhong de dianji diwei" 試論路大荒先生在'聊齋學'中的奠基地位, *Pu Songling yanjiu* 3 (2010), p. 297.

²⁷ Wang Xiantang 王獻唐 (1896-1960), prominent scholar, collector and head of the Shandong Provincial Library from 1929-1937; see "Wang Xiantang" 王獻唐, in Liang Zijie ed., *Shandong xiandai zhuming shehui kexue jia zhuan*, pp. 14-35. Lu would divulge later that while he contributed much of the materials in the collection, in fact the book was published without consulting him (see Lu Dahuang, "Zhengli Pu Songling shiwen zazhu liqu de jingguo 整理蒲松齡詩文雜著俚曲的經過, in Lu, *Pu Songling nianpu* 蒲松齡年譜 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1980), p. 127).

At around the same time, Pu's works came to the attention of another Shandong native, Liu Jieping, whose first acquaintance with Pu came in the wake of a larger story of the loss (and later partial recuperation) of the books of what was at one time the most extensive private library in Shandong, the Yang family's Haiyuan Ge 海源閣 in Liaocheng 聊城. The collection, which was started in the Daoguang era and boasted many rare Song and Yuan editions, was looted and destroyed during the two-time occupation of Liaocheng by Hebei's Wang Jinfa 王金發 and his troops.²⁸ Liu Jieping, who was attending the business school at the National Central University in Shanghai, had returned home to Shandong during winter of 1930 to find many of the Yang books scattered in the bookshops of Ji'nan, and in the course of conversation with his teacher Ding Jiamin 丁稼民, lamenting the troubled fate of books past and present, Ding took out his own collection of manuscript copies of Pu's poetry and told Liu about the dispersal of Pu's works. Liu, from then on keeping an eye out for Pu's works, gathered by spring 1937 thirty works in the form of old manuscript copies, which he began to edit with plans for publication but was halted with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in August of the same year.²⁹

²⁸ Liu Jieping, "Yang shi Haiyuan ge cangshu gailue ji jiehou baocun" 楊氏海源閣藏書概略及劫後保存, in *Jieping wencun*, pp. 1-23; on its destruction, see esp. pp. 6-8; also see Gu Yeqing 顧葉青, "Tufei Wang Jinfa panju Liaocheng kaolue" 土匪王金發盤據聊城考略, in *Liaocheng wenshi ziliao di 7 ji* 聊城文史資料 第7輯, ed. Zhengxie Shandong sheng Liaocheng shi wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui 政協山東省聊城市文史資料研究委員會 (Liaocheng, Shandong: Haiyuan ge yinshuachang, 1995), pp. 156-58.

²⁹ Liu Jieping, "Pu Liuxian yizhu kaolue yu Zhiyi yigao xu 蒲留仙遺著考略與志異遺稿序," in *Jieping wencun*, p. 285; additional biographical information can be found in Liu Ninghui 劉凝慧, "Dage Liu Jieping" 大哥劉階平, in *Weicheng qu wenshi ziliao di 23 ji* 濰城區文史資料 第23輯, ed. Zhengxie Shandong sheng Weifang shi Weicheng qu weiyuanhui wenshi waishi weiyuan hui 政協山東省濰坊市濰城區委員會文史外事委員會 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi, 2006), pp. 246-55.

It was perhaps with great fortune that Lu and Liu were able to amass the manuscripts that they did; besides them, there were also a number of other individuals who collected Pu's works in Shandong at the time.³⁰ Part of what made these collections possible must be that there were many old manuscript copies of Pu's works scattered around, reflecting the vibrant local reception of Pu's works in earlier times. But the main current was still the loss of books. In autumn of 1935 Xing Zhongcai 邢仲采 of Anqiu 安丘, Shandong, a book enthusiast, paid a visit to Xipu 西鋪 in western Zichuan, then three *li* from the Wangcun station 王村 on the Jiaonan-Ji'nan railway line.³¹ There, the Garden Hidden Among Stones 石隱園, where Pu had resided for three decades during his service to the eminent Bi family of Zichuan, was already a decrepit site, and the Pavilion of Ten Thousand Scrolls 萬卷樓 in front of the garden, which housed the Bi family library, had fallen apart, and the books were dispersed. Only the rocks still were in their old places.³²

³⁰ Liu Jieping, "Pu Liuxian xiansheng yishu kao caogao" 蒲留仙先生遺書考草稿, *Huabei ribao (Tushu zhoubao)* 華北日報 (圖書周刊), December 17, 1934, named a number of people who responded with their own materials to his call in an earlier article (Liu Jieping, "Pu Liuxian xiansheng de quanbu yizhu" 蒲留仙先生的全部遺著, *Guowen zhoubao* 國聞周報, issue 10 no. 27, 1933) to share and help assemble Pu's works: Wang Tongzhao 王統照 of Zhucheng 諸城, Ye Chunchi 葉春墀 of Rizhao 日照, Suo Hengwen 索衡文 of Hongyou 洪由, Ding Jiamin 丁稼民 of Weixian, and Arthur Hummel of the Library of Congress. Elsewhere, besides Wang Xiantang, Lu Dahuang and Ding Jiamin, Liu has also mentioned Zhang Jusheng 張菊生 of Haiyan 海鹽 (Liu Jieping, "Pu Liuxian zhuan xu" 蒲留仙傳序, in *Jieping wencun*, p. 306). Another Shandong collector of Pu's works is Luan Tiaofu 樂調甫, a professor at Qi Lu Daxue and Shandong daxue in the 20s and 30s and friend of Wang Xiantang (Shang Shuo 商碩, "Wang Xiantang de yinxue jiaoliu" 王獻唐的印學交流, *Shandong tushuguan xuekan* 3 (2009): 92-94).

³¹ The information below comes from Xing Zhongcai 邢仲采, "Xipu fangshu" 西鋪訪書, cited in Liu Jieping, "Zaiban zhuiyu Pu Liuxian zhuan" 再版綴語蒲留仙傳, in *Jieping wencun*, pp. 310-311. Xing (courtesy names Lantian 藍田 and Wen'an 文安), one time bureau head of the Ji'nan Bureau of Finances (財政局) and friend of Wang Xiantang, later moved to Chongqing and there became one of its important collectors of rare books (see Xu Yan, "Wang Xiantang shuba zhong de Quancheng jiushuyefengqing" 王獻唐書跋中的泉城舊書業風情, *Shandong tushuguan xuekan* 2 (2009): 107).

³² Some of these rocks are now in the courtyard of the Pu Songling Museum (formerly Pu's residence) in Zichuan.

Xing went through the village door to door trying to find books formerly belonging to the Bi library and was finally able to amass twenty three titles, a minute fraction of what was once one of the most colossal private collections in Shandong.³³ Xing tells of how the Bi books were viewed as wastepaper in the decade before – to the extent of being used to block overflowing drainage after the rains and being burned as heating materials in the winter time.³⁴

A similar account is given by Hirai Masao, who visited the Bi mansion sometime in the 1930s in the course of his stay in Shandong over several years as the hospital chief of Zichuan Hospital, part of the Zichuan Mining Company 淄川礦業所 jointly run by Chinese and Japanese investors, whose mining district included the Pu Family Village. Hirai enters the picture sometime in the early 30s – it is not clear when exactly he arrived in Shandong, but the earliest date I could find on manuscripts copied for him by Wang Fengzhi, Wang Cangpei’s nephew, dates to 1933.³⁵ A photo of him in his 1940 book *Liaozhai yanjiu* shows him in a doctor’s white garb, a middle-aged man with a mustache, in the X-ray room of the hospital where he once worked. There is also a group photo taken in front of a tall Western-style house, the former site of the hospital in Hongshan 洪山, Zichuan, while small letters on the top of the photo tell that the site had been destroyed after the onset of war.³⁶ These photos give a deeply nostalgic feel to the book, written in

³³ Liu, “Zaiban zhuiyu *Pu Liuxian zhuan*,” pp. 309-10. Liao Cheng’s Haiyuan Ge is probably the main name that stands out to modern-day scholars, but the Bi family collection goes back much earlier, having been started in the Ming.

³⁴ Liu Jieping tells that, in 1933, the Beiping Library purchased a book originally of the Bi collection with a high price, and with the attention it garnered, the Bi descendants amassed what they could of the remaining books (Liu, “Zaiban,” p. 310).

³⁵ See catalog no. 0724. I have not looked exhaustively though.

³⁶ The Chinese text gives: “Unfortunately [this site] is no longer with the change of events” 惜為事變歸有烏有 (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, unpaginated prefatory section).

unpunctuated literary Chinese and printed privately by Hirai in Pusan, Korea during the Sino-Japanese War.³⁷ While the book focuses on Hirai's collection and the state of Pu-related manuscripts as witnessed by the doctor in 1930s Shandong, it also tells the story of a man in a strange land, his encounter with an author of another country in another era, and the friendships and travails he experienced as his interest deepened.

It is curious how Hirai would have come to know of Pu Songling as a well-educated Japanese in the early 20th century trained in a profession unrelated to Chinese literature – of his time before Shandong we know nothing, and as he suggests in his own book, while Japanese translations of *Liaozhai zhiyi* existed, the tales were not widely read among ordinary Japanese, and were rather regarded as “licentious and vulgar.”³⁸ In spite of this common impression, in his initial introduction of Pu in his book, Hirai reiterates the high regard given the tales by the Japanese scholar and journalist Shibata Tenma 柴田天馬 (1872-1963), who resided at the time of Hirai's writing in Japanese-occupied Dalian 大連

³⁷ Hirai Masao 平井雅尾, *Liaozhai yanjiu* 聊齋研究 (Pusan: Ueda insatsujo 上田印刷所, 1940). While in most places Hirai signs his name with “recorded by Hirai Masao” 平井雅尾識, the initial section of the book (“Guanyu Liaozhai yigao” 關於聊齋遺稿) indicates “narrated by Hirai Masao” 平井雅尾述, which suggests that he may have worked through an assistant/ interpreter translating his words into literary Chinese.

³⁸ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 21; I have translated “yinwei” 淫猥 as “licentious and vulgar.” Maeno Naoaki seems to think that *Liaozhai zhiyi* was widely read enough for a Japanese visitor to Shandong to be able to associate the place with the book and its author (Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬, “*Liaozhai zhiyi yanjiu zai Riben*,” in *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan di 1 ji* (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1980), p. 292). By the early 20th century, of course, *Liaozhai zhiyi* has had well over two centuries of reception in Japan, from early adaptations in Edo fiction to vibrant receptions from the Meiji onwards in the form of adaptations, translations, and literary creations by inspiration of the tales, such as the works of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke during the Taisho period. See William D. Fleming, “Strange Tales from Edo: *Liaozhai zhiyi* in Early Modern Japan,” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 20 (2013): 75-96; Fujita Yūken, “*Liaozhai zhiyi* de yige cemiao – guanyu ta he Riben wenxue de guanxi” 聊齋誌異的一個側面——關於它和日本文學的關係, trans. Wang Zhizhong 王枝忠, *Pu Songling yanjiu Z1* (1993). Also see Fujita Yūken, “*Liaozhai zhiyi zai Riben* (zhuibu yu dingzheng)” 聊齋誌異在日本 (追補與訂正), trans. Lei Qunming 雷群明, *Pu Songling yanjiu Z1* (1995): 109-119.

and had published writings and translations of the *Liaozhai* tales.³⁹ Hirai recounts a visit to Dalian sometime in the 1930s, when in the course of conversation a mutual friend decided to telephone Shibata so the two could meet, only to find Shibata was out of town; afterwards Hirai received from Shibata a copy of his book in the mail, and promptly sent back to Dalian a rubbing of Pu's grave epitaph in return.⁴⁰ The book would presumably have been either Shibata's first book of translations of Pu's tales, *Wayaku Ryōsai shii* 和訳聊齋志異, published in 1919 by Tokyo's Genbunsha 玄文社 and in two subsequent editions, or the first volume of his translations of the complete *Liaozhai* tales published by Tokyo's Daiichi Shobō 第一書房 in 1933, which met with the unfortunate fate of being banned for sale in Japan.⁴¹ On this Hirai commented interestingly, noting above all the difficulty of translating the refined language of *Liaozhai zhiyi* into Japanese. He wrote, "really it is because my Japanese countrymen could not skillfully transform the vulgar words of the floating word into something poetic, and lacking in elegance, [the translated stories] therefore felt especially licentious and vulgar...."⁴² He thereby expressed his wish

³⁹ Shibata, who would go on to produce Japanese translations of *Liaozhai zhiyi* in its entirety, was a long time resident of Manchuria, where he worked for the Manchurian Railway Company and the Antō News Agency 安東新聞社, and served as the chief of the *Manshū keizai jihō* 滿洲經濟時報 newspaper. Shibata recounts his own encounter with *Liaozhai zhiyi* in an inn in Andong 安東 (present-day Dandong 丹東, Liaoning) in the summer of 1905 in his essay, "Yakuryō made" 譯了まで, in Shibata Tenma 柴田天馬, *Ryōsai shii kenkyū* 聊齋研究 (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1953), pp. 99-111. According to Shibata, he subsequently published translations of the tales in a certain "reading club magazine" ("dokushokai zasshi" 讀書會雜誌) which he edited in Manchuria. Hirai describes him as having written on *Liaozhai* in a certain "Dameizhi" 大每紙 (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 1), possibly an abbreviation for the *Osaka Mainichi shinbun* newspaper, which was also published abroad in Manchuria.

⁴⁰ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 1. On the date of his visit to Dalian, Hirai tells that it was in "autumn of the previous year" 先年秋; if we take this from the date the book ends, in 1937, this would have been autumn of 1936.

⁴¹ On Shibata's own account of this event, see "Yakuryō made," pp. 102-4. Only after the war, in the 1950s, was Shibata able to publish the remaining volumes of his complete translations of the tales.

⁴² Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 21. In the passage, Hirai comments first on how, "while ordinary [Japanese] regard the wild histories and fiction of *Liaozhai* as mostly licentious and vulgar, actually when one reads

that the authorities would reconsider this matter. Writing of the difficulties faced by other Japanese who wished to study Pu's works but lacked access to materials, Hirai finally expressed his desire to gift his books to a library for preservation for posterity upon completing his collection.⁴³

Whatever interest Hirai may have developed in Pu Songling prior to his arrival in Shandong, no doubt he came to be influenced by Lu Dahuang, whose presence can be felt throughout Hirai's book, from the preface relating the author's debt to Lu to notes telling of individual manuscripts borrowed from Lu or acquired through his help.⁴⁴ The book also included a concise chronicle by year of Pu's life (*nianpu yaocui* 年譜要粹) which Lu compiled, described by Hirai to be a gift from Lu.⁴⁵ On the basis of their shared fondness for gathering the works of Pu Songling, it seems, the two men had developed a close friendship over the years of Hirai's stay in Shandong.⁴⁶ Perhaps the greatest testament to their friendship is the publication of Pu's long ballad-narrative *Monan qu* (Song of tribulations) by Tokyo's Bunk'yūdō 文求堂 in 1936, with preface and annotations by Lu

[*Liaozhai zhiyi*] closely, one realizes how the words are chosen with care, and the meanings are far-fetched, such that they cannot be expressed aptly through translation into Japanese” 世人多謂聊齋之稗史小說等多於淫猥，然而熟讀玩味之餘，始知其用字周到，意味深長，非日文可做適當之譯語所能表示者。Hirai then tells of hearing Shibata's book being banned, and comments as translated above (the Chinese text: 曾聞柴田之書已被禁賣，實因吾日本人士對於浮世之俗字無法巧為詩化，及缺乏韻調，故特感淫猥也。 Punctuation mine).

⁴³ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 21.

⁴⁴ Hirai also shared what he collected with Lu, such as giving Lu a copy of the genealogy in Pu's own hand that he acquired (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 48).

⁴⁵ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 13. This is the earliest version of Lu's *nianpu* of Pu Songling that I know of, a concise chart with Pu's age and year and main event(s) of that year. Lu would later publish a much more elaborate Pu Songling *nianpu* (see his *Pu Songling ji* of 1962). Interestingly, the chart in Hirai's book includes not only the year according to the Chinese dynastic calendar and the Gregorian calendar, but also by Japanese *nengo* (was the book intended for a Japanese audience? Did Hirai add them in for himself?).

⁴⁶ In his preface, Hirai tells of Lu, chief librarian of Zichuan library, being “a friend of many years” (與余交誼有年)

Dahuang and a preface by Hirai, which related the story of the book's publication from its inception over conversation in Hirai's "hut" in Shandong, where Lu Dahuang and another Pu Songling aficionado, Yamashita Mokuō 山下默應, had come to visit him in the spring of the same year.⁴⁷ Hirai recounted the introduction of Jissōji Sadahiko 実相寺貞彦 of the Shandong Mining Company in Tokyo and the generosity of Tanaka Keitarō 田中慶太郎 of Bunkiyūdō, who immediately agreed to publish the book without regard to profit but out of a sense of cultural mission.⁴⁸ The preface celebrated the publication of the book as a pioneering act of Sino-Japanese friendship and a joyful event in the international literary world. Following the preface, next to a transcription of Pu's biography from his grave epitaph, there is a picture of the three friends, standing together in the shade of the trees before Pu's grave, the sun filtering through the foliage above them. Hirai appears in a Western-style suit, with glasses, hat and cane; Lu stands to his side, a full head taller, arms crossed behind his back and sporting sandals and a simple long-sleeved shirt. Here and elsewhere are testaments to a personal friendship which, like others, have become overshadowed by the umbra of war and national conflict in later times.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Hirai Masao, "Pu Liuquan weng yigao ji chuban zhi jingguo xu" 蒲柳泉翁遺稿及出版之經過序, in Lu Dahuang ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi waishu Monan qu* 聊齋志異外書磨難曲 (Tokyo: Bunkiyūdō, 1936), pp. 5-6.

⁴⁸ Tanaka Keitarō (1880-1951), owner of Bunkiyūdō, was an important patron and publisher of Chinese scholarship during this time. On Tanaka and Bunkiyūdō, see Ito Toramaru 伊藤虎丸, "Zengjing Jingfu xiansheng cang Guo Moruo zhi Wenqiu Tang shujian kanyin yuanqi" 增井經夫先生藏郭沫若致文求堂書簡刊印緣起, in Ma Liangchun 馬良春 and Ito Toramaru 伊藤虎丸, *Guo Muoro zhi Wenqiu Tang shujian* 郭沫若致文求堂書簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1997), pp. 322-25.

⁴⁹ In the Keio collection there are several leafs of writing in Pu's own hand, presented in frames or in albums, which are signed with the name of Lu Dahuang – they are likely gifts from Lu to Hirai (catalog no. 2804).

As for Yamashita, whom Hirai had introduced as a selfless Buddhist priest devoted to the teaching of school children in Zichuan for over a decade, his involvement in Shandong took on less innocent colors as he went on to serve the Japanese military with the onset of the war (see Sun Zhaoqing 孫兆慶, "Ribei ren zai Hongshan ban de liang suo xuexiao" 日本人在洪山辦的兩所學校," in *Zichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji di*

In Hirai's account of Pu's works there is constantly a deep feeling for the dispersed works of a great author and a sense of connection to the place where he arrived hundreds of years after Pu's passing.⁵⁰ Hirai divulges his own interest in Pu as an amateur despite being neither a researcher nor scholar, and of utilizing his location in Zichuan to gather Pu's works from the "secret treasury" of his native land that few scholars of Pu had the fortune to visit in person. The picture of Pu's writings outside of *Liaozhai zhiyi* which Hirai delineates is one of bleak isolation, of works remaining unknown outside of Zichuan for some three hundred years. Trying to account for why they remained obscure for so long, Hirai cited the remoteness of Zichuan in central Shandong, the politically sensitive nature of many of these works in manuscript form, and the expense of print publication and the modest conditions of Pu's descendants.⁵¹ In the same book Hirai recounted a meeting with Pu Yingchun 蒲英春, an eighth generation descendant of Pu Songling, who entrusted the printing of Pu's various works to him.⁵² Indeed, two hundred years earlier Pu Songling's own grandson Pu Lide (1683-1750) had dutifully yet vainly searched for a knowing reader to sponsor the printing of *Liaozhai zhiyi*, clutching still in his old age to the hope of making his forebear's works known to the world.⁵³ If *Liaozhai zhiyi* eventually saw the light of day, the great trove of Pu Songling's other works lingered in obscurity in his native region, becoming more and more dispersed with the passing of years.

3 ji 淄川文史資料選輯 第3輯, ed. Zibo shi Zichuan qu zhengxie wenshi weiyuanhui 淄博市淄川區政協文史委員會 (Place unknown, year unknown), pp. 158-59).

⁵⁰ See especially Hirai's preface to *Liaozhai yanjiu*.

⁵¹ See Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 3-4.

⁵² Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, pp. 8-9, which has the letter from Pu Yingchun to Hirai with his request. Hirai includes in his book a genealogy chart given to him by Pu Yingchun's son Pu Wenkui 蒲文魁 (p. 12).

⁵³ See Yuan Shishuo, *Pu Songling shiji zhushu xinkao*, pp. 259-60.

The manner in which Hirai constantly referred to Zichuan as a “secret treasury” reflects something of the local reception of Pu’s works - the information, though partial, which Hirai has noted of the items in his collection give us a glimpse into earlier, local collections. Notably, Hirai acquired copies of almost the entire collection of books belonging to the Tianshan Ge 天山閣 library of the Wang family of Zichuan, which began with Wang Jingzhu 王敬鑄 (courtesy name Zitao 子陶), *juren* during the Xianfeng era (1851-61) and compiler of the Zichuan gazetteers of 1911.⁵⁴ An avid collector of Pu’s works, Wang had made copies of manuscripts which he encountered since his youth,⁵⁵ and had also put together a compilation of Pu’s prose writings.⁵⁶ Wang’s interest in Pu Songling was inherited by his son Wang Cangpei 王滄佩, an old man of over seventy at the time of Hirai’s writing.⁵⁷ Hirai also tells that he had purchased several dozen books belong to the Tongying shuyuan 桐蔭書院 of the Geng 耿 family, whose forebear Geng Shiwei 耿士偉 (courtesy name Hefeng 鶴峰, *juren* 1864, later magistrate in Sichuan), one-time resident of Zichuan, was also a notable collector Pu’s writings in the late Qing.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Fang Zuolin 方作霖 ed., Wang Jingzhu 王敬鑄 comp., *Xuantong sanxu Zichuan xianzhi* 宣統三續淄川縣志 (ed. 1911, lithographic edition 1920), in *Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng: Shandong fu xian zhi ji 6* 中國地方志集成 山東府縣志輯 6 (Nanjing: Fenghuang, 2004).

The biographical information on Wang Jingzhu in this paragraph comes from Liu Jieping, “Xuanzhu tiyao” 選注提要 to *Liaozhai wenji xuanzhu* 聊齋文集選注, in his *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu* 聊齋全集選注, 2 vols (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), v. 2, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁵ See postface by Wang Jingzhu to catalog no. 2408 in the Keio collection.

⁵⁶ This work contained the majority of Pu’s prose writings which Lu Dahuang collected in the 1930s and forms a significant part of the *wenji* (prose collection) included in his later *Pu Songling ji* (see Lu Dahuang, “Zhengli jingguo,” p. 127.

⁵⁷ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 20. Hirai tells that he had never met Wang Cangpei in person, but that Wang’s nephew Wang Fengzhi 王豐之 had copied almost the entirety of the family’s collection for him over several years. The last section of this chapter will discuss in more detail the Wang family collection and Wang Fengzhi as a copyist.

⁵⁸ The biographical information on Geng comes from Liu Jieping, “Xuanzhu tiyao” to *Liaozhai wenji xuanzhu*, pp. 2-3, and Zou Zongliang 鄒宗良, “Geng Shiwei bian *Liaozhai wenji* yu Pu Songling yiwen de xin faxian 耿士偉編聊齋文集與蒲松齡佚文的新發現, *Wenxian* 4 (1990): 64-67. On Geng’s efforts to

Hirai collected as well from Xipu 西鋪, fifty *li* west of Zichuan township, where Pu had resided for three decades as tutor to the children of the Bi family, and from members of the Pu lineage, including descendants of Pu Songling, whose books he especially valued.⁵⁹ But of the most precious items in the collection – a genealogy in Pu’s own hand and portions of what must have been a larger compendium of literary works which Pu had copied and compiled – Hirai said nothing of how he acquired them.⁶⁰ In the case of a poetry manuscript in Pu’s own hand, Hirai only divulged that it came from a member of the Pu lineage, whose name he deliberately concealed.⁶¹

compile and print Pu’s writings, see Zou article. Hirai (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 20 and preface to *Qinse le*, Keio catalog no. 0607) tells that Geng was related to Wang Jinzhu by the marriage of their children; he describes Geng as *jinshi* at the end of the Qing and being from Zhangdian 張店, but he seems to have been mistaken on these two accounts – Geng was a *jueren* from Xincheng 新城, in Huantai 桓臺, Shandong.

Hirai (p. 20) tells that among the several dozen books he acquired from the Geng collection, one or two pertained to Pu Songling. In any case, the significant number of Geng items is not reflected in the Keio catalog (see Fujita and Yagi, 1988) – they may be among the books in the collection whose provenance were not given.

⁵⁹ What Hirai tells to be Pu’s “main line descendants” (*zhixi houdai* 直系後代) may need to be qualified. For instance, Hirai (p. 7) describes Pu Yingchun to be Pu Songling’s “main-line eighth generation descendant” (*dixi ba shisun* 嫡系八世孫), but actually, while Pu Yingchun is a descendant of Pu Songling, his line comes not from Pu’s eldest great-grandson but from his younger brother (Yang Hairu 楊海儒, “Pu Songling de zhixi houdai jin he zai?” 蒲松齡的直系後代今何在? in idem., *Pu Songling shengping zhushu kaobian* 蒲松齡生平著述考辨 (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji, 1994), pp. 115-117).

A survey of the names listed in the Keio catalog reveals eleven names of individuals with the surname of Pu, but none belongs to the actual “main line” (see Yang Hairu, “Pu Songling de zhixi houdai jin he zai?” p. 116).

⁶⁰ These are catalog no. 2601 (genealogy) and 2801-2802 (literary compilation).

⁶¹ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 30. This compilation of Pu’s own poems (catalog no. 0301) and the genealogy (2601) in Pu’s own hand have been reproduced in facsimile in *Hoshi zokufu, Ryōsai sō: Ho Shōrei shushō* 蒲氏族譜·聊齋草：蒲松齡手鈔, Comp. Keiō Gijuku daigaku chūgoku bungaku kenkyūshitsu 慶応義塾大学中国文学研究室 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1991).

While it is clear that the bulk of Hirai’s collection is gathered locally in Shandong, the exact provenance of many items is unclear. A survey of the Keio catalog yields names of owners for approximately 60 items (including both individuals who owned the books previously, and owners of books for which Hirai had hand-copies made). While Hirai’s *Liaozhai yanjiu* occasionally mentions Lu Dahuang in connection with texts acquired, it is not clear from the Keio catalog which items form part of the texts amounting to “tens of thousands of characters” which Hirai copied from Lu (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 2).

It is perhaps useful to briefly note the transmission of Pu Songling's own manuscripts to give an idea of the complex issues Hirai faced in his collecting. Pu's own manuscripts that had been preserved into the 20th century had weathered two centuries of the vagaries of transmission – from the caprices of the weather and the turmoil of local history to the Pu lineage's own woes. In the time of Pu's fifth generation descendant Pu Tingju 蒲庭橘, the prose writings which Pu himself had copied and arranged into different volumes seemed to have been already only partially extant.⁶² Still later in the 19th century, the books would weather rains in Zichuan and the devastating raids of 1862, when many homes were burnt and looted, and books destroyed.⁶³ Still a remarkable number of manuscripts in Pu's own hand survived the raids – in 1870, Pu Jiaren 蒲價人, a member of the Pu lineage, would take Pu's manuscripts of *Liaozhai zhiyi* and other manuscripts with him to Liaoning in north China, and they would become lost and dispersed there.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, at home in Zichuan, manuscript copies of Pu's works were

⁶² Being unable to afford printing the texts, Pu Tingju called for others to hand copy the extant writings in an effort to preserve them. See Pu Tingju's preface to *Liaozhai wenji*, cited in Liu Jieping, "Xuanzhu tiyao" 選注提要, *Liaozhai wenji xuanzhu* 2: 1.

⁶³ Sun Jikui 孫濟奎 (Zichuan native, *juren* 1864), tells of his family's books being destroyed in the raids of 1862 in his postface to *Liaozhai xiansheng yiji* 聊齋先生遺集 (1893) (cited in Liu Jieping, "Xuanzhu tiyao" to *Liaozhai wenji xuanzhu*, in *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu* 2: 1-2). Western Shandong was the site of large-scale armed conflict between Nian 捻 troops (originally self-defense bands from Anhui) and the Qing throughout the 1860s. Among the lesser uprisings which they spurred is the insurgency led by Liu Depei 劉德培 in Zichuan during 1860-2, which culminated with the armed occupation of the county seat by Liu and his troops and their execution of its magistrate in late 1862. See Zichuan quzhi bangongshi 淄川區志辦公室 ed., *Zichuan qu jian zhi* 淄川區簡志 (Laiwu: Laiwu shi yinshua chang 萊蕪市印刷廠, 1985), p. 11; on the larger context, see Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 16-17. For a contemporary, official Qing perspective, see Zhang Yao 張曜, *Shandong junxing jilüe* 山東軍興紀略 (Chronicle of military campaigns in Shandong) [postface dated 1885], *juan* 20, reprinted in Shen Yunlong 沈雲龍 ed., *Jindai zhongguo shiliao congkan* 近代中國史料叢刊 v. 543 pt. 2 (Taipei: Wen hai, 1970), pp. 1127-65.

⁶⁴ Half of the manuscripts were discovered in Xifeng 西豐, Liaoning in the mid-20th century, and are now in the collection of the Liaoning Provincial Library. What happened to the other half remains a mystery; it is rumored that there are Pu manuscripts in Russia but this is still unconfirmed. There are different accounts

left to wear and tear. Pu Yingchun, the eighth generation descendant of Pu Songling whom Hirai had met as an old man, who had migrated to north China in the late 19th century, sometime after Pu Jiaren, had entrusted the sizeable number of books he owned to friends and relatives in Zichuan when he left. But when his son Pu Wenkui 蒲文魁 returned to the Pu family village five decades later to re-inhabit the Pu house, the former house of Pu Songling, the books and other properties which Pu Yingchun had left behind were long lost and dispersed. Pu Yingchun's elder brother Yingben 英本 had passed away early on; the portrait of Pu Songling the family inherited was now held under common oversight by the Pu lineage; as for Pu's own manuscript of *Liaozhai zhiyi*, which was rumored at the time to have been sold by Pu Jiaren's descendant Pu Wenshan 蒲文珊, Pu Yingchun admitted to knowing nothing, except that perhaps it was the doing of other members of the Pu lineage in Shenyang.⁶⁵

Of note is that in the 1930s a number of Pu's autograph manuscripts were still extant in the Pu family village. In an essay published in December 1934, Lu Dahuang recounted his own adventure searching for Pu's manuscripts there.⁶⁶ In September of that year, upon hearing of the collection of Pu Yinchuan 蒲印川, Lu visited the village with a friend, initially presenting themselves at a tobacco shop, and were fortunately granted an

as to what happened to the *Liaozhai zhiyi* manuscripts after Pu Jiaren took them to Liaoning. See Sun Renkui 孫仁奎, "*Liaozhai zhiyi* yuangao zai Liaoning liuchuan shimo" 聊齋志異原稿在遼寧流傳始末, *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan* 3 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1982): 284-87; Yang Hairu, "Liaozhai shougao heyi liuluo Liaoning?" 聊齋手稿何以流落遼寧, in his *Pu Songling shengping zhushu kaobian*, pp. 253-67.

⁶⁵ On the story of Pu Yingchun's family in Manchuria and his return to the Pu family village in his old age, see Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, pp. 7-8; also pp. 80-90. Pu Yingchun's comment reveals that he knew something about these manuscripts - the Pu lineage members in Shenyang he referred to may allude to Pu Wenshan, who resided there at the time before moving to Xifeng, Liaoning some time later.

⁶⁶ The information below comes from Lu Dahuang, "Pu Liuquan xiansheng guxiang fangshu riji" 蒲柳泉先生故鄉訪書日記, *Huabei ribao* (*Tushu zhokan*) 華北日報 (圖書周刊), December 17, 1934.

audience with Pu Yinchuan, who agreed to gather and show his books at a later time. Two months later, with invitation, Lu returned to the village to find himself ecstatically seated before nineteen fascicles of manuscripts owned by Pu Yinchuan. These included four fascicles (two in Pu's hand) of *Hexuan bizha* 鶴軒筆札 (Documents from the Crane Lodge), letters and prose writings Pu composed in 1670-71 while serving as secretary to his countryman Sun Hui 孫蕙 (*jinsshi* 1661) in Yangzhou; three fascicles of passages from *Guanxiang wanzhan* 觀象玩占 (Divinatory Studies and Observations of [Heaven's] Phenomena) and one fascicle of excerpted passages from a *Hui tianyi* 會天意 (Perceiving Heaven's Intentions), which Pu himself had excerpted and copied; one fascicle of a *Jiazheng huibian* 家政彙編 (Comprehensive Matters of Household Governance), likewise a compilation of excerpts; an untitled fascicle on auspicious and inauspicious matters relating to marriage; and one fascicle of the Pu family genealogy in Pu's hand. There were also four fascicles of a *Zhuyou ke* 祝由科 (Incantatory Remedies) and another four of writings by Pu Songling's grandson Pu Lide, one of which is in Lide's hand.⁶⁷

How these manuscripts came into the hand of Pu Yinchuan is not clear; what happened to them in the ensuing years is also a mystery. Certainly Lu Dahuang's article, published in a special issue on Pu Songling in Beijing's *Huabei ribao* newspaper weekly supplement upon the invitation of its editor Liu Jieping, would have made Pu Yinchuan's

⁶⁷ By Lu Dahuang's description, fourteen of the nineteen fascicles were "original manuscripts" 手稿本 and five were "old manuscript copies" 舊抄本 – the latter would be the two fascicles of *Hexuan bizha* and three fascicles of copies of Pu Lide's writings. This would suggest that, with the exception of the one fascicle in Pu Lide's hand, all the other items were written in the hand of Pu Songling; Lu, however, did not give details for the *Zhuyou ke* and also did not state this explicitly in his description of the untitled one fascicle on matters of marriage.

collection widely known. The same newspaper issue included a bibliography put together by Liu Jieping on the known writings and compilations of Pu Songling, and a “Special notice,” signed by Lu and Liu, calling out to collectors and aficionados everywhere to aid in their assemblage of Pu’s works.⁶⁸ The results of this enthusiastic (perhaps idealistic) call is unclear, while the books belonging at one time to Pu Yinchuan eventually fell into different hands. Years later, two fascicles of the *Guanxiang wanzhan* would eventually come into the possession of Lu Dahuang, and in 1956 the four fascicles of *Hexuan bizha* were offered for sale in Zibo by a certain Mr. Li.⁶⁹ Earlier on, Hirai told of four fascicles of *Guanxiang wanzhan* in Pu Songling’s hand having been transferred to the guardianship of Pu Yingtan 蒲英譚.⁷⁰ Hirai himself seems to have acquired a number of Pu Yinchuan’s books, which I suspect include the four fascicles of Pu Lide’s writings and the four of *Zhuyou ke*; the genealogy whose provenance he guarded may also be the one owned at one time by Pu Yinchuan.⁷¹

Things changed over the years in Zichuan as Hirai’s collection grew. The same books which had been seen as worthless as wastepaper a decade before came to have exorbitant prices on the market as the value of Pu’s writings came to be widely known. Reminiscing on how he had formerly obtained valuable books from the Bi family in Xipu, years later Hirai would find in the same area even a single leaf of authentic writing

⁶⁸ See Lu Dahuang and Liu Jieping, “Tebie qishi” 特別啓事, and Liu Jieping, “Pu Liuxian xiansheng yishu kao caogao” 蒲留仙先生遺書考草稿, *Huabei ribao* (*Tushu zhouban*) 華北日報 (圖書周刊), December 17, 1934.

⁶⁹ From this Mr. Li, Lu purchased the books for Shandong province; the *Documents* are now in the collection of the Qingdao Municipal Library (see Lu Dahuang, “Pu Songling jilu *Guan xiang wan zhan* shougao yu qi suo bianzhu de *Nongshu jian jie*” 蒲松齡輯錄觀象玩占手稿與其所編著的農書簡介, in *Pu Songling nianpu*, pp. 157-161; “*Hexuan bizha* shougao” 鶴軒筆札手稿, in *Pu Songling zhi*, pp. 349-50).

⁷⁰ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 55.

⁷¹ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, pp. 71-2.

difficult to obtain. Forgeries presented themselves along with true works; multiple stories are told around what pages have come around for sale; the common market price of a single leaf of writing shot up to ten silver dollars (*yuan*).⁷² While noting the price to be still rather low for a first-rate author, Hirai nevertheless was led to lament the state of the books, growing rarer by the day.⁷³ In the Pu family village, at some point the Pu lineage came to have common oversight over what remained of their books, while still there were lineage members who wished to sell them. Commenting on the state of affairs, Hirai noted subtly that it would be more meaningful to let collectors purchase and preserve the books, only that too few people understood the import of these words.⁷⁴

It is not clear when Hirai left Shandong. The latest date which appears in his prefaces to the books he collected date to the first month of 1937.⁷⁵ *Liaozhai yanjiu* ends with a date of spring 1937, signed “in the shade of cherry trees at the foot of Dupuo Hill” 於獨坡山下櫻陰, which suggests that the story of Hirai’s collection ends there.⁷⁶ In December of the same year Japanese troops occupied Zichuan, and in autumn 1938 launched extensive raids against the Balujun 八路軍 (Eighth Route Army) guerillas in the area, who retreated south. Lu Dahuang, who went into hiding before the Japanese takeover, became a wanted man. In March 1938 his house in Zichuan was raided and burned to the ground by Japanese troops. With the publication of the Pu Songling anthology in 1936 it had become known that he had collected old books; before he left his home Lu hid most of

⁷² Compare with two *yuan* for the six-volume 1920 lithographic edition of *Liaozhai quanji* (see Hu Shi, “Bianwei juli”; Yang Hairu, “Minguo shiyin ben *Liaozhai quanji* bianwei xinzheng,” in *Pu Songling shengping zhushu kaobian*, p. 178).

⁷³ The information in this paragraph up to here comes from Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 20 and p. 90.

⁷⁴ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 90.

⁷⁵ Nos. 2501 and 2504, *Riyong suzi*.

⁷⁶ So far I have not been able to locate Duposhan 獨坡山.

them with Tian Mingguang 田明廣, the father-in-law of his student Zhang Maogong 張懋功. Tian's home was subsequently hunted down by Japanese soldiers. The old man preserved the books, but at the cost of his life – he was shot to death upon his refusal to admit having them.⁷⁷

What Hirai did during the war years remains unclear. Judging by the 1940 date of printing of *Liaozhai yanjiu* in Pusan, Hirai would seem to have been based in Korea by that time.⁷⁸ In the summer of 1945, with Japan's impending defeat in the war, Hirai sent the books to his Japanese residence in Yokosuka 横須賀 by way of Korea – the books having left Pusan, three days before the war ended in August they landed safely in Japan.⁷⁹ Like many others, Hirai was in dire financial straits after his return, and perhaps it was due to circumstances that he sought to sell his collection amassed over many years. Initially Hirai seemed to have wanted to find them a home in Japan – but when he learned that even the National Diet Library was not acquiring books, he turned to contacts in America. The books were about to end up in an American library when the Japanese businessman Fujikawa Isshū 藤川一秋 (1914-1992), then studying at Keio University,

⁷⁷ The information on Lu and Tian in this paragraph comes from “Lu Dahuang,” in Liang Zijie ed., *Shandong xiandai zhuming shehui kexue jia zhuan*, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁸ I did find in a typeset folio (no. 6016) an intriguing account by Hirai, dated to 1942 in a guest lodge in Beijing, telling of his revisit to Zichuan in March of the same year and his acquisition of a small portion of Pu's autograph manuscripts of *Liaozhai zhiyi* there (I did not find these manuscripts in the Keio collection). In this same account, Hirai mentions having traveled to Manchuria in 1939, where he had an audience with Yuan Jinkai, who shared with him photos of Pu's autograph manuscripts in his custody. More investigation is due on this topic.

⁷⁹ The information here and below come from Yagi Akiyoshi 八木章好, “Hirai Masao shūshū Ho Shōrei kankei shiryō” 平井雅尾蒐集蒲松齡關係資料, *Mita hyōron* 三田評論 (Oct. 1995): 128-29. I am much grateful to Dr. Yagi Akiyoshi for sharing the article with me. Also, see “Keidai Chūgoku Bungaku Kenkyūshitsu e osamaru Ryōsai shii korekushion” 慶大中國文學研究室へおさまる聊齋志異コレクション, *Mainichi shinbun* 毎日新聞 (夕刊), December 14, 1953.

stepped into the picture.⁸⁰ Fujikawa had come to know of the collection through professor Okuno Shintarō 奥野信太郎 (1899-1968) at Keio, who had earlier negotiated with Hirai to acquire his books for the university but could not find anyone willing to fund Hirai's proposed price of one million yen (a very significant sum at the time).⁸¹ With Fujiakwa's generosity, the books ended up at Keio. Today the five hundred or so items from Hirai form the core of the collection; about two hundred more were later acquired by Keio's Office for Research on Chinese Literature 中國文學研究室.

As for Hirai, it is not clear what happened to him after that. In a newspaper interview dated to 1953, asked about the transference of his collection to Keio University, Hirai expressed his preference for the books staying in Asia, them being things from the land. His encounter with Pu Yingchun seemed to have been well alive in his mind – Hirai tells of being entrusted by Pu's descendants to publish Pu's works, and expressed his hope to realize this during his lifetime.⁸² These hopes were never been realized; Hirai passed away quietly in Japan sometime around 1960.⁸³ The collection which he passed to Keio would provide important primary sources for the next generations of Japanese

⁸⁰ Fujikawa graduated from Keio in 1953. Besides occupying prominent positions in the business world, he was later elected to the House of Councillors (<https://kotobank.jp/word/藤川+一秋-1653947>, accessed February 13, 2016).

⁸¹ On Okuno Shintarō, see Fujita Yūken, "Okuno Shintarō nenpu" 奥野信太郎年譜, *Geibun kenkyu* 27 (1969): 426-440.

⁸² "Ryōsai shii korekushion," *Mainichi shinbun*, December 14, 1953. Maeno Naoaki ("Liaozhai zhiyi yanjiu zai Riben," p. 299) mentions that Hirai had printed at his own cost several works from Pu's ballads and plays besides *Monan qu*, but no further details are given, and I have not come across any of these imprints – I am guessing Maeno is referring to some earlier mimeograph copies made by Hirai.

⁸³ Amano Motonosuke 天野元之助, "Qing Pu Songling Nongsangjing kao" 清蒲松齡農桑經考, trans. Tao Zhengang 陶振綱, *Pu Songling yanjiu* Z2 (1993), p. 168, cites a letter from Fujita Yūken dated to 1965 which tells of Hirai having passed away several years before.

scholars studying Pu Songling, while *Liaozhai zhiyi* acquired flourishing new lives through translations and adaptations in post-war Japan.⁸⁴

Meanwhile, Liu Jieping and Lu Dahuang would go on to publish their most important works on Pu Songling in the 1960s onwards. Liu had left for Taiwan in 1949 with the Nationalist government, for whom he continued to work, while in his leisure time he resumed his studies of Pu's works from before the war, and between 1965 and 1975 he published in Taiwan an annotated series of Pu's works, as well as a biography of Pu and a collection of ballads and songs from early Qing-dynasty Shandong.⁸⁵ In the PRC, Lu Dahuang would contribute to the preservation of cultural artifacts under the new regime, taking posts at the Shandong Association for the Preservation of Cultural Artifacts (later the Shandong Provincial Museum) and working in the rare books section of the Shandong Provincial Library from 1959. In the 1950s he would contribute to the renovation of the Pu house the Pu family village; he also continued to write about Pu Songling, publishing his magisterial two volume *Pu Songling ji* in 1962. But his friendship with Japanese colleagues in the early decades of the 20th century would cause him to suffer terribly during the Cultural Revolution. The old man died in its midst in June 1972; only in 1980 was a memorial held for him in Ji'nan by the Provincial Cultural Bureau, restoring his honor and achievements.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ See Maeno, "*Liaozhai zhiyi* yanjiu zai Riben"; Fujita, "*Liaozhai zhiyi* zai Riben (zhuibu yu dingzheng)", pp. 114-19.

⁸⁵ For a complete bibliography, see Liu Jieping's letter to the Pu Songling Museum, dated October 1990, included in the appendix of Liu Ninghui, "Dage Liu Jieping," pp. 251-55.

⁸⁶ The information on Lu Dahuang in this paragraph comes from Meng Hongsheng, "Lu Dahuang xiansheng nianpu," and interview with Yang Hairu, 6/30/15 (Zibo, Shandong). Lu's achievements were recently commemorated in a series of memoirs and essays in *Shandong tushuguan xuekan* 山東圖書館學刊 3 (2009): 137-61; the issue is dedicated to studies of Lu, Wang Xiantang 王獻堂 and Qu Wanli 屈萬里.

At the time of my visit to Ji'nan in summer 2015, Lu's former house on the bank of the Qushuiting stream was the site of an oldies bar, a path leading through a small courtyard with many potted plants to a dark interior covered with old photos. The books that had once felt his hands are now scattered and hard to trace – but for a seal or two that appears here or there, bearing his name or sobriquet. One of the seals, which Lu carved, styles himself “a townsman of Liuxian” 留仙同邑人.⁸⁷

Liaozhai and beyond: The Keio corpus

Today, many of the books attributed to Pu that have survived the early 20th century are scattered in libraries, museums, and archives in China, while the Ryōsai Archive at Keio University formed from Hirai Masao's collection is the most comprehensive and accessible collection of Pu's works in the world.⁸⁸ The circumstances of Hirai's collection in 1930s Shandong combined with his sensibility as a collector has resulted in a unique corpus of books, dating from the Ming to the Republican era, which besides being centered on Pu Songling also includes many texts outside of the author's oeuvre as known in the present day. In this section I would like to discuss both the limitations and unique aspects of Hirai's collection, and present questions for further

⁸⁷ I have not seen this seal; it is described in Li Shizhao, “*Pu Songling ji yu Lu Dahuang*,” in *Pu Songling nianpu*, p. 186. Liuxian was Pu Songling's courtesy name.

⁸⁸ The Pu Songling Museum tells of having several dozen fascicles of “old manuscript copies” 舊抄本 of Pu's works in various genres in its collection (<http://www.pusongling.net/Aboutus.asp?ID=1>; accessed march 18, 2016), but they are not easily accessible to researchers. During my visit there in June 2015 I was able to see an internal catalog but not any of the items.

Recently, the *Shandong wenxian jicheng* 山東文獻集成 series has made a number of items in Shandong museums and libraries available in the form of facsimiles, but this has also made access to the primary materials themselves more difficult.

research. The vast majority of the books in the archive being still unexplored in the secondary scholarship, the analyses below are necessarily preliminary.⁸⁹

Himself conscious of the complexity of the books he collected, Hirai categorized them into four groups in his *Liaozhai yanjiu*: printed works of Pu Songling, works with sure evidence of his authorship, works outside of those inscribed on his grave epitaph but with evidence of his composition, and other locally transmitted manuscripts. The collector's categorizations were perhaps intended to convey a range of confidence in the authenticity of the books, but they are frequently inconsistent. The “printed works of Liaozhai” 聊齋已刊之書, for example, included a primer whose authorship Hirai himself expressed uncertainty about. The “proven works [by Pu]” 考證的確者 contained both works of disputed authorship and writings in Pu's own hand. The last category of “locally transmitted manuscripts” 地方所傳之聊齋遺稿 proves particularly problematic.⁹⁰

Commenting on the abundance of local manuscripts attributed to Pu and the opinion that many must therefore be forged by later hands, Hirai rather expressed his own faith in Pu's

⁸⁹ I have handled only a selection of the texts (between one-hundred-fifty and two hundred items – some very briefly – mostly listed under the “Suqu” 俗曲 and “zazhu” 雜著 sections in the catalog compiled by Fujita Yūken and Yagi Akiyoshi) and have relied significantly on information given in the catalog itself in parts of the analyses below.

The Ryōsai bunko 聊齋文庫 at Keio University, formed around Hirai's collection, also includes later acquisitions by the Office for Research on Chinese Literature 中國文學研究室 at Keio. The 1988 catalog clearly indicates where each item belongs; besides the items in Ryōsai bunko, it also includes relevant holdings elsewhere at the University – belonging to the Okuno bunko 奧野文庫, Keio University Library, the Hiyoshi Library 日吉図書館 in Yokohama, and reference materials at the Office for Research on Chinese Literature. In the analyses below, unless otherwise indicated, I refer only to books from Hirai's original collection.

⁹⁰ See the table of contents to *Liaozhai yanjiu*, pp. 1-6. There is ambiguity to the phrase “Liaozhai yigao” 聊齋遺稿 as used by Hirai – the term easily suggests “manuscripts left behind by Liaozhai” (Liaozhai, Pu's studio name, is used interchangeably with the author here and in texts attributed to Pu to be discussed below). In Hirai's usage, however, it has the more encompassing sense of “works of Liaozhai” inclusive of works in his hand and transmitted texts.

prolific output and in the presence of Pu's works among them, even if they existed only in the form of transmitted copies.⁹¹ Hirai's solution, it seemed, was to err on the side of inclusiveness lest he should miss a veritable work by Pu. The present-day scholar thus finds delightfully in the Ryosai Archive multiple copies of the same titles, works across diverse genres from poetry and prose to couplets and riddles, reflecting, if inadvertently, a motley selection of local manuscript culture in Zichuan and vicinity dating from the early Qing to the early 20th century.⁹²

The discrepancy between the focus of the collection on the figure of Pu Songling and the variegated assortment of books which it grew into reflects in many ways the challenges of assembling a literary archive in a changing age - when forgeries existed alongside with autograph manuscripts, when new ideas about authorship and literary property rubbed against older practices of copying and attribution, when oeuvres and canons were still in the process of being defined against larger, more unstable bodies of writings. These challenges were faced similarly by other collectors and scholars in Hirai's time, notably Lu Dahuang and Liu Jieping. While the books which these Chinese scholars had acquired at the time are difficult to track in the present day, Hirai's collection, together with his own documentation in his 1940 book, offers something of a slice of the picture of things from back in time. The analyses below will examine the archive with consideration to both the historical moment of its gathering and in

⁹¹ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 55.

⁹² See previous section on the provenance of Hirai's books. The exact provenance of many books not being given, we can't be sure of every item – the manuscripts of known provenance generally come from Zichuan and vicinity, and such is the impression given by Hirai in *Liaozhai yanjiu*. In at least one instance Hirai did acquire a printed book from elsewhere (an 1878 *Liaozhai zhiyi shiyi*, acquired from a Beijing bookstore); I suspect the same of other printed books including imprints of *Liaozhai zhiyi*, but this will need further investigation. See the discussion later in this section on the printed books in the collection.

connection to a locality's textual culture. I will give special attention to the works outside of and on the margins of Pu's oeuvre as defined by Chinese scholars from the 1930s onwards (the next section will focus on select works from the known oeuvre).⁹³

Like Hirai, later scholars who have approached the Ryōsai Archive have wrestled with putting order to his large and motley collection of books. The detailed catalog compiled by Fujita Yūken and Yagi Akiyoshi, arranged according to genre, with separate sections for *Liaozhai zhiyi* and Pu's miscellaneous works, provided the foundations for further scholarly research.⁹⁴ In the catalog, asterisks appear next to works of dubious authorship and those texts whose authentication proved difficult; the task of authentication has indeed remained a key concern of scholars who have approached the archive. Thus, in a study of fifteen transmitted works, Ma Zhenfang attempted to distinguish the items composed by Pu, employing such criteria as corroboration between the content of manuscripts with known biographical information on Pu, their relevance to Pu's time and place, as well as more subjective judgments of style and authorial intent.⁹⁵ While Ma brings to the study tremendous knowledge of Ming Qing literature and philological expertise, however, missing from the analytical picture is the role of the texts' transmission process, as well as acknowledgement of the implicit assumptions under what are deemed "authentic" ("zhen"真) and "spurious" ("wei"偽).

⁹³ While focusing on the Keio corpus, I will also draw on a few manuscripts in China that have been published.

⁹⁴ Fujita Yūken had compiled an earlier catalog (Fujita Yūken 藤田祐賢, "Ryōsai kankei shiryō mokuroku" 聊齋關係資料目錄, *Geibun Kenkyū* 4 (1955): 127-144), but it does not have the detailed information for each item contained in the later 1988 catalog he compiled together with Yagi Akiyoshi.

⁹⁵ Ma Zhenfang 马振方, *Liaozhai yiwen qizhong* 聊齋遺文七種 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1998).

We might begin with taking a look at “the spurious” in all its variety, as part of a multiplicity of practices of assigning Pu’s name to manuscripts. The Chinese term for “spurious manuscripts” (*yanben* 贗本) does not itself relay the many forms which they can take: from later attributions given to older manuscripts (such as with forged seals and false names) to forgeries from raw materials, to manuscript copies which inherited erroneous attributions from their sources.⁹⁶ In the case of works attributed to Pu, it is uncertain when the earliest instances of forgeries took place – forgeries in the sense of works created or modified deliberately to give the semblance of Pu’s authorship. They perhaps predate the 20th century, as in the case of a Ming play whose title and author were both changed in the course of transmission.⁹⁷ In the Republican era certainly there was a proliferation of forgeries of Pu’s works. In Zichuan there was at least one person, with surname Sun, who forged manuscripts in Pu’s hand.⁹⁸ Forgeries also took place in the

⁹⁶ On the long tradition of forgeries of both printed books and manuscripts in China, see Chang Bide 昌彼得, “Gushu zuowei juli ji ruhe jianbie” 古書作偽舉例及如何鑒別 and Feng Siyi 封思毅, “Lidai xieben gaishu 歷代寫本概述,” in Wu Zhefu 吳哲夫 ed., *Guji jian ding yu weihu yanxihui zhuanji* 古籍鑒定與維護研習會專集 (Taipei: Zhongguo tushuguan xuehui, 1985), pp. 205-10 and pp. 286-300, respectively. On examples of forgeries in Hirai’s collection, see Fujita Yūken, “Lun jiuchuan Pu Songling zhu *Qingyun ji*, *Zhiming ji* de zhenwei” 論舊傳蒲松齡著青雲集, 知命集的真偽, *Pu Songling yanjiu* 1 (1989): 119-20 (the article was translated by Tao Zhengang 陶振剛 and originally appears as Fujita Yūken, “Den Ho Shōrei-cho *Seiun-shū*, *Chimei-shū* ni tsuite 伝蒲松齡著「青雲集」「知命集」について, *Kokugakuin zasshi* 国学院雜誌 86 (Nov. 1985): 256-68). The *Qingyun ji* and *Zhiming ji* discussed in this article are examples of early Qing manuscripts stamped with false seals and attributed later to Pu.

⁹⁷ In a postface by Wang Zitao 王子陶 dated to 1909, which appears at the end of catalog no. 2408, Wang tells of having once possessed complete copies of the three plays known to have been composed by Pu, inherited from his father Wang Chunqu 王春渠; he lost one during the “mutiny of the rebel Liu [Depei]” 劉逆之變 (referring to the events of 1861-2 in Zichuan), while the two others, *Jingchai ji* 荊釵記 and *Guobao ji* 果報記, remained. But neither of these two titles match the known titles of Pu’s three plays; *Jingchai ji* preserves the content of the play *Zichai ji* 紫釵記 from the Ming collection *Yuming tang simeng* 玉茗堂四夢, while altering the title and the author (Fujita, “Lun jiuchuan Pu Songling zhu *Qingyun ji*, *Zhiming ji* de zhenwei,” p. 134).

⁹⁸ Luo Wei 駱偉, “Shangao shuiyuan yi xianshi – mianhuai Lu Dahuang xiansheng” 山高水遠憶先師——緬懷路大荒先生, *Shandong tushuguan xuekan* 3 (2009): 153.

medium of printed texts, such as in the lithographic edition of *Liaozhai quanji* of 1920 in six fascicles, which contained many verses fabricated after Pu's works and much other content of dubious origin.⁹⁹ It was in reference to these books that the 1936 *Liaozhai quanji* published by Shijie shuju advertised the authenticity of its own content. In the “Special features of this anthology,” it says:

In this *Collected Works*, previously unpublished manuscript copies form as much as half of the content. Rare and precious, they will be especially gratifying to the eyes. The prose and poetry anthologies of Liaozhai printed by the various houses mostly try to fool readers with spurious works, while those with discerning eyes will detect the truth with a glance. Featured here are all carefully preserved, authentic works. As for the charge of ‘faking pearls using fish eyes’ [i.e.

presenting the spurious as true], let it be ruled out.... 全集之中。未刊行之鈔本。幾佔二分之一強。珍奇名貴。尤足一飽眼福。三坊間所刊行之聊齋文集詩集。類以贗本充數。明眼人固一見即知之。此則皆為珍藏之真本。魚目混珠之誚。庶幾其免。¹⁰⁰

Unabashedly advertising for an “authentic” print edition based on reliable manuscripts, the passage nevertheless gives an idea of the confusion present in the sources at this time.¹⁰¹ The high level of forgeries taking place at this time (and perhaps

⁹⁹ Yang Hairu, “Minguo shiyin ben *Liaozhai quanji* bianwei xin zheng” 民國石印本聊齋全集辨偽新證, in *Pu Songling shengping zhushu kaobian*, pp. 176-188. Hu Shi studied these texts early on in his “Bianwei juli.”

¹⁰⁰ “Benji tedian” 本集特點, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ The advertisement is not to be taken at face value; Lu Dahuang divulges later that the anthology was published with his “editorship” without consulting him, and that while he provided many of the manuscripts, the publisher added in a series of *guci* of dubious authorship (Lu, “Zhengli jingguo,” pp. 124-25).

already earlier) can be illustrated with one example, the case of *Qinse le* 琴瑟樂 (The delights of marriage). This is one of the most controversial works attributed to Pu to date, as a title which appears listed on Pu's grave epitaph but whose extant manuscripts have presented all sorts of puzzles for scholars. There are four known manuscripts of this title, three of which, with variations in the text, narrate a young woman's longing for the pleasures of the marriage bed and the subsequent joys she experienced as a new bride.¹⁰² The erotic content, with lines excerpted from *Jinpingmei* and an extended postface attributed to Pu's contemporary Gao Heng 高珩 at the end of one manuscript,¹⁰³ have aroused great interest among scholars as well as debate surrounding the authenticity of the known manuscripts.¹⁰⁴ A recent study by Huang Lin has shown persuasively that the

¹⁰² The three manuscripts are: a manuscript by the title of *Qinse le* 琴瑟樂 in the collection of the Pu Songling Museum, belonging to the "Liaozhai liqu" series of handwritten copies, but whose provenance is unclear; a second manuscript in the museum's collection, entitled *Zhiyi waishu: Guiyan qinsheng* 志異外書 閨艷琴聲 which was originally presented by Tian Qingshun 田慶順 of Boshan 博山, Shandong, to Wang Tongzhao 王統照, then president of the Shandong Province Writers' Association 山東省文聯, in November 1956, in response to the publication of Wang's article "Youguan Pu Songling de ji ze suotan" 有關蒲松齡的幾則瑣談 in *Renmin ribao* on October 3, 1956. The third manuscript is *Qinse le qu* 琴瑟樂曲, catalog no. 0607 in the Ryōsai Archive at Keio, copied by Wang Fengzhi 王豐之 for Hirai Masao after a manuscript in his collection. For a comparison of these three manuscripts, see Sheng Wei 盛偉, "Qin se le guo nei cangben yu Riben cangben jiaoshi" 琴瑟樂國內藏本與日本藏本校釋, *Pu Songling yanjiu* 1 (1989): 188-260.

Actually, there is also a fourth manuscript by the title of *Qinse le qu* 琴瑟樂曲, also at Keio (catalog no. 0608), whose content differs entirely from the three manuscripts described above, being rather a prosimetric work telling of two jealous wives, their trading a dead cat for the son borne by the third wife, the rescue of the child by the Taibai Star 太白金星, and the eventual restoration of justice. Ma Zhenfang has studied this manuscript and deemed it to be a later work not authored by Pu (*Liaozhai yiwen qizhong*, pp. 364-67).

¹⁰³ This is catalog no. 0607 at Keio; Ma Zhenfang has reproduced the entire text in his *Liaozhai yiwen qizhong* (with the excerpts of *Jinpingmei* taken out of the body of the text and put in the annotations). Also see his "Qingying daxue cangben liaozhai liqu *Qinse le wenben kaoyi*" 慶應大學藏本聊齋俚曲琴瑟樂文本考議, *Beijing daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 1 (1999): 99-104, which argues of the value of the Keio manuscript. The preface attributed to Gao, however, has been shown by Huang Lin to be altered from a commentary to another work, *Guiyan Qinsheng* (Huang Lin 黃霖, "Guiyan Qinsheng yu 'yixing wenxue'" 閨艷秦聲與'易性文學,' *Wenxue yichan* 1 (2004): 122).

¹⁰⁴ Out of his discretion, Lu Dahuang did not include the text of *Qinse le* in his *Pu Songling ji* of 1962; he mentioned the existence of a *Guiyan Qinsheng*, but chose to omit it from the anthology on the grounds of

three extant manuscripts of similar content were most likely forged after a work entitled *Guiyan Qinsheng* 閨艷秦聲 (Beauties of the boudoir, to the tunes of Qin) by a certain Shan Ameng 單阿蒙, dating to the late 18th or early 19th centuries.¹⁰⁵ The first known printing of this latter work was in Tianjing's *Dagongbao* 大公報 of 1923, while a more complete version followed in 1936 in the *Series of unprinted gems* 未刻珍品叢傳 compiled by Yao Lingxi 姚靈犀.¹⁰⁶ Whether the three *Qinse le* manuscripts were forged after these printed works or copied from works that were forged earlier will need further investigation, as does the question of their relationship to each other; perhaps more research can unveil the circumstances and complex factors behind these productions and others.¹⁰⁷

its questionable authorship by Pu and its sensuous content (“Bianding houji,” p. 1817). Sheng Wei reproduces a “*Qinse le*” in his *Pu Songling quanji*, 3: 2681-2690 (also reproduced in Sheng Wei ed., *Liaozhai yiwen jizhu* 聊齋佚文輯注 (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 1986), pp. 57-67, under the title “*Guiyan qinsheng you ming Qinse le* 閨艷琴聲又名琴瑟樂”), after the text of the second manuscript described in the previous note (the *Guiyan qinsheng* manuscript).

Fujita Yūken 藤田祐賢 was among the earliest to endorse *Qinse le* as among Pu’s works, using Keio manuscript no. 0607 as the basis of his discussion (see his “Liaozhai suqu kao” 聊齋俗曲考, in *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan* 蒲松齡研究集刊 (1984), 4: 286-303, translated by Itō Naoya 伊藤直哉; the article appears originally as “Ryōsai zōkkyoku kō,” *Geibun Kenkyū* 18 (1964.9): 29-43). The Keio manuscript has especially aroused the interest of scholars on Pu Songling and *Jinpingmei*. For a review of the debates among Chinese scholars, see Shao Jizhi 邵吉志, “Liushi duo nian lai Pu Songling liqu yanjiu gaishu” 六十多年來蒲松齡俚曲研究概述, which appears as an appendix to his *Cong Zhiyi dao liqu—Pu Songling xinjie* 從志異到俚曲—蒲松齡新解 (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 2008), pp. 346-47.

¹⁰⁵ Huang Lin, “*Guiyan Qinsheng* yu ‘yixing wenxue’”; see pp. 128-29 for discussion on the dating.

¹⁰⁶ Huang Lin, “*Guiyan Qinsheng* yu ‘yixing wenxue,’” pp. 120-1. Yao was an important collector and researcher on Chinese erotic literature, active in Tianjin in the first half of the 20th century.

¹⁰⁷ Huang suggests that the three known manuscripts are forged after the 1923 appearance of *Guiyan Qinsheng* in *Dagong bao*, but I suspect the forgeries happened earlier. The *Guiyan qinsheng* manuscript at the Pu Songling Museum has been described as an “old manuscript copy” 舊抄本 by Sheng Wei (“Bianding houji,” *Pu Songling quanji*, 3: 3467). As for Keio no. 0607, which Wang Fengzhi copied in the 1930s, it would seem unlikely that the conscientious copyist forged things, especially given his own words at the end of the book that he “carefully copied” the original manuscript in his own collection (he does not usually include such a note). It would rather seem to allude that the many errors and questionable aspects of the text are not due to the copyist but rather faithfully reproduced from the manuscript after which the copy was made.

While forgeries reflect, from an undesirable side, a certain fascination with Pu as an author, many older manuscripts from Zichuan assigned with Pu's name were not all "forgeries" in the same sense. Whether they were later attributions attempting to give the older books a certain provenance (and in that sense similar to forgeries using contemporary materials) or whether there were other reasons behind the attributions will in many cases need more study. It has been said that whenever there is a work of unknown authorship in Pu's native area, it gets attributed to Liaozhai; certainly the apparently questionable content of some works makes the phenomenon very puzzling.¹⁰⁸ One might note that the author's name was not always understood in the modern sense in the circulation of literature in earlier times.¹⁰⁹ In any case, what have become captured under the name of Pu Songling in his home region encompasses diverse realms of local literary production and reproduction. A large proportion of works attributed to Pu take the form of ballads, plays, and songs, while there are also titles in the more prestigious

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, catalog no. 2711, which is a pamphlet of funereal materials, held previously by Zichuan Longkou Sizhu Tang 淄川龍口四助堂. The manuscript is a Republican-era copy.

¹⁰⁹ Despite very different historical circumstances, one might be reminded of Hanshan 寒山, said to be a recluse during the Tang dynasty who lived on a mountain of the same name near the Buddhist center of Tiantai, Zhejiang, to whom a large body of verse has been attributed (see Paul Rouzer, *On Cold Mountain: A Buddhist Reading of the Hanshan Poems* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), esp. pp. 32-50 on approaches to his biography and attributed works; on the heavily vernacular aspects of the verses, see Victor H. Mair, "Script and Word in Medieval Vernacular Sinitic," review of *The Poetry of Han-shan: A Complete, Annotated Translation of Cold Mountain*, by Robert G. Henricks, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112.2 (1992): 269-78. There is also another example, the eccentric monk Daoji 道濟 (popularly known as Jigong 濟公), historically active in the vicinity of Hangzhou in the 13th century, who came to be credited with many literary accomplishments in later times. The works attributed to Daoji range from poetry and prose (in Ming and Qing monastic histories) to morality books (in the context of spirit-writing in the 20th century); see Meir Shahar, *Crazy Ji: Chinese Religion and Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), pp. 28-29 and pp. 189-90. In the Shandong Provincial Library there is an early Qing imprint, *Xingmeng xiqu* 醒夢戲曲 (*Songs to awaken one from dreams*), by Pu's contemporary Gao Heng, with commentary and postface attributed to Daoji (as "monk Jidian" 僧濟顛). I have not seen this book; the description is from Wang Shaozeng 王紹曾 ed., *Shandong wenxian shumu* 山東文獻書目, p. 474).

literary genres of poetry and prose, and other types of works such as compilations and commentaries to existing works.¹¹⁰ Among the large body of vernacular writings attributed to Pu there are both works which seemed to have been confined to local circulation and texts which belonged to genres which circulated more widely through the empire. The range of writing, varying from less learned scripts to fine calligraphic hands, reflected a wide spectrum of literate abilities.

As this study is concerned centrally with writings in vernacular genres, below I introduce three groups of such works from a much larger corpus of Zichuan manuscripts, if only to give a feel for the richness of the literature captured under Pu's name. The first involve several works which have been included as "drum ballads" (*guci* 鼓詞) in the 1936 *Liaozhai quanji* but which are most likely works of other Shandong literati which have come to be circulated in Zichuan: *Kong fuzi gu'erci* 孔夫子鼓兒詞 (Drum ballad on the life of Confucius), a work in alternating prose and verse narrating the events in the life of Confucius as a real-life figure¹¹¹; and *Dongguo waizhuan* 東郭外傳 (A Legend East of the City Wall), another prosimetric work adapted from a story from the *Mencius*, which tells of a man bragging about his high connections to his wife and concubine while eeking out his living in an altogether different manner (begging and feeding from gravesite offerings).¹¹² The latter work was quite widely transmitted in Shandong, with

¹¹⁰ For example, there are commentaries attributed to Pu in a Qing manuscript, *Classic of Burials* 葬經, no. 2714 in the Keio catalog; this text is discussed in Gu Meigao 辜美高, *Liaozhai zhiyi yu Pu Songling* 聊齋志異與蒲松齡 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji, 1988), pp. 27-8 and 200-202.

¹¹¹ This work has been attributed to a Cao Hange 曹漢閣 (see Lu Dahuang, "Bianding houji," p. 1818, which cites the attribution from an old manuscript copy owned by Zichuan's He Shutang 何樹棠). There is a copy of this title at Keio, catalog no. 4027.

¹¹² Hirai's collection contains two copies, *Dongguo zhuan* (catalog no. 4025) and *Dongguo waizhuan* (catalog no. 4026), a copy made after a manuscript owned by Pu Yingtan. This story was printed in the

many manuscript versions and varying titles, and attributed to literati from various parts of the region – from humble village literati such as Ma Yizhu 馬益著 (1722-1807) of Linqu 臨朐 and Qiu Chengcui 邱澂翠 (exact dates unknown; active end of Ming into Qing) of Guangrao 廣饒 to the late Ming official Jia Fuxi 賈燾西 (1590-1674) of Qufu 曲阜, who is known also to have composed a number of other prosimetric narratives including an extended *Lidai shilüe guci* 歷代史略鼓詞 (Drum ballad briefing the dynastic histories) and two shorter works adapting stories from the Confucian *Analects*.¹¹³ These works point to the willingness of Shandong literati to engage with serious subjects through the prosimetric form and of the status of the drum ballad as a literary genre (while also being a performed one).¹¹⁴ One might add to these vernacular engagements another *Ershisi xiao gu'erci* 二十四孝鼓兒詞 (Drum Ballad on the Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars) of anonymous authorship, elaborating the stories of filial exemplars,¹¹⁵ and *Wentian ci* 問天詞 (Song Interrogating Heaven) attributed to Pu

Republican-era a number of times; besides a *Dongguo waizhuan* included in the 1929 *Liaozhai baihua yunwen*, there is a *Dongguo xiao gu'erci* 東郭蕭鼓兒詞 credited to Pu Songling published by Shanghai's Zhonghua shuju in 1930, 1931 and 1934, and a *Dongguo ji* 東郭記 published in 1935 by Shanghai's Kaiming shudian 開明書店 in 1935, credited to Sun Renru 孫仁孺.

¹¹³ See Lu, "Zuozhe wenti," in *Pu Songling nianpu*, p. 95; Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 46; Liu, "Pu Liuxian xiansheng de quanbu yizhu," p. 5, which tells of finding five manuscripts of the *Dongguo* story, all different from each other. Liu, "Pu Liuxian yishu manji," p. 22, mentions additional names to which the story is attributed: a Sun Renru 孫仁孺 from the Ming, and a Ma Zunlie 馬遵烈 of unknown date and origin; Liu also cites a *Huazhaosheng biji* 花朝生筆記 telling of a "Song of [a man] who boasts to his wife and concubine" 驕其妻妾曲 by the great late Ming painter and literatus Fu Qingzhu 傅青主.

Chapter 5 will discuss Jia Fuxi and his works in more detail.

¹¹⁴ On the genre of the drum ballad, see Wilt Idema, "Prosimetric and verse narrative," in Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, eds., *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2: 368-70, which provides an introduction to these works; also pp. 356-61 on literary uses of prosimetric forms from the late Ming to the early Qing (including Pu's transmitted works).

¹¹⁵ Catalog no. 0616, which Hirai tells to be an old manuscript from the Bi family (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p.59).

Songling's grandson Pu Lide, a short work in verse protesting the injustices of this world.¹¹⁶

In a different but related vein, there is another group of works attributed to Pu, which consists of plays, ballads and songs on the subject of lower-level schoolmasters and schooling which seemed to have been quite popular locally in Zichuan. The most recent *Pu Songling quanji* edited by Sheng Wei includes three such works: *Xuejiu zichao* 學究自嘲 (The Pedant Mocks Himself), a sequence of short songs relaying a poor pedant's woes by the months of the year; *Taoxue zhuan* 逃學傳 (Fleeing from School), an act played by a single character in the *chou* (clown) role, who confesses the sufferings of being a student; and *Naoguan* 鬧館 (Teaching's troubles), one of three plays known from the list on the backside of Pu's tombstone dealing with the subject of school-teaching.¹¹⁷ Early on Lu Dahuang had questioned Pu's authorship of the first two works, together with another two short works attributed to Pu, *Churi ji qiongshen wen* 除日祭窮神文 (Plea on the Last Day of the Year to the Deity of Impoverishment) and *Qiongshen da wen* 窮神答文 (The Deity of Impoverishment Replies).¹¹⁸ Lu pointed out that, previous to their publication, these works circulated in many manuscript copies locally, some of

¹¹⁶ *Wentian ci* was included in the 1936 anthology as a *guci* by Pu Songling, but Lu Dahuang suggests (by the account of his teacher and Pu descendant Pu Guozheng and evidence from manuscripts) that it was authored by Pu Lide (see Lu, "Zuozhe wenti," p. 95). There are a number of extant manuscripts of this work extant from Hirai's collection (catalogs no. 3017-22).

¹¹⁷ One might also add to the list the short pieces *Weijiong* 鬧窘 (Trouble behind the examination-room curtain) and the song-suite 南呂調考詞九轉貨郎兒 (Lyrics on the examinations – nine airs to the tune of the peddler), which tell in first-person the trials and tribulations of suffering examinees, included together as another of the three plays (Sheng Wei ed., *Pu Songling quanji* 3: 2399-2409).

¹¹⁸ All of these works were included in the 1928 collection *Liaozhai baihua yunwen* edited by Ma Lixun (along with *Wentian ci* and *Dongguo waizhuan*).

which did not specify the names of their authors.¹¹⁹ Liu Jieping had also called attention to the fact that works attributed to Pu may in fact be the compositions of his descendants, who had inherited with the family's "literary" heritage the profession of school-teaching.¹²⁰

One of the most vivid depictions (and parodies) of the poor pedant's life is *Naoguan*, a play cum prosimetric work which depicts the exchanges between a starving schoolmaster and a parsimonious villager taking advantage of the situation to hire him for cheap.¹²¹ While thus far few have questioned its authorship by Pu Songling, in fact multiple, different versions of the play with the same title exists: the version commonly included in Pu anthologies, which circulated in manuscripts and also in woodblock prints with varying titles¹²²; a *Naoguan qu* 鬧館曲 (Song on Teaching's Troubles), a series of songs in decasyllabic lines on a schoolmaster's laments, which appears in a manuscript also containing another work, *Quncan nao xia* 群殘鬧瞎 (The Various Cripples Taunt the Blind Man)¹²³; and *Naoguan* 鬧館 (A Riot at school), a recently discovered play from Zhoucun, in the vicinity of Zichuan, copied during the early Republican era, on the

¹¹⁹ Lu, "Zhengli jingguo," p. 134.

¹²⁰ Liu, "Xuanzhu tiyao" 選注提要, *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu xuanzhu* 聊齋通俗戲曲選注 (Taipei: Taiwan zhonghua shuju, 1970), p. 12. With this caveat, Liu did include annotated versions of *Xuejiu zichao* and *Taoxue zhuan* in the book.

¹²¹ I have previously translated this piece following the version edited and annotated by Guan Dedong while at the time neglecting to discuss the issues around the authorship of the play (see Lu, "Scrounging for a School," *CHINOPEL Papers* 33.1 (2014): 60-81). While I have translated "Naoguan" as "Scrounging for a school" after the subject of the versions of the play in Guan's book and the Pu anthologies – a translation which is really closer in meaning to "languan" 攬館, of a schoolmaster trying to rein in business – quite literally "naoguan" 鬧館 suggests "a ruckus at school," such as corroborated by a different version of the play discussed below. In the appendix, I use the ambiguous translation "Teaching's troubles," which can refer to either scenario.

¹²² Boris Riftin (Li Fuqing 李福清) and Wang Changyou 王長友, "Bangzi xi xijian banben shulu (xia)" 梆子戲稀見版本書錄(下), *Jiuzhou xuelin* 九州學林 2.1 (Spring 2004): 201–202.

¹²³ No. 0613.

subject of students causing a ruckus in the schoolroom when the teacher is invited away during the school session.¹²⁴ The multiplicity of works under the single title point to the popularity of the subject of schooling, reflecting the concerns and interests of local, lower-level literati who transmitted and perhaps composed some of these works.¹²⁵ One gains this impression when looking through extant copies in the Keio collection of works containing the titles mentioned above, often written in less fine hands, and appearing as part of pamphlets containing other works, reflecting a certain lower, local strata of literate composition and anthologizing.¹²⁶ One is led to ponder their attribution to Pu Songling, local literary hero, himself a schoolmaster of moderate means before shooting posthumously to literary fame. One also ponders the appearance of these works in the larger context of Qing examination culture, which produced many more literate men than it accommodated in the civil service system, who in turn contributed to the production of popular literature such as on the subject of low-level school-teaching, a subject which demands further study.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ See Pu Xizhang 蒲喜章 and Cao Juetian 曹厥田, “Liaozhai yizhu sanzong” 聊齋佚著三種, *Pu Songling yanjiu* (2007.4): 105–33, esp. pp. 110–16. The manuscript, along with two others, was copied by Cao Rugui 曹汝貴 between 1908 and 1915.

¹²⁵ There are more works in the Keio collection with *Naoguan* as title but I have not looked at all of them yet – these include catalog nos. 0705–0709.

¹²⁶ For example, see catalog no. 0709, titled *Liaozhai xiansheng xici* 聊齋先生戲詞, containing a version of the schoolmaster play (this one is not an anthology, but has two little doggerel poems scribbled at the end, one on the subject of a romantic liaison and another on the difficulties of the profession (of teaching?). On anthologies of teaching-related works, such as in the collection of the Pu Songling Museum, see Yang Hairu 楊海儒, “Liaozhai yiwen 'Jiaoshu ci' 'Ci guan ge' 'Xiansheng lun' 'Tao qingying wen' “ 聊齋遺文 教書詞 辭館歌 先生論討青蠅文, *Wenxian* 1 (1987): 81–87 and “Pu Songling yiwen 'Shushi siku' 'Xunmeng jue' 'Juantang wen'” 蒲松齡遺文 塾師四苦 訓蒙決 卷堂文, *Wenxian* 4 (1988): 59–63.

¹²⁷ Dr. Roland Altenburger of Wurzburg University is currently studying these works and others on the subject of schooling and schoolmasters, and will be able to offer a much more comprehensive treatment than the sketch presented here.

Besides the texts on students and schoolmasters, yet another body of works calls into question their attribution to Pu Songling - a group of play texts with characters adopting the names of materia medica, which may have originated in a different place and time but circulated in Zichuan some time in the Qing.¹²⁸ Lu Dahuang had early on questioned Pu's authorship of *Caomu zhuan* 草木傳 (A Plants' Tale), a play which has the same form as a manuscript copy of *Bencao ji* 本草記 (Record of the Medicinal Plants), said to be of the Qianlong-era, and a Daoguang-era copy *Yaohui tu* 藥會圖 (Battle of the Herbs).¹²⁹ Lu noted that "this type of composition, which adopted a form well-liked by the common folk to popularize medicinal knowledge, was perhaps also a fad of the times, and was quite effective in its accessibility and practicality...."¹³⁰ In the Keio corpus there are ten titles which seem to be works of this variety, two of which I viewed, one by the title of *Yaohui tu* 藥會圖 and the other being a fragmented *Yaoxing bangzi qiang* 藥性梆子腔 (Medicinal Properties [sung to the tune of] *bangzi qiang*), both of which appear to be quite old manuscript copies written in fine hands, dating perhaps to as early as Pu's

¹²⁸ A version is included in Sheng Wei ed., *Pu Songling quan ji*, 3: 3291-3335.

¹²⁹ Lu Dahuang, "Bianding houji," *Pu Songling ji*, 2: 1817.

¹³⁰ Lu Dahuang, "Bianding houji," p. 1817. Actually the genre of literature employing medicine puns go much further back, to Tang and Song times, and in the Song there was a type of storytelling which made great use of these kinds of puns. For a translation of the earliest known example from Dunhuang, which depicts Wu Zixu 伍子胥's confrontation with his wife during his flight, see Victor Mair ed., *Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, pp. 488-490, and *Tun-huang Popular Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 134-36 and pp. 275-79. *Jin ping mei* has an example of song sung to the names of fruits and flowers in chapter 33 (see David Roy trans., *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, vol. 2, "The Rivals," pp. 269-270 and p. 542) and another sung to names of materia medica in chapter 85. Similar titles to these have been produced in print, such as in the southern printing center of Sibao (Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce and Culture*, p. 490, cites an early Qing work, *Caomu chunqiu yanyi* 草木春秋演義, appearing on a list of imprints from Sibao's Cuiyun tang 萃雲堂 publishing house, founded in 1816? (p. 23)).

time.¹³¹ The first one has tells of the marriage between a heroic Dendrobium 石斛 with Chrysanthemum 菊花, daughter of Licorice 甘草, interspersed with interludes of comedy, action, and seduction. Notably, the culminating drama comes from rebellion led by a Barbarian Nux Vomica 番鱉子,¹³² who used the mineral sal ammoniac 礪砂 to blind the troops of the Middle Kingdom but was ultimately defeated with the arrival of Licorice, famed for his ability to dispel the many poisons.¹³³ The directions for roles of characters, as well as for spoken and sung sections and for gestures, all indicate this is a play, while sung sections take the form of ten-character lines common in many forms of local drama and prosimetric literature. The second manuscript, also a play on the same story, has some variations in the plot and somewhat less obscene content. These works point to a genre which may well have been alive in Pu's day. What will need further study – and what will be illuminating for the broader study of popular literature – is the variations within the manuscripts that circulated in Zichuan, their relationship with works of a similar nature

¹³¹ Catalog no. 0745 and no. 0748, respectively. On the first page of no. 0745, there are two small seals indicating the two characters of Pu Songling's courtesy name, "Liuxian" 留仙; they appear also on no. 0503. The relatively bright red color of the ink suggests that they were stamped on fairly late. Otherwise there is no indication on the MS (nor on no. 0748) of Pu Songling's name, as there are on some other found manuscripts which attribute their authorship to him (see detailed descriptions in Yang Hairu 楊海儒, "Caomu zhuan de zuozhe shi Pu Songling ma?" 草木傳的作者是蒲松齡嗎?, in *Pu Songling shengping zhushu kaobian*, pp. 150-53). Similar to a work of the same title described by Yang now in the collection of the Pu Songling Museum, no. 0745 contains a preface which mentions a Master Guo Xiusheng of Jin 晉之郭子秀升, a scholar-doctor 儒醫, who "composed a *chuanqi*-drama in his leisure, which told of the various medicines" 其暇譜有傳奇, 則乃群藥 (punctuation mine). On the last page of this manuscript is a fragment of a letter, telling of the return of loaned "capital-money" of five thousand 京錢五千, and in lighter ink there is a name "Li Hengchang of Suzhou" 姑蘇李恒昌.

¹³² 番木鱉(Strychnos nux vomica) is a tree native to India and Southeast Asia, with poisonous bark and seeds used sometimes for their medicinal properties.

¹³³ There is a reference to the Tibetan regions here, as the text tells that sal ammoniac 礪砂 comes from the Western regions 西番, and the general who quelled the rebellion went on to remain in Sichuan to guard the borders.

which also circulated elsewhere in the empire, and the relationship between the manuscript copies and printed versions of the texts.¹³⁴

As the previous discussions have focused on ballads and plays, probably a quick note ought to be made on the abundant works of poetry which are also in the collection. Notably, the few manuscripts thus far authenticated to be from the early Qing - the majority of others being still unstudied – are centered on the more prestigious genres of literary writing, especially poetry. These include two early Qing manuscripts, the *Qingyun ji* 青云集 (Blue Cloud Anthology), a collection of poetry, and the *Zhiming ji* 知命集 (Having Destiny's Knowledge), a collection of poetry, *ci* and *qu*, whose compiler is unknown but likely from Zichuan.¹³⁵ There is also an early Qing manuscript of a collection of writings in parallel prose with reference to sites in Shandong, and another on instructions for the composition of examination essays, which seems to have been closely associated with the Gao family of Zichuan.¹³⁶ One might add the selection of Tang poetry copied by Pu's contemporary and friend Zhang Duqing 張篤慶,¹³⁷ and the selections of earlier literature and a compilation of his own poems in Pu's hand.¹³⁸ Together these texts provide valuable sources for studying literary practice in early Qing Zichuan. With more study perhaps more early manuscripts of works in other genres will come to light. And besides these early manuscripts, the plethora of poetry anthologies

¹³⁴ Jia Zhizhong 贾治中 and Yang Yanfei 杨燕飞, *Qing dai yaoxing ju* 清代药性剧 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2013), provides a wonderful start, with the text to three works with detailed annotations, facsimiles of texts collected by the authors from Shanxi, descriptions of other sources in archives and seen online, and scholarly essays on the topic.

¹³⁵ Fujita Yūken, "Lun jiuchuan Pu Songling zhu *Qingyun ji*, *Zhiming ji* de zhenwei." These texts have catalog no. 4012.

¹³⁶ Ma, *Liaozhai yiwen qizhong*, p. 338, 330.

¹³⁷ No. 7039.

¹³⁸ Nos. 2801 and 2802 (selections of earlier literature); and no. 0301 (Pu's MS of his own poems).

attributed to Pu from later times, like the songs and plays attributed to him, should provide interesting glimpses into the complex factors behind the attributions and perhaps also some aspect of local literary practice.¹³⁹

If it would only be easier to date the manuscripts precisely we would be able to discern when and how so many works became attributed to Pu. Probably here a word should be said on the challenges of working with the manuscripts and the difficulty of arriving at precise dates for them in the absence of sure evidence besides the material texts themselves. Among the five hundred or so items Hirai collected, a substantial proportion are copies which he commissioned of manuscripts in the possession of others, with the copyist's name indicated in some cases. Besides these copies made in the Republican era, the hundreds of older manuscripts, ranging from the early Qing to the beginning of the 20th century, are generally very difficult to date. The manuscripts from Zichuan usually being written on a bamboo paper, scholars have often paid attention to their color, which range from the brittle, brown pages of manuscripts from Pu's day (such as can judged from manuscripts in his hand) to those in various gradations of color with lesser age. A number of the books have undergone preservation, and many were rebound in Japan judging by their evenly spaced four hole sewing, but the different qualities of work done on the books – such as different paper used for backing – make the relative ages of the books in some cases very difficult to judge.¹⁴⁰ These challenges are compounded by the poor state of preservation of many manuscripts, with missing covers

¹³⁹ I have not looked at any of these texts, but catalog nos. 0310-0330, all with asterisks denoting their dubious attribution to Pu, would seem especially promising for discoveries.

¹⁴⁰ Where (China or Japan) and under what circumstances the preservations were done will need further study.

and fragmented pages, reflecting in part the humble literary status of some works and in part the general lack of care given to books by the early 20th century. This is not to mention the frequent presence of false seals and attributions which have been assigned to the manuscripts by later hands.

We might also reflect on another difficulty - the question of absence - in making sense of Hirai's collection as a selection of a much wider sphere of texts from one locale, encompassing writings in diverse registers, genres, social contexts, and times. As a selected body of works focused on the figure of a single author, many facets of textual production are necessarily ruled out, including writings of specified context, such as contracts, land deeds, ephemera of certain kinds. On the other hand, Hirai's collection does contain a number of works attributed to Pu (medical books, certain handbooks, the genealogy in his hand) which do not traditionally belong to the realm of literary writing, reflecting the breadth of textual production in which Pu is known to have participated as a village literatus. Still one ponders the absences within the realm of literary composition, such as classical fiction in the style of *Liaozhai zhiyi* and other genres of classical prose-writing.¹⁴¹ If one attempts to explain this through Pu's local reputation as an author of popular literature, besides the plethora of shorter works of ballads and songs, one might also expect to see more titles of fiction, such as of the historical romance or *caizi jiaren* variety, but one does not find them – it may be that they were not read in the area, or perhaps that their very popularity ruled out the credibility of any attributions to Pu. But

¹⁴¹ I am thinking examination essays, which must have been produced copiously in the Qing and easily attributed – I do suspect that an “exam papers” 考卷 (no. 7045) held by Hirai to be a precious remnant from the Bi house had a fabricated provenance – that the “Chuoran tang” 焯然堂 on the cover was scribbled on by someone later to an existing collection of essays).

what qualifies a text for attribution, and what rules it out? What slices of Zichuan's local manuscripts are reflected in Hirai's collection, and what are not? These questions beg much further research.

As with books in the manuscript medium, one might wonder about the varying strata of textual production reflected by the printed texts from Hirai's collection. Numbering about forty in total, they form a relatively small proportion in comparison to the hundreds of manuscripts collected by Hirai. Unlike the manuscripts, Hirai seemed to have acquired the imprints not only locally in Zichuan but also elsewhere in north China, such as an 1878 *Liaozhai zhiyi shiyi* obtained from a Beijing bookstore.¹⁴² As with the manuscripts, the printed books are a motley bunch. It is hard to tell whether Hirai purchased groups of books at a time from his privileged sources or whether he also had cultivated interests outside of Pu, but books apparently unrelated to Pu got into the mix in the process.¹⁴³ Among books which Pu acquired from the Pu lineage, there is a *Sishu wen* 四書文 (Essays on the Four Books) in eighteen fascicles,¹⁴⁴ and one fascicle from a *Qinding qizhen sishu wen* 欽定啓禎四書文 (Imperially Approved Essays on the Four Books)¹⁴⁵; a *Wufeishi shijing* 伍非石詩經 (Wu Feishi's *Book of Odes*) in four fascicles, printed by a

¹⁴² Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 25. This would be catalog no. 1301, *Liaozhai zhiyi yigao sijuan* in two fascicles, printed by Beijing's Juzhen Tang 聚珍堂. Hirai did not give the provenance of most of the imprints except a few acquired from the Geng family and the Pu lineage.

¹⁴³ Hirai generally did not speak of interests outside of Pu in his *Liaozhai yanjiu*, while he did privilege books from certain families – the Pu lineage, the Wang and Geng families, the Bi house; from the Geng library, we remember, only one or two of the several dozen books he purchased pertained to Liaozhai (Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 20).

¹⁴⁴ No. 7007. The title appears to be from the catalogers. These are essays on topics from the Four Books from both the Ming and Qing. I could not find the date and place of printing.

¹⁴⁵ No. 7006. The title appears to be from the catalogers. These are also essays on the topics from the Four Books. I could not find the date and place of printing.

Wenmao tang 文茂堂, dating to 1761¹⁴⁶; one fascicle each of the *Yangzhen yigui* 養正遺規 (Instructions for cultivating rectitude) and the *Xunsu yigui* 訓俗遺規 (Instructions for guiding the populace) compendiums by Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀 (1696-1771).¹⁴⁷ The provenance of other titles are more obscure: a *Guigu siyou zhi* 鬼谷四友志 (Chronicle of Guiguzi and his four friends) by Yang Danyou 楊澹游 with preface dated to 1795¹⁴⁸; one fascicle of a *Yingzhi wen tushuo* 陰鷲文圖說 (Illustrated Text on the Secret Accumulation of Merit)¹⁴⁹; an *Quanxiao lu* 勸孝錄 (Exhortations to be Filial) printed in Zichuan¹⁵⁰; one fascicle of *Huibeijiji* 回盃記 (The goblet), a play¹⁵¹; and one fascicle of the *Baixiang cipu* 白香詞譜 ([Shu] Baixiang's Anthology of ci-lyrics) by Shu Menglan 舒夢蘭 (1757-1835).¹⁵² There are also several varieties of basic educational literature – a *Newly Compiled Assorted Characters in Four Syllable lines* 新編四言雜字 from later in the 18th century,¹⁵³ and a lithographic edition from the late Qing or Republican Era.¹⁵⁴ This is not to include manuscript copies of printed books – this would no doubt complicate the picture.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁶ No. 7001. I could not find the date and place of printing.

¹⁴⁷ Nos. 7022 and 7023, respectively. A native of Lingui 臨桂, in present-day Guangxi, Chen was a prominent Confucian scholar and official known for his pioneering educational projects, including his founding of charitable schools in Yunnan. See Alexander Woodside, "Some Mid-Qing Theorists of Popular Schools, Their Innovations, Inhibitions, and Attitudes toward the Poor," *Modern China* 9.1 (1983): 6; 22-27.

¹⁴⁸ No. 7034. This is one of the very few printed works of fiction outside of *Liaozhai zhiyi* in Hirai's collection. A very similar title was published in Sibao (see Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 483-4; I have borrowed the translation of the title). I could not find the place of printing.

¹⁴⁹ No. 7037. No date is given in the catalog.

¹⁵⁰ No. 7005. Undated. This text will be discussed more in Chapter 3.

¹⁵¹ No. 4024. Catalog tells it is a Qing imprint; I have not handled the book

¹⁵² No. 7048. Catalog tells it is a Qing imprint; I have not handled the book

¹⁵³ No. 7012. This and the next item will be discussed more in Chapter 2.

¹⁵⁴ No. 7013.

¹⁵⁵ It remains to be known how many of the manuscript copies are made from printed books.

The connection to Pu Songling does seem to be the central force behind the collection of a number of other books which otherwise had diverse contexts of production. These include the few earliest imprints in the collection¹⁵⁶: eight fascicles from a *Beishi* 北史 (History of the Northern Dynasties) dated to 1593, with scattered commentaries allegedly in Pu Songling's hand¹⁵⁷; two fascicles from a Kangxi-era *Zichuan xianzhi* 淄川縣志 (*Zichuan gazetteer*)¹⁵⁸; and four imprints in two varieties of Pu's *Riyong suzi* 日用俗字 (Popular Characters for Daily Use), with a preface by Pu's son Pu Lide dated to 1747, very possibly printed in Zichuan or vicinity.¹⁵⁹ One might also add the *Lishan shixuan* 笠山詩選 (Selected Poems of Lishan), by Pu's countryman Sun Lishan 孫笠山 (1636-1682, *jinshi* 1661)¹⁶⁰; a genealogy of the prominent Gao family of Zichuan with a preface dated to 1806¹⁶¹; and a lithographic edition of the Pu family genealogy in six fascicles, dated to 1934, revised jointly by members of the Pu lineage and given a run of forty-copies, distributed among the headmen of the lineage.¹⁶² There is a copy of the *Panyang shicui* 般陽詩萃 (Compendium of poems from Panyang), a collection of over 1,800 poems by the area's literati (including 145 by Pu), edited by

¹⁵⁶ Here and below the dates given are the dates indicated on the blocks.

¹⁵⁷ No. 7019; see Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 72, under "Pu shi cangshu" 蒲氏藏書. I suspect that the sections allegedly in Pu's hand were in fact fabricated later.

¹⁵⁸ No. 6026.

¹⁵⁹ Nos. 2501-4. More on these texts in Chapter 2.

¹⁶⁰ No. 4008. I could not ascertain the place of printing. Judging by the missing last stroke in the character 禛 this imprint observes the taboo for the Yongzhen emperor (reign era 1723-35) and would appear to date from that time.

¹⁶¹ No. 6024. The information above comes from the catalog; I have not handled this book.

¹⁶² Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 28. I did not find this item in the collection. There are a few copies of the genealogy compiled by Pu (nos. 2602, 2603; 6001 also contains a preface by Hirai) and genealogy charts (no. 6002-4) which extend the generations up to those alive in Hirai's time.

Feng Jizhao 馮繼照 and dated to 1847.¹⁶³ There are also a few books (provenance not given) whose connection to Pu is not explicit but which motivated Hirai's purchase: an *Ershisi xiaodi tu shi ke kan* 二十四孝弟圖詩合刊 (The combined twenty-four filial exemplars and twenty-four exemplary siblings with poems and illustrations) printed by Baoshutang 寶書堂 of Weiyang 濰陽 and dated to the Tongzhi era¹⁶⁴; and two versions of a *Farmer's Assorted Characters for Easy Use* 新刊音釋校正便用莊雜字 of unknown place and date.¹⁶⁵

Besides the aforementioned books, the majority of the two dozen or so imprints in Hirai's collection with evidence of their dates was produced in the 19th century and later, revolving unsurprisingly around *Liaozhai zhiyi* and other writings by or attributed to Pu Songling. Those with earlier dates include six fascicles of the first printing of *Liaozhai zhiyi* (the Zhao Qigao edition) of 1766¹⁶⁶, and five fascicles from a 1785 printing of *Liaozhai zhiyi* in eighteen *juan* by a Yuwentang 郁文堂, made after the 1767 printing that was edited by Wang Jinfa 王金范 and probably printed in Zhoucun 周村.¹⁶⁷ There is also

¹⁶³ No. 6027; Hirai, *Liaozhi yanjiu*, p. 28. The book indicates the blocks to be kept by a Liubo guan 柳波館. I am not sure where it is. There is a copy of the imprint in the collection at Harvard Yenching Library.

¹⁶⁴ No. 7004; there are prefaces dated to the Tongzhi era. Hirai may have acquired this text thinking that it was by Pu Songling; he describes a manuscript copy of *Ershi si xiao gu'erci* 二十四孝鼓兒詞 which he attributes to Pu (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 59). This text will be discussed more in Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁵ Nos. 7015 and 7016. These latter two texts bear a close relationship to Pu's *Riyong suzi* and Hirai acquired them in this connection. Chapter 2 will discuss these and the other assorted characters texts in more detail.

¹⁶⁶ Hirai (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p.23) lists first among his acquisitions the first printing of *Liaozhai zhiyi* of 1766 of Zhao Qigao in sixteen fascicles (the provenance is not given), but I cannot find it in the catalog. There is a copy of the Zhao printing (no. 1150) but it is described to come from Keio's Okuno bunko 奧野文庫, not Hirai. Was this a cataloging mistake? Did Hirai decide to keep his 1766 *Liaozhai zhiyi* for himself? This will need further investigation.

¹⁶⁷ No. 1153. On Wang Jinfa and his compilation of tales from *Liaozhai zhiyi*, see Chen Naiqian 陳乃乾, "Tan Wang Jinfa ke shiba juan ben *Liaozhai zhiyi* 談王金範刻十八卷本聊齋誌異, *Wenwu* 3 (1963): 1-6, and Yuan Shishuo, *Pu Songling zhushu xinkao*, pp. 406-32. The extant books in China are also reprintings from 1785 by Yuwen tang 郁文堂.

a Qing imprint of *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* in sixteen fascicles.¹⁶⁸ Then there are various 19th century recensions of *Liaozhai zhiyi* and anthologies of Pu's attributed works in various genres from the end of the 19th century to the Republican era.¹⁶⁹ The provenance of the majority of these books we do not know; only a handful or so are described in Hirai's book.¹⁷⁰

The glimpses of a wider sphere of the reception of Pu Songling's writings reflected by these imprints leads us to reflect back on Hirai's collection of Zichuan manuscripts as a selection of local texts which only in part overlapped with the shared literary culture of the empire, which included works such as *Liaozhai zhiyi*.¹⁷¹ We might ponder: why was *Liaozhai zhiyi* chosen for remembrance by literary history, whereas the diverse array of other works which Pu was known to have composed is relegated to relative oblivion except in his home region until the early 20th century? Would *Liaozhai zhiyi*'s success perhaps have had something to do with the medium of printing, the prestige of its commentators, and the shared language of classical fiction, which flourished in the mid and late Qing¹⁷²? The local manuscripts collected by Hirai reveal other possibilities, transmissions, memories. In Zichuan, which claims the special status of being the

¹⁶⁸ No. 5001; Hirai describes it as a Kangxi-era printing (*Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 24) but this needs to be ascertained. I handled this book very briefly and could not ascertain its date or place of printing.

¹⁶⁹ I have not handled the majority of these later imprints.

Besides those books from Hirai's original collection, the Keio libraries house a wealth of other imprints of *Liaozhai zhiyi* and related works. See the catalog, section 4, "*Liaozhai zhiyi*," pp. 133-42.

¹⁷⁰ See *Liaozhai yanjiu*, pp. 23-28. For a collector so keen on gathering the known works of Pu Songling in all their forms, one might ponder the absence of some printed titles – such as, for example, the 1928 printing of *Cibei qu* and the various Republican era printings of the *Dongguo ji* story attributed at that time to Pu. It may well be that Hirai focused his energy on searching out local manuscripts and prioritized them over the collection of printed books; perhaps some books were also not available to a collector in his time.

¹⁷¹ Very crucially absent from my analysis so far is the picture of local manuscript transmission of *Liaozhai zhiyi*; I hope to return to the archive and look at these manuscripts at some point.

¹⁷² See Leo Tak-hung Chan, *The Discourse on Foxes and Ghosts: Ji Yun and Eighteenth-Century Literati Storytelling* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 13-16.

author's birthplace, both the transmitted works of Pu Songling and others belonging to varying realms of local textual culture together comprised the reception of *Liaozhai*. Pu Songling, of course, had many other local receptions, all of which are in need of further study – from the now obscure local printings of *Liaozhai zhiyi* to adaptations in the forms of fiction, ballads, and plays which flourished well into the 20th century.¹⁷³

If the relative concentration of Pu's literary works in Hirai's collection allows us to ask certain kinds of questions, the fragmented and mixed quality of the collection as a whole makes for greater challenges in interpretation, while still it tempts us to think about book culture more broadly in Qing Zichuan and beyond. Even if there are no answers, we might wonder: how much did Hirai's books reflect the availability of books to a collector in his time and how much is his selection? How much of the content of locally acquired books originated elsewhere, and how far did locally produced books travel – from *Liaozhai zhiyi* to lesser known titles? What varying social and literate realms did the local readers and creators of Zichuan's manuscript culture encompass? How much does the dominance of the handwritten over the printed medium in Hirai's collection reflect their actual relationship in the realm of local texts in the Qing? And in what ways does it make sense to consider a text "local" – given the mobility of physical books, the empire-wide

¹⁷³ See Guan Dedong 關德棟, "Qianyan" 前言, in Guan Dedong and Li Wanpeng 李萬鵬 eds., *Liaozhai zhiyi shuochang ji* 聊齋志異說唱集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1983), pp. 1-27 for an overview. Also see Guan Dedong ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi huaben ji* 聊齋志異話本集 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1991) and Guan, Dedong and Che Xilun 車錫倫, eds. *Liaozhai zhiyi xiqu ji* 聊齋志異戲曲集, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1983); Jiang Yubin 蔣玉斌, *Liaozhai zhiyi de Qing dai yansheng zuopin yanjiu* 聊齋志異的清代衍生作品研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2012).

production of common texts, and a shared literate culture engaging with similar written scripts, literary values, and cultural tropes and imaginations?

While these questions go beyond the scope of this study, they shall remain in the background of discussions in the following chapters, which deal in one way or another with textual cultures local and shared. What I hoped to have done here is to open up ways of thinking about Hirai's collection beyond the paradigm of authenticity, which is itself a reflection of certain scholarly and disciplinary priorities. A collection formed against the shifting political, social and literary landscapes of the early 20th century, it is messy, mixed, shaped by many factors which are hard to know now; meanwhile, the very fact that it was gathered over a concentrated period of time and concentrated on one locality provides for a certain historicity, which I have tried my best to delineate here and in the first part of this chapter. In the next section, I focus on a much smaller selection of texts from within the corpus of books from Zichuan, a group of locally transmitted writings known to have been composed by Pu Songling. As they will form the core of this dissertation, I will examine the extant sources, their transmission and production, and evidence from Pu's day of their composition. Then I define the scope of the study at large and summarize the approaches I take given the nature of the sources.

A vernacular oeuvre

In a eulogy of Pu Songling dated to 1715, the year of Pu's death, the Pu sons memorialized their father's achievements thus¹⁷⁴:

¹⁷⁴ "Pu Ruo deng ji fu wen" 蒲箬等祭父文, in Lu Dahuang ed., *Pu Songling ji*, 2: 1811.

Our father was known for his literary talents since a young age, and was respected throughout the land. Yet, unmet with worldly success, he was able to entrust his feelings only through his impassioned compositions. Thus the works of poetry and prose which he gathered and arranged exceeded a thousand in total; the prefaces, expositions, letters for marriage arrangements, birthday congratulations and mourning banners [which he wrote] numbered over four hundred. In his old age he composed the *Strange Tales of Make-Do Studio* in eight fascicles, each fascicle consisting of several tens of thousands of words, bearing in its front the prefaces of Minister Gao and Grand Scribe Tang and in its back the commentary of Sir [Wang] Yuyang.¹⁷⁵ On the whole [the *Tales*] are expressions of indignation and discontent, in which [its author] imparted through [the form of stories] his keen intent to exhort [his audience] to goodness and caution them against evil; the stories were not merely told in humor and jest. From among them he further picked out those which relayed the unerring courses of karmic retribution, and elaborated them into popular song-narratives. Without exception, they were widely celebrated, being capable of moving [audiences] to song and [to tears].¹⁷⁶ As for [our father's] other works, such as *Selected Words for Admonishing the Self, Document on the Calendar, Classics of Farming and Sericulture, Popular Characters for Daily Use...* and the like, these various compilations well suffice to nourish one's mind and body while aiding one in daily life.

我父少有才名，為海內所推重，而淪落不偶，僅托諸悲歌慷慨之間。故詩賦詞章，集而帙者凡千餘首；序表婚啟壽屏祭幃等文，計四百餘篇；暮年著聊齋誌異八卷，每卷各數萬言，高司寇、唐太史兩先生序傳於首，漁洋先生評跋於後，大抵皆憤抑無聊，藉以抒勸善懲惡之心，非僅為談諧調笑已也。間摘其中之果報不爽者，演為通俗之曲，無不膾炙人口，可歌而可泣。他如省身語錄，歷字文，農桑經，日用俗字……之屬，種種編輯，皆足以補益身心而取資於日用。

Besides the much celebrated *Liaozhai zhiyi*, the eulogy presents a wide-ranging body of texts composed by Pu Songling, from poetry and prose to song-narratives and didactic texts, from personal expressions to compilations. It begins with Pu's arrangements of literature from the past and the formal prose writings which he wrote on behalf of others, which reveal his status at the center of a local social world. It then

¹⁷⁵ Gao Heng 高珩 (1612-1697, *jinshi* 1643), Tang Menglai 唐夢賚 (1627-1698, *jinshi* 1649), and Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634-1711, *jinshi* 1659) were eminent contemporaries of Pu Songling from Shandong; on Pu's relationships to them, see Yuan Shishuo, *Pu Songling shiji zhushu xinkao*, pp. 100-146 and pp. 187-219.

¹⁷⁶ I have tentatively filled in the last two words ("to tears"), representing the two characters that are no longer extant in this line ("keqi" 可泣 in "ke ge er ke qi" 可歌而可泣).

proceeds to the classical tales, the status of which was confirmed through prefaces by eminent men of the day. Besides works in an elevated literary register, the eulogy tells us also that Pu composed “popular song-narratives,” elaborated from *Liaozhai zhiyi*, which were at once moving and celebrated, sharing with the classic tales a certain expressive power and didactic ethos. Finally, this encompassing oeuvre also included various “compilations,” different in content yet common in their ability to “nourish the mind and body” and “aid one in daily life,” being at once morally instructive and suitable for practical use.

Later attempts to define Pu’s oeuvre, just as the efforts by Pu’s own sons to spell out posthumously the works of their father, are embedded in the exigencies of their own times and places, being inevitably acts of selection and circumscription. The relegation of Pu’s compilations and didactic works to the margins of literary history is perhaps a reflection of changing conceptions of what “literature” involves. Meanwhile, Pu’s transmitted song-narratives have intrigued scholars from the early 20th century onwards for their employment of vernacular language, and have inspired an increasing number of studies from linguistic, musicological, and literary perspectives in the last two decades.¹⁷⁷ But many fundamental questions have remained unanswered. These include the processes of transmission of works attributed to Pu and the milieu out of which they arose; the

¹⁷⁷ For example, recent monographs include Cai Zaomin 蔡造珉, *Xiegui xieyao, citan cinüe—Liaozhai liqu xinlun* 寫鬼寫妖, 刺貪刺虐—聊齋俚曲新論 (Taipei: Wanjuan lou, 2003); Shao Jizhi 邵吉志, *Cong Zhiyi dao liqu—Pu Songling xinjie* 從志異到俚曲—蒲松齡新解 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 2008); Feng Chuntian 馮春田, *Liaozhai liqu yufa yanjiu* 聊齋俚曲語法研究 (Kaifeng: Henan daxue, 2003); Chen Yuchen 陳玉琛, *Liaozhai liqu* 聊齋俚曲 (Jinan: Shandong wenyi, 2004) and Liu Xiaojing 劉曉靜, *Sanbai nian yixiang—Pu Songling liqu yinyue yanjiu* 三百年遺響—蒲松齡俚曲音樂研究 (Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 2002). Articles on the *liqu* are numerous and will be cited selectively.

activities of Pu as a reader, writer, and assembler of texts which call attention to the assumptions behind modern models of authorship imposed on him as well as to intertextual aspects of his writings; and the relationship between works attributed to Pu and regional and local performance traditions which informed them.

In this section I do not attempt to begin answering these questions, but rather try to tease out what is at stake in them, ultimately with the hope of providing some context for the limited scope of my study - several of what are known to be Pu's song-narratives, and *Riyong suzi*, one among the list of "various compilations" listed at the end of the Pu sons' eulogy. I begin with evidence we have of their composition in Pu's own day as a body of works intended for a popular audience, and proceed to a critical examination of the terms used by scholars to describe these transmitted works as well as my own use of the term "vernacular" in categorizing them. Drawing on existing scholarship, I survey the complex questions surrounding language and genre in this diverse body of writings, with attention to their shared musical and linguistic aspects. Finally, I present the fragmented picture we have of the local transmission of these works as performed and written. I conclude with approaches I adopt in working with them as a group of locally transmitted texts and my choices of the particular song-narratives and *Riyong suzi* from among a wealth of possibilities.

Since a great deal of the study will be devoted to Pu's song-narratives, probably a first note ought to be made on the term *liqu* 俚曲 ("rustic song"), which does not seem to have ever been used by Pu Songling himself to describe his works but has rather been

known as such from the 1936 *Liaozhai quanji* and subsequent anthologies.¹⁷⁸ The source they inherit is the list on the backside of Pu's tombstone, whose inscription in stone has imparted its unquestionable authenticity to scholars, despite the fact that the date and circumstances of the engraving remains unknown.¹⁷⁹ There are however several early accounts corroborating Pu's composition of "popular song-narratives" (*tongsu zhi qu* 通俗之曲).¹⁸⁰ In another eulogy of Pu Songling, Pu Ruo gives a very similar account to the one cited above of his father elaborating stories from the *Strange Tales* into "miscellaneous popular cantos" (*tongsu zaqu* 通俗雜曲), "so that those on the highways and byways would sing along when they saw them and weep when they heard them...."¹⁸¹ In this account, the sound and sight of the song-narratives awakened the populace, just as the classical tales instructed their lofty readers. Pu Lide, son of Pu Ruo,

¹⁷⁸ See Shao Jizhi, *Cong Zhiyi dao liqu*, pp. 1-2. I adopt "rustic song" as a translation for *liqu* following Wilt L. Idema, "Prosimetric and Verse Narrative," p. 358. Throughout the dissertation I adopt Idema's translations (occasionally with slight modification) for many of the titles; they are listed in Appendix 1, n656.

¹⁷⁹ For the list, see Appendix 1. The one scholar who has questioned the grave inscriptions is Liu Jieping (see his preface to *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu xuanzhu*, pp. 7-8). What is clear from viewing rubbings of the tombstone is that the inscriptions on the backside were not engraved at the same time as the front side, which has the eulogy of Pu by Zhang Yuan dated to 1725.

¹⁸⁰ Pu Ruo, "Pu Ruo deng ji fu wen."

¹⁸¹ Pu Ruo 蒲簪, "A Biographical Sketch of My Late, Illustrious Father, Gentleman of the Willow Spring, Senior Licentiate of the Second Class, and Candidate for Prefectural Sub-Director of Schools under the Qing Dynasty" 清故顯考歲進士, 候選儒學訓導柳泉公行述, in Lu Dahuang ed., *Pu Songling ji*, 2: 1808: "As for the *Strange Tales* [of Make-Do Studio] in eight fascicles, my father gathered together things he had seen and heard. Expressing his innermost feelings, he completed them after several years of work. It was always his opinion that they could serve as a curative for the scholars and officials. But still he regretted that the *Strange Tales* were not like the morning bells and evening drums that can penetrate the bewilderment of the common man in the villages and fully awaken the old women in the markets from their dreams. He went on to elaborate them as miscellaneous popular dramatic cantos so that those on the highways and byways would sing along when they saw them and weep when they heard them . . . 如志異八卷, 漁菟聞見, 抒寫襟懷, 積數年而成, 總以為學士大夫之針砭; 而猶恨不如晨鐘暮鼓, 可參破村庸之迷, 而大醒士媼之夢也, 又演為通俗雜曲, 使街衢里巷之中, 見者歌, 而聞者亦泣. . . (The translation is from Li-Ching Chang and Victor H. Mair, "The Wall, A Folk Opera by Pu Songling," *CHINOPERL Papers* 14 (1986): 98, with slight modification).

further described in a 1747 preface to *Riyong suzi* (Popular Characters for Daily Use) that his grandfather composed several dozen “playful works of popular verse for admonishing the world” 通俗勸世游戲詞.¹⁸² Still later in the Daoguang era (1820-1850), the Zichuan literatus Wang Peixun 王培荀 recorded in his collection of jottings, *Xiangyuan yijiu lu* 鄉園憶舊錄 (Reminiscences of Former Times from the Country Garden):

[Pu Songling] selected from his own *Strange Tales* the stories of ‘Shan Hu,’ ‘Zhang Ne,’ ‘Jiang Cheng,’ and turned them into short song-narratives or elaborated them into *chuanqi*-plays so that [even] old women could understand them – they were most touching. 就自作志異中擇珊瑚，張訥，江城編為小曲，演為傳奇，使老嫗可解，最足感人。¹⁸³

These descriptions bring to light a body of compositions intended for a popular audience – inclusive of old women, common villagers, “those on the highways and byways,” while the *Strange Tales*, in their elegant classical language, served readers acquainted with the higher literary tradition. In the absence of a better alternative, I have translated the term “tongsu” 通俗 as “popular,” in the sense that these works employed languages and forms which would have been comprehensible to audiences across a wide array of social backgrounds. The terms used by Wang Peixun and Pu Ruo to describe these works, *xiaoqu* 小曲 (“short song-narratives”) and *tongsu zaqu* 通俗雜曲 (“popular miscellaneous song-narratives”), give us some inkling to the nature of these works as intended not only for reading but also for performance, and to the fact that *liqu* does not itself refer to a genre. The body of works now known collectively as “Liaozhai *liqu*” 聊齋俚曲 (“rustic songs of Make-Do Studio”) based on the fifteen titles given on Pu’s

¹⁸² See the opening passage in Chapter 2 for a complete translation of this preface.

¹⁸³ Wang Peixun 王培荀, *Xiangyuan yijiu lu* 鄉園憶舊錄 (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 1993), *juan* 1, p. 20.

tombstone in fact encompasses a diverse body of texts and genres, with connections to both literary traditions of dramatic composition (such as Yuan drama and *chuanqi*-drama) to performed, popular genres which flourished in Pu's day (such as Shandong prosimetric traditions and precious scrolls).¹⁸⁴ Despite what the term "Liaozhai *liqu*" may suggest, the songs which occur throughout these works were most probably not songs composed by Pu Songling, but rather lyrics filled in according to existing tune-matrices, a common practice in the composition of drama.

The term "tongsu" does not itself imply "vernacular," and some explanation is needed for the usage here of the latter term in reference to the song-narratives as well as Pu's *Riyong suzi*. We might recall that Hu Shi had referred to Pu's transmitted song-narratives as *baihua quci* 白話曲詞 ("song-lyrics in plain speech") in his study of the novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, citing them as examples of Pu's ability to compose works of *baihua wenxue* 白話文學 ("literature in plain speech") beyond his reputation as the writer of classical prose in *Liaozhai zhiyi*.¹⁸⁵ For Hu Shi the writer and literary critic, his excitement in these works stemmed from his own investment in *baihua* as the new medium of national literature and the discovery of premodern precedents.¹⁸⁶ The language of the song-narratives struck him such that he highlighted the affinities between the *tebie tuhua* 特別土話 ("distinct patois") of these works and of *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, Chen Yuchen 陳玉琛, "Liaozhai *liqu* suyuan" 聊齋俚曲溯源, in his *Liaozhai liqu*, pp. 88-103, for a discussion of these topics.

¹⁸⁵ Hu Shi, "*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* kaozheng," pp. 287-88.

¹⁸⁶ On the term *baihua* in the context of early 20th century debates on language, culture and politics, see, for example, Shang Wei, "Writing and Speech: Rethinking the Issue of Vernaculars in Early Modern China," pp. 257-72; in relation to vernacular journalism, see Elisabeth Kaske, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895-1919* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 106-8 and 214-225.

as evidence for their composition by one person. At one time he even referred to the song-narratives as *tuhua wenxue* 土話文學 (“patois literature”), although he did not explain the relationship between *baihua* and *tuhua*, written and spoken, beyond the fact that the artful use of a distinctive colloquial language in the case of the novel and the song-narratives contributed to their high literary status as works of *baihua wenxue*.¹⁸⁷ Like Hu Shi, later scholars of literature and drama have maintained that the song-narratives were written in the local spoken language of Zichuan. From the perspective of dramatic criticism, Pu’s innovative usage of the colloquial language in these written compositions put him at the forefront of literati *qu*-writing in the early Qing.¹⁸⁸

For modern linguists, the keyword in the study of Pu’s transmitted song-narratives and *Riyong suzi* is not *baihua* – a term fraught with the political tensions of the early 20th century and ambiguous as to whether it referred to spoken or written language – but rather *fangyan* 方言, commonly translated as “dialect,” or, as used hereafter in this study, “topolect.”¹⁸⁹ The transmitted texts of Pu’s works have attracted great interest as specimens of historical Shandong spoken languages, and the debate has tended to center around the nature of speech(es) reflected in the texts. While many have maintained the closeness of these works to the local spoken language of Zichuan,¹⁹⁰ others have

¹⁸⁷ Hu Shi, “*Xingshi yinyuan zhuan kaozheng*,” pp. 295-96.

¹⁸⁸ Zhou Yibai 周貽白, *Zhongguo xiju fazhan shi* 中國戲劇發展史 (Taipei: Xueyi, 1977), pp. 494–95.

¹⁸⁹ This is a term coined by Victor Mair to reflect more closely the ambiguity present in usages of the Chinese term *fangyan* (often used to refer to mutually unintelligible languages, whereas ‘dialect’ technically refers to mutually intelligible varieties of the same language). See Victor H. Mair, “What is a Chinese ‘Dialect/Topolect’? Reflections on Some Key Sino-English Linguistic Terms,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 29 (1991): 1-31.

¹⁹⁰ The *Zichuan fangyan zhi* 淄川方言志 by Meng Qingtai 孟慶泰 and Luo Futeng 羅福騰 (Beijing: Yuwen, 1994), for example, makes heavy use of these texts (and *Riyong suzi*) together with contemporary Zichuan speech in its survey of Zichuan topolect.

suggested the primary form of sung sections in the song-narratives to be Shandong *guanhua*, a regional variety of the common official speech; in this view the spoken sections more closely resembles modern Zichuan speech.¹⁹¹ A cursory comparison of the song-narratives and *Riyong suzi*, which belonged to a still more humble genre of elementary educational literature, reveals the artificiality of the former as storytelling literature, while *Riyong suzi* contains much more the vocabulary of daily life.¹⁹² Whether the latter work more closely resembles the spoken language of Pu's time and place will need further study, as does the precise nature of the language(s) reflected in the transmitted song-narratives.

The challenges present in identifying the language(s) of these works are many – from the difficulty of inferring historical spoken languages from written texts, to ways in which these particular texts as literary compositions engage with written norms and previous traditions of vernacular writing. From the perspective of the study of historical languages, the fact that Shandong languages form part of the basis of northern *guanhua* makes the task of identifying local and regional speeches challenging, while the disjunction between language spoken and written compound the difficulty – words written in common forms may have different topolectal meanings, while some unstandardized written words reflect topolectal sounds for words that are also in the shared speech.¹⁹³ From the perspective of literary studies, the language(s) of fiction and

¹⁹¹ See Zhang Hongkui 張鴻魁, “Liaozhai liqu de fangyan shuxing” 聊齋俚曲的方言屬性, *Yuyan kexue* 2005 (04): 76-82, and “Liaozhai liqu de diyu wenhua neihan” 聊齋俚曲的地域文化內涵, in Li Shaoqun 李少群 and Qiao Li 喬力 eds., *Qi Lu wenxue yanbian yu diyu wenhua* 齊魯文學演變與地域文化 (Beijing: Renmin, 2009), pp. 490-95.

¹⁹² Zhang Shuzheng 張樹錚, “Qianyan” 前言, *Pu Songling Riyong suzi zhu* 蒲松齡日用俗字注 (Ji'nan: Shandong daxue, 2015), p. 3, notes how *Riyong suzi* contains much vocabulary not contained in the *liqu*.

¹⁹³ Zhang Hongkui, “Liaozhai liqu de diyu wenhua neihan,” p. 494.

drama are not consistently straightforward employments of spoken language but often hybrid compositions drawing on a range of registers and dictions.¹⁹⁴ In view of these complex factors, the present study employs the term “vernacular” in describing the transmitted texts of Pu’s works with all the ambiguity of the term – between spoken and written mediums, speeches and literary forms, local and shared languages – and in the broad sense that these writings differ from the classical genres of prose writing employed by Pu’s *Liaozhai zhiyi*.

The questions surrounding language betray only part of the complexity this body of works, which are varied in content, form, and genre. Before going on to introduce the song-narratives, I would like to begin with *Riyong suzi*, a now little known work by Pu Songling which forms the first subject of this study. It belongs to a humble genre of what I translate as “assorted characters” (“zazi” 雜字) literature, which together with the well-known classical primers (such as the *Trimetrical Classic*) formed the basic texts of elementary education in late imperial times. Like the song-narratives, it most likely circulated in both written and oral form as character-teaching songs, while it is the earliest of Pu’s works to have been printed and the only one which we know of to have been printed by his direct descendants. With prefaces by both Pu Songling and his grandson, *Riyong suzi* is among the very few extant works outside of *Liaozhai zhiyi* and

¹⁹⁴ See, for example, Li Wai-yee, “Full-length Vernacular Fiction,” in Victor H. Mair ed., *Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 620: “The copresence of or tension between high and low diction... is but one token of the intrinsic hybridity of vernacular fiction. Lyric poetry, songs, descriptive verses, poetic exposition, parallel prose, dramatic arias, doggerels, quotations from and summaries of historical texts and other fictional works, and the rhetoric of oral performance are often woven into the fabric of narrative. The best examples of the genre almost never fail self-consciously to exploit the interplay of different generic traits and stylistic levels to achieve ironic disjunctions or visions of totality based on complementary opposites and balanced juxtapositions.....”

Pu's prose and poetry for which we can be sure of his authorship.¹⁹⁵ Importantly, the rich colloquial language contained in this purportedly basic educational text offers clues into Pu's idiosyncratic experiments with vernacular language, and helps to illuminate the nature of Pu's transmitted song-narratives as both literary experiments and compositions intended for local audiences. At the same time, the more earthy language of the *Riyong suzi* and its extensive use of the seven-syllable line (it is composed of nearly 1600 such lines), very common also in the prosimetric literature of the day, provides something by way of contrast with the song-narratives.

A sizeable body of scholarship has accumulated over the last two decades around the transmitted texts of the fifteen titles on Pu's tombstone. While they are often now collectively referred to as "Liaozhai *liqu*," it must be emphasized that the group consists of works with great variety in length, narrative form, and subject matter.¹⁹⁶ The shortest works are just a single act, and vary between being sung in the first person to being told by a third-person narrator in song and prose. The three longest works are comprised respectively of twenty-eight, thirty-three, and thirty-six *hui* ("sessions" or "chapters"), with the latter two taking the form of plays with indications for dialogue, arias, and

¹⁹⁵ Of course, it may very likely have been edited by Pu Lide. Its nature as a "compilation" (as described in Pu Ruo's eulogy) also suggests its indebtedness to other texts in the genre. More on this in chapter 2.

¹⁹⁶ The following analyses will omit *Qinse le*, which may have been deliberately altered (as discussed in the previous section of this chapter), and *Chou junba* 丑俊巴, of which only a fragment exists, as published in Lu Dahuang's 1962 *Pu Songling ji* (Lu tells in his 1957 essay "Bianding jingguo" of obtaining the text from a manuscript copy in the possession of Luan Tiaofu 樂調甫). In the appendix I have tentatively translated this title as *Pigsy in Love* based on the subject matter of the extant portion, which features Pigsy (from *Journey to the West*) developing a huge crush on Pan Jinlian (from *The Plum in the Golden Vase*) sometime in the aftermath of their respective transformations into god and ghost in the two great vernacular novels.

I did not find this title in the Keio catalog, even though Hirai devoted a page of his book (p. 45) to listing the table of contents of a manuscript by this title which he obtained from the Pu descendant Pu Yingxuan 蒲英宣. The TOC, containing titles of twenty-four *hui* (except for the first *hui*, due to a missing first page), does not betray evidence of a Pigsy / Pan Jinlian story.

gestures. The remainder – the majority of the song-narratives - lie somewhere in between, with length anywhere between three and fourteen *hui*, most of which employ the form of ballad-stories told by a narrator.¹⁹⁷ In subject matter, eight song-narratives are formed around the plots of tales from *Liaozhai zhiyi*. One shares the storyline of a Tang *chuanqi* tale, which has also been previously adapted into a play.¹⁹⁸ Another, a retelling of stories from the *Three Kingdoms*, is exceptional in being comprised of *lian* 聯 (“straps”) instead of *hui* 回 (“sessions”) and in being the only one among all the titles which deals with stories from popular history.¹⁹⁹ Still another work, the *Xingyun qu* (The Imperial Progress to Datong), in twenty-eight *hui*, is based on a Ming play.²⁰⁰

Common to all of these works is the extensive use of songs in the course of narrative in ways that are distinct from contemporary literati traditions of song-writing.²⁰¹ In contrast to these traditions, which employed set forms (*qupai*, or pre-existent tunes with rules for tones, rhymes, and line divisions) and regulated sequencing of tunes, Pu’s transmitted song-narratives rather seemed to have adopted different and altered tunes and

¹⁹⁷ Fujita Yūken distinguishes the song-narratives between taking the form of narrative stories (“xushu ti” 敘述體) and that of plays (“daiyan ti” 代言體) (See Fujita Yūken 藤田祐賢, “Liaozhai suqu kao,” p.289. I don’t want to overemphasize the difference, as the genres can be altered in performance (see discussion on fieldwork later in this section), and indications for dialogues and arias can also be added or eliminated with varying contexts of reading and copying.

¹⁹⁸ *Penglai yan* (Banquet on Mt. Penglai) tells the story of the banished immortals Cailuan 彩鸞 and Wenxiao 文蕭, based on the *chuanqi* tale; the subject matter has been previously adapted by the Zichuan playwright Jia Zhongming 賈仲明 (1343-1422) into a Yuan drama, *Tieguai li du jintong yunü* 鐵拐李度金童玉女 (see Wang Shaozeng 王紹曾 and Gong Qingshan 宮慶山 eds., *Shanzuo xiqu jicheng* 山左戲曲集成 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2007), 3 vols, 1: 422-39).

¹⁹⁹ This work takes on varying titles as *Kuaiqu* 快曲 or *Qiangku kuai* 千古快. A well-annotated version of *Qiangku kuai* appears in Guan Dedong 關德棟 ed., *Liaozhai liqu xuan* 聊齋俚曲選 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1980), pp. 19-47.

²⁰⁰ See Chapter 4.

²⁰¹ Two of the “plays” as listed on the grave do follow the more common tune suite organizations of *nanbeiqu*; see Ji Genyin 紀根垠, ‘Liuquan jushi shi xiqu’ 柳泉居士嗜戲曲, in Sun Bo 孫勃 et al., eds., *Liaozhai shicui* 聊齋拾粹 (Jinan: Shandong wenyi, 1990), p. 175.

to be organized in varying ways. Where their tunes share the names of tunes in the traditions of *nanqu* and *beiqu* (the “northern” and “southern” songs inherited from the Yuan and Ming) they are often altered in form²⁰²; over twenty other tunes are not corroborated in textual sources.²⁰³ In organization, the song-narratives vary from repeating a single tune many times throughout the same chapter or even the entire work, to employing various tunes within a single chapter without any regular pattern,²⁰⁴ to deliberate, repeated use of complex sequences of tunes (up to ten) in each chapter reflecting formal innovations.²⁰⁵ Scholars have further made note of the extremely strict use of rhyme throughout the song-narratives,²⁰⁶ and the strict distinction made between words of rising and level tones which define these works apart from more *ya*, or “refined” traditions of literati *qu*-composition.²⁰⁷

There is evidence to suggest that popular songs and local music were incorporated into these works. But documentation of local performance traditions in the Zichuan region prior to the mid-Qing is scarce, even if glimpses can be had from Pu’s own

²⁰² Zhou Yibai observed early on that they seem to have been “popularized” 俗化了 (*Zhongguo xiju fazhan shi*, p. 492).

²⁰³ On explanations for tunes not in precious scrolls, see Zhang Hongkui 張鴻魁, “Liaozhai liqu qupai de gulu” 聊齋俚曲曲牌的格律, *Yuwen yanjiu* 2002 (03): 17-18, and Che Xilun 車錫倫, “Baojuan zhong de suqu ji qi yu Liaozhai liqu de bijiao” 寶卷中的俗曲及其與聊齋俚曲的比較, *Pu Songling yanjiu* 2000 (Z1): 376-77.

²⁰⁴ The former cases are reminiscent of traditions before the development of *nanbeiqu*, such as the *guzici* 鼓子詞 of the Song; In the case of the latter, it is also the norm in regional *liuzi*, which employ tunes without regular patterning (see Ji Genyin, *Liuzi xi jianshi* 柳子戲簡史 (Zhongguo xiju, 1988), p. 50).

²⁰⁵ Fujita Yūken 藤田祐賢, “Liaozhai suqu kao,” pp. 294-5, notes how *Cibei qu* (Song of Compassion) and *Gufu qu* (Song of Mother-in-law and Daughter-in-law) stand out from the rest of the corpus in this regard. Both of these works (adapted from the *Liaozhai zhiyi* tales “Zhang Cheng” and “Shan Hu,” respectively), are corroborated by Wang Peixun’s account of Pu adapting these specific stories into “xiaqu” 小曲.

²⁰⁶ Zhang Shuzheng, *Shandong fangyan yuyin yanjiu* 山東方言語音研究 (Ji’nan: Shandong daxue, 2005), p. 88.

²⁰⁷ Zhang Hongkui, “Liaozhai liqu qupai de gulu,” pp. 16-17.

writings of theatrical and other types of performances in the area.²⁰⁸ Scholars have speculated on the relationship between Pu's transmitted song narratives and *liuzi* 柳子 opera, a regional theatrical tradition evolved from singing with stringed accompaniment, but the exact connection between them is hard to ascertain given the fragmented nature of the sources and the lack of correspondence between Pu's corpus and the existing repertoire of *liuzi* opera.²⁰⁹ The most suggestive evidence of Pu's use of popular songs comes from studies by Che Xilun comparing the tunes in the song-narratives and in a number of sectarian *baojuan* 寶卷 (precious scrolls) from the Ming and Qing which made use of popular tunes.²¹⁰ These latter texts, composed by members of the sectarian religions and performed before lay audiences through recitation, often incorporated tunes familiar to their large and less literate audiences.²¹¹ While they differ from the song narratives in their format of performance and purportedly religious content, several of the most frequently used tunes in the song narratives bear a strong resemblance to tunes used in the precious scroll texts. To take an example, the most often used tune in the corpus, "Shua hai'er" 耍孩兒, shares the basic format as in precious scrolls while differing from

²⁰⁸ Che Xilun 車錫倫, "Baojuan zhong de suqu ji qi yu Liaozhai liqu de bijiao" 寶卷中的俗曲及其與聊齋俚曲的比較, *Pu Songling yanjiu* (3-4) 2000: 370-78; Che Xilun 車錫倫 and Li Zhijun 李智軍, "Shandong, Jiangsu nuo wenhua qu he Pu Songling jishu de 'wuxi', 'wufeng'" 山東、江蘇儺文化區和蒲松齡記述的"巫戲"、"巫風," *Henan jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 河南教育學院學報(哲學社會科學版): 1 (2007): 22-28.

²⁰⁹ One of the three "plays" on the grave epitaph, *Naoguan*, is an exception in being transmitted; see Ji Genyin, *Liuzi xi jianshi*, pp. 39-44.

²¹⁰ Che Xilun 車錫倫, "Liaozhai liqu qupai de lai yuan (zhiyi)" 聊齋俚曲曲牌的來源(之一), *Pu Songling yanjiu* 2 (2002): 63-78.

²¹¹ While sectarian activities in the Ming and Qing were spread over a large geographic area, Che suggests that their center lay in the Hebei/ Shandong nexus and adjacent areas (Che, "Baojuan zhong de suqu," pp. 373-4).

varying forms of the tune under the same name from the Yuan and Ming, reflecting its current use in north China in the early Qing.²¹²

While the picture of their composition and circulation in Pu's own time is difficult to trace, ethnographic evidence give us intriguing clues into their local transmission through the intertwined realms of oral and manuscript culture. In his time, Hirai noted that many ordinary families of the Pu lineage possessed manuscript copies.²¹³ Referring to "those sing-able and recitable works" 可歌可誦者, Hirai told that villagers "sung and recited them loudly" 高歌朗誦之 during the Mid-Autumn and Lantern festivals, and that there were even "ballad-tellers" ("shuoci zhe" 說詞者) who could recite works from memory."²¹⁴ Ethnographic research conducted in the early 1960s by the musicologist Wu Zhao and others revealed that a number of the songs were still alive in the oral repertoire of villagers from the Pu Family Village and neighboring Ezhuang 峨莊.²¹⁵ They were sung by farmers in their spare time, and in former times some songs were transmitted by village school-teachers and degree-holders (*xiucai*) of surname Pu to pupils. Individual songs and short works rather than entire long song-narratives were transmitted this way.²¹⁶ In these contexts they were mainly sung without accompaniment; both sung and spoken sections were intoned in local speech. Among the village schoolmasters and

²¹² Che, "Liaozhai liqu qupai de lai yuan (zhiyi)," pp. 65-67. "Shua hai'er is overwhelmingly the most frequently used tune in the entire corpus of song-narratives. By one estimate, it appears in 1388 sung sections, while the next oft-used tune ("Die duanqiao" 疊斷橋) and ("Yayayou" 呀呀油) appear in 267 and 187 sections, respectively; these three tunes together account for over 60% of all the sung sections in the corpus of "Liaozhai liqu" (Chen Yuchen, "Zoujin 'yayayou' 走近呀呀油, in *Liaozhai liqu*, p. 129).

²¹³ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 7.

²¹⁴ Hirai, p. 7. No titles are given, unfortunately.

²¹⁵ Wu Zhao 吳釗, "Pu Songling de liqu" 蒲松齡的俚曲, in his *Guyue xun you: Wu Zhao yinyuexue wenji* 古樂尋幽: 吳釗音樂學文集 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu, 2011), p. 30.

²¹⁶ Wu, "Pu Songling de liqu," p. 13.

xiucai they were chanted in ways much like how texts were chanted in the old times.²¹⁷ One middle-aged villager recalled learning *Xuejiu zichao* (The pedant mocks himself) from the village schoolmaster Pu Yingtang 蒲英棠 (ca.1879-1957), who learned it from Pu Renhong 蒲人鴻, an older member of the Pu lineage in a neighboring village sometime in the 1920s; the manuscript Pu Yingtang owns of the lyrics was also made after Pu Renhong's copy.²¹⁸

Pu's transmitted song narratives were apparently of much local popularity in Zichuan into the early 20th century, judging by the fact that characters from the stories made their way onto local stages. Some time around 1980, a twelfth generation descendant of Pu Songling, then in his eighties, recounted former times when villagers would dress up in roles and went around the townships and villages on the fifteenth day of the lunar new year to perform to large, enthusiastic audiences who sang along.²¹⁹ The characters which he recalled included the unfilial sons and the carpenter from *Qiangtou ji* (On the Wall), a play; the female protagonist of *Penglai yan* (The Banquet on Penglai), an immortal banished to the human realm; and the fox spirit from *Monan qu* (Song of Tribulations) (and the classical tale "Zhang Hongjian"). At the time of the interview, many decades later, the old man was still able to sing individual songs from the latter two works. Lu Dahuang also recounted seeing a performance of the comedic skit *Naoguan* in

²¹⁷ Wu, "Pu Songling de liqu," p. 25, tells of them being sung like a kind of "tune for chanting" ("yinsong diao" 吟誦調).

²¹⁸ Wu, "Pu Songling de liqu," p. 30.

²¹⁹ The information here and below comes from Ma Ruifang, "Pu Songling liqu de sixiang chengjiu he yuyan tese" 蒲松齡俚曲的思想成就和語言特色, in *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan di 1 ji* 蒲松齡研究集刊第一輯 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1980), pp. 201-2. There is no date given for when the article was completed, while Ma refers to the interview as having taken place in "the previous year"; if we take the date of publication of the book, then this would be 1979.

his youth, on a “stage” set up during a village temple festival.²²⁰ What needs further research is the overlap between Pu’s transmitted and attributed works and the extant repertoire of regional performance traditions – to my knowledge, just a few works (including *Qiangtou ji* and *Naoguan*) were extant in complete form into the 20th century.

Blind musicians seems to have been responsible for the oral transmission of the longest song-narratives. In his 1960s study, Wu Zhao came across an old man who recounted hearing a blind woman from Dongguan 東關, Zichuan singing the entire *Monan qu* at the very end of the late 19th century – this is the longest of the song-narratives, in the the form of a play.²²¹ Another long ballad-narrative, the *Xingyun qu*, was in the repertoire of at least two generations of blind musicians.²²² Perhaps because of their profession, these musicians paid more attention to accompaniment, which varied from the *salajin* 撒拉金 (an instrument formed from a string of bamboo clappers set against a bamboo block) to the *sanxian* 三弦 (three-stringed lute), the *sihu* 四胡 (four-stringed *erhu*), and the *zhuiqin* 墜琴 (a bowed stringed instrument similar in size to a small *sanxian*).²²³ One blind musician recalled being taught *gongche* notation from a printed text in his youth before he became blind, a small section of which he was still able to reproduce.²²⁴ But otherwise it is unclear if and how written texts figured in the transmission of the song-narratives among professional performers. For the majority of

²²⁰ Lu, “Zhengli jingguo,” p. 131.

²²¹ Wu, “Pu Songling de ‘liqu,’” p. 13. This indicates that the textual distinction between plays with characters and ballad-stories involving a narrator would have been quite fluid in performance.

²²² Wu, p. 13.

²²³ Wu, pp. 25-6.

²²⁴ Wu, p. 14; 30. For more on this book, see Chapter 2 (the section on local printing).

the local audience, they would be much more likely to have become acquainted with the stories and songs through hearing and seeing performances rather than through reading.

While these accounts give us intriguing glimpses into the transmission of the song-narratives through performance, the extant sources which we have are manuscripts, reflecting their transmission in the literate realm. Lu Dahuang, recalling his early 20th century collecting efforts, noted the general scarcity of the *liqu* manuscripts by then and the numerous errors in the extant sources due to the process of copying.²²⁵ In his *Liaozhai yanjiu*, Hirai Masao also noted the difficulty of finding “proper editions” (*zhengben* 正本), stressing the need for existing manuscripts to be edited and corrected.²²⁶ This would seem in reference to his efforts to have copies made of all the manuscripts in the Wang family collection, and of the efforts of Wang Fengzhi, the copyist, in improving the texts in the process of producing copies for Hirai, some of which he may have significantly edited.²²⁷ Meanwhile, noting the value of older manuscripts, Hirai also searched exhaustively for them, often finding them in poorly preserved condition.²²⁸ The Keio collection seems to reflect the general scarcity of manuscripts of *liqu* in spite of Hirai’s efforts – besides a set of titles copied by Wang Fengzhi, for the majority of the song-narratives, just one or two older manuscripts

²²⁵ Lu, “Zhengli jingguo,” p. 131.

²²⁶ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 17.

²²⁷ The copies which Wang produced for Hirai are generally very clean, but a glimpse of his editing can be had from another manuscript he copied (which does not seem to have been made for Hirai) – see *Fugui shenxian*, in *Shandong wenxian jicheng di 3 ji*, vol. 47, p. 676, where he crosses out and fills in text.

²²⁸ Hirai, *Liaozhai yanjiu*, p. 36.

exist.²²⁹ By way of comparison, ten versions (four imprints and six manuscripts) exist for *Riyong suzi* alone.²³⁰

Probably a note ought to be made on the different strata of manuscript copies. Besides the manuscripts which he acquired, Hirai had commissioned copies of works owned by others which he was not able to acquire, and also had duplicate copies made of some of the books which he did obtain. I have not yet conducted a survey of exact numbers, but these copies should comprise a substantial portion of all the manuscripts in the collection. The copies made by Wang Fengzhi are distinct in the sense that they were made by the copyist for Hirai after manuscripts in his own collection. Other copyists whom Hirai employed often did not indicate their names, though there is one instance of a signature by a local scribe.²³¹ Besides these commissioned copies, older manuscript copies reflected varying levels of calligraphic competence on the part of their copyists, who must have included village schoolmasters, their students, and other local literates with differing literary interests and abilities. The known names of copyists (about thirty) range from Pu Songling himself and others in the Pu lineage to those with familiar surnames from the area's families such as Bi, Wang, and Gao. Much more detailed research is due of them and of the other copyists who did not leave their names. The few dated and signed manuscripts suggest that Pu's works were still being transmitted through

²²⁹ Ruling out *Qinse le* and *Chou junba*; *Jun yecha*, *Qionghan ci* and *Xuejiu zichao* seem to have been transmitted more widely (and sometimes in combinations), judging by multiple existing copies.

²³⁰ Not counting the copies in the collection likely commissioned by Hirai.

²³¹ This is catalog no. 0721, a copy of the *Hansen qu* (Song of the infernal realms) made after no. 0720, an older manuscript copied by Pu Guozheng 蒲國政. On the last page, a short commentary citing Mencius precedes the dedication to Hirai and the copyist's signature, by "scribe Tan Yanfeng" ("xiezi ren Tan Yanfeng" 寫字人譚延鳳). The date given is April 27, Mingguo 25 [1936]; at the end of the commentary it is told that the text was "copied at the reception office at the southern gate of Zichuan Coal Mine, Shandong" 書於山東淄川炭礦南門外應.

handcopies at the end of the Qing. There are for instance two song-narratives in the hand of Pu Guozheng 蒲國政, a local schoolmaster and former teacher of Lu Dahuang, dated to 1880 and 1901.²³²

In this study I have chosen to avoid the available critical editions of Pu Songling's works and rather use archival sources as much as possible, if only because we have more of the original contexts of textual production (if still incomplete) in the latter case.²³³ I have supplemented the Keio texts with facsimiles of several manuscripts preserved in China, recently published in the *Shandong wenxian jicheng* series, and another microfilm of a manuscript preserved in the National Central Library in Taiwan. Rather than using one source text for each work, I have chosen to consult two or more, and to provide alternate translations in cases of significant differences. For all the variations presented by the archival sources, in my translations I have benefited much from annotations of select song-narratives by Guan Dedong and Liu Jieping, the *Liaozhai liqu ji* edited and annotated by Zou Zongliang and Pu Xianming, and the recently published *Riyong suzi* annotated by Zhang Shuzheng.²³⁴ These published works should provide fine entry into

²³² Catalog no. 0725 and no. 0720, respectively.

²³³ For his *Pu Songling ji*, Lu Dahuang had consulted a number of manuscripts in his time, but he did not specify the textual changes he made in the process of editing, nor the specific texts which he employed. Sheng Wei's *Pu Songling quanji* tells of using Lu's texts as the base texts, while consulting additional manuscripts in the Pu Songling Museum, but limited information is given about these latter texts, and references are not always consistently indicated; there is some information on the texts he used in Sheng, "Bianding houji," in *Pu Songling quanji* 3: 18-19.

²³⁴ Guan Dedong 關德棟 ed., *Liaozhai liqu xuan* 聊齋俚曲選 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1980); Liu Jieping, *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu xuanzhu* 聊齋通俗戲曲選注 (Taipei: Taiwan zhonghua shuju, 1970); Pu Xianming 蒲先明 and Zou Zongliang 鄒宗良 eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji* 聊齋俚曲集 (Beijing: Guoji wenhua chubanshe, 1999); Zhang Shuzheng 張樹錚, *Pu Songling Riyong suzi zhu* 蒲松齡日用俗字注 (Ji'nan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2015).

the vernacular corpus for interested general readers so long as they are aware that the texts have been modified in various ways by modern editors.

I should finally clarify the ways in which I refer to Pu Songling in relation to the many works attributed to him. First, I use “attribute” quite liberally, in the multiple senses that Pu is understood to have created a work, whether in a eulogy or grave epitaph or manuscript. As such the term is used to describe both works of uncertain origins and transmitted song-narratives which modern scholars have understood to be authored by Pu. “Authorship,” of course, can be defined in various ways. Taken strictly, there is no sure evidence (one way or another) that the existing texts of the song-narratives were authored by Pu, in the absence of manuscripts and prefaces by Pu himself. The question of authorship is complicated not only by the involvement of multiple agents (e.g. copyists) in their transmission but also by the fact that, in the context of musical works, the “author” is not so much a “composer” as a writer of lyrics to existing tunes.²³⁵ In this study, which focuses on *Riyong suzi* and a selection of Pu’s transmitted song-narratives, I study the texts as a body of locally transmitted texts with strong structural and linguistic affinities. Rather than adopting a “works” approach connecting them to the figure of Pu as an author, I focus on the worlds they depict, the imaginative and historical landscapes which informed them, and their connections to other texts which help us better understand Zichuan’s local textual culture.

²³⁵ On this point, see Judith Zeitlin, “Music and Performance in *Palace of Lasting Life*,” in *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, p. 458, which cites Bell Yung’s *Cantonese Opera: Performance as Creative Process* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1989) in describing Chinese dramatists as “poet-scriptwriters.”

CHAPTER 2

Riyong suzi and the world of Pu Songling

“‘Liver,’ ‘gallbladder,’ ‘lungs’ and ‘intestines’ each have standard characters / ‘Skin,’ ‘hair,’ ‘hand’ and ‘foot’ are the same across the tongues

肝胆肺腸有正字 皮毛手足無鄉音

---“The Body,” *Riyong suzi*

Introduction

In a preface dated to 1747 which appears at the front of Pu Songling (1640-1715)’s *Riyong suzi* (*Popular Characters for Daily Use* 日用俗字), his grandson Pu Lide 蒲立憲 (1683-1751) provided a brief yet curious account of his achievements. The preface read like this²³⁶:

My deceased grandfather’s given name was Songling, and his style name was Liuxian. Willow Spring was his sobriquet. His books include a poetry collection, a prose collection, a collection of writings in parallel prose, and the *Strange Tales from Make-Do Studio*. Further, he wrote playful works of popular verse for admonishing the world, numbering no less than several dozens of titles, for which he can likewise be known to posterity. Now this book is being printed first because it is the easiest to succeed. And those works of his which are especially apt for the mind and body, such as the *Selected Words for Admonishing the Self*, *Records for Harboring Reverence*, *Comprehensive Matters of Household Government*, and *Essay on the Regulation of the Seasons*, are now in the process of being edited, and they will be printed successively following [this book]. 大父

²³⁶ Pu Songling 蒲松齡, *Riyong suzi* 日用俗字 [1747], Catalog no. 2503, Ryōsai Archive 聊齋文庫, Keio University, Tokyo. I have also consulted no. 2502, a second copy printed from the same woodblocks, for a few places where characters are missing from pages in no. 2503.

For a chapter which deals so heavily with the physical forms of graphs, I would ideally like to depict the graphs as they appear in the primary sources, but the amount of time needed to create them makes it simply too big of a project at present. For now, I’ve used a A+B form to indicate graphs made up of two components. In this chapter (and in the accompanying appendix 2) I have also underlined characters to indicate that they are different in some way (whether by a single stroke or in the whole appearance) from the graphs in the sources.

諱松齡，字留仙，柳泉則別號也。有詩集，文集，四六集，聊齋志異等書，又有通俗勸世遊戲詞，亦不下數十種，皆可行世。今此書先出，以其易爲力耳。而尤有切於身心者，如省身語錄，懷刑錄，家政廣編，時憲文，現在校訂，陸續嗣出。

Whereas in other places Pu Songling is frequently portrayed as a failed yet brilliant scholar, as author of the *Strange Tales*, and a master of classical prose – in this simple preface he is presented as the author of an eclectic body of writings, all of which make him deserving to be “known to posterity.”²³⁷ 1747, thirty-two years after Pu Songling’s death, is a curious time for the little book’s publication. We know that even before this time Pu’s fame had grown far and wide for his *Strange Tales*, and that people competed to make copies of the stories.²³⁸ Yet Pu’s own family was troubled by poverty. The relative prosperity that Pu Songling had gathered by the end of his thirty years of service as tutor to the affluent Bi family must have declined in the decades after his death – in a eulogy dated to 1742, Pu Lide tells of eight years of successive poor harvests, deaths in the family, and his own lack of livelihood.²³⁹ In those years, whatever attempts Pu Lide made to get the massive corpus of *Strange Tales* printed never seem to have

²³⁷ The term “xingshi” 行世 (“known to posterity”, or “known to the world”) often, though not always, has an echo of printing (for example in “zi yi xingshi” 梓以行世 (“print [something] so that it is known to the world”).

As far as we know, those other works mentioned by Pu Lide which were “in the process of being edited” never made it into print – and not all of them made it to posterity. Several of what are claimed to be these works appear in Sheng Wei 盛偉 ed., *Pu Songling quanji* 蒲松齡全集, 3 vols. (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1998). For analysis of manuscripts bearing same or similar titles in the Ryōsai Archive at Keio, see Ma Zhenfang 馬振方, *Liaozhai yiwen qizhong* 聊齋遺文七種 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1998).

²³⁸ Pu Lide 蒲立憲, “*Liaozhai zhiyi* juan hou ba” 聊齋志異卷后跋, in *Donggu wenji* 東谷文集, j. 1; MS no. 3001.1, Ryōsai Archive. The postface appears also in the first printed edition of *Liaozhai zhiyi* of 1766; see “Geben xu ba tici” 各本序跋題辭, in *Liaozhai zhiyi huijiao huizhu huiping ben* 聊齋志異會校會注會評本, ed. Zhang Youhe 張友鶴, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997 reprint of 1978 ed.), v. 1, p. 32.

²³⁹ Pu Lide, “*Ji jifu wen*” 祭季父文, in *Donggu wenji*, j. 4; MS no. 3001.2, Ryōsai Archive.

come to fruition. The earliest known imprints of them date to the 1760s, well after Pu Lide's death.²⁴⁰ *Riyong suzi* was the earliest work of Pu Songling's to be printed and the only one we know of to have ever been printed by his direct descendants.

What sort of book was *Riyong suzi* for it to deserve this honor? And what did Pu Lide mean by it being “the easiest to succeed”? When we look at the relative wealth of extant primers from Pu's native Zichuan, many with “*riyong suzi*” in the title and most of which were copied by hand, we get the impression that it was well circulated indeed. There were also other manuscripts which bear little relationship to the 1747 imprints but contain “*Liaozhai*” (“*Make-Do Studio*”) in the title, reflecting from another angle the success of Pu's original text. In four and five and seven syllable lines, enumerating the vocabulary of everyday life from the human body and objects of the farm to the activities of common professions, together they belong to a little-studied genre of vernacular primers which had for centuries played an important role in the education of ordinary folk, whose daily worlds are nonetheless lost to us. For the most part, we also don't know anything about the people who composed them, even as they bridged in a most practical way the gap between literate and less literate worlds.

This essay tells the story of *Riyong suzi*, the world it evokes, and ways in which it reflects a real confrontation between the world of the learned and lively local sounds which defied the standardizing, taming impulses of that world. Despite its origins in a

²⁴⁰ The first printed edition of *Liaozhai zhiyi*, edited by Zhao Qigao 趙起杲, dates to 1766. There seems to have been an intent during Pu Lide's lifetime by members of the Zhu 朱 family of Jin'an to sponsor a printing of the tales, but there is no evidence of it ever having taken place (see Pu Lide, “*Shu Liaozhai zhiyi Jin'an Zhu ke juan hou*” 書聊齋志異濟南朱刻卷后, in *Donggu wenji*, j. 1; MS no. 3001.1, Ryōsai Archive).

humble genre, the work embodies an amalgam of contradictions. Purportedly for “everyday use,” it is of encyclopedic scope, containing nearly 1600 lines organized under thirty-one sections. And while the title indicates “popular characters,” in fact it is sprinkled with many rare and little-known characters unfamiliar to the highly literate. This essay is an attempt to unravel these contradictions through gazing back at the worlds in which it came into being and came to be known: by locating *Riyong suzi* within a genre of texts and the common challenges they share in bridging orality and writing; examining just what these challenges involved when it came to Chinese written scripts and spoken languages and how the dictionaries of the day attempted to deal with them, as well as how the literati viewed these challenges from the standpoint of philology; and probing the sources of knowledge of Pu Songling’s “primer” within the world of texts and beyond texts.

“Assorted characters” and “village books”

In her pioneering study of elementary education in Qing (1644-1911) China, Evelyn Rawski provided a fascinating glimpse into the world of popular literacy in late imperial times, and the ways in which people participated in elementary learning even if they did not possess “literacy” according to modern definitions based on knowledge of large numbers of characters. Apart from those who aspired to success in the civil examinations, which required mastery of the classical Chinese language and a significant body of learned texts, many others – farmers, merchants, and those of other professions –

also participated in a world where writing was everywhere present.²⁴¹ While they may not have possessed advanced abilities in the literary language, many people had some degree of practical literacy, and were able to read and write to the extent demanded by their professions (for example, writing receipts or keeping accounts).²⁴² When one surveys the literature of elementary education one finds a vibrant bibliography of vernacular primers, many with the term “assorted characters” (*zazi* 雜字) in their titles, which must have contributed since very early on to the education of non-elite populations alongside the much more studied orthodox primers of classical education.²⁴³

The earliest extant vernacular primers are those discovered in the cave grottoes of Dunhuang in northwest China, dating to the Tang dynasty (618-907) and the tenth century, which together with the plethora of classical-language primers discovered there

²⁴¹ On the village world as inscribed with writing, see James Hayes, “Specialists and written materials in the village world,” in David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski eds., *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Also see James W. Hayes, “Manuscript Documents in the Life and Culture of Hong Kong Villagers in Late Imperial China,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, 50 (2010), pp. 165-244. For a picture of things in Shandong in the 19th century, see Arthur H. Smith, *Village Life in China* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1899).

²⁴² Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979). On a definition of “literacy” which does away with the qualification of character-knowledge altogether, based rather on people’s abilities to wield the power of writing, see Rebecca Fu, “Women’s Literacy Practices in Late Medieval China (600-1000),” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2015), pp. 10-13.

²⁴³ The pioneering work in this field is Zhang Zhigong 張志公, *Chuantong yuwen jiaoyu chutan* 傳統語文教育初探 (first published in 1962 by Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe); the version I consulted is contained in Zhang zhigong wenji 張志公文集, 5 vols. (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991), 4: 1-188. An extensive bibliography of primers is provided in his *Meng xue shumù gāo* 蒙學書目稿 (same volume in the same series, pp. 189-224).

On premodern Chinese classical education, see, for example, the essays collected in Benjamin Elman and Alexander Woodside, eds., *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600-1900* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994); William Theodore de Bary and John Chaffee, eds., *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989); Charles Ridley, “Educational Theory and Practice in Late Imperial China (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1973); and James T. Liu, “The Classical Chinese Primer: Its Three-Character Style and Authorship,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105.2 (1985): 191-96. Also, see Bai Liming, *Shaping the Ideal Child: Children and Their Primers in Late Imperial China*, 2005.

give us a picture of a regional educational literature in a flourishing age of manuscript culture.²⁴⁴ The most numerous manuscripts concern the classical-language *Thousand Character Essay* (“Qianzi wen” 千字文) from the 6th century, which continued to be a staple of classical education in later times throughout the Chinese empire, and the *Key Elementary Teachings* (“Kaimeng yaoxun” 開蒙要訓), a rhymed text in four-syllable lines containing an admixture of classical and vernacular vocabulary and encompassing many categories of everyday knowledge, which must have been very popular in Dunhuang in the 9th and 10th centuries judging by the number of extant copies. There were also glossaries of names, the *Forest of Keys Terms for Common Affairs* (“Suwu yaoming lin” 俗務要名林), which was arranged in categories of knowledge similar to those in Tang encyclopedias but included much vocabulary that was outside of the classical lexicon. Still there were other glossaries of vernacular terms arranged according to the four tones known as “Pieces of gold” (“Suijin” 碎金).²⁴⁵ Running the spectrum from classical to vernacular, and composed by literati, these texts and glossaries reflected their kinship with the philological and lexical categories of classical learning while evoking in varying degrees regional knowledge and regional sounds.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Zheng Acai 鄭阿財 and Zhu Fengyu 朱鳳玉, *Dunhuang mengshu yanjiu* 敦煌蒙書研究 (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002). While titles bearing the term *zazi* exist from earlier bibliography, these works are now lost, and Zheng and Zhu believe that they have little to do with the vernacular primers bearing the name that were popular in later ages (ibid., pp. 75-76).

²⁴⁵ Whether the “Pieces of gold” texts were intended as primers is questionable, judging by an extant preface—they rather reflect a literati interest in colloquial words that are not easily found in writing, an interest that was shared by Pu Songling in his *Riyong suzi*. I will return to this subject later. Zheng and Zhu note that the “pieces of gold” of later literature are more similar to *Forest of Key Terms for Common Affairs* than to the *Pieces of gold* texts from Dunhuang (*Dunhuang mengshu yanjiu*, pp. 87-88).

²⁴⁶ Zheng and Zhu, *Dunhuang mengshu yanjiu*, p. 83-84; 445-447.

A word is due on the terminology used here to describe the texts as “classical” or “vernacular.” Classical Chinese usually refers to the written language from about the fifth century BC to the end of the third century, which was emulated in the literary writings of later ages even while it became completely divorced from speech. Chinese written vernacular developed in a parallel tradition from the Tang dynasty onwards, and while it seemed to have consistently had a close relationship to a common spoken language, as a written medium of communication it was also never a pure embodiment of speech.²⁴⁷ In practice there are varying degrees of admixtures of classical and colloquial elements in written texts, and primers are no exception. But the divorce in cultural perceptions between classical Chinese as a prestige language and written vernacular as a lesser medium necessarily impacted the ways in which the literature of primers came to be viewed. While classical primers such as *The Three Characters*, *Thousand Character Text*, and *Hundred Surnames* came to form the core texts of Confucian elementary education by Ming and Qing times, the marginal status ascribed to the much broader variety of vernacular primers can be discerned from the very ways by which they were referred to, as “suzi” and “zazi” – literally, “vulgar characters” and “miscellaneous characters.”²⁴⁸

The spread and impact of the assorted characters literature have yet to be fully assessed. While early studies have associated their audiences with the lower strata of

²⁴⁷ See Jerry Norman, *Chinese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 reprint of 1988 ed.), p. 112; on mandarin and the common spoken language, also see Victor H. Mair, “Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages, *Journal of Asian Studies* 53.3 (1994): 728-30.

²⁴⁸ In this paper, I will describe this literature as “assorted characters” literature (as a translation for “zazi”), while “za” also has a sense of being “mixed” and “miscellaneous.” Another possible translation would be perhaps “mixed characters.”

society, recent scholarship has rather shed light on the variety and ubiquity of *zazi* literature in late imperial times.²⁴⁹ The robust extant bibliography of texts from the Ming and Qing reveal a great deal of variety in the genre, with the books varying from manuscript copies and commercial imprints to elite compilations and official editions.²⁵⁰ Importantly, through a survey of gazetteers, Wu Huifang has shown assorted characters texts to have been used as part of elementary education curricula throughout the Qing empire, often taught alongside the core classical primers, most frequently in the setting of private schools but also in charitable schools sponsored by local communities.²⁵¹ Combining in varying degrees the “textbook” function of teaching characters and “toolbook” function of storing knowledge, they were instrumental in the transmission of the miscellaneous, context-driven, diverse vocabularies necessary for the operations of

²⁴⁹ Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, p. 128: “The *tsa-tzu* circulated among the lower strata of society...” Zhang Zhigong’s study had in one place described the *zazi* literature to be popular only among “the lower and middling strata of society” but in another place adds upper class families who did not care for obtaining examination success (*Chuantong yuwen jiaoyu chutan*, pp. 45 and 48, respectively). A more recent monograph by Gu Yueqin 顧月琴, while bringing to light a wealth of primary materials she collected, is also ambivalent in her interpretations. While in places she discusses the pervasiveness of *zazi* texts in late imperial society and their complementarity with the core classical primers in the education of the populace, elsewhere she suggests the audiences of the two groups of texts to be bifurcated. See, for example, pp. 225; 232-233, in Gu Yueqin, *Richang shenghuo bianqian zhong de jiaoyu: Ming Qing shiqi zazi yanjiu* 日常生活變遷中的教育：明清時期雜字研究 (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2013).

²⁵⁰ The recently published 11-volume *Zazi leihan* edited by Li Guoqing 李國慶 (Beijing: Xueyuan, 2009) includes facsimiles of 157 assorted characters texts, the majority of which date to Qing and Republican times. Also see the appendix to Wu Huifang 吳蕙芳, *Ming Qing yilai minjian shenghuo zhishi de jiangou yu chuandi* 明清以來民間生活知識的建構與傳遞 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 2007), pp. 201-208, and the chart in Gu, *Zazi yanjiu*, pp. 102-104.

On late Ming elite dabblings with the *zazi* genre, see Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, pp. 82-84. A variety of *zazi* texts also appear in official bibliographies of the Ming and Qing, and the Directorate of Ceremonial 司禮監 printed *zazi* titles along with the core classical primers. The Translators Institute (Ming 四夷館; Qing 四譯館) produced bilingual *zazi* glossaries for training elites in foreign languages from Arabic to Burmese (See Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, pp. 84-86). Before the Ming, the Tangut kingdom also produced *zazi* texts in Tangut and Chinese (Wu, pp. 69-72).

²⁵¹ Wu Huifang, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, pp. 102-106. Wu’s survey shows that cases of assorted characters texts being explicitly rejected in the orthodox educational settings of charitable schools such as discussed by Rawski (*Education and Popular Literacy*, p. 128) forms the exception rather than the rule.

everyday life.²⁵² The ubiquity of these texts in late imperial society calls into question parallel forms of written knowledge which existed alongside those privileged by classical education and which at the same time engaged in varying degrees with elite literary culture through the mediation of their literate authors and compilers.²⁵³

In his early study of the literature of elementary education, the scholar Zhang Zhigong had paid attention to a special body within the assorted characters literature, which he categorized as “produced for targeted audiences in targeted regions,” of which he described: “first, they were easy to understand (*tongsu* 通俗); second, they incorporated the realities of living of the targeted audience, and emphasized daily use; third, they had a distinct regional color and rustic flavor....”²⁵⁴ Zhang pointed out that the practical aspects of these texts – such as specialized content on the vocabulary of farming or of trade – were directed for uses independent of the acquisition of classical literacy for the pursuit of officialdom and passing the civil service examinations, but were rather designed for teaching characters to a non-elite audience needing to learn them in a limited amount of time to deal with daily needs. In a similar vein, a more recent study by Patrick

²⁵² Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, pp. 195.

²⁵³ The lasting popularity of the zazi literature is reflected in the large numbers in which they were produced from the late Qing well into the 20th century in both lithographic and manuscript form. In the Republican era, these texts were a truly popular phenomenon, reaching to readers across north and south, urban and rural areas, and divisions in gender and social status. The traditional genre continued to be put to new uses in the changing political contexts of the 20th century, while inspiring polarized attitudes among scholars of Chinese education (Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, pp. 90-91).

The social role played by these texts have been debated - Alexander Woodside has for example pointed out that they did not enable learners to acquire the kind of literacy necessary for succeeding in the civil service examinations (Alexander Woodside, “Real and Imagined Continuities in the Chinese Struggle for Literacy,” in *Education and Modernization: The Chinese Experience*, edited by Ruth Hayhoe (Oxford: Pergamon, 1992), pp. 23-45. Wu acknowledges that, while the assorted characters literature was not politically empowering in this sense, it was geared in the first place not for that purpose but rather towards fulfilling practical needs (pp. 199-200).

²⁵⁴ Zhang Zhigong 張志公, *Chuantong yuwen jiaoyu chutan*, pp. 48-49.

Hase of village scholars from rural Hong Kong in the early 20th century discusses the important role played by a special group of what he called “mnemonic teaching songs” in teaching practical vocabulary to village boys.²⁵⁵ These songs, varying from lists of New Year’s goods and market items to bamboo clapper songs (zhuzhici 竹枝詞) conveying names of places, enabled learners to grasp hundreds, even thousands of characters outside of the Classics which could be recalled at will and written down upon demand. As such they formed “a vital informal strand to the traditional education.”²⁵⁶

While to date no systematic study has been conducted on the subject, the wide variety of zazi literature contained not only many local references (from places and sights to things) but also a wealth of topolectal information, as individual studies have shown.²⁵⁷ You Rujie, a scholar of Chinese regional languages, has noted how assorted characters texts from different regions, mainly in manuscript form, transmitted regional graphic conventions, what he calls “topolectal characters” (“fangyan zazi” 方言雜字) – a term which coincides with how “assorted characters” (“zazi”) literature is sometimes referred to.²⁵⁸ You characterized these graphic forms to have following qualities: they are used only to record topolect, and as such differ from characters in the common written language; they have not been standardized, so that ways of writing may vary by region, and even by person; and they have a certain ephemeral quality, falling in and out of

²⁵⁵ Patrick H. Hase, “Village Literacy and Scholarship: Village Scholars and their Documents,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 52 (2012), p. 83.

²⁵⁶ Hase, “Village Literacy,” p. 83. Hase (p. 82) tells of the texts being “read through and chanted in the school until the boys had committed them to memory.”

²⁵⁷ Pan Jiayi 潘家懿, “Cong Fangyan yingyong zazi kan Qianlong shidai de Jin zhong fangyan 從方言應用雜字看乾隆時代的晉中方言,” *Shanxi shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 23.2 (1996): 88-92.

²⁵⁸ You Rujie 游汝杰, *Hanyu fangyan xue daolun 漢語方言學導論* (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu, 2000), pp. 221.

use.²⁵⁹ As a correspondingly ephemeral genre, the literature of assorted characters offer many potentials for studying the diversity of script conventions and persistence of regional norms against trends toward standardization and integration.²⁶⁰ More systematic study of the literature would provide not only insights into regional languages historically but also how, as varied and diverse texts, the assorted characters literature informed the literacies of regional learners.

It is hard to know when regional speech first entered these texts, or when books first appeared in villages. The known instances of bans on these books in the Song and Yuan reveal their dissemination in rural areas already in these times.²⁶¹ In the Song (960-1279), with the profusion of the written vernacular in diverse genres, an “assorted character” literature had flourished, as attested by textual records and excavated texts.²⁶²

An annotation by Lu You 陸游 (1125-1209) to his own poem explained:

“In the tenth month, the farmers send their sons to school, and this is called ‘winter schooling.’ The books read there, the likes of *Assorted Characters* and *Hundred Surnames*, are called ‘village books’ 農家十月，乃遣子弟入學，謂之冬學。所讀雜字，百家姓之類，謂之村書。”²⁶³

²⁵⁹ This is my terminology; the word You uses is “open-endedness” 開放性, such that “new characters continually appear on the one hand, while older characters may fall out of use after being in popularity for a time....” (*Hanyu fangyan xue daolun*, p. 221)

²⁶⁰ In this light, the assorted characters literature lies at the opposite end of dictionaries, which attempt to standardize and correct. But as this paper will illustrate in the discussion of the 17th century dictionary *Zihui* in the next section, such attempts reflected in themselves the lack of standardization of graphic forms battled against by the dictionaries.

²⁶¹ Wu Huifang 吳蕙芳, *Ming Qing yilai minjian shenghuo zhishi de jiangou yu chuandi* 明清以來民間生活知識的建構與傳遞 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 2007), pp. 73-74; the particular circumstances need to be further studied.

²⁶² See Wu Huifang, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, pp. 68-74.

²⁶³ By the ways in which it was referred to, the *Assorted Characters* would seem to have been a specific text, although it could also refer to a general category of “assorted character” books. The lines are cited in Zhang Zhigong, *Chuantong yuwen jiaoyu chutan*, p. 39; I have modified the punctuation slightly. The poem is the third in the series entitled “The Countryside on an Autumn Day” (“qiuri jiaojū” 秋日郊居) in Lu’s collection *Jiannan shichao* 劍南詩鈔 (Poems from south of Jiange). In this particular poem Lu mocks the village schoolmaster who fails to discipline the children during winter schooling, and takes off to nap after teaching the “village books.”

The scholar Huang Zhen 黃震, writing at the end of the Song, recalled seeing village schoolmaster teaching a text by the name of *Xiao zazi* 小雜字 (*The little assorted characters*) to schoolchildren; he described it as a text in four syllable lines recounting the names of objects.²⁶⁴

In Shandong, certainly by the 18th century, there existed a variety of primers in the form of physical books. In a description which echoes Lu You's description of "village books" several centuries earlier, the authors of an *Assorted Characters in Four Syllables* dated to 1788, described in its preface a variety of "small books" available to beginning students the area:

"I often see students and those from farming families learning to read and write, taking up to six or seven years or even ten plus years. They exhaustively gather *The Thousand Character Essay*, *The Hundred Surnames* and the small books of the various houses, and yet, beyond being able to record miscellaneous inventories they are helplessly lost...." 余每見生、農家讀書，往往至六七年或十數年。凡千文、百姓、以及各家小本幾於搜羅殆盡，而至於記寫雜帳之餘茫然無措。...

The preface continues to tell of a "zazi in seven-syllable lines recited recently" (近來之讀七言雜字) which appears to be widely known ("guangshi" 廣識) but is actually incomplete, and complained that its sentences are too long for memorization. Thus, explained the preface, the authors composed a text in four-syllable lines, and took care to

²⁶⁴ Huang Zhen, *Huang shi richao* 黃氏日抄, cited in Wu, *Minjian shenghuo shizhi*, p. 74. Huang commented on the text in a rather derogatory manner: "it is irrelevant to reason and principle, and I secretly despised it" 義理無關，余竊鄙之。 That he "secretly" despised it is interesting; it may reveal something about the text being widely accepted and used.

make sure the written forms are correct on the authority of the *Zihui* and *Pianhai* dictionaries.²⁶⁵ They conclude humbly:

“We dare not to call ourselves capable in the art of rime, nor practiced in the art of verse; we pray only that [this text] is pithy but not deficient, comprehensive but not cumbersome; perhaps it would be of some small assistance in keeping accounts 非敢謂長於韻也，非敢謂嫻於詞也。但簡而不疎，備而不煩，聊以爲記賬之小補也。²⁶⁶

While the assorted characters literature is often regarded as a “popular” genre, as written works they are necessarily the compositions of literates, even if it is not always the fully literate who learned and recited them. Besides the text discussed above, there are a number of other authors from Shandong whose names have come down to us. It is curious that they have chosen to leave their names given the humbleness of the genre. Known names include Song Xinzong 宋信忠 of Boshan 博山 (fl. Tongzhi era), composer of a *Shantou zazi* 山頭雜字 (Assorted characters of Shantou), a text which is extant in manuscript form and contains fascinating details on the production of clayware in Boshan²⁶⁷; Ma Wenyuan 馬文源 of Feicheng 肥城; and one Shimeng shanfang 石門山

²⁶⁵ These dictionaries will be discussed in the next section of this paper.

²⁶⁶ There are two characters following the last line which I can't quite make out from the facsimile. From “Xinbian siyan zazi” 新編四言雜字 (Qing Wenfutang 文富堂 imprint), in *Zazi leihan*, ed. Li Guoqing, v. 5, p.7; also included in the same volume are three lithographic editions of this text, one of which was printed in Qingdao, Shandong. At the Ryōsai Archive I also saw a version of this text (Catalog no. 7012), which corroborates its circulation in Shandong.

The authors' names are given as Qu Wenbing 曲文炳 and Huan Zhangfu 煥章甫 of Dongwu 東武. I suspect these are not the real names of the authors (“Huan” is not a surname). According to Li Zhenju 李振聚, Qu Wenbing is of 諸城, Shandong (“Pu Songling *Riyong suzi* lüekao” 蒲松齡日用俗字略考,” *Pu Songling yanjiu* 3 (2012), p. 120.

“Various houses” (“Ge jia”) is rather ambiguous, but perhaps it refers to printing shops?

²⁶⁷ See Gu Xueqin, *Zazi yanjiu*, p. 128-131; 156; 227. On p. 129 Gu provides a page image from a typeset version of *Shantou zazi* edited by Chen Yizhu 陳貽柱, which mentions a Song family genealogy dated to 1865 telling of Song Xinzong as the eldest of three sons of a certain Song Ziqiang 宋子強.

房 of Dongmou 東牟, most likely a sobriquet.²⁶⁸ Perhaps the most famous Shandong primer is the *Zhuangnong zazi* 莊農雜字 (The farmer's assorted characters) by Ma Yizhu 馬益著 (1722-1807) of Linqu 臨朐, a descendant of the literatus Ma Yu 馬愉 (*zhuangyuan* 1427), who is also known to have composed a *Gengxu shuizai gu'erci* 庚戌水災鼓兒詞 (Drum ballad on the floods in the year of Gengxu) and a *Zihua shi yu Qi quanzhang guci* 子華使于齊全章鼓詞 (Drum Ballad on the Chapter [in the Analects] of Zihua's mission to the kingdom of Qi), which are extant along with two other short works, *Zuojiu xietan* 佐酒諧談 (Pleasant chatters to supplement wine) and *She geng zhuan* 舌耕傳 (Tale of a schoolmaster).²⁶⁹ Like Pu Songling, Ma obtained minor recognition as a local scholar (he obtained the rank of *xiucai* in his youth and eventually received the title of senior licentiate²⁷⁰), but he never rose through the ranks of the civil exams, much like Pu Songling, and remained a local scholar, tirelessly writing into his

²⁶⁸ These latter two names are provided by Li Zhenju in his "Pu Songling *Riyong suzi* lüekao," p. 120, but dates are not given. Their backgrounds will need further research; a preliminary search through gazetteer databases did not yield either name. Shimeng Shanfang ("Mountain hut by stone gate"), would seem to be the sobriquet of an individual; more commonly, neither names nor sobriquets are given, while occasionally authors have referred to themselves humbly as "shanren" 山人 (man of the hills) in ending couplets (Gu, *Zazi yanjiu*, p. 102).

²⁶⁹ Edited versions of these texts are contained in *Wenshi ziliao xuanji di 4 ji* 文史資料選輯第四輯, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Shandong sheng Linqu xian weiyuanhui 中國人民政治協商會議山東省臨朐縣委員會 (Dec. 1985, Linqu), pp. 81-116. Ma is credited with pedagogical texts on poetry and the *Four Books* as well as a few other vernacular works. See Ji Li 冀歷, "Minjian wenxue jia Ma Yizhu ji qi zuopin jianjie" 民間文學家馬益著及其作品簡介, in *Shandong sheng wenhua yishu zhi ziliao huibian di 18 ji* (*Weifang shi wenhua zhi ziliao zhuanji*) 山東省文化藝術志資料彙編 第十八輯 (濰坊市文化志資料專輯), ed. Shandong sheng wenhua ting shi zhi bangongshi 山東省文化廳史志辦公室 and Weifang shi wenhua ju shi zhi bangongshi (1989) 濰坊市文化局史志辦公室, pp. 29-31, for a list of works attributed to Ma. Biographical information on Ma appears in the *Guangxu Linqu xianzhi* 光緒臨朐縣志.

²⁷⁰ Translations of official titles in this study generally follow Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), occasionally with modification.

eighties.²⁷¹ His assorted characters in rhymed five-syllable lines was widely recited not only in his area but also in other regions in Shandong well into the 20th century, and was transmitted in both the form of imprints and in manuscript form. With Shandongese traveling outside of the province at the end of the Qing, this little text also spread to a wider world; later it influenced a new character book composed under the Communists.²⁷²

In the Ryōsai Archive at Keio University, among the hundreds of manuscripts collected by Hirai Masao during his stay in Shandong in the 1930s, are a sizeable corpus of primers from Pu's native village and its vicinity, many with "Liaozhai" in the title but actually having little to do with Pu's *Riyong suzi*, reflecting rather a vibrant local literature of vernacular rhyme books.²⁷³ Minus the manuscript copies (nine in total) which seemed to have been commissioned by Hirai after texts he collected, there are twenty-six unique primers from the area which are preserved in the Ryōsai collection. Among them there are six varieties of imprints, two of which exist in duplicate copies; the remaining eighteen, which form the majority, are manuscript copies. The vast majority of the texts are undated, and it remains difficult to date them – judging from the

²⁷¹ The information here and in the remainder of this paragraph comes from Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, p. 162-3.

On the regional popularity of *Zhuangnong zazi* in Shandong in the early 20th century, see the memoir by Wu Boxiao 吳伯蕭, of Laiwu 萊蕪, (located adjacent to Ma Yizhu's Linqu) (Wu, "Yizhong zazi" 一種雜字, in idem., *Beijixing* 北極星 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1978), pp. 126-31). Also, in the 1980s, the magazine *Shandong wenxian* 山東文獻 (published in Taiwan) printed a lively series of essays by older migrants recalling the assorted characters texts of their youth in their native Shandong (Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, pp. 57-58, gives the full citations).

²⁷³ It is said that whenever there is a work of unknown author in Pu's native area, it gets attributed to him – and the rhyme books are no exception. In fact, it is probably because of the attribution to Liaozhai that these texts wound up in Hirai's collection. As a Pu-aficionado Hirai seemed to have been after everything that had anything to do with Pu Songling - even while knowing that some attributions are dubious; that he ended up collecting so many area primers was probably not directly meant to be so.

quality of the paper, probably several manuscript copies of Pu's *Riyong suzi* form the earliest strata of the texts, dating perhaps to Pu's own times, but it is difficult to arrive at any precise dating for them. Nevertheless, the corpus of primers as a whole offer a rare glimpse into a vibrant world of local textual transmission, with all its variety in form and content, exchanges between the mediums of print and manuscript, and interwoven oral and written modes.

A first impression from the survey of the Zichuan area primers is their variety in form and content, reflected in titles, ranging from a simple *Zazi* 雜字 (Assorted characters) to titles claiming to be sequels and continuations in a lineage of Liaozhai texts, such as a *Houxu Liaozhai zazi* 后續聊齋雜字 (*Sequel to Liaozhai's assorted characters*) and *Chongxu Liaozhai zazi* 重續聊齋雜字 (*Liaozhai's assorted characters continued*). Besides copies of Pu Songling's *Riyong suzi*, most of the dozen or so other handwritten copies are distinct from each other, varying in form from simple glossaries in two character sets to more extended affairs in four, five, and seven syllable lines.²⁷⁴ Some texts adopt the form of a long running list; others are organized into sections along the common knowledge categories of the assorted characters literature: plants, foods, animals, objects, farming, and so on. Besides these more common varieties of assorted character texts there are also two texts with specialized content. One is a *Yixue sanzi jing* 醫學三字經 (*Medical classic in three characters*), an undated manuscript comprised of twenty-four rhymed sections whose contents range from the beginnings of medicine to

²⁷⁴ Judging by the quality of the paper and the mention of Liaozhai, probably all of these come from after Pu's time.

the various illnesses, followed by lists of recipes and a final series of remedies in the form of songs.²⁷⁵ Another, dated to the late 19th century, is the *Taiping tianguo sanzijing* 太平天國三字經 (Three character classic of the Heavenly Kingdom of Supreme Peace), a short pamphlet of vernacular rhymes proselytizing the glory of God, reflecting perhaps a special moment in local history.²⁷⁶

One perplexing aspect of the Ryōsai corpus of primers is the dearth of the major classical primers – the *Three Character Classic*, the *Thousand Character Text*, and the *Hundred Surnames* – which are known to have formed the core texts of elementary education in the Qing. From among the twenty-six primers from Pu’s native area there is just one *Sanzi jing zhujie beiyao* 三字經注解備要, authored by Wang Yinglin and annotated by He Xingsi 賀興思, an undated Qing manuscript in two volumes.²⁷⁷ Of note is that there are four copies (not enumerated in my twenty-six) of a classical primer attributed to Pu Songling, the *Chronicle of the Ages* (*Liren wen* 曆日文), which is a classical text in four-syllable lines in roughly 260 lines narrating the famous personages and events of history from mythical beginnings to the end of the Ming.²⁷⁸ But besides those, the vast majority of the primers in the collection are of the “assorted characters” kind. One likely possibility, of course, is that Hirai did not care to collect the classical

²⁷⁵ Catalog no. 7010.

²⁷⁶ Catalog no. 7011. The book is written in a basic hand and the cover notes that it was in the “authentic collection of Liu Depei” (劉德培真藏) – which casts doubt on the authenticity of the claim. On Liu Depei and his uprising in Zichuan, see Chapter 1, n63.

²⁷⁷ Catalog no. 7009. The extensive glosses of the *Sanzi jing* in the text reveal it to be a work of erudition (and not exactly a “primer” directed towards beginners readers).

²⁷⁸ Catalog nos. 2202-2205. I have not handled these texts. One of them has been studied by Ma Zhenfang, who thinks the text is authored by Pu Songling on the basis of evidence in the ending lines and a postface attributed to his contemporary Zhang Duqing (*Liaozhai yiwen qizhong*, pp. 321-323). The *Liri wen* is not mentioned in Pu’s tomb inscription or in writings by his descendants. The text is reproduced in the *Pu Songling quanji* edited by Sheng Wei, vol. 3, pp. 2061-2070.

primers that may have been available to him, since clearly they were not authored by Pu Songling, and were perhaps too common to attract a collector's eye.²⁷⁹ But in any case the large number of assorted characters books from the area reflect the importance of vernacular primers in this local realm of basic educational texts.

There are six varieties of imprints among the primers. Four are of Pu Songling's *Riyong suzi* (to be discussed in detail below). Then there is a *Newly Edited Assorted Characters in Four Syllabl Lines* (*Xinbian siyan zazi* 新編四言雜字) which appears to be a version of the text by Qu Wenbing described earlier²⁸⁰; and a lithographic edition probably from the late Qing or Republican Era, whose cover is missing, beginning with the lines "In one's lifetime in this world, plowing and study ought to come first" 人生世間 耕讀當先.²⁸¹ Finally there are two versions of a *Newly Printed, Glossed, and Corrected Farmer's Assorted Characters for Easy Use* (*Xinkan yinshi jiaozheng bianyong zhuang zazi* 新刊音釋校正便用莊雜字), carved on different blocks, comprised of an extend series of seven-syllable rhymes divided into thirty-one sections, much like *Riyong suzi*.²⁸² One has an extant cover, on which is printed in big characters "Farmer's Assorted Characters" ("zhuangnong zazi" 莊農雜字) in the center and with "expanded assorted characters" ("zengding zazi" 增定雜字) in smaller characters on the side. These two texts are particularly of interest because in his preface to *Riyong suzi* Pu mentioned a book by the name of *Zhuangnong zazi* which circulated in the area, and the notes to one

²⁷⁹ Though one may also point to a number of texts that Hirai *did* collect which had nothing to do with Pu whatsoever.

²⁸⁰ Catalog no. 7012.

²⁸¹ Catalog no. 7013.

²⁸² Catalog nos. 7015 and 7016. 7015 is the one with the extant cover.

of the stories in a manuscript copy of *Liaozhai zhiyi* also tell of a *Zhuangnong zazi*, the first line of which is “the Buddha left a hundred twenty professions behind” 佛留一百二十行.²⁸³

The two Keio imprints appear very similar but have telling differences: one begins with “The Buddha left a hundred twenty professions behind, only farming is the most awesome” 佛留一百二十行 惟有莊農打頭強 while the other has, suspiciously, “Pu left a hundred twenty professions behind, only farming is the most awesome” 蒲留一百二十行 惟有莊農打頭強.²⁸⁴ Hirai Masao noted the textual similarities between the latter and *Riyong suzi*, and expressed his puzzlement at their relationship. He further suggested that the *Zhongnong zazi* imprint dated to the early Qing by the quality of the paper and the style of the carved characters.²⁸⁵ Unfortunately neither of the two extant imprints contain any information as to a date or place of printing, but Hirai’s hypothesized dating is a reasonable one. The version with “Buddha” would seem to predate the version with “Pu,” being the text on which variation is drawn. There is also evidence that the text (if not the book itself) may predate Pu Songling’s time. In a recent article which pointed out the intimate relationship between Pu’s *Riyong suzi* and a *Zhuangnong zazi* imprint, the scholar Li Wanpeng suggested that the latter text was composed by someone of the Ming and no later than the early Qing, possibly from somewhere in eastern Shandong, since the content of the text reflected many aspects of

²⁸³ See “Coda” to this chapter.

²⁸⁴ This is catalog no. 7016.

²⁸⁵ See Hirai preface, Catalog no. 7017 (which seems to be a handcopy commissioned by Hirai). I do believe that he is talking about 7016 in his discussion of *Zhuangnong zazi*, as it is the only imprint in the collection which begins with quoted lines “Pu left a hundred professions behind....”

late Ming society as well as topolectal and local references.²⁸⁶ In another study, Li Zhenju notes having seen a *Zhuangnong zazi* imprint, with the first “Buddha” line, which tells at the end of the book that it was “reprinted by Mr. Ju of Qi in the spring of the third year of the Shunzhi reign [1646]” 順治三年春日岐所鞠氏重刻; the title given is *Newly Printed Comprehensive Compendium of the Farmer’s Assorted Characters* 新刻莊農雜字備用大全.²⁸⁷ Li surmises that it was printed in Shandong by the mention of “Qing Qi” 青齊 on the first page, and that as a reprinted edition at the very beginning of the Qing, probably the text was composed before that.²⁸⁸ There, then, existed at least four printings of *Zhuangnong zazi* from the Qing and possibly earlier, reflecting its lasting popularity and regional reception.²⁸⁹

If *Zhuangnong zazi* was a text very much in demand, Pu Songling’s *Riyong suzi* was equally so, judging by the portion of its manuscript copies and imprints in the whole corpus of Keio primers (numbering ten in total). In his 1940 book, Hirai Masao had written of possessing several copies of *Riyong suzi* imprints, which belonged to two varieties: “large” and “small.”²⁹⁰ In the present Keio collection, there are indeed four

²⁸⁶ More discussion on this in the last section of the chapter. See Li Wanpeng 李萬鵬, “*Zhuangnong zazi yu Riyong suzi*” 莊農雜字與日用俗字, *Pu Songling yanjiu* Z1 (2000): pp. 330-6. Li studied a partially extant *Zhuangnong zazi* imprint in the private collection of Bao Jiahu 鮑家虎, said to have come from eastern Shandong; by his descriptions of the extant sections of the imprint, it contains the same content as Keio catalog no. 7015, while differences in a few individual characters suggest they were from two different printings.

²⁸⁷ Li Zhenju, “Pu Songling *Riyong suzi* lüekao,” pp. 120-122. “Qing Qi” appears in the context of “Qing Qi Qi suo Ju shi kanxing” 青齊岐所鞠氏刊行.

²⁸⁸ Li reports also have seen a reprinted edition (*fanke*) with the title modified slightly - the *Newly Printed and Emended Comprehensive Compendium of the Farmer’s Assorted Characters* 新刻校正備用莊農雜字大全, printed by a certain Juyuan Tang 聚元堂 in the Qing. Li, “*Riyong suzi*,” p. 121.

²⁸⁹ The four books listed were all found in Shandong.

²⁹⁰ Hirai, *Liaozhai yigao*, pp. 25-6. Hirai noted that his copies were missing pages in the front and back, but that Lu Dahuang possessed a book in its complete form, from which he was able to “amend” his own. No further details, however, are given as to Lu Dahuang’s copy. Lu himself did not indicate any details in the

extant imprints representing two printings: two books of a larger size (approx. 15cm by 22cm) from the same blocks,²⁹¹ and two of a smaller size (approx. 15.8 by 20cm) from another set of blocks.²⁹² The larger imprints, with their fragile, browning pages of bamboo paper, reveal their age; the combination of widely spaced lines, seven columns to a page, and graphs carved in a *jiangti* style with thin, long strokes, give the books a distinct visual feel. Neither has extant covers, and the initial and ending pages are missing.²⁹³ The first extant page of one of the books displays the end of a table of contents and a fragmented preface by Pu Lide and his sons, with two initial characters of names (“yi” 一), the year (“dingmao” 丁卯), and another character or two extant on the second page.²⁹⁴ A note by Hirai Masao tells that where the name of Pu Songling’s great-grandson Yihong 一泓 should have appeared, a blank space had followed the character “yi” 一, which corroborated the authenticity of the books.²⁹⁵ Unfortunately, no information remains on either book to give any details as to their place of printing.

“Bianding houji” to his *Pu Songling ji* as to the version of *Riyong suzi* which he used for the anthology; judging by the two extra lines at the very end of the anthologized version, it would not have been the smaller variety imprint (of 2502 and 2503) and likely not the larger variety (2501 and 2504) either, but perhaps a manuscript copy.

There is a copy of a *Riyong suzi* imprint in the collection of the Pu Songling Research Institute, but I was not given the opportunity to see it during my visit there in June 2015.

²⁹¹ Catalog nos. 2501 and 2504. Measurements are according to the size of the block face, here and below. While the imprints are described as “larger” and “smaller,” which is in reference to the sizes of the bound books, note that the sizes of their block faces are almost identical.

²⁹² Catalog nos. 2502 and 2503.

²⁹³ The books have also undergone repair, with the original pages affixed onto later paper (I’m not sure of the professional way of describing this? This is not the ‘jade-set-in-gold’ technique with paper inserted into the fold, but the original pages seem to be permanently fixed onto the later setup). No. 2501, which is housed in the Rare Books Room at Keio, is rebound in the Japanese-style four-hole sewing; perhaps the page repairs may also have been done in Japan?

²⁹⁴ Catalog no. 2501.

²⁹⁵ See Hirai’s note at the front of both no. 2501 and 2504. The logic is that the missing character for 泓 observed the Qianlong emperor’s tabooed name (Hongli 弘曆), thus corroborating the blocks to be from the Qianlong era. It is of note that in the smaller format imprints, such as no. 2503, 泓 is printed with complete

The two smaller size imprints offer a few more clues, if still not many. While both are missing covers, there is a page at the front of one of them, perhaps commissioned by Hirai, which appear to be drawn after an original cover.²⁹⁶ The main title in the center is *Liaozhai riyong suzi* 聊齋日用俗字 (Liaozhai's *Riyong suzi*), to the right of which appears: “composed by Mr. Pu Liuquan 柳泉蒲先生纂. On the left side the page says: “*Shixian wen* forthcoming” 時憲文嗣出, and the top of the page the book is indicated to be “newly carved in the *dingmao* year of Qianlong” 乾隆丁卯新鑄. This would seem to have been a commercial imprint, especially given the lines on the bottom left of the page claiming possession of the blocks: “This house owns the blocks; reprints will be investigated” 本家藏版 翻印必究.²⁹⁷ As in the large imprints, the pages consist of seven columns of text, with two seven-character lines in each column forming a complete couplet; and as in the large books, pages distinctly have fishtails only in the top segment of the block-heart and no bottom ones to match.²⁹⁸ The forms of characters are extremely similar in places while being apparently different in others. The smaller *Riyong suzi* books depict homophones on the sides of the main text less frequently than the large books, and are on the whole of a cheaper quality of printing, with less even ink, less

strokes, while the same date of *dingmao* year of Qianlong (1747) is given in the preface. Would this perhaps indicate a later printing?

²⁹⁶ Catalog no. 2502. There is an almost identical cover (which seems to have been drawn, too, after an original cover) to the manuscript of *Riyong suzi* in the private collection of Wang Kongrui 王孔瑞 in Ji'nan (image reproduced in Gu, *Zazi yanjiu*, p. 40).

²⁹⁷ There is nevertheless no information in the extant books as to which “house” did the printing.

²⁹⁸ These single upper fishtails are also a feature of the *Zhuangong zazi* imprints, nos. 7015 and 7016.

finely carved characters, and marks left from crudely carved blocks, all revealing of their status as belonging to a lower class of commercial imprints.²⁹⁹

While none of the *Riyong suzi* books indicate their places of printing, we might try to sketch a picture of possibilities for when Pu Lide initially tried to have his grandfather's works printed during the Qianlong era. In Qing Zichuan there were a number of prominent families that privately printed books, some of very fine quality.³⁰⁰ Pu Lide could perhaps have enlisted the help of patrons, such as when he attempted to find sponsors to print the massive *Liaozhai zhiyi*,³⁰¹ but the extant preface of *Riyong suzi* does not acknowledge any such names. Rather than the desire to anthologize the important works of his grandfather, Pu Lide's rationale for printing the little book as first among all of Pu Songling's works hints at a different sentiment. That it was "easy to put effort into" (or "easy to succeed") ("yi weili" 易爲力) alludes to the anticipation of a welcome reception, perhaps owing to the work's belonging to an accessible genre. Given the relative poverty of the family during this time, would perhaps there have been hope for the little book to win some earnings? Such a guess is, of course, highly speculative, but it cannot be ruled out. It is also curious that Pu's *Shi xianwen* 時憲文 (On the regulation of the seasons) was the next book set for printing. Judging by its title, it was a

²⁹⁹ Also, one might make a visual comparison between the smaller *Riyong suzi* books and the *Zhuangnong zazi* imprints, almost identical in the sizes of the bound volumes and with similar, crude border lines – the latter are more packed visually (with 10 columns per page as opposed to 7 in the *Riyong suzi* books), and instead of appearing next to characters, homophones are depicted in a separate horizontal column at the top of the page.

³⁰⁰ On private printing in Zichuan during the Qing, see Tang Guiyan 唐桂艷, "Qing dai Shandong keshu shi" 清代山東刻書史 (PhD diss, Shandong University, 2011), pp. 144-154. I am much grateful to Prof. Cynthia Brokaw for sharing this dissertation with me.

³⁰¹ I am thinking of Pu Lide's interfaces with the Zhu family of Ji'nan.

book for practical use,³⁰² which suggests something of the practical orientation behind its printing as well as that of *Riyong suzi*.

In Qianlong-era Zichuan, Pu Lide would perhaps not have had to look far to find carvers and printers. A number of sites of commercial printing flourished in Qing Shandong – from Ji’nan and Liaocheng 聊城 to Weifang 濰坊 and Tai’an 泰安,³⁰³ but much closer by, Zichuan’s adjacent Zhoucun 周村 emerged in the early Qing as an important regional center of trade and commerce from an ordinary Shandong village of three hundred households in the mid-Ming. A record by the magistrate of Changshan County 長山 dated to 1710 expressed his puzzlement at the growth of Zhoucun, which by then had become a bustling center of commerce.³⁰⁴ Zhoucun’s prosperity grew to be such that by the end of the 18th century, it was known as a “port on land” 旱馬頭.³⁰⁵ The eighteen *juan* *Liaozhai zhiyi*, with preface by Wang Jinfan 王金范 dated 1767 to “Makeshift study of Zhoucun” (“Zhoucun qieju shi” 周村且居書室), was most probably

³⁰² Yuan Shishuo has suggested that *Shixian wen* is a changed title for Pu’s *Lizi wen* 曆字文 during the Qianlong era (“li” 曆 violated the Qianlong emperor’s name taboo) and surmised it to be an accessible almanac, with information on the calendar and the seasonal nodes, which would help the reader with planning for farming and other matters (Yuan, *Pu Songling shiji zhushu xinkao*, pp. 342-343). A manuscript copy by the title of *Lizi wen* 曆字文 is present at Keio (catalog no. 2201) and has been studied by Ma Zhenfang in his *Liaozhai yiwen qizhong*, which also reproduces this rather lengthy text containing a variety of almanac information.

³⁰³ See *Shandong sheng zhi: chuban zhi* 山東省志 出版志, edited by Shandong sheng difang shi zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 山東省地方史志編纂委員會 (Ji’nan: Shandong renmin, 1993), pp. 19-31.

³⁰⁴ “Zhoucun yi ji ji” 周村義集記, in *Changshan xianzhi* 長山縣志 [1716], *juan* 9, accessed through the Zhongguo fangzhi ku 中國方志庫 online database, Feb. 23, 2017.

³⁰⁵ Wang Yanlin 王衍霖, “Zhoucun chongxiu Xinglong qiao bei” 周村重修興隆橋碑記, in *Changshan xianzhi* 長山縣志 16 卷 [1801], *juan* 13, accessed through the Zhongguo fangzhi ku 中國方志庫 online database, Feb. 23, 2017.

printed in Zhoucun – just a few months after the famous first printing of *Liaozhai zhiyi* by Zhao Qigao 趙起杲 in Hangzhou.³⁰⁶

While the early history of Zhoucun printing will still need more research, more evidence of Zhoucun’s commercial printing survives from the 19th century, with known shops such as Sanyi Tang 三益堂, whose surviving imprints include finely carved books of the classics and illustrated works of fiction³⁰⁷; Yiyou Tang 益友堂, established in 1881, known to have printed educational primers, bestselling classics, and books for the examinations³⁰⁸; and a number of other printing shops from the late 19th century onwards. These shops printed the “core” sellers of educational primers, Four Books, Five classics, and medical books printed widely elsewhere in the country,³⁰⁹ as well as genealogies, at least one gazetteer,³¹⁰ at least one vernacular variety of *Liaozhai zhiyi* (Tales of Make-Do

³⁰⁶ Yuan Shishuo, *Pu Songling zhushu shiji xinkao*, pp. 410-13; also, *Pu Songling zhi*, pp. 172-74. The cover tells of the blocks being possessed by a certain Jiejing Tang 介景堂. At Keio there is a fragment of a reprint of Wang’s edition of *Liaozhai zhiyi* dated to 1785 and printed by a Yuwen Tang 郁文堂 (catalog no. 1153).

³⁰⁷ According to the *Shandong sheng zhi chuban zhi*, Sanyi Tang was in operation before 1795 (p. 25). Tang, in “Qing dai Shandong keshu shi,” gives an early date of 1851, and provides a list of over thirty titles printed by Sanyi Tang with the earliest extant book being an 1828 carved *Erya zhiyin* 爾雅直音 (pp. 648-650).

Sanyi Tang was also known as 參益堂; the library of Jilin University holds an imprint of Pu’s *Cibei qu* 慈悲曲 in eight volumes, printed in 1919 (?), which would have been the earliest known printed version of this work.

³⁰⁸ *Shandong sheng zhi chuban zhi*, pp. 28-29.

³⁰⁹ *Shandong sheng zhi chuban zhi*, pp. 25-31; also, Lin Baixiang 藺百祥, “San shi yinshua, si yi qi ming: wo jia sandai bai yu nian jingying chuban yinshua gaikuang” 三世印刷, 四易其名: 我家三代百餘年經營出版印刷概況, in *Shandong sheng Zibo shi wenhua zhi ziliao huibian* 山東省淄博市文化志資料匯編 (上卷), ed. Zibao shi wenhua zhi bianzuan zu 淄博市文化志編纂組, 2 vols. (Zibo: Zibo ribaoshe yinshuachang, 1983 (?)), v. 1, pp. 54-55.

By using the descriptions “core” and “specialized” I am borrowing Cynthia Brokaw’s characterizations of Qing commercial book culture, of a commonly shared body of texts printed all over the country and of books produced for local consumption or written in topolect (*Commerce in Culture*, pp. 553-559).

³¹⁰ Lin, “Sanshi yinshua,” mentions a “Jiapu” 家譜 and “Fuzhi” 府志, but specifics are not given. The 1801 *Changshan xianzhi* tells its cover that “this yamen possesses the blocks” 本衙藏版, and it would appear to be printed under official auspices. Would the commercially printed “Fuzhi” be a later development? Or perhaps the yamen hired local carvers and printers? In the same article, Lin mentions moving to Zichuan in

Studio in Accessible Rendition 通俗本聊齋), and a *Riyong zazi* 日用雜字 (would it have perhaps been an imprint of Pu's *Riyong suzi*?).

Besides in Zhoucun, locally in Zichuan – very locally – there may have been shops which offered the possibility of carving and printing. The earliest known printed text of Pu's vernacular works is a woodblock edition titled *Zhengde piaoyuan* 正德嫖院 (The Zhengde emperor in the courtesans' quarters) dated to 1749, said to have been printed by a calligraphy and brushes shop (shubi pu 書筆鋪) of Xiguan 西關 village in Zichuan. The book is said to have had slanted *gongche* 工尺 characters next to the lyrics which indicated beats for the rise and fall of the clapper beats (banqi 板起 and banluo 板落), and it was owned by an old man from the locality, himself said to be fond of gambling and girls, who took it with him to northeastern China sometime in the early - mid 20th century.³¹¹ Besides this book, there is little other evidence of printing in Zichuan from the 18th century, but there is an intriguing little book by the title of *Quanxiao lu* 勸孝錄 (Exhortation to filial piety) in the Keio collection which may perhaps have also come from there at that time.³¹² The blockface measures 11.5 by 14.5 cm; on the left-side of the title on the damaged cover it is indicated that “blocks are stored in the township of Zichuan” (ban cun Zi yi 版存淄邑), but the remainder of the page is missing, so that we don't know if a more specific name came after the last character “yi.” The pages are fragile and brown, while their format suspiciously resemble the *Riyong suzi* imprints –

1872, a drought year, and working for the county yamen carving woodblocks and printing some kind of food provision sheets / pamphlets (糧秣, 糟冊 – perhaps food stamps?).

³¹¹ The information on this book comes from Wu Zhao 吳釗, “Pu Songling de liqu, p. 30

³¹² Catalog no. 7005.

with seven columns per page divided into upper and lower sections of seven characters each, and fishtails only in the top segment of the block heart. Like *Riyong suzi*, the text is consisted of heptasyllabic rhymes; the content is devoted to the subject of filial piety.³¹³

While these books reveal fragments of the picture of local printing in Zichuan, the many extant manuscripts of *Riyong suzi* suggest that the handwritten medium continued to exert a strong presence in the transmission of the text. Besides the four imprints of *Riyong suzi*, the remaining six books in the Keio collection are manuscript copies.³¹⁴ When one leafs through the pages of these texts one receives the impression that these were used books, with worn corners, missing covers, and occasional doodles on the sides of pages, unlike well-preserved books of a different literary order.³¹⁵ Judging by the gradations in the color of the bamboo paper so often used in Zichuan, they must have spanned the time range from Pu's own day or thereabouts to the beginning of the last century. And judging by the range of hands which present the rhymes, varying from sure calligraphic hands to less stately ones, the copyists varied from the fully literate to those in less advanced stages of learning. Besides those in the Keio collection, there are at least four other known books of *Riyong suzi* from Shandong, all of which are manuscript

³¹³ This text will be discussed more in Chapter 3.

As with Zhoucun, more sources for local printing remain from the late 19th century. By that time there were four print shops in Zichuan, including a Shunhe Tang 順和堂 in Xiguan, which acquired a lithography machine from Qingdao in 1910 while continuing to employ the traditional method of woodblock carving into the 1920s. (Lin, "Sanshi yinshua," p. 54)

³¹⁴ These are catalog nos. 2505, 2507, 2508, 2510, 2513; I've also counted catalog no. 2506, of which actually only the first page contains text from *Riyong suzi*; the content of the remaining pages corroborates *Zhuangnong zazi* (catalog no. 7015), and intriguingly, the original cover advertises that it is an "original manuscript from the Hesheng tobacco shop of Zichuan" (Zichuan Hesheng yandian yuan gaoben 淄川合盛煙店原稿本) – which suggests that possibly the shop doubled as a book shop or lending library.

³¹⁵ Many of the texts did undergo later preservation, i.e. with covers put in, original pages affixed onto new paper, rebound. Some, such as no. 2501, were rebound in Japan judging by the evenly spaced four-hole sewing.

copies.³¹⁶ That *Riyong suzi* circulated mainly in handwritten copies explains perhaps its restricted geographical reach; it also says something about the dominance of the manuscript medium into the Qing in the case of a particular text in a particular locale.³¹⁷

But despite what seems to be a genuinely local, “popular” reception, *Riyong suzi* itself is a very odd work, and defies in a number of respects the conventions of the genre. In the next section we examine the text of *Riyong suzi* closely, focusing attention on the physical forms of characters in the Qing imprints.³¹⁸ We question just what “suzi” means in the context, the challenges of conveying spoken sounds through standard scripts, and the unique solutions adopted by Pu in his massive “primer” of nearly 1,600 lines and some 11,000 characters.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ These are: a manuscript, *Liaozhai riyong suzi* 聊齋日用俗字 in the private collection of Wang Kongrui 王孔瑞 in Ji’nan; a manuscript in the collection of the Shandong Provincial Library, reproduced in facsimile form in *Shandong wenxian jicheng*, 4th series, vol. 11; a manuscript discovered in Yimengshan 沂蒙山, Shandong, described in Liu Xinjian 劉心健, Fan Hua 范華 and Zhao Wenjun 趙文俊, “Pu Songling yizhu *Qiyang zawen* shouchaoben” 蒲松齡佚著七言雜文手抄本, *Wenwu* 文物 8 (1983): 89-90, and “Guanyu Pu Songling *Riyong suzi* shouchaoben buzheng er ze” 關於蒲松齡日用俗字手抄本補正二則, *Wenwu* 文物 10 (1983): 23. There is also a copy of *Riyong suzi* in the display case of the Pu Songling Research Institute, but I was not able to see the inside – judging by the handwritten cover, I am guessing it is a handwritten copy.

³¹⁷ I do not know of any texts of *Riyong suzi* circulating outside of Shandong.

³¹⁸ I will have to discuss the variations in the manuscripts at another time, which is a whole other subject. . . . Ironically, the complex process of manuscript transmission, with no one scribe and no one script, pose real challenges for the study of a text like *Riyong suzi*, which sets out to put writing in “correct” forms.

The more widely accessible versions of *Riyong suzi*, in Lu Dahuang 路大荒’s *Pu Songling ji* of 1962 and in the 1998 *Pu Songling quanji* edited by Sheng Wei, each has its own set of problems in being used for scholarly study. Li Zhenju, comparing these two versions of the text, the Shandong Museum manuscript, another hand-copy (“影抄本”), has pointed to a large number of errors in the Lu text compared to the other three; it’s unknown whether this is due to the proofing process in the modern editions or to the text which Lu transcribed, since he did not give any details as to the source(s) he used. Sheng Wei’s text also has errors, according to Li (although any attribution of textual variants as “error” simplifies the complex issues of textual variation); the big problem I had with it was its use of simplified characters, which is particularly troubling for a text like *Riyong suzi*. See Li Zhenju, “Pu Songling *Riyong suzi* lüekao,” pp. 123-37.

³¹⁹ Compare with the 2,636 graphs of the *Thousand Character Essay, Hundred Surnames and Three Character Classic* combined (Benjamin Elman, “The Social Roles of Literati in Early to Mid-Ch’ing,” in *Cambridge History of China*, edited by Willard J. Peterson, vol. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 372). 11,000 is an estimate of the total number of characters in *Riyong suzi*; the number of distinct graphs would be less.

Local sounds and unruly scripts

In the preface to *Riyong suzi*, dated to 1704, Pu Songling wrote³²⁰:

Every so often, when one needs something, one is troubled by not being able to write its name. In old times there was the *Farmer's Miscellaneous Characters*; most of the village children recited it. Not to mention that it had many omissions, but even for those [characters] that it contained, when one investigates the strokes, one finds that they are all fabricated. Therefore I made up my mind to carefully consult the *Zihui* 字彙 (Compendium of characters) and put together this book. In cases of errors of mispronunciation in the patois, such as reading [what ought to be] the character 猓 [to the sound of] 腳 and [what ought to be] the word 種耜 [to the sound of] 種使 and other cases of this kind, I have in all cases chosen to follow the standard characters.³²¹ Where characters are difficult to recognize, characters of the same pronunciation are provided on the side. If characters are themselves phono-semantic compounds,³²² then according to convention, they are to be pronounced following [the appropriate] half of the character, and for all those characters, there are no extra characters on the side indicating the pronunciation. If, in common expressions, there are differences between how things are said in the north and the south, I have on occasion borrowed characters, which as a rule can all be found in the *Zihui*, such that the reader will be able to grasp what is referred to intuitively. Although this “popular characters” cannot exhaustively capture everything, still it will suffice for use around the house. – Recorded by the Gentleman of the Willow Spring, in the latter part of the first month of the *jiashen* year of the Kangxi reign [1704].

每需一物，苦不能書其名。舊有莊農雜字，村童多誦之。無論與脫漏甚多，而即其所有者，考其點畫，率皆杜撰。故立意詳查字彙，編為此書。土音之訛，如猓讀為腳，種耜讀種使之類，悉從正字。其[難]識者，並用音切於大

³²⁰ Catalog no. 2503. The characters in brackets are missing or partially absent from the pages, and I have filled them in after the handcopied preface appended at the beginning of catalog no. 2502. The punctuation is mine.

³²¹ In some versions of this text (including the *Pu Songling ji* edited by Lu Dahuang and the *Pu Songling quanji* edited by Sheng Wei, the phrase (here 悉從正字) is given as 悉從正字通, which means (instead of “to follow the standard characters”) “to follow the *Zhengzi tong*,” with *Zhengzi tong* being the name of a major 17th century dictionary (to be discussed later in this section). Zhang Shuzheng 張樹錚 has found that in the versions of *Riyong suzi* he studied the characters tended to follow *Zihui* (“Pu Songling *Riyong suzi zhong de suzi*” 蒲松齡日用俗字中的俗字, *PSLYJ* 3 (2012): 105), and suggests rightly that 通 at the end was not originally intended (*Pu Songling Riyong suzi zhu* 蒲松齡日用俗字注 (Ji’nan: Shandong daxue, 2015), p. 2). I have benefited greatly from the annotations in Zhang’s *Pu Songling Riyong suzi zhu* in translating this preface and in the following discussions of *Riyong suzi*.

³²² One of the six traditional ways of describing characters – these refer to characters which have both a phonetic component and a semantic component. About 85% of all characters are of this composition.

字之側。[若偏旁原]係諧聲，例應讀從半字，槩無音切。或俗語有南北之不同者，偶一借用，要皆字彙所有，使人可以意會。雖俗字不能盡誌，而家常應用，亦可以不窮矣。康熙甲申歲正月下浣柳泉氏誌。

In this fascinating preface, Pu outlined the central concerns of his book – putting things from the spoken language into writing, and finding the “standard characters” for them. It is told, perhaps as a modest gesture, that the book is meant for “use around the house.” When one looks through the extant imprints of *Riyong suzi* one is struck by the range of things that are enumerated, varying from the bodily organs to flora and fauna, to an encyclopedic range of things and crafts.³²³ While the categorizations of knowledge and the interplays between textual and living forms of knowledge will be explored in the next section of the chapter, this section will focus on the many curiously shaped characters which fill the pages of *Riyong suzi*, and the nuts and bolts of just how the books tried to convey in writing things that are spoken according to the ways in which they were said.

This essay begins with introduction to “suzi” (“popular characters”) and the issues of popular orthography in Ming and Qing times, as discerned from the late Ming dictionary *Zihui* whose authority *Riyong suzi* evokes. It then examines the unique linguistic project of *Riyong suzi* by focusing on the range of decisions employed in the text against the challenges of depicting spoken sounds with standard scripts. It follows by briefly treating the graphs not found in the dictionaries as claimed, suggesting possible local orthographic conventions. Finally, the paper contextualizes Pu’s project among a range of literati attitudes to popular orthography from the Qing and earlier, from the lenses of philology to more informal genres of literary writing which looked upon

³²³ For a list of the categories in *Riyong suzi*, please see the Appendix.

colloquial languages and regional conventions of writing with fascination and curiosity. In this light, it comments on the unique aspects of Pu's project in adopting the accessible format of rhymes to inculcate "proper" characters.

"Suzi" and "zhengzi"

Probably a first note ought to be made on the title, *Riyong suzi*, here translated as "popular characters for daily use." In the context of its appearances in the text, "suzi" refers to a type of book, much like "zazi," that treats what is translated in this chapter as "assorted characters." This is evident when we look at the line in the preface where the term is used to refer to *Riyong suzi* itself: "although this 'popular characters' can't exhaustively capture everything, still it will suffice for use around the house" 雖俗字不能盡誌, 而家常應用, 亦可以不窮矣. "Suzi" in this context can be understood as "primer" or "glossary," in other words, as a type of book, and it is in this sense that the title is best understood – as a "suzi" book for everyday use. But there is another way in which "suzi" is used when we look at the concluding lines to the work: "The various categories of popular characters [listed in this text] contain many omissions; it is difficult to flip through all of the *Compendium of Standard Characters*" 諸門俗字多遺漏 難在全掀正字通.³²⁴ Here "suzi" is used to describe the characters included in the text, and this usage is particularly of interest when we try to understand the aims of the book regarding the written script.

³²⁴ The extant pages of the large print recensions at Keio (2501 and 2504) do not go all the way to the end of the text, but Catalog no. 2503 ends with these lines.

In present day usage, *suzi*, also known as *sutizi* 俗體字, is used to indicate characters that are written in non-standard orthography. The *Hanyu da cidian* defines *sutizi* (“characters with popular forms”) as “characters which are in popular use but whose forms are unstandardized, as distinguished from ‘characters with standard forms’” 指通俗流行而字形不規範的漢字，別於正體字而言。 While such a definition of “*suzi*” may seem straightforward, the distinction between “*zheng*” 正 and “*su*” 俗, “standard” and “popular” forms, as any hierarchy of value ascriptions, is never as innocent as they are made out to be. In a pioneering essay on the study of orthographies, the scholar Jiang Lihong has pointed out that “*su*” characters are invariably defined in relation to “*zheng*” characters³²⁵ – definitions which often vary with the specific social, political, and individual impetuses which drive discourses on norms of writing. Movements to standardize writing follow every period of political division, and such impetuses come not just from the political center but are also intimately tied to literati identities founded upon a sense of guardianship of the literate culture and thus of writing. In some sense, the problems of textual transmission meant that a discourse of “*zhengzi*” was always present.³²⁶

At the same time, under what are often dismissed as not “*zheng*” there must have been many realms of use and corresponding norms of writing, all which need further study – norms shared across times, genres, mediums, and regions. The *Hanyu da cidian* definition hints at a distinction between the ways in which graphs are used and the values

³²⁵ Jiang Lihong 蔣禮鴻, “Zhongguo suwenzi xue yanjiu daoyan” 中國俗文字學研究導言 (orig. published 1959), in *Jiang Lihong ji: di san juan* 蔣禮鴻集 第三卷 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu, 2001), p. 133-34.

³²⁶ For a study of “error” ascriptions, see Susan Cherniack, “Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Sung China,” *HJAS* 54.1 (June 1994): 109-25.

ascribed to their forms – of how the attributions of “su” and “zheng” are independent of the actual ways in which graphs circulated, such as those in “popular use” but not “standard” forms. Literati have long recognized that certain graphic forms are not practical for ordinary writing, but such recognition tends to remain implicit. The most explicitly presented opinion on the legitimacy of the less formal spheres of writing and their corresponding graphic forms is probably Yan Yuansun 顏元孫’s preface to his *Ganlu zishu* 干祿字書(Character book for wealth and success) of the Tang dynasty:

In precise terms, characters belong to one of three forms, “customary,” “popular,” and “authoritative.” Those that are known as “popular” are, as a rule, all rather basic; in accounts and simple documents, deeds and prescriptions, since they don’t involve the more lofty registers of language,³²⁷ using popular characters is not unsound. Of course, if they can be reformed, that’s wonderful.³²⁸ What are regarded as “customary” forms have been passed down from a long time ago, and can be applied to memorials and letters, petitions and verdicts, and naturally one is free from criticism in using them. What are regarded as “authoritative” characters all have [textual] proof. They can be applied to formal works and fine writings, to examinations responses and stele inscriptions; using them is proper.³²⁹

具言通、俗、正三體。所謂俗者，例皆淺近，唯籍帳文案，券契藥方，非涉雅言，用亦無爽；倘能改革，善不可加。所謂通者，相承久遠，可以施表奏牋啓，尺牘判狀，固免詆訶。所謂正者，並有憑據，可以施著述文章，對策碑碣，將爲允當。

Here one finds an unusually explicit recognition of the variety of graphic forms which belonged to varying realms of use, and of the need for graphs which facilitated the writing of certain kinds of common documents. In this light, one might consider how genres such as the assorted characters literature allowed for negotiations between less prestigious realms of use (“everyday use”) and so-called “standard” forms of writing

³²⁷ The term “yayan” (“the more lofty registers of language”) as it appears in the *Analects* is sometimes interpreted to refer to the koine of antiquity. In this context I take the less specialized meaning.

³²⁸ Tentative translation.

³²⁹ Cited in Jiang Lihong, “Yanjiu daoyan,” p. 133.

graphs. Would they have depicted graphs in current, local circulation? Would their authors have struggled with choices between employing “correct” forms in these didactic texts, versus more “common” graphic forms? Zhang Shuzheng has pointed out how the “suzi” which *Riyong suzi* aims to provide are not what we think of as “variants” in the modern sense of the word but are rather characters in “standard” forms for commonly spoken words, following the authority of the dictionaries of Pu’s day.³³⁰ That is to say, for all its emphasis on “everyday use,” *Riyong suzi* was at heart a corrective project on “zhengzi.” But we might also discern something of the issues present in the assorted characters literature of Pu’s time and place in the protest in the preface against the “omissions” and “fabricated” characters of *Zhuangnong zazi*. There must be many unstandardized graphs in circulation, and a host of issues – variation in written forms, over-abundance of graphs, and still the lack of available, authoritative graphs to convey spoken things.

“Suzi” and “zhengzi” mean different things to different people, and there is a range of attitudes and definitions of “suzi” among literati of the early Qing. A common way to restore the “right,” “correct” and “authoritative,” form of writing, all captured under the term “zhengzi,” is to rely on the authority of a text, and in this light Xu Shen’s second century dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 looms large. Qing scholars of the elementary learning continued to trying find in the *Shuowen* the “original characters” (*benzi* 本字) of characters in the transmitted texts of the classics.³³¹ From orthodox

³³⁰ Zhang, “*Riyong suzi zhong de suzi*,” pp. 104-5.

³³¹ Yu Yue 俞樾, “Xu” 叙, dated 1875, in Lei Jun 雷浚, *Shuowen waibian* 說文外編, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, vol. 227, p. 298.

perspectives, all graphs which are outside of the nine thousand or so characters in *Shuowen* were “su” – with all the term’s connotations of error, vulgarity, and heterodoxy.³³²

But there were also others who saw “zheng” in less restrictive terms, recognizing that many characters were not contained in *Shuowen* – from those in the transmitted texts of the Confucian canon to realms of ordinary use. In a study of characters from the classics not contained in *Shuowen*, a late Qing philologist also included a section on “suzi,” which he defined thus: “Popular characters are those which appear not in the classics but in the *Yupian* and the *Guangyun*. The number of these characters is as immense as the sea” 俗字者, 不見於經而見於玉篇, 廣韻也. 其字浩如煙海.³³³ Beyond *Shuowen* and the classics, there is a recognition of a much wider sphere of written forms and certain ones among them that are important enough to be studied. The author tells that, in choosing the particular ones included in his study, he selected “those which are important in contemporary usage” 時俗要用者; he eliminated those which are “not important to the usage” 非要用者, those which are “too vulgar to be included in [formal] writing” 俗不入文者, and those characters which did not appear in the two named dictionaries.³³⁴

³³² Traditionally “suzi” are also often understood to be characters which do not conform to the principles of the six categories of graphic forms (*liushu* 六書) elaborated in *Shuowen*, even though many in fact do (Jiang Lihong, “Yanjiu daoyan,” p. 134).

³³³ Lei Jun 雷浚, *Shuowen waibian* 說文外編, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, vol. 227, p. 396. *Yupian*, compiled in the Liang dynasty, contained 16,917 characters – significantly more than *Shuowen*, which contained 9,353 characters. The expanded version 大廣益會玉篇 of the Song contained 22,561 characters. *Guangyun*, the earliest extant rime dictionary based on the *Qieyun* 切韻 of the early 7th century, is a smaller book. See Wu Junxun 巫俊勳, *Zihui bianzuan lilun yanjiu* 字彙編纂理論研究 (Taipei: Hua Mulan, 2007), pp. 2-3; Wilkinson, *Manual*, p. 37.

³³⁴ Lei Jun 雷浚, *Shuowen waibian* 說文外編, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, vol. 227, p. 396.

Like this late Qing philologist, modern specialists working with primary materials in Ming Qing literature must navigate an immense sea of graphic forms in the books of this time.³³⁵ While scholars have observed trends toward standardization in the styles of carved graphs in late imperial books, still little attention has been paid to variation in the graphic forms themselves.³³⁶ When one considers the extensive number of graphs in the dictionaries of the day against the fact that the number of commonly used graph does not exceed a few thousand at any given time, the makeup of these lexical compendiums is especially intriguing. The *Zihui* 字彙 (Compendium of Characters), compiled by Mei Yingzuo 梅膺祚 (fl. 1570-1615) and first printed in 1615, contained 33,179 characters.³³⁷ The *Zhengzi tong* 正字通 (The Comprehensive Standard Characters) of 1680, of similar character count, apparently adopted a stricter standard for inclusion while including several hundred graphs not included in *Zihui*.³³⁸ The *Kangxi* dictionary of 1716, which was compiled on the basis of these two previous dictionaries, contained a whopping 47,035 characters.³³⁹ The sheer number of characters in these dictionaries says something

³³⁵ For a historical overview of Chinese orthographies, see Zhang Yongquan 張涌泉, *Hanyu suzi yanjiu* 漢語俗字研究 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1995).

³³⁶ On standardization of the printed graph in late Ming books, with the *jiangti* (craftman's style) emerging as the standard script, making for both ease of carving and reading, see Robert Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction*, pp. 110-113.

³³⁷ Of note is that the *Pian hai* 篇海 (originally compiled in the Jin dynasty) contained more characters, at 55,116, and the *Xiang jiao pian hai* 詳校篇海 of the Ming contained 38,244 graphs, so *Zihui*'s 33,179 actually represents an abridgement (Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 3).

³³⁸ Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 45. Jiang Yuhua 姜聿華, *Zhongguo chuantong yuyanxue yaoji shulun* 中國傳統語言學要籍述論 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian, 1992), p. 281, describes *Zhengzi tong* as containing approximately 33,000 characters.

³³⁹ Jiang Yuhua, *Zhongguo chuantong yuyanxue yaoji shulun*, p. 282.

about the lack of standardization of the script in the 17th and early 18th centuries, if not about graphs in actual circulation.³⁴⁰

While modern discussions often describe these period dictionaries as containing large numbers of variants, the concept of “graphic variant,” or “yitizi” 異體字, does not begin to capture the complexity of the range of issues faced by the older dictionaries.³⁴¹ They negotiated between a range of scripts from antiquity to contemporary times; they dealt with variations among carved styles as well as conventions in handwriting; and still there were graphs used in regional and other specialized, circumscribed contexts.³⁴²

Deserving a special note are the references to scribal culture in the 17th century dictionaries, which are especially interesting when considered in the context of its associations with orthographic variation and the persistence of manuscript culture into the

³⁴⁰ Wang Fengyan 王鳳陽, *Hanzi xue* 漢字學 (Jilin: Jilin wenshi, 1989), pp. 541-42, in a discussion of the appearance of new characters historically, suggests that the large numbers of graphs in the *Zihui* and *Kangxi zidian* reflect not so much the appearance of new graphs as the inclusion of pre-existing graphs from earlier times. Wang suggests that the great boom in new characters took place between the Han and the Song.

³⁴¹ By modern estimates, forty percent of the characters in *Kangxi zidian* and over twenty percent of those in *Zihui* are “graphic variants” (see Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 234; Wilkinson, *Manual*, p. 80). On “yitizi” 異體字 (graphic variants), Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 writes: “graphic variants are graphs which are the same in sound and meaning but are different in form. Strictly speaking, only graphs which are used in completely the same way...can be called graphic variant. But the graphic variants usually referred to tend to include graphs whose uses only partially overlap. Graphic variants in the strict sense can be called ‘graphic variants in the restricted sense,’ while graphic variants with partial overlap in their usage can be called ‘partial graphic variants.’ The two types combined make up ‘graphic variants in the broad sense.’” See Qiu, *Wenzi xue gaiyao* 文字學概要 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1996), p. 205.

³⁴² One might get a feel of these issues by looking at the sections in *Zihui* described as “Following the ancients” 從古, “Conforming to the times,” 遵時, “Ancient and contemporary forms are both viable” 古今通用, “Distinguishing similar forms” 辯似, and “Alerting one to errors” 醒誤. Pairs of characters are listed together, usually one being the preferred form and the other being the form it is distinguished from. The notes at the beginning of each list are often revealing of the issues involved. For all the effort taken to distinguish between forms, the editor relaxes finally for a moment under “Ancient and contemporary forms are both viable,” where it is told, “The erudite gentlemen are fond of ancient forms, whereas the gentlemen in pursuit of worldly success follow the times. The characters [listed here] can be used interchangeably, and each person may choose what is convenient to him....” 博雅之士好古, 功名之士趨時。字可通用, 各隨其便。(*Zihui*, Xuxiu siku quanshu ed., v. 232, p. 408; punctuation mine.)

this period. If the project of lexicology and of philology is about establishing the stability of graphic forms, the practice of writing – with calligraphic variations, individual idiosyncracies, and the messiness of brush and paper – directly counters these impulses to standardize and to control. It comes as no surprise that in critiques of “suzi” there is a heavy association with hand-writing. The *Xiangjiao Pianhai* 詳校篇海 of 1608, which is known to contain many graphs from popular orthography, tells in the “editorial principles” 凡例 at the beginning of the book that it eliminated many “characters spread wildly by copyists in the common realms” 俗間省手浪傳等字.³⁴³ *Zihui* similarly characterized itself against the errors of scribal culture in descriptions of characters as “false” 言+爲, where the “falsity” is in places attributed to “errors from hand-copying” 傳寫之僞.³⁴⁴ The relationship between hand-writing and orthographic variation and innovation in this period will need to be further studied,³⁴⁵ but the attempts of the dictionaries to provide the standard can be seen in some sense as asserting the authority of print in a world of persisting manuscript culture and its accompanying divergent orthographies.³⁴⁶

³⁴³ Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 38. Here *Xiangjiao Pianhai* is critiquing its predecessor, the *Pianhai*, which included all of these graphs. It tells that while the present book did not dare to eliminate all of these graphs, some measures were taken at selection. *Shengshou* 省手, something like “efficient hands,” would seem to suggest professional scribes.

³⁴⁴ For examples, see Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 69-70.

³⁴⁵ Perhaps by examining specific graphs and how they are depicted in manuscripts vs. print.

³⁴⁶ Besides scribal culture, there is also the assertion against commercial printing, with all its errors. In the section under “Correcting errors” 醒誤, for example, the editor of *Zihui* writes, “When I was a child I practiced writing the characters [listed here] without knowing that they were the products of mistakes in the commercially printed books. Alas, now I am alerted of these mistakes. I dare to question erudite persons with them.... 此數字，余童時習焉，而不知蓋緣坊間書本所誤也。今醒之矣。敢以質於鴻博。(Zihui, Xuxiu siku quanshu ed., v. 233, p. 406; punctuation mine.)

A glimpse of the chaos can be had from looking at *Zihui*'s confused attempts at incorporation and standardization of graphic forms. In the "Stipulations" at the beginning of the book, *Zihui* traces its lineage to the imperially commissioned rime-book *Hongwu zhengyun* 洪武正韻 of 1375, along with *Yunhui* and *Shuowen*, claiming to contain graphs which belonged to the classics and histories, and to have eliminated the "strange" graphs in popular use in contemporary character books such as the *Pianhai*.³⁴⁷ Actually *Zihui* shows many similarities in both scope and outlook to this book, which included many characters from popular orthography. When *Zihui* is studied against this book and other books from which it incorporated graphs, it reveals no consistent criteria for selection. Wu Junxun finds that, while *Zihui* eliminated many so-called variants, it also included many other variants,³⁴⁸ making up more than twenty percent of the total number of graphs.³⁴⁹ While *Zihui* claims not to include graphs which were had a known pronunciation but whose meanings were lost, it in fact contained a small number of such graphs, as well as graphs with known meanings but no known pronunciation. And while it eliminated many rarely used graphs, many of the graphs in the book are still rarely used forms. These phenomena all point to the at times arbitrary attempts at inclusion and

³⁴⁷ See "Stipulations" 範例, *Zihui*, cited in Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 31. Wu, investigating the actual source of characters in *Zihui*, finds that while characters from the three named texts do form a central part of *Zihui*, there are still some 20,000 characters in *Zihui* that are not contained in these books and come from elsewhere. Significantly, an examination of a cross-section of characters by the radical 金 shows that many of the characters in *Zihui* overlap with the *Da guangyi hui Yupian* 大廣益會玉篇, *Leipian* 類篇, and as for the critiqued *Xiangjiao Pianhai* 詳校篇海, *Zihui*'s characters almost do not exceed its range for that cross-section. There are also characters taken from 顏氏家訓, and ancient characters from the drum-shaped stones 石鼓文 reflecting the script of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, 32-34). All in all it's a big hodge-podge.

³⁴⁸ There is a question as to whether these include the variants from *Pianhai* or are new ones.

³⁴⁹ This and the remainder of the paragraph following the summary in Wu Junxun, *Zihui*, p. 234.

incorporation while *Zihui* navigated the immense sea of existing graphs, where orthographic multiplicity contributed to the chaos.

What about standardization? A glimpse of the range of issues involved can be had from looking the categories of descriptions *Zihui* applies to graphs. At first glance, they seem to be straightforward, indicating variations of the same character with “tong” 同 (“same as”) and “ji” 即 (“is”), and proper forms with “zhengzi” 正字 (“standard graph”) and “benzi” 本字 (“original graph”). The descriptions of “gu” 古 (“ancient”), “zhouwen” 籀文 (“great seal script”), “zhuanwen” 篆文 (“seal script”), and “liwen” 隸文 (“clerk script”) denote forms evolved from ancient scripts, while “popular” 俗, “abbreviated” 省, and “false” 言+爲 suggest something of the contemporary usage.³⁵⁰ But when one studies actual graphs against these descriptions, one finds no consistent criteria for employing them. For example, under the listing for a graph a “su” form may be given, but another graph with a similar component may be described as “benzi.” Similarly, confusions happen between “tong” and “gu,” between “tong” and “su,” between “benzi” and “zhengzi” and “zhuanwen,” and “ji” referred at times to “gu” and at times to “su” graphs.³⁵¹ Moreover, the formal explanatory mode employed for “zheng” graphs (giving the *fanqie* and all) is also employed for graphs of other categories, such as “su” graphs and graphs which resulted from the changing of seal and clerk script into the *kaishu* form – what would be “variants” in modern terms.³⁵² Together these reflect the lack of a

³⁵⁰ In grouping the graph descriptions in these ways I am partially following a chart provide in Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 74; the entire list of descriptions is given on p. 50.

³⁵¹ Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 73.

³⁵² Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, pp. 71-72.

standard in defining individual graphs against orthographic variants. Seen from another perspective, the focus perhaps is not on defining such a standard (or to define “variants” as we know it in the modern day) – but rather to acknowledge a range of possibilities for describing scripts, where “zheng” is but one among them.

Perhaps because of its inclusion of many characters from popular orthography, *Zihui* was criticized by the more orthodox scholars as a “vulgar book” (“sushu” 俗書).³⁵³ *Riyong suzi* did not evince such a condescending attitude toward the *Zihui*, using it instead as its authority, probably because it was a genuinely widely used dictionary.³⁵⁴ But when we consider Pu’s project against the actual features of *Zihui*, this solution appears to be less than ideal. As Pu suggested in his preface, the main issue involved “the errors of patois” 土音之訛 – accounting for the sounds of topolectal speech. *Zihui* in fact has an extremely complex phonological landscape reflecting both textually transmitted phonological indications it inherited from older rime-books and dictionaries, and elements of contemporary speech, but it did not approach spoken languages in any

³⁵³ The scholar Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709) commented: “The elementary learning is not spoken of, while the vulgar books are flourishing. The schoolmasters of villages of just three households will take Mei Yingzuo’s *Zihui* and Zhang Zilie’s *Zhengzi tong* as ‘pamphlets of the rabbit garden,’ and if one were to ask them where do ‘ancient characters’ belong, they would but sneer and gape in ignorance” 小學之不講，俗書繁興。三家村夫子，挾梅膺祚之字彙、張自烈之正字通，以為兔園冊府，問奇字者歸焉，可為齒冷目張也 (cited in Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 2).

³⁵⁴ With its innovative ordering by stroke and radical (later adopted by the *Kangxi zidian*), *Zihui* was a vast improvement over previous dictionaries in its user-friendliness. The popularity of the dictionary in the early Qing is testified by a contemporary: “As for character books, there are more than one variety, but among those circulated in recent times, *Zihui* is the one which people everywhere treasure as gold. As one can look up graphs by category [of radical and stroke count], every single one can be found. Thus teachers and erudite scholars, beginning pupils and young lads alike swarm to use it” 字學一書，書不一家，近世之所流傳，而人人奉為拱璧者，莫如字彙。蓋以筆畫之可分類而求，悉數而得也，於是老師宿儒、蒙童小子，莫不群而習之。(Nian Xiyao 年希堯, “Preface” 序 to *Wufang yuanyin* 五方元音, cited in Wu, *Zihui yanjiu*, p. 14).

systematic way.³⁵⁵ To use it to account for the sounds of a chosen topolect would thus have required a great deal of manipulation. As we will see below, *Riyong suzi* adopted a range of solutions in reconciling the discrepancies between sound and script in its choices of characters and pronunciation guides for them. Characters were chosen at times for their dictionary meanings (despite being pronounced differently from the local speech) and at times for their resemblance to local speech sounds (despite having different dictionary meanings). Some pronunciation guides (given in smaller characters next to the main text) followed those in *Zihui*, while others deviated from them. These discrepancies revealed *Riyong suzi*'s creative attempts to record the spoken language in the absence of existing means, and its ambivalence at heart in trying to find “correct” written forms and be faithful to spoken sounds.³⁵⁶

Below we look at several examples of how *Riyong suzi* chose individual graphs from *Zihui* for its use, and just how tricky it can be to come up with standardized solutions to the problem of spoken language. We then go on to examine graphs that are contained in *Riyong suzi* but not in the large dictionaries of the day – with attention to graphs in common use, regional conventions, and possible inventions.

³⁵⁵ For scholarship on the phonology of *Zihui*, see Furuya Akihiro 古屋昭弘, “*Zihui* yu Ming dai fangyin” 字彙與明代吳方音, in *Yuyan xue luncong* 語言學論叢, edited by Beijing daxue zhongwen xi 北京大學中文系 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1998): 139-48; Gao Yong'an 高永安, “*Zihui* yinjie de lai yuan” 字彙音切的來源, *Nanyang shifan xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 2.1 (Jan. 2003): 37-41; Chen Yaping 陳雅萍, “*Zihui* fanqie yinxi yanjiu” 字彙反切音系研究, M.A. thesis, Guoli chengong daxue, 2007; and Dong Jiawei 董家珮, “*Zihui* yinxi yanjiu” 字彙音系研究, M.A. thesis, Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue, 2011).

³⁵⁶ The most thorough study to date on *Riyong suzi* has been done by Zhang Shuzheng. For a study of historical Shandong topolect through *Riyong suzi* and other texts, see Zhang, *Qing dai Shandong fangyan yuyin yanjiu* 清代山東方言語音研究 (Ji'nan: Shandong daxue, 2005).

In the preface to *Riyong suzi*, Pu described “errors of mispronunciation in the patois” (“tuyin zhi e 土音之訛”) and gave as example the case of *jia* 豨, “boar.”³⁵⁸ Actually, for 豨 there is no homophone to indicate the pronunciation where it appears in the rhymes (Chapter twenty eight, Beasts: “The boar that shows its teeth shan’t go in the pig-pen”³⁵⁹ 豨豬膠牙不上圈), while smaller characters on the sides of other characters in the same line are glossed with homophones (膠 is glossed with 寥 and 圈 with 卷).³⁶⁰ The problem is not “mispronunciation,” but rather how to indicate a topolectal word in writing. In present-day Zichuan topolect, the first syllable for “boar” (“jue zhu” 腳豬) is pronounced *jue*; the graph 豨, however, has the pronunciation of *jia*. The problem is that 腳, which indicates the right sound, is not semantically related – in fact, it means something else entirely (“foot”). 豨, on the other hand, indicates a “male pig” but is pronounced differently from the topolectal pronunciation. What do to? According to Pu, the solution is to follow the “zhengzi,” or “correct form”: 豨, which appears in the dictionary to indicate “male pig.” The dictionary entries for 豨 are as follows.

Zihui says: “*Ju* and *ya* form the *fanqie*. It is pronounced *jia*. It indicates a male pig. According to the *Miscellaneous Records of the Rites*: As for all the vessels of the

³⁵⁷ In this and the following sections of the chapter, I have relied significantly on the annotations given in Zhang Shuzheng’s *Riyong suzi zhu*. In citing *Riyong suzi* I refer consistently to no. 2501, except for where it is missing parts. In citing *Zihui* and *Zhengzi tong*, unless otherwise indicated, I have followed the definitions cited in the annotations to *Riyong suzi zhu*.

³⁵⁸ The analysis in this paragraph comes from Zhang Shuzheng, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p.2.

³⁵⁹ Following Zhang Shuzheng, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 295. I am not sure what the teeth-showing means – perhaps the boar is too aggressive to be put in the pig-pen with others? Or perhaps it has reached a certain age?

³⁶⁰ Catalog no. 2501, 54a.

ancestral temple, when they are completed and given names³⁶¹, they are smeared with the blood of boars and piglets.”³⁶² 居牙切。音加。牡豕。禮雜記：凡宗廟之器。其名者成。則釁之以豶豚。Further, “*Hong* and *gu* form the *fanqie* for another pronunciation [of this graph]. It is pronounced *hu*. *Zuozhuan*, Duke Yin, year eleven: ‘The chief of Zheng sent troops to deliver pigs.’ [*Zuozhuan*], Duke Ding, year fourteen: ‘Kuai Kui of Wei passed by the fields of Song. The people of the fields sang to him, saying: having appeased your female pig on heat, why do you not return our old boar?’”³⁶³ 又叶洪孤切。音胡。左傳 隱公十一年。鄭伯使卒出豶。定公十四年。衛蒯聩過宋野。野人歌之，曰：既定爾婁豬。盍歸吾艾豶。The *Zhengzi tong* clarifies that the definition of “male pig” 牡豕 comes from *Shuowen* and also goes on to explain the song of “the people of the fields” – that 婁豬 means a female pig on heat, and that the words alluded to the sexual liaison between Nanzi 南子 and Song Zhao 宋朝.³⁶⁴

In the *Shuowen*, 豶 is defined as “male pig” 牡豕. Duan Yucan (1735-1815)’s gloss briefly cites the song in *Zuozhuan* (左傳: 野人歌曰. 既定爾婁豬。盍歸吾艾豶) and comments: “This is proof for 豶 meaning ‘male pig’” 此豶為牡豕之證也.³⁶⁵ Then

³⁶¹ Tentative translation.

³⁶² This and the following quote from *Zihui*, p. 266.

³⁶³ The context suggests that the terms are used in a pretty racy way, being sung by “rustic people” sarcastically.

³⁶⁴ The context for this is given earlier in the same section in *Zuozhuan*: “The marquis of Wei summoned Zhao of Song for his wife Nanzi” 衛侯為夫人南子召宋朝; an early gloss by Du Yu tells that 艾豶 alludes to Song Zhao and that 艾 means “old.” 杜預注：艾豶，喻宋朝。艾，老也 (both lines from *Hanyu da cidian*, under “ai jia” 艾豶). Nanzi is known as a lascivious woman and Zhao as a handsome man; Kuai Kui, the prince of Wei, eventually had her killed when he ascended the throne. For the *Zhengzi tong* entry, see *Zhengzi tong*, p. 521.

³⁶⁵ This is an interesting comment because it shows Duan did not take it for granted that 豶 was the word for ‘male pig’ - perhaps he also faced Pu Songling’s challenge (needing to find an authoritative graphic form for a word) in some way? Or perhaps he was simply trying to find a textual precedent for the graph.

the gloss cites *Fangyan* 方言, the early compendium of topolectal lexicons attributed to Yang Xiong (53 BCE- 18 CE): “*Fangyan* says: ‘As for ‘pig,’ [in the area] spanning the north of Yan and Chaoxian, it is called ‘boar.’ [The gloss by] Guo [Pu] says: it is like saying ‘mighty ox.’ 方言曰。豬、北燕朝鮮之間謂之豨。郭云。猶云豨斗也。³⁶⁶ For the pronunciation of 豨, *Shuowen* gives 从豕。段聲。³⁶⁷

The authority of the graph 豨 is corroborated by all these texts - *Fangyan*, *Shuowen*, *Zihui* and *Zhengzi tong*. It would seem difficult to skip over such a graph for a humble homophone like 腳, and here one can see the corrective aspect of *Riyong suzi* which prioritizes authoritative forms over topolectal sounds. But elsewhere in the rhymes there are also many graphs which seemed to have been chosen for their phonetic properties, and in these cases the dictionary definitions are overlooked. One such example is the graph 蒼+毛 in the line “Drooping long eyelashes are ugly to behold” 眼眨毛長蒼+毛 毛+及醜.³⁶⁸ In the imprint, small characters are depicted next to the word 蒼+毛穉, indicating that they are to be pronounced after ‘ta’ 塔 and ‘sa’ 撒. There are two options in *Zihui*. One is 毛+合, which has “*fanqie* of ‘gu’ and ‘ta/da,’ pronounced as ‘ga (?)’ ‘Gasa (?)’ describes eyelashes being long” 古查切, 音閣。毛+合 毛+及, 目睫長

³⁶⁶ Following the notes in Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 ed., *Fangyan jiaojian* 方言校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1993), p. 51, which expresses suspicion of 豨斗 being a mistake for 豨牛 (“mighty ox”).

³⁶⁷ The citations of *Shuowen* in this paragraph comes from *Shuowen jiezi zhu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2001), p. 455.

³⁶⁸ From “Section one, The Body.” Whereas I focus on catalog no. 2501 here as elsewhere (note: in this line the last character is missing and the second to last character is partially missing - the page is only partially extant), the smaller size imprint (no. 2503) depicts some different graphs in this line: 眼眨毛長 right component of 絲+毛及醜. The homophones in small letters are consistent with no. 2501 (扎 for 眨, 塔 for fifth graph, and 撒 (without the rightmost part) for 及).

也。 (毛+及 is described in *Zihui* to “have fanqie of ‘xi’ and ‘ha (?)’”, pronounced ‘sa’ 悉合切，音撒). The other option, the one adopted by *Riyong suzi*, is 蒼+毛; for the graph, *Zihui* tells: “it is the same as the graph 毳” 同毳。 Under 毳: “It has ‘fanqie of ‘tu’ and ‘ha (?)’”, and is pronounced as ‘ta.’ ‘Tadeng (?)’ is a rug 土盍切，音榻。 毳毳，毛席也。” Here, between the two dictionary options – one whose meaning matches but whose sound is different from the topolect, and one whose sound matches but whose meaning is irrelevant, it is the latter that *Riyong suzi* chose.³⁶⁹ That the decision was deliberate is corroborated by the usage of 毛+及 to indicate the second syllable of the word, because if Pu had looked up 毛+及 in *Zihui* (judging by the use of the homophone 撒 in *Riyong suzi*, it is very likely that he did), he would have found 毛+合 毛+及, defined as “eyelashes being long” 眼睫長也 as it is under the entry for 毛+合 with a slight variation.

When we look at the pronunciation guides in *Riyong suzi*, which appear occasionally in the form of smaller characters next to the characters of the main text, we find as well a range of decisions reflecting the tussle between sound and script. In places homophone characters are used as pronunciation guides, after those given in *Zihui*; there are also cases where the pronunciation guide indicates a topolectal sound that deviates from the dictionary pronunciation for the graph.³⁷⁰ Then there are individual cases where the sound indicated may have reflected some form of standard pronunciation.³⁷¹ Very

³⁶⁹ Zhang Shuzheng, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 6, notes that in the present-day topolect, “tasa” is not present, but there is a related word “dasa” 搭撒 which describes hair drooping messily.

³⁷⁰ Ref. 血+right component of 俊 (MSM: zui1) (“penis”) being glossed as 即; see Zhang, *Riyong suzi zhu*, pp. 13-4, and the discussion in n406.

³⁷¹ See, for example, the discussion on the graph 膊 in Zhang, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 8.

occasionally, below the character indicating the pronunciation, another character is given to indicate the tone of the word to be pronounced³⁷². It seems that the pronunciation guides reflected not only an importance given to real, spoken sounds but also an ambivalence towards using “proper” graphic forms. In places the pronunciation guides included graphs not contained in the period dictionaries, perhaps belonging to regional orthography, to denote the sounds of the characters in the main text, the so-called “zhengzi,” or “standard characters.”

So we get to the intriguing fact that many characters in *Riyong suzi* are not in the period dictionaries – despite Pu’s claim in the preface of *Riyong suzi* to have “carefully looked up *Zihui*.” The number of such characters form a small proportion against the total number of characters in the *Riyong suzi*, but still they are a significant number.³⁷³ Searching for each graph in *Zihui* and *Zhengzi tong*, Zhang Shuzheng finds them to belong to three categories: graphs which do not appear in either period dictionary but appear in texts transmitted from earlier times (as cited by *Hanyu da zidian*); graphs which do not appear in either dictionary and whose earliest or only known instance is the *Riyong suzi*³⁷⁴; and graphs which appear in the dictionaries, but are used in *Riyong suzi* in such a way that the dictionary pronunciation and meaning are irrelevant. Zhang points out astutely that Pu did not necessarily look up every character in the dictionary,

³⁷² I have found “level” 平, “rising” 上 and “falling” 去 but no “entering” 入 tone.

³⁷³ Zhang Shuzheng finds 50 (“Pu Songling *Riyong suzi zhong de suzi*,” p. 105); this number needs to be qualified as the Keio imprints differ in a number of places from the source texts Zhang used (mainly the typeset, collated editions edited by Lu Dahuang and Sheng Wei, along with the manuscript in the collection of Shandong Provincial Museum).

³⁷⁴ While it is important to distinguish between these first two categories, as Zhang attempts to do, it is hard to make conclusions based on text cited in the *Hanyu da zidian* alone, as a seemingly earlier text may well be extant through later recensions and thus would bear the textual markers (including characters) of these particular, later instances of production. One will have to check the source texts of the citations and see when they are from.

especially characters that he would have deemed to be in common use. Some of the characters in *Riyong suzi* would very well be these, and what is of interest to us is the range of use of these particular graphic forms.

Zhang suggests that some of the graphs in question may be topolectal graphs (*fangyan zi* 方言字). Zhang defined them to be graphs which recorded words unique to topolectal speech and graphs in popular use in topolectal regions, inclusive of graphs which indicated words shared with the common language but are written in non-standard forms.³⁷⁵ You Rujie gives a more restrictive definition of “fangyan zazi” in his study, limited to graphs which only capture topolect, and divides such graphs into four categories: characters recognized by dictionaries to record topolectal words, characters borrowed as homophones but not used in that way in standard written communication, invented characters outside of dictionary regulation, and a special category of such characters used to convey disyllabic words whose syllables become meshed in speech.³⁷⁶ The artificiality of these distinctions is apparent when we consider the chaotic content of dictionaries themselves such as *Zihui* and also the actual range of use of graphs for which dictionaries don’t give any information. Whatever we call them, there are a number of graphs in *Riyong suzi* which clue us into a local world of written forms – at the same time that the book attempts to define what is “proper” through negotiating with dictionaries.

We might take a look at the graph 腚 from 腚腫 (“buttocks”). According to Zhang Shuzheng, 腚 as “butt” is still extant in Shandong topolect; he finds that in the

³⁷⁵ Zhang, “*Riyong suzi zhong de suzi*,” p. 115.

³⁷⁶ You, *Hanyu fangyan xue daolun*, pp. 221-224.

Compendium of Basic Topolectal Vocabulary in Putonghua 普通話基礎方言基本詞彙集, the term is used only in Shandong, neighboring Shangqiu 商丘 to its southwest, and Dalian 大連, which belongs to the sphere of northern mandarin and in this particular instance is influenced by the language of eastern Shandong.³⁷⁷ 脛 is not a rare character today, and would have appeared to have entered the common mandarin vocabulary at some point, but the large dictionaries of the 17th and early 18th centuries do not contain it – not the *Xiangjiao Pianhai*, nor *Zihui* nor *Zhengzi tong*, nor the *Kangxi* dictionary. The *Hanyu da zidian* describes 脛 as “topolect” (*fangyan*) and the only passage it cites is from the story of “Isle of the Immortals” (“Xianren dao” 仙人島) from *Liaozhai zhiyi*. In the *Zhuxuezhai* manuscript the character is written with 之 in place of the 疋 in the character.³⁷⁸ Would 脛 have been omitted from the dictionaries because it belonged to a sphere of orthographic convention specific to manuscript culture? Would it simply not be known to the dictionary makers because its use was limited to a particular region in a particular time? These are questions that beg further exploration.

If Pu indeed used topolectal characters in cases like 脛, elsewhere he seemed to have deliberately avoided characters in common use to opt for lesser known characters which, for one reason or another, he judged to be more suitable or “correct.” An example which Zhang cites is 字+頁 for 脛 in a line from “Section one, The Body”: 字+頁 倉+頁

³⁷⁷ Zhang, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p.13.

³⁷⁸ *Zhuxuezhai chaoben Liaozhai zhiyi* 鑄雪齋抄本聊齋志異 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1974) *juan* 7, 42a.

脊梁腰髀骨 “The neck, the spine, and the hipbones.”³⁷⁹ Here Pu deliberately chose not to use 脖 for “neck,” and used it instead in a different, later line to indicate the navel: 腋折脬臍鄰小腹 “The pelvis and navel neighbor the lower belly.” This is in fact following dictionary definitions for 脬. The entry for 脬 in *Zihui* gives: “*Boyang* is the navel. According to *The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon*, ‘Divine Pivot’: the *huang* originates from the navel 蒲沒切，音勃。脬腴，臍也。黃帝靈樞經：育之原出於脬腴。” Judging by its appearance elsewhere in the vernacular oeuvre attributed to Pu, in the vast majority of cases 脬 does not follow the archaic meaning of “navel” but is rather used to denote “neck”; Zhang suggests that this is the common usage for the character in early Qing Shandong.³⁸⁰ If this is true, then Pu had opted for the dictionary meaning against a common meaning of the character 脬. And what about 孛+頁? It does not appear at all in either *Zihui* or *Zhengzi tong*.³⁸¹ Of course it does not appear in *Shuowen jiezi* – but then, nor does 脬. They would both have been characters in the common usage, and the interesting question would be the geographic and time range of their uses.

Finally, there are graphs in *Riyong suzi* which are not explained by the common logics that inform the uses of other graphs – whether they were chosen for their phonetic components matched to topolectal sounds, or for their semantic components to more clearly indicate meanings, or whatever other logic we can think of. A particular

³⁷⁹ The analysis in this paragraph is from Zhang, “*Riyong suzi zhong de suzi*,” p. 115; *Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 9; 11-12.

³⁸⁰ Zhang, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p.12 – the period usage of 脬 in Shandong texts would need to be further researched. The evidence from *liqu* described by Zhang need to be qualified, as the source texts are not necessarily from Pu’s time.

³⁸¹ The *Hanyu da zidian* cites a line from chapter fifteen of *Shuihu zhuan* which uses 孛+頁 to indicate “neck”:....孛+頁 頤 (It also tells that in *Shuihu quanzhuan* the term is indicated as 脬).

perplexing graph which Zhang points out is “軍+rightside component of 俊,” which appears in the last line of Chapter Nineteen, “Illnesses,” in the line “cuts and calluses are no big deal” 擘~ 磨眼不相干.³⁸² The graph appears in neither *Zihui* nor *Zhengzi tong*, but there is a “proper” graph in *Zihui*, 皴 (“cun” in MSM, indicated in *Zihui* to have 七人切, 音親), appearing also in the *Shuowen* and defined as “skin that is lightly split” 皮細起也, which matches the meaning but for some reason was not chosen for this particular context. In another place in *Riyong suzi*, Chapter twenty-eight, “Beasts,” 皴 is used to indicate a very similar meaning (“The gelded pig’s pancreas will cleanse cuts and sores” 豨豬月+臣子洗皴瘡³⁸³). Did the two words 擘~ and 皴瘡 have different pronunciations in the topolect of the times? Did Pu overlook a repetition for just a moment? Just what kind of graph was 軍+rightside of 俊 – was it a graph in local use, or perhaps invented by Pu?

While these questions will have to be further explored, Zhang tells that, as a child in his native Shouguang 壽光 in Shandong, he had learned to write the graph this way from the older generation, and only many years later did he discover that the “proper” way to write it was as 皴.³⁸⁴ That such a strangely composed graph – with no apparent

³⁸² Tentative translation, following the gloss in Zhang Shuzheng, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 219, which cites 擘 as it appears in *Zihui* (博麥切, 音伯。搗也。分擘也。...又手指也) and *Zhengzi tong* (手指也。又以指裂物也。). In MSM 擘 has the sounds of bai1 as in “peel” 掰 and bo4 as in “thumb.” Zhang suggests that “moyan” 磨眼 ought to indicate calluses on the feet in a similar way as “jiyan” 鷄眼, perhaps with “mo” 磨 to indicate abrasion.

³⁸³ Following Zhang Shuzheng, *Riyong suzi zhu*, p.295 – in old times the pancreas (usually written as 胰子) of pigs were soaked in wine, and in the winter people would smear the liquid on their faces and hands to prevent chapped skin; Zhang tells that the term is still used in the present-day topolect. This colloquial term is very interesting because in the system of anatomy of traditional Chinese medicine there is no term for the pancreas.

³⁸⁴ Zhang Shuzheng, “Suzi,” p. 116.

phonological or semantic relationship to its meaning – continues to circulate through time suggests something of the ways in which, independent of the graphs and whatever logics used to explain their component forms, other factors – social, individual, contextual – governed the uses of written scripts.

Food for thought

For all the centuries of interactions between Chinese written vernacular and the spoken languages, putting spoken speech to standard scripts has remained a perpetual challenge. The author of an early vernacular lexicon has described it well³⁸⁵:

In every case that involves a movement of the body there is a way of referring to them, but while one regularly says them, it is difficult to know which graphs capture them in writing. This is such that, where it comes to the language employed by the common folk, whenever one tries to put them into works of writing, one must expend much effort to search and pick out the graphs. Though things may be said simply, [in writing] they frequently cause doubt. Moreover, as for common and vulgar characters, they are not contained in the classics and canons. The language one hears said by myriads of people often has characters that are obscure. One might say them, but none recognizes [the characters].

凡人之運[手]動足皆有名目。言常在口，字難得知。是以兆人之用，每妨下筆修撰著述，費于尋檢。雖以淡吐，常致疑之。又俗猥刺之字，不在經典史籍之內。聞于萬人理論之言，字多僻遠，口則言之，皆不之識。

It is perhaps the gaps between the spoken and the written – and all the challenges involved in bridging them – that drove the continual literati fascination with the colloquial and the quotidian, while they continued to experiment with different ways of capturing spoken sounds as driven by the practical demands of writing. As we have seen with *Riyong suzi*, it is no simple task, due not only to what some call the “logographic”

³⁸⁵ From a “Pieces of gold” 碎金 text from the Tang, cited in Zheng and Zhu, *Dunhuang mengshu yanjiu*, p. 107. I have made minor modifications to the punctuation of the Chinese text in the cited passage.

nature of Chinese characters but also to the norms of writing that become involved in the process, and the complex sets of values attributed to them ranging from authoritative on one end to erroneous on the other. The 17th century dictionaries, *Zihui* and *Zhengzi tong*, attempted to provide the standard, but do not meet up to the challenge of the immense lexicons of spoken languages. Their attempts at incorporation and selection of graphs from previous dictionaries reveal rather something of orthographic chaos, while we might surmise still many more graphs in circulation in specialized regional contexts which are not contained in them.³⁸⁶ The tussle between the attempt at standardization – trying to find a dictionary graph – and maintaining faithfulness to spoken sounds – makes *Riyong suzi* a deeply ambivalent project, just as the genre of “suzi” itself is tied to both what is commonly used, the “su,” and what ought to be standard graphic “zi.”

For all the characterizations of error of popular orthography among Chinese literati, scholars did recognize from time to time the presence of orthographic differences as related to spheres of use, which varied across time and place. Here it is instructive to look at the comments by Qing scholars on texts from the past which dealt with variants. The great *Shuowen* scholar and philologist Duan Yucai (1735-1815), for example, writing about the *Ganlu zishu*, after noting the issues with the various transmitted versions of the text, interestingly pointed out its usefulness for correcting ancient texts given the differences between *suzi* of Tang times and in his day.³⁸⁷ In the Qing, when scholars of the elementary learning tried with more precision than ever before to study the proper

³⁸⁶ As we have seen with individual graphs from Shandong in *Riyong suzi*; this will need to be studied further.

³⁸⁷ Duan Yucai, “Shu *Ganlu zishu* hou” 書干祿字書後, in *Jingun lou ji: fu bubian, liang kao* 經韻樓集: 附補編, 兩考, ed. Zhao Hang 趙航 and Xue Zhengxing 薛正興 (Nanjing: Fenghuang, 2010).

forms of characters for reading and explicating the classics, they developed a pioneering body of scholarship, some of which saw variations in the script with new perspectives.³⁸⁸ But the analyses tended to focus on individual graphs, not language – which is made up of far more than script and lexicon. Few scholars recognized the issues beyond the script itself – from the mechanisms of conveying spoken language into writing to the multiplicity of written norms beyond the graphic forms authorized by elite learning.³⁸⁹

We might take a brief look at the attitudes of Qing scholars toward *Fangyan*, which collected topolectal terms as spoken in the Han dynasties, with nearly seven hundreds entries arranged into broad categories and giving definitions according to both “the common language” and variations according to region.³⁹⁰ While modern studies have found the graphs in *Fangyan* to reflect spoken languages, the Qing scholars of elementary learning saw *Fangyan* primarily as a philological work.³⁹¹ It was known since the Song that there were many “odd” characters in *Fangyan*. At one end, they were seen

³⁸⁸ These scholars had to deal with the shifts in writing in the Han period (as the more “demotic” clerk’s script *lishu* took over the seal-script *zhuan* from earlier times) and the post-Han (with the emergence of *kaishu* script); in the centuries following the Eastern Han the character variants were most prolix (Zhang Yongquan, *Hanyu suzi yanjiu*, p. 232.)

The great Qing scholar of elementary learning, Wang Niansun 王念孫, in his *漢隸拾遺*, has some interesting comments but are not systematic (according to Jiang Lihong, “Yanjiu daoyan,” p. 138). Studies such as the *Study of clerk-script* 隸辯 by Gu Aiji 顧藹吉 (fl. Kangxi era) attempted to make sense of the many variants on Han steles with the shift in scripts (Zhang Yongquan, *Hanyu suzi yanjiu*, p. 297).

³⁸⁹ In the more informal literary genres of *biji* writing (and these instances are quite scattered), literati have noted regional norms, for example, Fan Chengda 范成大 writing about orthographic conventions in the Guilin area (cited in Tang Lan 唐蘭, *Zhongguo wenzi xue* 中國文字學, pp. 158-159. In Shandong in the early Qing, the *Shuowen* scholar Gui Fu 桂馥 also recorded many topolectal terms in his jottings *Zhapu* (Wood chip miscellanies) 札樸.

³⁹⁰ Wilkinson, *Manual*, p. 92.

³⁹¹ Hua Xuecheng 華學誠, “Yang Xiong *Fangyan* qizi kao” 楊雄方言奇字考, *Qin Zhou shifan gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 15.4 (2000) cites Dai Zhen 戴震 – among the most authoritative studies of *Fangyan* in the Qing.

as “marvelous and ancient” *qigu* 奇古,³⁹² with all the connotations of “strange,” “marvelous,” and “rare” in the term *qi*.³⁹³ At the other extreme these characters were seen as “promiscuous in form” *tixiang bulun* 體象不倫.³⁹⁴ These comments reflected the philological preoccupations of later scholars as well, who, for all their attention to the script, ignored the fact that the work, with its “strange” and “marvelous” characters, reflected a record of the living languages of its day.³⁹⁵

If the philological project distances and exoticizes language, character books and “*suzi*” books for practical use lie at the opposite extreme, while they must no less come to terms with the issues of sound and script. Seen in the light of contemporary philological attitudes, Pu Songling’s *Riyong suzi* was peculiar indeed. For his interest in spoken language, Pu chose not to adopt the format of a philological treatise or even the informal genre of *biji* (jottings), but chose for his big project the accessible format of heptasyllabic rhymes – a format which captured the language as spoken. A world apart from the traditional discourse on characters (i.e. *liushu*), Pu also experimented very creatively (if not always following consistent criteria) with picking out graphs from *Zihui* to match the living language.

But perhaps it is this affinity to the living language that limited *Riyong suzi* from reaching wider and more lasting audiences. Zhang Shuzheng has pointed out the problem

³⁹² As described by Li Mengchuan 李孟傳 of the Song dynasty: “The written characters in *Fangyan* are most antique.... Probably Yang Ziyun [Yang Xiong] excelled in the elementary learning, and then he saw many ancient books from the times before the Qin dynasty. Thus *Fangyan* often records ‘strange characters’ (*qizi* 奇字)....” (cited in Hua, “Yang Xiong *fangyan* qizi kao,” p. 44).

³⁹³ For the Ming-Qing discourse on *qi*, see, for example, Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, pp. 5-6.

³⁹⁴ Wang Zhichang 汪之昌, *Yangzi fangyan zhenwei bian* 楊子方言真偽辨, cited in Hua 2000, p. 44.

³⁹⁵ Luo Zhen 羅振玉 preface to Zhou Zumo ed., *Fangyan jiaojian*.

with reception of *Riyong suzi*: locals are familiar with its sounds, but few will be able to decipher all the graphs; literati outside of the topolectal area may know the graphs, but will not be able to match them with sounds. One might also add that the living language evolves over time – as a Ming writer has observed: “Times change from antiquity to present, regions vary from north to south. The script sees changes, and sounds evolve; this is the necessary course of things” 時有古今，地有南北，字有更革，音有轉移，亦勢所必至。³⁹⁶ *Riyong suzi* reminds us of how popular – and how ephemeral – characters can be.

A book for daily use

In the preface to *Riyong suzi*, Pu Songling told of his hopes for the little book to address all the needs “for use around the house,” and to later readers, the 1,600 lines of rhymes bring alive the world in which Pu lived and wrote – from its flora and fauna to the human figures of the village, from local and contemporary commodities to more distant and bookish worlds. Just as the curious visual forms of graphs on the page signified a boisterous, lively world of the local tongue, so the mnemonic genre of the rhyme became a vehicle for joyous naming, listing, enumeration, expanding the record of the spoken lexicon to ever broader horizons. In this part of the chapter, we inspect the content of *Riyong suzi*, examining its fascination with common ways of saying things against the extraordinary scope of knowledge it enlists. We look at how *Riyong suzi* takes roots in the

³⁹⁶ Chen Di 陳第, *Mao shi guyin kao, zixu* 毛詩古音考自序, cited in Hua Xuecheng, 周秦漢晉方言研究史, p. 113.

knowledge organization of the assorted characters literature while boasting transformations all its own. Examining the ways in which the text expands upon the features of a popular genre, we conclude with rethinking the aesthetic criteria of “literature” as we know it.

In her study of the *Wanbao yuanlong zazi* 萬寶元龍雜字 books of the Qing, which combined the lexical features of the assorted characters literature with the broader knowledge content of popular encyclopedias for daily use, Wu Huifang pointed out the intimate relationship between these genres of books in late imperial times.³⁹⁷ The so-called popular encyclopedias for daily use (“riyong leishu” 日用類書), which emerged out of older *leishu* categories, came to develop by the late Ming distinct knowledge structures of their own, which departed from traditional knowledge categories to include content reflective of the objects and needs of contemporary life.³⁹⁸ A typical list of categories in a late Ming / Qing popular encyclopedia might include the heavens, seasonal ordinances, history, geography, foreigners, official ranks and salaries, letter writing, calligraphy, painting, drinking games, jokes, basics of painting and calligraphy, interpretation of dreams, physiognomy, mathematics and numerology, agriculture and sericulture, oxen and horses, medicine, cures, and the family system.³⁹⁹ The assorted characters literature, while highly varied in the organization and presentation of their

³⁹⁷ Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, p. 177; 191-192.

³⁹⁸ Wu, *Minjian shenghuo zhishi*, p. 193.

³⁹⁹ I have taken this list (with modifications to a few translations) from Endymion Wilkson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, pp. 962, which provides a list of typical contents gathered from surveying 20 editions of *Wanbao quanshu* from 1597-1906.

contents, also shared many of these categories of knowledge.⁴⁰⁰ Viewed against the existing literature, *Riyong suzi*'s seemingly extraordinary scope is not so strange after all.

In a study of *Zhuangnong zazi* and *Riyong suzi*, the scholar Li Wanpeng illuminated the intimate connection between the two texts, from the organization of the chapters to a few identical and almost identical lines.⁴⁰¹ When one surveys the thirty-one chapter titles of each work one is immediately struck by their close resemblance.⁴⁰² With slight variations, both texts include the usual chapters on farming, foods, objects, plants, animals, and medicines, while they also feature a conspicuous array of specialized professions from smithery to carpentry and tailoring.⁴⁰³ Compared against popular encyclopedias for daily use such as the ones cited above, the sections on courtesans, monks, and the geomantic arts in the two texts are relatively less surprising, while the conspicuous absence of sections on geography, history, seasonal ordinances and the heavens – with all their traditional cosmological knowledge – corroborates the thesis that as assorted character books they favored practical, quotidian knowledge. Compared to *Zhuangnong zazi*, *Riyong suzi* is more succinct with the titles while being far lengthier in actual content⁴⁰⁴; when we examine the content closely, *Riyong suzi* emerges as a unique

⁴⁰⁰ Wu pointed out the complexity present in this genre, which varied from texts facilitating basic character acquisition to more extensive books which also contained terms with definitions.

⁴⁰¹ Li, “*Zhuangnong zazi* yu *Riyong suzi*.”

⁴⁰² See Appendix A.

⁴⁰³ I don't recall seeing these categories in other assorted characters books; they will need further investigation, and may well reflect a unique aspect of the *Zhuangnong zazi* and *Riyong suzi*. In the little play *Naoguan* 鬧館 (scrounging for a school) attributed to Pu, there is an intriguing section sung by a starving schoolmaster, who describes with envy the various craftsmen and how their skills helped them to earn good livings (while he is reduced to starvation).

⁴⁰⁴ Li estimates 932 lines in *Zhuangnong zazi* and suggests that *Riyong suzi*, with over 1580 lines, is nearly twice as long.

work, not only in its unparalleled linguistic project (as studied in the previous section) but also in the memorable images and lively personality which infuse the rhymes.

Among the most distinct features of *Riyong suzi* is its first chapter, “the body.” While heaven and earth form the common first categories of popular encyclopedias and assorted characters books,⁴⁰⁵ *Riyong suzi* begins with human birth: “Born to mom and dad, [you’re] called a person” 爺娘生來叫做人. Following immediately are the common ways of naming parts of the entire human body, from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet, and eventually to the names of kin and to children. Pervading the lines is a joy in rhyming, in listing the body in ordinary terms:

“The forehead lies under the cranium / On top of the shoulders is the neck / The nose is the face’s middle mount / The ears and cheeks are neighbors bound / Long eyebrows, drooping, are hideous / Mighty cheekbones accentuate fat lips / When the chin stirs, the whiskers do quiver / The teeth aren’t firm, but the tongue’s a keeper....”

骨+會下有額體蓋 / {肩膀以上是脖根} / 鼻梁在臉為中{岳} / {耳耳+朵與腮作近鄰} / 眼眨毛長蒼+毛毳{醜} / {顴骨高大襯粗唇} / 下頰纔動鬚鬚{戰} / {牙齒不牢口舌存}⁴⁰⁶

The exuberant listing of body terms expands to organs and parts ordinarily deemed too vulgar for the written language, which the author of the rhymes is well aware of. Following the naming of the lower belly and the buttocks, he exuberantly proclaims:

“Utterable still are ‘cock’ and ‘boob’ / It’s not too vulgar to say ‘pee’ and ‘poop’” 女女±

⁴⁰⁵ While it is not divided into categories, the classical primer *Thousand Character Essay* also begins with heaven and earth.

⁴⁰⁶ The bracketed sections {} are missing from no. 2501; and 鬚 are only partially visible; I have filled the missing parts with characters from no. 2507, which I believe to be among the earliest strata of manuscript copies of *Riyong suzi*. 唇 and 存 are also missing from no. 2507; these are filled in from no. 2508, another early manuscript copy.

爾兒血+right component of 俊 猶可說/ 止言屙尿不為村.⁴⁰⁷ These lines are followed by: “‘Liver,’ ‘gallbladder,’ ‘lungs’ and ‘intestines’ each have standard characters; ‘Skin,’ ‘hair,’ ‘hand’ and ‘foot’ have no topolectal variations” 肝胆肺腸有正字/ 皮毛手足無鄉音.⁴⁰⁸ The two couplets succinctly capture the central themes of the work: voicing things on the page as they are spoken, defying the perceptions of them as being unfit for the page, while finding legitimacy for them in standard characters.

Following “The Body” is the chapter “Farming” 莊農, the longest chapter in the entire *Riyong suzi* at over one hundred lines, proceeding from the tools of farming and the activities of the seasons to the tools and animals of the farm. It begins with telling of farming’s ancient roots: “The court esteemed farming since ancient times / Among the hundred professions farming is prime” 朝廷自古重耕田 / 生意百行他占先. The following chapter, “Silkworm breeding” 養蠶, begins in a similar way: “Even the queen cherished silkworms in antiquity / If the court acts like this, how much more so the common folk 古來皇后也親蠶 / 朝廷如此況民間.⁴⁰⁹ After evoking the picture of

⁴⁰⁷ Translation following Zhang Shuzheng’s glosses. Zhang tells that in present-day Zichuan topolect, the penis is referred to as either 鴨子 (“duckling”?) or ji1zi (“chicklet”), the latter being similar to the terms 雞巴 and 小雞雞 of northern topolects. He suggests that the graph 血+right of 俊 (MSM jun4) would have been pronounced ji1 or tsi according to topolectal area and that 雞 was a later orthographic convention in areas where the distinction became lost. *Zihui* gives for the graph: 子雷切, 音樞。赤子陰也。又即委切, 音髻。義同。 *Zhengzi tong*: 同駿 (MSM: juan1 and zui1). The graph 即 is given as homophone on the side of the graph in the imprint; this is a case where *Riyong suzi* gave the topolectal pronunciation, not dictionary sound, while using a semantically appropriate graph (*Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 14).

⁴⁰⁸ Zhang Shuzheng point out that this is not quite true in the case of “foot” – in the *liqu* the graph 腳 is used much more often than 足 to indicate “foot” (足 appears mostly in the sense of “enough” or “sufficient”), and in the present-day Zichuan topolect, “foot” is also said as 腳 (*Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 15; Zhang, however, did not give the pronunciation of this graph).

⁴⁰⁹ Traditionally, breeding silkworms was perceived as part of women’s work – this is also described in the beginning lines of *Zhuangnong zazi*: “The silkworm lady is the best of all / She breeds the moths, hatches the larva and minces mulberry leaves” 養蚕娘子最爲良/生蚕下蟻切細桑 (Catalog no. 7015).

farming and sericulture in antiquity, the chapters quickly move on to the practicalities of agricultural life. In “Farming,” the rhymes list not only the names of things but enumerate in detail the tasks and activities of the farm – from shoveling manure to securing wheels, to working the plow and sowing seeds. In the chapter on sericulture, the entire process of breeding silkworms is described in careful sequence, from distinguishing the sexes of the moths for mating to maintaining the proper temperature at each step of the process, to observing taboos and symptoms of worms’ illnesses, and feeding and processing the cocoons. The last section of the chapter describes the processing of the silk and the work of the loom. Arguably, *Riyong suzi* inherited general structural features of *Zhuangnong zazi* in these two chapters, but a comparison reveals it to be much more elaborate and thorough in providing agricultural and sericultural knowledge.⁴¹⁰

An aspect of *Riyong suzi* which will need further study is the relationship it bears to the living knowledge of the day on the one hand, and to a rich body of texts on the other. The rearing of silkworms in Shandong goes back to ancient times, and in the late Ming and early Qing Zichuan and adjacent areas of Boshan 博山, Zhoucun 周村, and Zhangdian 張店 were vibrant sites of silk production.⁴¹¹ The interest among the area’s literati can be glimpsed through a number of books authored on the subject during the Ming and Qing, not to mention the important earlier tradition of agricultural writing in

⁴¹⁰ In terms of the length, *Zhuangnong zazi* (my reference is Keio no. 7015) contains 78 lines in the chapter “Farming and crops,” and 46 lines in “Silkworms and clothing”; *Riyong suzi* (no. 2501) contains 112 lines and 74 lines, respectively, in “Farming” and “Silkworms.”

⁴¹¹ Sheng Wei 盛偉, “Pu Songling de *Nongsang jing* yu Ming mo Qing chu Zibo diqu de yangcan ye” 蒲松齡的農桑經與明末清初淄博地區的養蠶業, *Nongye kaogu* 農業考古 2 (1990): 286-7.

Shandong.⁴¹² Pu demonstrated his keen interest in these matters in his *Nongsang jing* (Treatises on farming and sericulture 農桑經), the preface of which, dated to 1705 (a year later than *Riyong suzi*), tells that its first part is modified from an existing treatise on farming and that its second part is a compendium of excerpts from writings on silkworm rearing from ancient times to the present.⁴¹³ Zhang Shuzheng's detailed gloss of *Riyong suzi* shows that it shared details with *Nongsang jing* in many places, which lead us to think that the knowledge in *Riyong suzi* come not only from Pu's own village world, but also from texts.⁴¹⁴ Those other texts, of course, belonged to a learned world, while *Riyong*

⁴¹² Writings contemporary to Pu's time include the *Shancan shuo* 山蠶說 (On the mountain silkworms), also known as *Yecan ji* 野蠶記 (Notes on wild silkworms) by Sun Tingquan 孫廷銓 (1613-1674) of Yidu 益都; the *Erru Ting qunfang pu* 二如亭群芳譜 (Compendium of the various flora from Erru Pavilion) by Wang Xiangjin 王象晉 (1561-1653) of Xincheng 新城, Shandong; there is also the later *Nongpu bianlan* 農圃便覽 (Survey of farming) by Ding Yizeng 丁宜曾 of Rizhao 日照, Shandong, with preface dated to 1755. Pu's own *Nongsang jing* tells that it is in part modified from a *Nongxun* 農訓 (Counsel on farming) by a certain Han 韓氏, which is no longer extant.

On the Shandong tradition of agricultural writing, which include the earliest extant agricultural treatise *Qiming yaoshu* 齊民要術 (Essential methods for the common people) by Jia Sixie 賈思勰 of the 5th century, see Hu Daojing 胡道靜, "Shandong de nongxue chuantong" 山東的農學傳統, in Yu Xintang 虞信堂 and Jin Liangnian 金良年 eds., *Hu Daojing wenji* 胡道靜文集, 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2011), 2: 18-19 (this article was originally published in *Wenshizhe* 2 (1962)

⁴¹³ Pu Songling, "*Nongsang jing xu*" 農桑經序, in Li Changnian 李長年 ed., *Nongsang jing jiaozhu* 農桑經校注 (Beijing: Nongye chubanshe, 1982). Judging by extant manuscripts, *Nongsang jing* was widely circulated in Shandong; Sheng Wei mentions more than ten varieties of "early manuscript copies" (早期傳抄本) in his article. Li's preface to his book discusses the variety of extant manuscripts he collated. *Shandong wenxian jicheng*, 1st series, vol. 37, pp. 102-69 has published one manuscript in the collection of the Shandong Provincial Museum, with the title of *Nong can jing* 農蠶經; it is comprised of "Nong jing" 農經 (Treatise on agriculture) and "Can jing" 蠶經 (Treatise on sericulture), followed by two appendices "Can jing bu" 蠶經補 (Addition to the treatise on sericulture) and "Can sui shu" 蠶崇書 (Book of silkworms maladies). The volume lists this manuscript as Pu's autograph manuscript (*shougao* 手稿), but it is a mistake.

In the Keio collection, besides manuscripts of *Nongsang jing* (which have been studied by Amano Motonosuke 天野元之助), there is a fascinating illustrated "sequel," entitled *Nong jing xuji bu huangchong yaofa* 農經續集 捕蝗蟲要法 (Sequel to the treatise on agriculture: important methods of catching pests) (no. 2408).

⁴¹⁴ Amano Motonosuke 天野元之助 has shown the "Nong jing" to contain content from the early agricultural treatises *Fan Shengzhi shu* 汜勝之書 and *Qimin yaoshu* 齊民要術. He suggests that "although the treatise does not reflect the degree of skill in the region, as a treatise founded upon local experience, it

suzi describes things in a way that must have been easily understood to local people of Pu's times. If *Nongsang jing* contained an erudite reader's digests, making agricultural knowledge past and present accessible to fellow literates, *Riyong suzi* was a creative project, which captured in a lively vernacular the names of things, processes, and generations of farming wisdom.⁴¹⁵

Following “Farming” and “Silkworms” come more chapters on the staple subjects of the assorted characters literature – foods and vegetables, goods and vessels, and other things. What is notable in *Riyong suzi* is the abundance of the spoken lexicon, and here the author really seems to have made an effort to record things as they are seen and heard about, while striving to be comprehensive. In later chapters on beasts, birds, scaly creatures and insects, the focus is not the classical creatures of the *Shijing* and *Erya* (there are a few of those, too) but real-life animals, many with their “common names” (summing 俗名), and their shapes, qualities, habits, habitats. In the chapter “Birds,” Pu emerges as an avid premodern bird enthusiast, naming one after another the birds of the countryside, giving at times what seems to be truly local names. Here Pu Songling's project both echoes and deviates from elites interests in natural history in the late Ming and early Qing, sharing a passion for naming and classifying things with the ethos of broad learning and investigation of things (gewu 格物), yet deliberately turning away from the classical language to describe the world in topolectal, living terms. At the same

is notable among Qing books on agriculture” (“Qing Pu Songling Nongsangjing kao” 清蒲松齡農桑經考, trans. Tao Zhengang 陶振綱, *Pu Songling yanjiu* Z2 (1993), p. 167.

⁴¹⁵ In this light, it is reminiscent of the earlier vernacular tradition of agricultural proverbs (“Nongyan” 農諺), many of which were transmitted through the efforts of interested literati. For an introduction, see John Rohsenow, “Proverbs,” in *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Victor H. Mair (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 148-159.

time, *Riyong suzi* transcended the common features of the assorted characters literature from which it takes its roots. Besides providing words for practical use (and it is questionable how practical the characters provided are), the rhymes are infused with a curiosity and an ambition – to voice, record, and name things heretofore unnamed in books.

One of the central questions which come up for a work which makes such as extensive and exceptional use of the spoken language as *Riyong suzi* is the correspondence between what is said in local terms and just how locality figures in its knowledge scheme. A survey of the contents reveal things both close to home and geographically removed, both contemporaneous and distant in time. In the botanical sections, such as the chapter “Fruits,” there are names of things from both north and south, from the famed tubers from west of Zi to the citruses of the tropics, from the northern “civil official’s fruit” taking its name from legend to the loquat and torreyia nuts of the south. In fact, the emphasis is not on the local at all, and the chapter begins with the prized fruits of distant lands.⁴¹⁶ The chapters related to clothing are especially fascinating for their mention of different materials, from common fabrics to furs of the Western regions and precious Japanese silks, and the reader is left to wonder if they reflect indeed the wide variety of commodities available or whether they are evoked for the sake of comprehensiveness. For example, “Chapter eighteen, The Wooler,” tells of exotic wools: “The pulu wool⁴¹⁷ is able to make saddles/ The duoluo felt⁴¹⁸ will ward off

⁴¹⁶ The first line: “Let me tell you that things distance from their native land are prized....”

⁴¹⁷ The Chinese term seems to be a transliteration from the Tibetan, and refers to a special wool of the northwestern regions.

⁴¹⁸ “Duoluo” is, again, a transliteration. In Buddhist contexts it can be transliteration for a number of different Sanskrit terms (denoting ceremonial bowl, the fan-palm tree, the pupils in the eyes, a woman

the cold” 氍毹堪爲鞍座/多羅尼可冒風寒. “Chapter sixteen, The Tanner”: “The lynx is not [a creature of] the Middle Kingdom / At the Western passes wolf-skins are presented to the generals” 舍利孫非中國有/ 西塞狼皮進武官. There is no section on geography in *Riyong suzi*, as in the popular encyclopedias of the day; nevertheless, things of distant regions, even outside of the Middle Kingdom proper, have found their way into the little book “for daily use.”

But when we read *Riyong suzi* closely and with care, we are occasionally able to discern traces of the world of its times, from the objects of daily use to customs and fashions. In the chapter “Vessels,” for example, there are two mentions of Zichuan’s adjacent Boshan, known until the present-day for its clayware, and of Hong mountain, five kilometers northeast of Zichuan’s county seat: “The big wine-pots of Shima have no fear of cracking / The fine coal of Hong Mountain will easily thicken the gruel” 石馬大鍋不怕炆，巒山好炭易濃湯.⁴¹⁹ If here the lines boast of things with local pride, elsewhere it adopts a critical stance, as in the chapter “Monks”: “In Qi and Lu these days there is an unwholesome custom / They let oxen and donkeys run wild in herds” 齊魯如今有陋弊/牛驢驢乍跑成群.⁴²⁰ The chapter “Illnesses” tell of recent maladies and remedies: “In recent years there is furthermore the ‘black miasma’/ While newly there is

bodhisattva, a sutra) while another possibility is transliteration of an honorific term from Manchu. Zhang Shuzheng suggests that the material *duoluo ni* 多羅尼 comes from Western Europe (*Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 207).

⁴¹⁹ Shima is located in present-day Boshan District and was known in Pu’s day for its metal plowshares and wine-pots. The other reference to Boshan in the same chapter is the line “The pots of Yanshen are used by poor households” 顏神盅確貧家用 – Yanshen is an ancient name for Boshan.

⁴²⁰ Zhang Shuzheng suggests that this refers to a custom of letting livestock join funeral processions as rituals are conducted (*Riyong suzi zhu*, p. 238).

a remedy for ‘scraggy eyes’” 近年又有烏沙瘴 骨眼新起有方傳.⁴²¹ Perhaps most revealing of the changing times is fashion, and in this light the chapters on “The Tailor” and “The Tanner” are most intriguing for the glimpses they provide into contemporary dress. “The Tailor” tells: “It was once fashionable to have arrow-bags on horse-hoof sleeves / Now donkey-hoof sleeves are in the vogue” 馬蹄袖口興弓鞞/又見驢蹄變一遭.⁴²² The literati world, too, has its vogues, which *Riyong suzi* does not forget to describe in its chapter on “Painting”: “There is ‘finger-painting’ in recent years / Impressing the authorities with a single art” 近年又有指頭畫 能將一藝動官家.⁴²³

If *Riyong suzi* shares with the assorted characters genre its broad categories of knowledge, occasional reflections of contemporary life, and impulses to capture what is seen and heard, it also has a distinct voice, at times humorous and satirical, which is clear when we compare sections of *Riyong suzi* against *Zhuangnong zazi*. Both books contain chapters on the professions, from artisans to courtesans and a variety of ritual specialists, but told with distinctly different voices. Whereas *Zhuangnong* describe the monks and their tasks respectfully, *Riyong suzi* expresses a deep skepticism, and in the chapters “Geomancy” and “Paper offerings,” it goes on length to caution the reader against the

⁴²¹ The maladies described will need further investigation. Zhang Shuzheng suggests “wusha zhang” to be some form of malaria (p. 218) but this needs to be further researched.

⁴²² What these sleeves look like exactly will need further investigation.

⁴²³ Yu Tianchi has tried to argue on the evidence of these latter two couplets (and a few others, including a self-reference “it is hard for an eighty-year old to remember things” 八十老翁難記數 in the chapter “Birds”) that *Riyong suzi* was not composed by Pu Songling – that he never got to be eighty, and that the ‘finger-painting’ referred to the Shandong painter Gao Qipei 高其佩, who was active in Pu’s time but did not reach true fame until later. As Yu suggests, it may very well be possible that Pu Lide edited the rhymes and modified things in the process; at the same time, we must remember that as rhymes they cannot be read as precise historical documents. Yu further suggested that the outright condemnation of Manchu dress in “donkey-hoof sleeves” is inconceivable in the Qianlong era, but when one reads the lines closely, it may simply be a description of things as they were called. See Yu Tianchi 于天池, “*Pu Songling ji zai Riyong suzi* fei Pu Songling yuanzuo” 蒲松齡集載日用俗字非蒲松齡原作, *Wenshi* 20 (1983): 250.

deceptions of ritual specialists and the ills of popular religion.⁴²⁴ The voice of caution, consistent through the chapters on gambling, lawsuits, courtesans, and sprinkled elsewhere through the rhymes, give a didactic dimension to *Riyong suzi*, and warn readers and listeners against the troubling consequences of poor action in a most vivid way. In “Courtesans,” for example, *Riyong suzi* parodies the courtesans while bringing pity to their woes: “Guests stop coming when her white hair alights, / There’s no coffin for her who in youth expires. / Even a decrepit reed mat will suffice to roll her up; / Into a mound of loose dust she is buried, alas!” There is a pathos in the lines, just as at the end of “The Body,” the author of *Riyong suzi* calls readers and listeners to a purposeful life: “Straighten up and do something [of importance] / To dally and dawdle is to waste this life” 壯起身子做樁事， 儻儻撒閒游負此身。

Finally, we might look at another comparison between *Zhuangnong zazi* and *Riyong suzi*. In the chapter “Painting and drawing,” *Zhuangnong zazi* had depicted a colorful list of figures from popular iconography, from the general Lü Bu to the bodhisattva Guanyin, to the deity Erlang subduing the monkey king to the eight immortals crossing the sea. These figures ruled the world of popular religion, from temples walls to opera stages – a few also appear in the plays and ballads attributed to Pu Songling. Yet in the short chapter “Painting,” *Riyong suzi* chose to focus on the literati arts. The rhymes, which describe minerals and precious materials used for colors and

⁴²⁴ These at times scathing attitudes has led one scholar to conclude that *Riyong suzi* was not authored by Pu Songling, one who should have been more sympathetic to such matters – but the question of religious attitudes is never a simple one, and it is important to remember that the rhymes provided detailed accounts of ritual objects and procedures at the same time that it critiqued them. See Yu Tianchi, “*Pu Songling ji zai Riyong suzi fei Pu Songling yanzuo*”.

techniques of water-painting, is reminiscent of another work compiled by Pu.⁴²⁵ In that compendium, there are more extensive descriptions of the things and procedures of the studio. From its details on calligraphy and painting, on minerals and antique objects and other precious things, we are reminded of the figure of the literati as connoisseur in the 17th century.

If connoisseurship is about taking delight in seeing and touching, in harboring a curiosity for the things of the world, then the writer of *Riyong suzi* is a connoisseur perhaps – one with a distinct sensibility, and a soft spot for spoken things. In crafting the rhymes he also took a great deal of care. Commenting on the *Riyong suzi*, Li Wanpeng writes of how both the language is accessible and the lines flow with ease, of how the rhymes don't at all feel affected and how figures are depicted in a lively way. In these ways, *Riyong suzi* well exceeded the *Zhuangnong zazi* at the same time that it used it “as a blueprint.”⁴²⁶ The former must also have been composed by a literate person, and one might wonder about how in the genre of the assorted characters new works continued to build upon the old, as any other genre, written or performed. One might also continue to wonder about *Riyong suzi* as a project in the transmission of knowledge. In putting to the

⁴²⁵ For a description of its contents, see Kang Erping 康爾平, “Yingyin *Liaozhai zaji* qianyan” 影印聊齋雜記前言, *Liaozhai zaji* 聊齋雜記 (遼瀋書社, 1987). This untitled two volume work, in the collection of the Liaoning Provincial Library, has been confused in the past with *Nongsang jing* (its first volume of resembles the *Nong jing* in its organization but contains completely different content). This work, which is mostly in Pu's own hand, was given varying titles by 20th century scholars such as *Liaozhai zaji* 聊齋雜記 and *Nongsang jing cangao* 農桑經殘稿. Yuan Shishuo has suggested cautiously that the first volume may be a draft version of *Jiazheng waibian* 家政外編, a lost work which Pu is known to have compiled through an extant preface (*Pu Songling shiji zhushu xinkao*, pp. 347-48). In the *Pu Songling quanji*, Sheng Wei has confusingly put the content of the first volume under the title *Jiazheng waibian* 家政外編 and that of the second volume under the title *Jiazheng neibian* 家政內編 (another work which Pu is known to have compiled but only its preface is extant), giving the impression that the two named works are extant, but this has not been conclusively established.

⁴²⁶ Li, “*Zhuangnong zazi* yu *Riyong suzi*,” p. 336.

script things that eluded writing, *Riyong suzi* gives us a glimpse into the world of Pu Songling unlike any other, a world which we can begin to imagine with reciting: “Born to mom and dad, you’re called a person.....”

Coda: A tale from *Liaozhai zhiyi*: “Scholar Zhang”

Among the many figures of scholars and schoolmasters in *Liaozhai zhiyi* there is the curious figure of scholar Zhang – curious not only for the marvelous experience he is recorded to have had, but also for what is said about him by others. In the Zhuxuezhai manuscript copy of the *Liaozhai* stories from the early 18th century, there is a section of the story told through the mouth of Gao Xiyuan, a painter and literatus who had met the aging Pu Songling in his youth. In the narrative by Gao, there is mention of a line from a *Farmer’s Assorted Characters*, and a comment (a rather derogatory one) on the book in the form of a gloss. There is also a joke, dating to the Song dynasty and perhaps earlier, which plays on the forms of characters to mock the village schoolmaster incapable of reading his characters (the real-life scholar Zhang was far from such – it is told later in the narrative that he was skilled in the Han-style seal script). These playful references to forms of writing in mediums high and low, to the basic texts of elementary education from *Analects* to the literature of assorted characters, and to the oral modes of classics recited and lyrics sung, all make “Scholar Zhang” an apt way to conclude this chapter – while they leave the reader to wonder about the comments on “rustic and “vulgar” matters expressed elsewhere in the elegant classical tales.

“Scholar Zhang” does not appear among the extant stories from Pu Songling’s own manuscripts, and there is evidence that the narrative by Gao Xiyuan (beginning with “Gao

Xiyuan said” in the translation below) was not written by Pu Songling himself but was rather appended by a copyist of the Zhuxuezhai manuscript.⁴²⁷ In the other early Qing manuscripts of *Liaozhai zhiyi*, only the first part of text is recorded.⁴²⁸ Gao Xiyuan (1683-1749), whose name was Fenghan 鳳翰 (Xiyuan 西園 was his courtesy name), was a native of Jiaozhou 膠州, Shandong; he was recommended to the civil service as a Worthy and Excellent 賢良方正 in 1727 and served as county magistrate in Xixian 歙縣 and Jixi 績溪 in present-day Anhui. A noted painter and poet, he also became known for paintings done by his left hand (due to a medical condition he became unable to use his right hand in his old age) and for his collection of inkstones numbering over a thousand.⁴²⁹ He authored a postface to *Liaozhai zhiyi*, which appears at the end of the Zhuxuezhai manuscript.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ Yuan Shishuo, *Pu Songling shiji zhushu xinkao*, pp. 398-400. Yuan suggests that Pu could not have written the section because Gao Xiyuan met him as a young man, when he could not possibly have known the family of scholar Zhang. In 1723 Gao traveled to Ji’nan for the examinations, when he stayed with Zhang Yuan (b. 1672), who served as tutor in the wealthy Zhu household. The Zhu house would be where Gao would have read *Liaozhai zhiyi*, as this is the time when the Zhu brothers were busy having a copy made of the tales (the Zhuxuezhai manuscript is very likely to have been based on the Zhu copy, which is no longer extant; see Yuan, pp. 384-86). Yuan surmises that Gao told of his account when reading the tales, and this was recorded by the Zhu brothers in their manuscript copy.

⁴²⁸ I refer to the twenty-four *juan* manuscript of *Liaozhai zhiyi* discovered in Zhoucun, probably copied in the Qianlong era or copied from a Qianlong-era manuscript; and the *Yishi* 異史 manuscript, dating to the Kangxi and Yongzhen eras.

Curiously, a very similar version of the story (consisting of just this first section) appears in the jottings *Chibei outan* 池北偶談 (Incidental remarks from north of the pond) by Pu Songling’s eminent Shandong contemporary Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634-1711) (see “Xintou xiaoren” 心頭小人, *juan* 26, in *Chibei outan* 池北偶談, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982; rpt. 1997), 2: 625). It is one of a dozen entries in *Chibei outan* which find parallels in *Liaozhai zhiyi*, with varying degrees of similarity existing between the two texts. For a detailed discussion on possible borrowings, see Marlon Hom, “The Continuation of Tradition: A Study of *Liaozhai zhiyi* by Pu Songling (1640-1715),” Ph.D. diss, University of Washington, 1979, pp. 65-79; see also, Roland Altenburger, *The Sword or the Needle* (Berne: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 176-77.

⁴²⁹ The biographical information on Gao in this paragraph comes mainly from Liu Jieping, *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu*, v. 1, p. 64.

⁴³⁰ It is signed “Nancun” 南邨 and dated to 1723. See *Zhuxuezhai chaoben Liaozhai zhiyi* 鑄雪齋抄本聊齋志異 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1974), *juan* 12.

As for Scholar Zhang of the story, he was a real-life figure from Anqiu 安邱, Shandong, a contemporary of Pu Songling and an eminent seal-carver and calligrapher of his times. Zhang's (1651-1738) name was Zaixin 在辛 and his courtesy name was Maojun 卯君. Elected Graduate for Pre-eminence 拔貢 for study in the National University (Taixue) in 1686, he was afterwards appointed Educational Director 教諭 of Guancheng 觀城 but did not go on to pursue a career in the civil service. In 1691 Zhang traveled to Nanjing to study the clerk-script from the eminent calligrapher Zheng Fu 鄭籊, and would later become known for his own style and writings on calligraphy, notably his *Lifa suoyan* 隸法瑣言 (Miscellaneous notes on methods of the clerk-script) and *Hanli qizi* 漢隸奇字 (Marvelous characters of the Han dynasty clerk-script), both of which were included in the bibliographies (Yiwen zhi 藝文志) section to the *Qing History*. Having learned to make seals from Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 and coming from a family of seal-carvers, Zhang was also a pioneering figure in the Shandong school of seal-carving; he captured his thoughts on the subject in his *Insights into the Art of Seal-Carving* 篆印心法. It is said that he lived into his eighties with clear cognition and sight.⁴³¹

⁴³¹ The biographical details on Zhang Zaixin in this paragraph come from Zhang Zhicheng 張志成, "Qi Lu yin pai zongshi Zhang Zaixin wenhua yishu shulüe" 齊魯印派宗師張在辛文化藝術述略, *Shandong Dang'an* 2 (2009): 58-60; and Liu Jieping, *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu*, v. 1, p. 64.

Scholar Zhang 張貢士⁴³² (Translation)

Scholar Zhang of Anqiu, bedridden with illness, was lying face up on his bed one day when he saw a little man emerge out of his heart. The little man's height was merely half a foot, and he donned the robe and hat of a scholar. Mimicking the movements of an entertainer, he began to sing the tunes of Kunshan, his tones being pure and clear. In his self-introduction he gave his name and native region⁴³³; Zhang Scholar recognized them to be the same as his own. As for the scenes which the little man sang of, they were the very events of his own life. At the end of the four acts, the little man concluded with reciting a poem. Zhang still remembered its gist afterwards, and recounted it to others.

Gao Xiyuan said: "In former times, when I read Mr. Wang Yuyang's *Incidental Remarks from North of the Pond*, it said that the affair of the little man from the heart had happened to a certain Mr. Zhang from Anqiu. I have always been close with Mr. Zhang Maojun of Anqiu, and figured that it must be one of his kin. One day I asked him about it in the course of things, and only then did I discover that it happened to none other than Maojun himself. When I inquired of the details, he said that when he initially recovered from his illness, he remembered the Kunshan tunes so well that he did not forget a single character, and he recorded everything by hand into a single fascicle. But afterwards his lady took them to be inauspicious words and burned the book. Every now and then, in the course of having wine or tea with friends, he was still able to recall the coda, and often recited it to guests.

Along with the story, I record the lines here, so as to spread knowledge of the marvelous incident. The lyrics say: "Don't discourse on 'according to the Book of Odes,' or 'the Master said'⁴³⁴; they are all merely cases of 'all, all relies on me' – [actually all that the schoolmaster] relies on is 'The Buddha left a hundred twenty professions behind.'"

When I thought about these words, it seemed that Maojun was telling of his own disappointing life – of how, in his old age, he resorted to being a tutor to farmers' children, and being treated with disregard by his host, he thereby composed the verse. Can it be that in his former lifetime Maojun was an old scholar aged in erudition⁴³⁵? Maojun's name was Zaixin, and he was skilled at carving seals in the style of the Han dynasty clerk-script.

安邱張貢士寢疾，仰臥床頭。忽見心頭有小人出。長僅半尺，儒冠儒服。作俳優狀，唱崑山曲，音調清徹。說白自道，名貫一與己同。所唱節末，皆其生平所遭。四折既畢，吟詩而沒。張猶記其梗槩，為人述之。

⁴³² The Chinese text (included at the end) is from *Zhuxuezhai chaoben Liaozhai zhiyi*, juan 9, 65a-65b. The modern punctuation is mine (having also consulted the punctuation in the facsimile).

⁴³³ In *kunqu*, spoken sections alternate with sung sections; the Chinese text indicates that the self-introduction took place in a spoken section.

⁴³⁴ These are common ways of evoking the authority of the Confucian classics in texts. "The Master says" ("Zi yue"子曰) lies at the beginning of just about every quote citing Confucius in the *Analects*.

⁴³⁵ For lack of a better translation for "sushi laoru" 夙世老儒; another possibility would be, perhaps, "an old scholar aged in erudition through yet former lifetimes."

高西園云：向讀漁洋先生池北偶談，見有記心頭小人者，為安邱張某事。余素善安邱張卯君，意必其宗屬也。一日晤間，問及，始知即卯君事。詢其本末，云：當病起時，所記崑山曲者，無一字遺，皆手錄成冊。後其嫂夫人以為不祥語，焚棄之。每從酒邊茶餘，猶能記其尾聲，常舉以誦客。今並識之，以廣異聞。其詞云：詩云、子曰都休講，不過是‘都都平丈’相傳一邨塾師，訓童子讀論語，字多訛謬，其尤堪笑者，讀‘郁郁乎文哉’為‘都都平丈我’全憑着‘佛留一百二十行’村塾中有訓蒙要書，名莊農雜字，其開章云：佛留一百二十行，惟有莊農打頭強。最為鄙俚。玩其語意，似自道其生平寥落，晚為農家作塾師，主人慢之，而為是曲。意者夙世老儒，其卯君前身乎？卯君名在辛，善漢隸篆印。

Translator's note: There are two glosses in small characters (included in the Chinese text above) in the manuscript to the lyrics of the little man's song. The first is to the line "all, all relies on me." It says:

It is said that there was a village schoolmaster who was teaching pupils to read the *Analects* aloud, and he got his characters all wrong. An especially ludicrous part was when he read "how splendid the culture of Zhou"⁴³⁶ as "all, all relies on me!"⁴³⁷

The second glosses "The Buddha left a hundred twenty professions behind." It says:

In the village schools there is an important book for teaching young pupils, which goes by the name of *The Farmer's Assorted Characters*. Its opening chapter says: "The Buddha left a hundred twenty professions behind, only farming is the most awesome." It is a most homely book.

⁴³⁶ This comes from *Analects* 3.14, when Confucius comments on the splendor of the Zhou dynasty, which has witnessed the past two dynasties: 子曰：周監於二代，郁郁乎文哉！吾從周。D. C. Lau translates the passage as: "The Master said, 'The Chou is resplendent in culture, having before it the example of the two previous dynasties. I am for the Chou'" in his translation of *The Analects* (New York: Penguin, 1979), p. 69.

⁴³⁷ While translated here as "all, all relies on me," 都都平丈我 is probably completely nonsensical. 都都 appears in the term "dudu momo" 都都磨磨, which the *Hanyu da cidian* defines as "topolect; description of shying from going forward" 方言。畏縮不前貌 and cites examples from the 17th century novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳. An alternative translation might be, "dilly, dilly, flat, man, me!" (Taking "dilly" to be the first part of "dilly-dally" as 都都 from 都都磨磨....)

The joke plays on the visual resemblance between the characters in 郁郁乎文哉 and 都都平丈我, which share many strokes and parts – if we give some sympathy to the poor village schoolmaster made fun of, it may well be that he was failing in his eyesight, or we might even blame the style of the graphs in the book he is reading. This joke appears in a few Ming works, including *Additions to the Record of Amusements by West Lake* 西湖游覽志餘 by Tian Rucheng 田汝成 (1503-1557), which cites a poem by Cao Yuanchong 曹元寵 (*jinshi* 1121): "this old man goes about as he pleases, and his fledgling pupils compete to chime in (?) / in the course of his instructions / it's "all, all relies on me!" 此老方捫虱/眾雛爭赴火/想當訓誨間/都都平丈我. Tian also cites a popular story of Hangzhou (*hangyan* 杭諺) which tells of a teacher at a community school (*sheshi* 社師) making the same mistake, and of the pupils practicing reading the *Analects* line (the wrong version) despite their incomprehension. When a learned scholar came to the school one day and corrected the mistake, the pupils all scattered in fear. Thus it is said, tells Tian, "'All relies on me,' and students fill the room; 'how splendid the culture of Zhou,' and the students all won't come" 都都平丈我/學生滿堂坐/郁郁乎文哉/學生都不來. The Cao Yuanchong poem, with some variation (眾雛亦附火/想見文字間), is cited as "Poem composed on a painting on village teaching by Chen Yuan, in the collection of Liang Zhongxu" 題梁仲敘所藏陳垣畫村教學詩 in the *Bintui lu* 賓退錄 of Zhao Yushi 趙與峕 (1175-1231), *juan* 6.

The information in the above paragraph comes from Cheng Yin 成蔭, "'Dou dou ping zhang wo' xiaohua chuzi Song dai' 都都平丈我笑話出自宋代, *Zhongxue yuwen jiaoxue* 8 (2013): 60.

CHAPTER 3

Family dramas and village worlds

Introduction

In both of his two extant eulogies of his father, Pu Ruo referred to the rousing powers of Pu Songling's rustic songs - just as *Liaozhai zhiyi* served its readers with serious moral purpose, so too the plays and ballads elaborating upon their stories moved more humble audiences to awakening in the village markets and on the streets.⁴³⁸ The image of these works moving viewers and listeners to song and to tears evokes an aesthetics of feeling often described of storytelling performance. The ideals of family life central to the rustic songs are meanwhile shared across a widely known body of stories on filial sons and daughters. This chapter employs filial piety as a lens to study the moral world of the vernacular plays and ballads attributed to Pu Songling. Focusing on three middle-length works of three to six chapters, I examine their connections to the literature of filial exemplars and morality books, as well as their unique depictions of a lively village world.

Many of the ballads and plays, especially shorter and middle-length works, deal with the subject of family life. Writing in the early 19th century, the Zichuan literatus Wang Peixun has described performances of song-narratives, elaborated from three of Pu's classical tales, which even old women could understand.⁴³⁹ Judging by the names of

⁴³⁸ Pu Ruo 蒲箬, "Liuquan gong xingshu" 柳泉公行述, and "Pu Ruo deng jifu wen" 蒲箬等祭父文, Lu Dahuang ed., *Pu Songling ji*, 2: 1807-1812.

⁴³⁹ See chapter 1, "A vernacular oeuvre."

the tales Wang provides, these included *Gufu qu* 姑婦曲 (Song of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) and *Cibei qu* 慈悲曲 (Song of Compassion), which respectively related the stories of a filial daughter-in-law and an exemplary step-son. Another work known to have been locally performed, *Qiangtou ji* 牆頭記 (On the wall), tells the story of two unfilial sons duped into taking care of their aging father by a clever silversmith.⁴⁴⁰ Besides these works, the themes of filiality also figure prominently in several longer works – *Rang du zhou* 禳妒咒 (A mantra to exorcise jealousy), which tells of the transformation of a shrewish wife; *Fan yanyang* 翻魘殃 (The swindler meets his ends), which relates a family's ups and downs and the surprising turns of destiny; and *Hansen qu* 寒森曲 (Song of the infernal realms), which satirizes official corruption while telling about the filial adventures of two exemplary siblings. In this chapter, I will focus on the first three works.

This chapter is organized into three sections. In the first, “Filial piety in story and song,” I look at how didactic ethos meet storytelling esthetics in literature intended for non-elite audiences, with special attention to songs and prosimetric works from the books collected by Hirai Masao from Shandong. In the second part, “From classical tale to vernacular ballad,” I proceed to examine the thematic connections between the rustic songs, *Liaozhi zhiyi*, and filial piety stories in the exemplar literature through close readings of one ballad. Comparison of ballad against classical tale calls into question the elements of these works which ostensibly make them “elite” or “popular.” In the third

⁴⁴⁰ On the transmission of this play in local performance tradition in modern times, see Li-Ching Chang and Victor H. Mair, “The Wall, A Folk Opera by Pu Songling,” *CHINOPERL Papers* 14 (1986), pp. 103-6.

part of the chapter, “A village world,” I show the ballads to be formed from a series of appropriations, not only of filial themes but also local idioms. I conclude with thoughts on these works as a unique local corpus in light of other treatments of the subject of filial piety in Qing fiction.

Filial piety in story and song

In a study of ethics transmitted through oral storytelling in modern rural north China, Zhou Fuyan contrasts “popular” notions of filial piety in villagers’ stories against its forms in the “elite” Confucian discourse, where it often serves political ends and is tied intimately to the virtue of loyalty.⁴⁴¹ Zhou shows filial piety in the villagers’ stories to revolve around everyday family relations, especially children’s caring for parents in old age. In stories on caring and repudiation of parents, loss and acquisition of sons, and conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, Zhou finds messy, ambivalent, and often contradictory attitudes towards the relationship between parents and children; filial piety is both an ethical mandate and a utilitarian measure ensuring the reciprocity of care in the face of its practical burdens.

One might object to such a bifurcated view of “elite” and “popular” cultural values by pointing to the multiple understandings of filial piety in the early textual tradition, such as in interpretations of canonical texts like the *Classic of Filial Piety*.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ The information in this paragraph comes from Zhou Fuyan 周福岩, *Minjian gushi de lunli sixiang yanjiu – yi Gengcun gushi wenben wei duixiang* 民間故事的倫理思想研究 – 以耿村故事文本為對象 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2006), pp. 72-91.

⁴⁴² On the political aspects of filial piety in the *Xiaojing*, see Lee Cheuk Yin, “Emperor Chengzu and imperial filial piety of the Ming dynasty,” pp. 144-148, in Alan K. L. Chan and Sor-hoon Tan eds., *Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); Thomas Radice, “The Ways of

One might also argue that filial piety constituted part of a shared culture in spite of its varying forms. In late imperial times, beyond the learned tradition, filial piety belonged to a widely known world of stories, transmitted through both oral and written media. These included the stories of the filial Buddhist monk Mulian who traveled through the underworld in search of his mother; tales of exemplary men and women from Chinese history and myth, whose deeds took on lives beyond official historical record in illustrated books, primers, and morality tracts; and still other tales of ordinary sons and daughters whose filial actions made their way from more formal genres into storytelling and song. While the sources for the most part do not permit us to study oral culture in context, the many texts written for non-elite audiences from the Ming and Qing allow for glimpses into the ways in which literate authors mediated between certain moral values and the images and vocabularies of less learned worlds.⁴⁴³

“Didactic” is a word often used to describe literature of a moralistic character, but it hardly suffices to capture the diverse forms and esthetic appeals of the genres involved. One might note how Chinese prosimetric literature in its beginnings in *bianwen* (transformation texts) mixed popular storytelling with Buddhist preaching, and how later genres of *baojuan* (precious scrolls) and *daoqing* (Daoist sentiments) drew from the

Filial Piety in Early China,” PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2006, chapter 4. On religious interpretations, see Lu Miaw-fen, “Religious dimensions of filial piety as developed in late Ming interpretations of the *Xiaojing*,” *Late Imperial China* 27.2 (2006): 1-37.

⁴⁴³ On filial piety in Dunhuang popular literature, see Zheng Acai 鄭阿財, *Dunhuang xiaodao wenxue yanjiu* 敦煌孝道文學研究 (Taipei: Shimen tushu gongsi, 1982); on the popularization of values of filial piety beyond the elite, see Keith Knapp, *Selfless Offspring: Filial Children and Social Order in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press, 2005), and Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

secular musical culture in proselytizing their ideas about salvation and transcendence.⁴⁴⁴ Filial piety loomed large in the literature of precious scrolls, such as in the widely known stories of Princess Miaoshan, who gave up her eyes and hands to heal her father, and Mulian, who toured the grim spaces of the underworld in search of his mother.⁴⁴⁵ These stories of journey and sacrifice channeled the moving powers of music and verse-narrative to expound the messages of religious salvation, so that exhortation to goodness must have also been a sensuous experience.⁴⁴⁶

Besides these overtly religious genres, there were other kinds of experiments with verse and song to reform popular morality. Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536-1618), who served as a

⁴⁴⁴ On popular elements in *baojuan*, see Daniel L. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 182-83; on *bianwen* and storytelling performance, see Victor Mair, *T'ang Transformation Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1989), pp. 152-170, and *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), pp. 1-16, which also discusses *baojuan* performances using pictures. On *daoqing*, see Wilt Idema, *The Resurrected Skeleton: From Zhuangzi to Lu Xun* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁴⁴⁵ On Miaoshan stories, see Glen Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miao-shan* (London: Ithaca Press for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University, 1978) and Yü Chünfang, *Kuan-yin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 293-352. On the *Xiangshan baojuan*, see Wilt Idema, *Personal Salvation and Filial Piety: Two Precious Scroll Narratives of Guanyin and Her Acolytes* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008). On Mulian in precious scrolls, see Rostislav Berezkin, "The Development of the Mulian Story in Baojuan Texts (14th -19th Century) in Connection with the Evolution of the Genre," PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010; David Johnson, "Mu-lien in *Pao-chüan*: The Performance Context and Religious Meaning of the *Yu-ming pao-ch'uan*," in idem, ed., *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion: Five Studies* (Berkeley: Chinese Popular Culture Project, 1995); Beata Grant and Wilt Idema trans., *Escape from Blood Pond Hell* (University of Washington Press, 2011). On Mulian in medieval times, see Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Victor Mair, *Tunhuang Popular Narratives*, pp. 87-122.

⁴⁴⁶ Wilt Idema describes scroll-recital sessions organized to chastise unfilial children in 20th century Gansu in "Introduction," *Precious Scrolls from Western Gansu* (Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2015), pp. 8-9. Zhai Jianhong 翟建紅, "Hexi baojuan de jiedu yu minjian jingshen de renshi – yi xuan yang xiaodao wei zhongxin de baojuan wenben de yanjiu" 河西寶卷的解讀與民間精神的認識 – 以宣揚孝道為中心的寶卷文本的研究, *Qiqiha'er shifan gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 5 (2008): 98-99, discusses two precious scrolls on the theme of filial piety; one of them, *Yingge baojuan* 鸚哥寶卷 (Precious Scroll of the Parrot), is translated in Idema 2015.

magistrate in Shanxi among during the Wanli era (1573-1620), eloquently described the popular appeal and transformative potentials he found in the prosimetric form⁴⁴⁷:

The common people delight in hearing popular tunes and songs to the latest fashion, but their wicked lyrics and licentious melodies are most terrible influences on local customs. If there are senior scholars and erudite men, lyricists and poets of talent, who can take those songs that have recently come into vogue, and turn them into virtuous works to exhort the world, they shall be rewarded one peck of grain for every song. Those who can take the good deeds of the ancients – such as that of [Sun’s wife] who killed the dog to awaken her husband, Guo Ju who tried to bury his son to save his mother, Guan Zhong and Bao Shuya who divided the gold, and Song Jiao who saved the ants,⁴⁴⁸ and all those others which are apt for reforming the popular morality – and elaborate them into drum-beat stories and plain talk, strum-lyrics and spoken tales, blending singing and narration, and being extremely simple and easy to understand, without using a single literary phrase; being comprehensible to women and children; and further, being true to life and greatly satisfying, capable of moving the hearts of the people, such that audiences will nod in sympathy and weep in sorrow: for each work of thirty segments or more, the area officials will have one copy made to be sent to the academy,⁴⁴⁹ where authors of chosen works will be rewarded five piculs of grain. Those willing to personally teach twenty or more persons to become familiar with their work will be rewarded ten piculs, and still further boons.

⁴⁴⁷ The passage cited below comes from Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536-1618), *Shizheng lu* 實政錄, *juan 2*, “Cun xu qiong du” 存恤羸獨, 49b-50a (archive.org; book contributor: Beijing University Library); the punctuation is mine. Lü Kun served in a range of higher official posts besides as a magistrate and was in many ways an unconventional thinker. For more on his interest in vernacular genres, see Joana Handlin, *Action in Late Ming Thought: The Reorientation of Lü K’un and Other Scholar-Officials* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 143-60; see pp. 109-110 for his biography. See Wilt Idema, “The Ideological Manipulation of Traditional Drama in Ming Times – Some Comments on the Work of Tanaka Issei,” in *Norms and the State in China*, edited by Chun-chieh Huang and Erik J. Zürcher (Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 50-70.

⁴⁴⁸ The story of “killing the dog” refers to that of a wife who killed a dog and dressed it up as a dead person, in order to have her husband see for himself who is truly loyal to him (his brother or his two idler friends); the earliest preserved version of the story is in an anthology of plays printed in 1553 and held in the royal library in El Escorial, Spain. There also exists a *zaju* version. Guo Ju 郭巨 burying his son is one of the twenty-four exemplar stories (to be discussed). The story of Guan Zhong 管仲 and Bao Shuya 鮑叔牙 is documented in the *Shiji*. The account involving ants refers to the story of Song Jiao 宋郊 (997-1066, *jinshi* 1024), brother of Song Qi 宋祁 (998-1061, *jinshi* same year as Song Jiao), who made a bridge out of bamboo to allow ants to escape from a flooded ant nest during a rainstorm; his later success in the examinations (both brothers historically rose to high office) is attributed to this meritorious act. The story is recounted in Li Yuangang 李元綱 (fl. 12th century), *Houde lu* 厚德錄, *juan 1*, in Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 ed., *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965-70); it appears also in Xinyuan zhuren 心遠主人 (probably of the early Qing)’s *Erke xingshi hengyan* 二刻醒世恒言, v. 2, 4 *hui* (*Guben xiaoshuo jicheng*, v. 168, pp. 508-9).

⁴⁴⁹ It is not clear to me which “academy” this refers to – possibly, private academies (*shuyuan* 書院)?

時調新曲，百姓喜聽，但邪語淫聲，甚壞民俗。如有老師宿儒，詞人詩客，能將近日時興腔調，翻成勸世良言，每一曲賞穀一斗。能將古人好事，如殺狗勸夫，埋兒孝母，管鮑分金，宋郊渡蟻一切有關風化者，作為鼓板平話，彈唱說書，半說半唱，極淺極俗，不用一字文言，婦人童子都省，又親切痛快，感動民心，使人點頭讚嘆，流淚悲傷者，每書三十段以上，一本有司抄錄送院，選中賞穀五石。肯親自教習二十人以上成熟者，賞穀十石，仍另行優獎。

Here is an eloquent description of the moving powers of story and song, accessible to the humblest audiences through their simple language and familiar musical vocabulary, inculcating moral lessons while moving audiences to “nod in sympathy and weep in sorrow.” The didactic potentials which Lü found in vernacular literature would find many expressions elsewhere by literati. Lü Kun inspired at least one later official, a Su Erde 蘇爾德, Inspector of Shanxi during the Qianlong era, to compose a series of twenty-four songs under the title of *Taiping guci* 太平鼓詞 (Drum-lyrics in an age of peace), which he had propagated in the region through blind musicians, clerks, the poor, and the elderly.⁴⁵⁰ The songs, with titles such as “Be filial to parents” and “Be loving to brothers,” echoed the Sacred Edict, the imperial program of sixteen maxims written by the Kangxi emperor and promulgated widely throughout the Qing.⁴⁵¹ Outside of official auspices such as these, later in the Qing there were still many other kinds of experiments which employed vernacular genres to reform popular morality, such as the prolific works

⁴⁵⁰ Che Zhenhua 車振華, *Qing dai shuochang wenxue chuanguo yanjiu* 清代說唱文學創作研究 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 2015), pp. 60-61. The songs were also known as *Fu Jin quan min ge* 撫晉勸民歌 (Songs to soothe and encourage the people of Jin).

⁴⁵¹ Filial piety was the first of the maxims. On the popularization of the Sacred Edict in the Qing, see Victor H. Mair, “Language and Ideology in the *Sacred Edict*,” in David Johnson, Andrew Nathan and Evelyn Rawski eds., *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, pp. 325-59; also, Zhou Zhenhe 周振鶴 and Gu Meihua 顧美華 eds., *Shengyu guanxun: jijie yu yanjiu* 聖諭廣訓：集解與研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2006).

of the Jiangnan activist and philanthropist Yu Zhi 余治 (1809-1874) during the turbulent decades of the mid-19th century.⁴⁵²

In the corpus of books which Hirai Masao collected from Zichuan, filial piety appears as the subject of a number of texts including songs and prosimetric narratives. While sometimes they are attributed to Pu Songling, the few works that I have been able to find out more about appear to be widely circulated works also known elsewhere in the Qing empire. These include texts on the twenty-four exemplars; a morality book or two; one precious scroll; and songs exhortating filiality. In language they range from a simple classical to varieties of vernacular, with differences which probably owe more to genre than to locality. In comparison, the rustic songs attributed to Pu stand out for their strong topolectal flavor, while they share much in common with the other works intended for non-elite audiences in the general frameworks of retribution and exhortation to filiality. The booklets of exhortatory verses from Zichuan expound in straightforward ways the ethics of caring for parents in old age. A *Quanxiao ge* 勸孝歌 (The filial songs) of unknown date, a pamphlet of ten songs, contrast the unfilial ways sons behave towards their parents against their love for their children, and caution readers that they would ultimately be treated in their old age the same way.⁴⁵³ Another undated *Quan xiao lu* 勸孝

⁴⁵² On Yu Zhi, see You Zi'an 游子安, *Quanhua jinzhen* 勸化金箴 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin, 1999), pp. 100-109; Tobie Meyer-Fong, *What Remains: Coming to Terms with Civil War in 19th century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), Ch. 2; Katherine Alexander, "Virtues of the Vernacular," PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2016, Ch. 3.

⁴⁵³ Catalog no. 0352. *Quanxiao ge* is the title given on the cover, which also tells that the manuscript was kept by Pu Guotong 蒲國桐. The title which appears on the first page is "Liaozhai shifan ge" 聊齋十反歌 and the author is given as "Pu Jianchen [Pu Songling] of Manjing" 滿井蒲劍臣. A date of Shunzhi 9 (1652) is given at the end of the manuscript but this is most unlikely. This text appears to be a well-known work, with the title of "Wenchang di jun ba fan ge" 文昌帝君八反歌 (Eight admonishing songs of the Lord Wenchang) in some versions, where it is associated with the deity Wenchang, the patron saint of scholars

錄, whose cover indicates that it was printed locally in Zichuan, includes three works in colloquial seven-syllable verse exhorting the reader to be filial.⁴⁵⁴ These texts of unknown date and author appear to have been quite well known in the Qing.⁴⁵⁵ Among them, there is a “Quan bao qin’en pian” 勸報親恩篇 (Song on requiting one’s debt of gratitude to parents), which describes the pains of parenting from the moment sons are born to being married. Another “Quanxiao pian” 勸孝篇 tells sons how to be filial to parents in everyday life while they are still living: take care of their food and clothing, not cause them worry, not be jealous of siblings or listen to the wife’s bickerings, attend to parents and pray for their healing when they are ill. Still another “Baixiao pian” 百孝篇 (The hundred ‘filial’ song), with which the booklet begins, contains hundred repetitions of the character *xiao* (“filiality”) while upholding its own efficacy as a text. Filial piety is described as encompassing all virtues:

To abstain from killing and to release living beings is to be filial	戒殺放生都是孝
Filiality increases the parents’ life-years, it reaches the Heavens	能積親壽孝通天
To treasure the grains and the written characters is to be filial	惜穀惜字都是孝
Filiality increases the parents’ good fortune, it is exceptional	能積親福孝非凡
To do good with a sincere heart is true filiality	真心為善是真孝
The myriad good qualities are encompassed by filiality	萬善都在孝裏邊
When the filial son acts filially, he is protected by lucky deities	孝子行孝吉神護
When a person is unfilial, disasters are without limit... ⁴⁵⁶	為人不孝禍無邊

The language is an accessible vernacular, while the vocabulary of good works and retribution reveal its affinities to *shanshu* 善書, “morality books,” widely circulated texts

and widely venerated in the Qing. On Wenchang, see Terry Kleeman, *A God’s Own Tale: The Book of Transformations of Wenchang, the Divine Lord of Zitong* (SUNY Press, 1994).

⁴⁵⁴ Keio catalog no. 7005.

⁴⁵⁵ Xiao Qunzhong 肖群忠, *Xiao yu Zhongguo wenhua* 孝與中國文化 (Beijing: Renmin, 2001), p. 291.

⁴⁵⁶ No. 7005, 3a-3b.

in late imperial times, which advocated good deeds and cautioned against evil ones in very similar terms.⁴⁵⁷ As texts known across the spectra of society, these books have been seen by scholars to have contributed to the integration of Chinese culture.⁴⁵⁸ Filiality is among the virtues advocated by books like the *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 (Tract of the most exalted on action and response), perhaps the most widely known of the morality books, which also urged readers to extend their caring beyond the family to other sentient beings.⁴⁵⁹ The *Tract* does not appear in Hirai's collection, but there is a partial copy of an illustrated version of the *Yinzhiwen* 陰騭文 (The tract on the hidden administration), another widely known morality text, of unknown time and place of printing.⁴⁶⁰ Divided into sections such as “donating medicines,” “illuminating the night,”

⁴⁵⁷ A diverse literature, *shanshu* “share some form of belief in the law of cause and effect, that is, the cosmic process of retribution by which good and bad actions have consequences for this life, subsequent lives, and even the lives of one's descendants. These consequences might include the realization of Taoist immortality, punishment in the hells of the underworld, or the attainment of this-worldly tangibles such as long life, social position, wealth, and male progeny...” (Catherine Bell, “Shanshu,” in Fabrizio Pregadio ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 2 vols., v. 2, p. 872). The foundational works on these texts include Sakai Tadao, *Zōho Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū* 增補中國善書の研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1999) and Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, *Dōkyō no kenkyū* 道教の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzokan, 1952). See also, Cynthia Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); You Zi'an 游子安, *Quanhua jinzhen – Qing dai shanshu yanjiu* 勸化金箴 – 清代善書研究 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin, 1999), and *Shan yu ren tong – Ming Qing yilai de cishan yu jiaohua* 善與人同 – 明清以來的慈善與教化 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005); Zhang Yichen 張禕琛, *Qingdai shanshu de kanke yu chuanbo* 清代善書的刊刻與傳播, PhD diss., Fudan University, 2010; Vincent Goossaert, *Livres de morale révélés par les dieux* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012).

⁴⁵⁸ See Catherine Bell, “Printing and Religion in China: Some Evidence from the *Taishang Ganying Pian*.” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 20 (Fall 1992):183.

⁴⁵⁹ The *Taishang ganyin pian* is a tract of about 1,200 characters. It probably was composed between the end of the northern Song and the early southern Song, and its first printing appeared in 1164. It became widely propagated in Ming and Qing times, including in vernacular versions such as the *Ganyin pian zhijiang* 感應篇直講 of the 18th century (see You Zi'an, *Quanshan jinzhen*, pp. 40-41).

Among the *Tract's* moral injunctions are “Be faithful, filial, friendly, and brotherly. First rectify thyself and then convert others. Take pity on orphans, assist widows; respect the old, be kind to children. Even the multifarious insects, herbs, and trees should not be injured...” 忠孝友悌。正己化人。矜孤恤寡。敬老懷幼。昆蟲草木。猶不可傷。 (D.T. Suzuki and Paul Carus, *Treatise on Response & Retribution* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing Co., 1973; originally published in 1906), p. 16 and pp. 52-53).

⁴⁶⁰ Keio catalog no. 7037. The title “Suowen bilu yinzhiwen” 所聞必錄陰騭文 (All that is heard is recorded – the tract on the hidden administration), is written on a red slip pasted onto the later cover; the

and “evil-doers,” the book elaborates upon the meritorious and evil acts contained in the *Yinzhuwen*, complete with commentaries and stories illustrating each moral lesson. Accompanied by full-page illustrations and narrated in a simple classical language, the stories bring to life a world of divine justice where punishments and rewards are inexorably meted out according to individual actions.⁴⁶¹

Whereas exhortatory verses expound filial piety in practical, straightforward terms, prosimetric stories elaborate on the lessons of divine retribution through extended family dramas. The stories from *Zichuan* are notably directed towards audiences of women. They include an undated booklet of three stories, written in a rather poor hand and given the title of *Liaozhai quanshi wen* 聊齋勸世文 (Liaozhai’s texts to exhort the world) on the cover.⁴⁶² The first, “The shrew transmits her ways” 悍婦傳法, “with *Veritable records of underworld justice*” 附冥案實錄, details the underworld

original cover is missing. I suspect this text may be a version of the *Yinzhuwen tushuo* 陰鷲文圖說 compiled by Huang Zhengyuan 黃正元 (*jinshi* 1713) in 1737, which has a similar format with commentary, case stories, and pictures; see You Zi’an, *Shan yu ren tong*, pp. 62, 144-48, 330-31. The *Yinzhuwen* itself is of unknown date, from some time between the Southern Song and the late Ming; see Terry Kleeman, “The Lives and Teachings of the Divine Lord of Zitong,” in Donald S. Lopez ed., *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: PUP, 1996), pp. 64-71, which includes a translation (“The tract on the hidden administration,” pp. 70-71).

⁴⁶¹ The relationship between morality books and fiction is a large subject. On *pinghua* 平話 as possible precedent to the finely printed morality books of the early Ming, which shared in their format of combined prose and poetry, see Wilt Idema, *Chinese Vernacular Fiction* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 92-94. The Japanese scholar Ogawa Yōichi has extensively studied the relationship between *shanshu* and late Ming vernacular fiction, noting their mutual borrowings of story material, down to the level of the text, as well as their common moral framework of man’s fate determined through good and bad deeds. He suggests that, while vernacular fiction was fundamentally different in its aims, in the late Ming it was forced to take on the guise of a moral framework in a society whose dominant values are expressed through morality books. See Ogawa Yōichi 小川陽一, *Nichiyō ruisho ni yoru Min Shin shōsetsu no kenkyū* 日用類書による明清小説の研究 (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 1995), pp. 325-27; 353; also, “Min Shin shōsetsu to zensho,” 明清小説と善書, *Kinsei bungei* 近世文芸 79 (2004): 29-43, and “Kankai zusetu no zū ni tsuite” 勸戒図説の図について, *Ajia yūgaku* アジア遊学 171 (2014): 164-180.

⁴⁶² No. 2107; indicated to be formerly owned by Pu Wenkui 蒲文魁. Besides on the cover (later bound) there is no other indication of Pu Songling’s name; these works are most probably from later in the Qing (see n463).

punishments exacted on two shrewish wives while cautioning its audience to be good wives and filial daughters-in-law.⁴⁶³ The second story, “Exhorting her husband to be filial to his grandparents” 勸夫孝祖, tells of an exemplary wife who tries to persuade her gambler husband to give up his bad habits and serve his grandparents with due respect, and of his failure to do so and the ultimate retribution for his deeds.⁴⁶⁴ The third story, “The evil son-in-law meets Heaven’s punishment” 惡婿遭譴, is about an evil son-in-law who sends his parents-in-law out the door in the dead of winter after tricking them into giving him their money and property.⁴⁶⁵ Like the other two stories, it is told in prose and rhyming ten-syllable verse, and emphasizes the punishment of the unfilial child within a framework of divine retribution.⁴⁶⁶

Filial devotion figures somewhat differently in the only precious scroll I have found in Hirai’s collection, a *Fofa yinyuan zhuan* 佛法姻緣傳 (Account of the bonds of matrimony according to the Dharma), which is actually a copy of the *Liu Xiangnü baojuan* 劉香女寶卷 (Precious scroll of *Liu Xiangnü*). The story existed at least since the Ming, and came to be widely propagated in the 19th century.⁴⁶⁷ A prefatory note to the

⁴⁶³ The extant portion of the text ends before the “Veritable records.”

⁴⁶⁴ In the course of a song on the five watches of the night, wife cautions husband against the various vices, the last of which is opium (*yangyan* 洋煙) – this would suggest that the story is probably from later in the Qing. In the catalog there is another manuscript entitled *Yanggui jie* 煙鬼戒 (no. 0752) (The opium addict gives up his habit?).

⁴⁶⁵ The extant portion of the text ends before the punishment, but there is a clear sense that it is going to happen.

⁴⁶⁶ There is also another text, copied in a very similar hand and format, entitled *Zong nüe qianzi* 縱虐前子 ([The stepmother] tortures her stepsons to no end), which cautions women against abusing their stepchildren; it concludes with a warning as well to men who want to remarry (No. 0625).

⁴⁶⁷ No. 0750. See Che Xilun 車錫倫, *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu* 中國寶卷研究 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2009), pp. 126-28; also, idem., *Zhongguo baojuan zongmu (xiuding ben)* 中國寶卷總目 (修訂本) (Beijing: Yanshan, 2000), pp. 153-56, which lists several dozen extant copies of this text. Daniel Overmyer, in his “Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch’ing *Pao-chüan*,” in *Popular Culture in Late*

manuscript by the copyist, a Bi Peixian 畢沛先 of Wangcun 王村, tells that twenty odd pages are missing; the notes are followed by a forged postface attributing the work to Pu Songling.⁴⁶⁸ The precious scroll tells the story of the devout Liu Xiangnü, who is attracted to a life of observing the Buddhist precepts and becomes castigated and eventually banished from the house by her mother-in-law, but goes on to attract many lay followers as a female preacher. An old nun's sermons at the beginning of the story details the sufferings of parents in the process of child-rearing, urging all to be filial, while near the end, Xiangnü chants a version of the Mulian story in order to deliver her deceased parents-in-law from suffering.⁴⁶⁹ Despite these sections devoted to filial ethics, the text seems to have an implicitly negative attitude towards marriage, advocating instead for the religious salvation of women, which has led scholars to surmise its audience among female religious groups.⁴⁷⁰ The book from Zichuan being a copy made in Hirai's time, however, gives no information on the local context in which its base-text circulated.

The biggest proportion of texts on filial piety from the Zichuan corpus are books on the twenty-four filial exemplars (*ershisi xiao* 二十四孝), stories of exemplary figures from Chinese history and myth which were transmitted widely in the Ming and Qing. The term *ershisi xiao* itself appears earliest in a 10th century Dunhuang text⁴⁷¹; in later

Imperial China, pp. 245-53, introduces this precious scroll and translates portions of it. For a more extensive treatment, see Katherine Alexander, "Virtues of the Vernacular," Ch. 1.

⁴⁶⁸ The forged preface is signed Li Yaochen 李堯臣 (Pu Songling's contemporary and friend) and dated to Kangxi 48 (1709), and suggests that the present work is one of the *liqu* which Pu composed while residing in the Bi house.

⁴⁶⁹ The old nun's sermon is not in the extant pages of no. 0750, which starts later in the story, with the introduction of Liu's future father-in-law. I am filling in the plot from Overmyer's descriptions.

⁴⁷⁰ Overmyer, "Values," pp. 252-53.

⁴⁷¹ This text is the *Gu Yuan Jian dashi ershisi xiao yazuo wen* 故圓鑒大師二十四孝押座文 (see *Dunhuang bianwen* 敦煌變文, ed. Wang Congmin 王重民, 2 vols (Beijing: renmin wenxue, 1957), 2: 835-39. See also the partially extant *Soushen ji* 搜神記 and the *Xiaozhi zhuan* 孝子傳 in the same volume, with many

compilations, the number was maintained while the actual figures often varied, exemplifying filial piety according to varying Buddhist, Daoist, and Neo-Confucian sympathies.⁴⁷² Probably the most propagated version of twenty-four exemplars in late imperial times is the *Ershisi xiao shi* 二十四孝詩 compiled during the Yuan dynasty and often attributed to a Guo Jujing 郭居敬 from the Fujian area.⁴⁷³ The exemplars, most of whom date from medieval times and earlier, are lauded in the poems for acts of caring and self-sacrifice, going to extremes to find nourishment for their parents and incurring miracles in the process. In themes such as these the text has much to share with early accounts of filial offspring, while on the level of the text and in its popularizing ethos it seems intimately related to Song and Yuan Neo-Confucian primers.⁴⁷⁴ In the later editions of the text from which it is known, notably the widely printed *Riji gushi* 日記故事

filiality stories (pp. 865-900 and pp. 901-913). On these and other filial piety texts from Dunhuang, see Zheng Acai, *Dunhuang xiaodao wenxue yanjiu*.

⁴⁷² See Xu Duanrong 許端容, *Ershisi xiao yanjiu* 二十四孝研究 (M.A. thesis, Taiwan wenhua daxue, 1981), pp. 132-49. On variations, also see Anne McLaren, *Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 130-31.

In the context of sectarian religion, from the Ming, there is a *Foshuo ershisi xiao xianliang baojuan* 佛說二十四孝賢良寶卷 (Precious scroll on the twenty-four filial and virtuous exemplars according to the Buddha) in the style of precious scrolls of the Wuwei sect founded by Luo Menghong 羅夢鴻 (1442-1527) of Jimo 即墨, Shandong; this version of twenty-four exemplars was widely transmitted in north China in the Qing and later; see Che Xilun, *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu*, pp. 500-505.

There is also a precious scroll dedicated to Guo Ju 郭巨 transmitted in the Gansu area (ibid., p. 262) and another dedicated to Dong Yong 董永 (Tokuda Susumu 徳田進, *Kōshi setsuwashū no kenkyū - nijuyo kō wo chūshin ni* 孝子說話集の研究- 二十四孝を中心に, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Kuresu shuppan, 2004), 2: 122). On Dong Yong, see Wilt Idema ed., *Filial Piety and Its Divine Rewards: The Legend of Dong Yong and Weaving Maiden, With Related Texts* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009).

⁴⁷³ On its textual history and the debate over authorship, see Tokuda Susumu, *Kōshi*, 1: 138-47. The earliest extant edition of this text is a manuscript copy of a *Xinkan quanxiang ershisi xiao shi xuan* 新刊全相二十四孝詩選 (The newly printed and fully illustrated anthology of poems on the twenty-four filial exemplars) printed in 1546, in the collection of the Ryūkoku University in Kyoto. On the earlier tradition of *Xiaozhi zhuan*, see Knapp, *Selfless Offspring*, esp. chapters 2 and 3.

⁴⁷⁴ On the text and early accounts of filial figures, see Tokuda, *Kōshi*, pp. 162-66; also, Keith Knapp, *Selfless Offspring*, pp. 4-5. On textual affinities between the Yuan *Ershi si xiao shi* and Neo-Confucian texts, notably Zhu Xi's *Xiaoxue* 小學 and the *Chunzheng mengqiu* 純正蒙求 by Hu Bingwen 胡炳文 (fl. early 14th century), see Tokuda, *Kōshi*, pp. 146-48; 168-174.

(Former events for daily memorizing) of the Ming and Qing, the text is accompanied by pictures; the poems always appear together with short prose accounts of the exemplars, relayed in a simple classical language accessible to the beginning reader.⁴⁷⁵

The popularity of exemplar stories in late imperial times is corroborated by their appearances in fiction, drama, illustrated books, as well as material culture.⁴⁷⁶ While the twenty-four exemplars (in various combinations) came to be known throughout the Chinese empire, certainly in north China they took hold of the popular imagination. Evidence from pictorial depictions in northern Chinese tombs from the Song and Jin dynasties corroborate their widespread transmission already at that time.⁴⁷⁷ Among all the figures of exemplars, fifteen are from Shandong – from the emperor Shun and three of Confucius’s disciples to commoners such as Yang Xiang 楊香, who killed a tiger to save her father, and Jiang Ge 江革, who indentured himself to serve his mother.⁴⁷⁸ A number

⁴⁷⁵ The best-known versions of the Yuan text today are probably those contained in *Riji gushi*, which belonged to a genre of educational texts, often illustrated, containing excerpts of stories from history and literature which conveyed moral lessons. *Riji gushi* is thought to have originally been compiled in the Yuan dynasty by a Yu Shao 虞韶 of Jian’an 建安, whose biographical details are now lost. The earliest extant edition is a 1542 imprint with annotations by Xiong Damu 熊大木, preserved in the National Library of China. *Riji gushi* was widely reprinted in the Qing, with at least ten known editions (see Zhang Xuan 張炫, “Lun Yuandai *Riji gushi* zhong ershisi xiao de liuchuan ji yingxiang” 論元代日記故事中二十四孝的流傳及影響, *Mianyang shifan xueyuan xuebao* 3 (2015): 117-118. On *Riji gushi*, see Bai Liming, *Shaping the Ideal Child*, pp. 64-65, 102-3, 120-21; see p. 56 for the *gushi* genre. On imprints produced by the Jianyang publishers, see Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit*, pp. 235-36.

⁴⁷⁶ On adaptations of the exemplars stories in Yuan and Ming drama, see Xu Duanrong, *Ershisi xiao yanjiu*, pp. 160, 178-80, 186, 190, 203, 208, 214; also, Tokuda, *Kōshi*, 2: 119-21.

⁴⁷⁷ See Zhao Chao 趙超, preface to Kuroda, Akira 黑田彰, *Kōshi denzu no kenkyū* 孝子伝図の研究 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2007), pp. 1-9; also, Kin Bunkyō (Kim Moonkyon) 金文京, “Gaoli ben Xiaoxinglu yu ‘ershisi xiao’” 高麗本孝行錄與二十四孝, in Fudan daxue Hangguo yanjiu zhongxin 復旦大學韓國研究中心 ed., *Hangguo yanjiu luncong (di san ji)* 韓國研究論叢 (第三輯) (Shanghai: Shanghai remin, 1997), pp. 278-80. One might note that already in early imperial times, many of the later twenty-four exemplars are depicted in the Wuliang Shrine 武梁祠 in Jiexiang 嘉祥, Shandong; see Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

⁴⁷⁸ The other region where exemplar figures are concentrated is the Zhejiang / Anhui region; see map, Tokuda, *Kōshi*, 1: 163.

of the exemplars had temples dedicated to them in the region. Besides the venerated emperor Shun, Min Ziqian 閔子騫 has a famous temple near Ji'nan; in the birthplace of Wang Xiang 王祥 in Linyi 臨沂, Shandong, Wang's temple was still extant at the end of the Qing.⁴⁷⁹ Besides in material culture, a number of exemplars appear in the village plays and folksongs of north China collected in the 20th century, testifying to their continual transmission in oral culture.⁴⁸⁰

The Zichuan books collected by Hirai on the subject of twenty-four exemplars offer glimpses not so much into oral culture as into adaptations of the exemplar stories in different literary contexts. Among the books there is an *Ershisi xiaodi tu shi hekan* 二十四孝弟圖詩合刊 (The combined twenty-four filial exemplars and twenty-four exemplary siblings with poems and illustrations) printed by Baoshutang 寶書堂 of Weiyang 濰陽, Shandong, compiled by Xiao Peiyuan 蕭培元 (1816-1873) of Yunnan and illustrated by a Li Xitong 李錫彤, which includes stories of the twenty-four filial exemplars and another series of twenty-four virtuous brothers, complete with full-page illustrations.⁴⁸¹ The *Ershisi xiao* section, along with the well-known prose stories and poems, includes exam-style verses (試律) retelling each story⁴⁸²; a 1869 preface by Kuang Yuan 匡源 to the

⁴⁷⁹ See Tokuda, *Kōshi*, 1: 126; Wang Xiaojia 王曉家, “You ershisi xiao tandao xiaoyou wenhua” 由二十四孝談到孝友文化, *Xiju congkan* 4 (2012): 46.

⁴⁸⁰ See Tokuda, *Kōshi*, 1: 127-30. Guo Ju appears in the village plays of Dingxian, Hebei, recorded by Sidney Gamble in the early 20th century and published in his *Chinese Village Plays* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1970); also, David Johnson trans., “Guo Ju buries his son,” *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2: 105-117. In his study of stories from Gengcun, Hebei, Zhou Fuquan reveals how villagers' narratives portrayed the exemplars in a different, more human light than in the *Ershisi xiao* texts (*Minjian gushi*, pp. 78-79).

⁴⁸¹ No. 7004.

⁴⁸² These are the prose stories and poems often attributed to Guo Jujing, but his name is not mentioned in this imprint. The exam-style verses appear to be composed by Xiao Peiyuan.

next *Ershisi di* section in the same volume tells that the first book was widely popular in schools throughout Shandong. Besides this book, there is also a handwritten pamphlet, containing the exam-style verses in the book by Xiao and a series of other poems, written in a beginner's hand.⁴⁸³ There is also another hand-copied text containing the well-known quatrains on the twenty-four exemplars.⁴⁸⁴

Besides these texts the collection further includes an *Ershisi xiao gu'erci* 二十四孝鼓兒詞 (Drum lyrics on the twenty-four exemplars), a manuscript of unknown authorship and date, which came from the Bi family in Wangcun.⁴⁸⁵ In the Qing there appeared to have been a great deal of interest among Shandong literati in the genre of the drum-lyric, which adopted a wide range of subjects. The *Ershisi xiao gu'erci* brings the exemplar to life in the course of a powerful series of exhortations, some directly explicitly at unfilial sons in the audience. In its "Opening prelude" 開場小引, it sets forth its style of narration seeking to both instruct and inspire:

Since time immemorial, those who told drum-lyrics – whether they're on the Qin and Han dynasties and the Three Kingdoms, or the Sui and Tang and the Five Dynasties, or on miscellaneous tales and chronicles of more recent times – all seek after creating pleasure and a merry mood. And so they have no regard for the veracity of their stories, and care not even if they are completely devoid of sense; as long as something is exciting,⁴⁸⁶ they will tell it to one's heart's content. Little

⁴⁸³ No. 0329. The attribution to Pu on the first page of the text is written in a different hand from the main text (at the end of the poems on the twenty-four exemplars, "Liaozhai shicao" 聊齋詩草 also appears on an inserted slip); I suspect they are added later.

⁴⁸⁴ No. 0617. This text also attributes itself to Pu Songling.

⁴⁸⁵ Hirai apparently mistook the drum-lyric as composed by Pu from having seen the quatrains preceding the main text in an anthology of Liaozhai's poems (these were in fact the well-known *Ershisi xiao shi* poems). See Hirai preface, no. 0616.

According to Xiao Qunzhong, *Xiao yu Zhongguo wenhua*, p. 103, there exists a *guci* of similar title composed during the Xianfeng era (1851-61), but no further details are given. Li Yu 李豫 et al, *Zhongguo guci zongmu* 中國鼓詞總目 (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji, 2006), p. 89, lists a drum ballad entitled *Ershi si xiao* contained in the anthology *Guci siban* 鼓詞四編 compiled by Qi Jiaben 齊家本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1933), and another typeset edition of a different drum ballad by the same title produced in Beijing.

⁴⁸⁶ Tentative translation.

does one know that the better number of officials and generals and scholars and beauties which they tell of are shadows without true forms! How can [these stories] be said to be deeply moving while being grounded in truth?

I've newly read a drum-lyric, by the name of the *Twenty-four Exemplars*. Speaking of the twenty-four exemplars, who has not heard of them? Who does not know of them? Though people all know their names, they don't necessarily all know the facts. Let me tell of the actual events that happened to these twenty-four, and relay everything clearly, detail by detail, so that those who aren't familiar with them will expand their horizons, and be moved to their conscience. As for those who are already familiar with them, they will hear something new, and be inspired to be filial. Now, the joyous and smooth-flowing sections are truly gratifying, and shall move all to nodding satisfaction. The episodes of difficulties and ordeals shall stun and startle, and rouse one to secretly shed tears. As I'm about to recite this book today, there is no need to be anxious with guilt; only sincerity is asked for. My respected hosts, please listen to the opening tune *Moon over West River*:

In life, there is only one principle:
To be filial is the basis of all actions.
The debt one owes to parents is deep as the Heavens;
Don't forget the days of your childhood.

How much father and mother had loved you
Endlessly exerting themselves to care for you!
Behold the filial paragons and virtuous men of old
And how they were filled with filial passion.

This *Moon over West River* only tells how, while in this world, every person has a father and mother. Who doesn't know that they ought to be served? One knows to love one's parents as a child, yet growing up one forgets one's gratitude. After one becomes married, one's conscience gradually dwindles, and one leaves to the wind the complaints of parents, who had reared one through infancy's troubles, and worried about one in heat and cold. One doesn't think about how even the crow, leaving its nest, knows to return and feed its parents; and how the lamb, upon receiving milk from its mother, knows to kneel. Can it be that a human being is willing to be inferior to the animals? Now, there are also those whose conscience wouldn't release them, and who do not overstep the bounds of etiquette before their parents, but deep in their hearts, [what they feel for their parents] does not match even one ten-thousandth of what their parents feel for them. Look at how men are prone to lose their conscience; yet they prim themselves so as to look good in appearance. And then there are those who, coveting money and favoring their own spouses, make a huge ruckus, while being completely oblivious to how they have caused their parents to suffer in hunger and choke with anguish. Those who are thus so insolent and unfilial, who repay

kindness with ingratitude, will not escape being punished by Heaven in the end!
Their own sons and daughters shall certainly be insolent and unfilial too. Reading
up to here, how I am full of sighs!

開場小引

歷來這說鼓兒詞的。不論說的秦漢三國。隋唐五代。以及時下的雜傳列記。俱要的是個熱鬧。喜的是個快活。所以也不論支離。也不嫌荒唐。自然熱耳。便說快心。殊不知、他講些文官武將。談些才子佳人。大半是有影無形。何如說至情實理。在下新看了部鼓兒詞。叫做二十四孝。說起這二十四孝。誰人不知。誰人不曉。但人盡知其名。未必盡知其實。咱就把這二十四個人的實事。說個明白。講個的當。在那不知者聽見。長一番見識。也動一番天良。那知之者聽見。添一番新鮮。也生一番鼓舞。若聽到懽欣和樂的去處。真教人興來情往。個個點頭。若聽到那困苦艱難的區處。又教人魂動心驚。暗暗的垂淚。今日既要說這書。不要虛慌。只要懇切。尊聲列位東道主。且聽開場西江月。

人生只有一本	孝為百行之原	罔極之恩如昊天
莫忘依依膝前	父母何等恩愛	心力費盡萬千
試看純孝古聖賢	都是血性流連	

這首西江月。單說的是人生在世。誰無父母。誰不知父母是當孝的。但少小知愛。長大忘恩。到了婚冠以後。天良漸泯。就把那、煨干就濕、知疼冷熱的父母。放在那耳根後邊。獨不思烏鴉出巢。尚知返哺。羊羔臨乳。猶知跪足。難道說、為一個人。甘心不如禽獸么。也有那良心難昧。在父母跟前。大禮不越。反諸本心。比着那父母疼兒的心腸。萬分不能及一。你說人心喪失的狠。妝點的外面。還是好的。還有那、好貨財私妻子。聒口嘹舌。教那父母忍飢受餓。閉氣寒心。全然不顧。似這忤逆不孝的、忘恩負義。總就不遭天譴。他生的兒女。也定是忤逆不孝。看到這裡。好不可嘆的緊哪。⁴⁸⁷

In contrast to the terse classical-style poems and prose stories of the twenty-four exemplars, the drum-lyric expends all the rhetorical power it can through repetitions in alternating prose and verse. The transformation from classical to vernacular gives space to extended exhortations and to portrayals of the exemplars as real-life people who are full of emotion. Filial piety is described as an manifestation of human feeling, indeed of passion: Shun is said to be “full of devotion” 一腔熱心; Tanzi 鄰子, “painstaking” 苦情

⁴⁸⁷ No. 0616. I have replicated a reader's punctuation of the manuscript.

in serving his parents; Huang Tingjian is described as “filial with a pure heart” 孝純心. According to the traditional notion of *xiaogan* 孝感, “the moving power of filial piety,” filiality is capable of moving the sentient beings and Heaven above – thus the filial Shun in his youth moved the elephants and birds to till the land for him, and Meng Zong, desperate to cure his sick mother, was so filial that bamboos sprouted in the winter. By extension, filiality is also capable of moving readers and listeners, and the drum-lyric does the best it can to elicit heightened feelings as it eloquently expounds its message of filial virtue.

The rustic songs attributed to Pu Songling share much with the *Ershisi xiao gu'erci* in their aesthetics of magnified emotions, while their earthy language, full of topolectal flavor, distinguishes them from the drum-lyric's colloquial style with many literary cadences. Like the drum-lyric and other vernacular texts from Zichuan on the subject of filial piety, the rustic songs deal with the practical ethics of domestic life while taking on many familiar themes – the rewards of the virtuous and the punishment of the unfilial; filial wives and evil shrews; evil stepmothers and filial sons; filial quests and filial vengeance. At the same time, adopting modes both satirical and lyrical, and grounded in the language of topolect and song, they present a unique literary vision. In the next section I proceed to examine these aspects through the close reading of one ballad, *Cibei qu*.

From classical tale to vernacular ballad

The prologue to several ballads attributed to Pu begins thus:

To the tune of Moon over the West River

When other books exhort people to be filial,
They employ righteous principles and stern words,
But good medicines are bitter and hard to swallow,
And when they're performed they only cause disdain.
Only this book on the filial sons and daughters
Can be sung to divert and entertain;
Full of true feeling, with lyrics sincere,
and rhymes that stir the heart,
They will touch and move even fiends of men.

If you read it and approve of it,
Then everybody, all chip in a cent,
And treat it like the *Tract of Action and Response*,
To be printed so it can exhort people far and wide.
Not only will you accumulate merit,
But you will also make money;
When the blocks are carved, they will go around everywhere.
This business is really good!

If you have no intention of having it copied or printed,
Then return the book once you've read it,
Don't keep it just for fun
For there is something else important:
Writing lyrics required much contemplation,
Compiling this book took a great deal of effort;
All the leisure and fun ought to be passed on,
So that your sons and grandsons can enjoy it in future times.

There is one kind of rude ruffian
Who flips through a book without care for where he is
He doesn't wash his claws for ten and some years
And reads with his face all covered in dirt
He gets the books wrinkled on his bed and on the earthen *kang*
He picks it up from among the pee and the dung
He tussles and scuffles for it with tightened fists
Causing the book's pages to be all rolled up

Then there is yet another kind of ruffian
Who borrows and never returns a book

[西江月]

別書勸人孝弟。
俱是義正詞嚴。
涼藥苦口吃着難。
說來徒取人厭。
惟有這本賢孝。
唱着解悶閑玩。

情真詞切韻纏綿。
惡煞的人也情傷動念。

若是看了說好。
大家助毛攢毡。
拿着當是感應篇。
刻來廣把人勸。
一來積了陰德。
二來還要轉錢。
刻了印板天下傳。
這宗生意誠善。

若是無心抄刻。
看了即時送還。
不要留着光為玩。
要緊還有一件。
詞句曾經敲琢。
編書亦費鑽研。
閑情閑意須留傳。
兒孫後日好看。

有等粗俗光棍。
拿着隨處掀翻。
爪子不洗十來年。
灰頭土臉也看。
床上坑上揉搓。
尿裡尿裡估揀。
爭來奪去濟着拳。
弄的反邊捲沿。

更有一種光棍。
借去全不送還。

He passes it around among his bro's
And has no thought for its whereabouts
Today it is in Hebei
Tomorrow it is in Yunnan
In some remote nook and cranny it is hard to find (?)
And before long (?) the whole book is gone

張兄李弟俛着传。
有無全不塞念。
今日正在直隸。
明日弄到雲南。
几溜哈喇找着难。
仔等是連本不見。

Please, those who borrow the book to read it, pity how hard it is for me to preserve a book, and don't borrow it for a long time without returning it.

敬告借書觀者憐俺存本之難、勿得久假而不歸⁴⁸⁸

While published editions of the rustic songs include this passage as part of the ballad *Cibei qu*, it rather reads as a later appendage, date and place unascertained, advertising the books and cautioning readers to promptly return them – whether to the private owner or a lending library. Judging by the fact that this preface appears on manuscripts of *Cibei qu*, *Hansen qu*, and *Fan yanyang*, these works apparently all belonged to such a place at some point.⁴⁸⁹ The prologue goes on to parody a class of “ruffian” readers who do not take care of books, evoking playful caricatures of an avid but disrespectful class of readers, which adds to the conundrum of just what kind of audience these books circulated among. Just as intriguing is the comparison made in the beginning of the prologue between the ballads and morality books like the *Tract of Action and Response*. Unlike them but like them, the ballads were capable of moral persuasion;

⁴⁸⁸ After no. 0720, a manuscript of *Hansen qu* copied by Pu Guozheng 蒲國政 and dated to 1901. I have replicated the punctuation in the manuscript and have depicted the lines in stanzas following the section breaks in the manuscript. I have tried to use the same graphs as in the manuscripts, but where there is no exact graph available in my character-pack I use the closest graph I have at my disposal.

⁴⁸⁹ See catalog nos. 0715 (*Cibei qu*), 0723 (*Fan yanyang*) and 0720 (*Hansen qu*). The prologue in these manuscripts is more or less the same (with some graphic variants and a few textual differences). The manuscripts of *Fan yanyang* and *Hansen qu* copied by Wang Fengzhi (no. 0719, *Hansen qu*, and no. 0722, *Fan yanyang*) do not contain this prologue. No. 0714, a manuscript of *Cibei qu* copied by Wang Zipei 王子佩, dated to 1936, also does not contain this prologue. Two other manuscripts of *Cibei qu* contain abbreviated versions of the prologue; these are no. 0713, copied by Wang Fengzhi, and a manuscript held at the Shandong Provincial Museum (facsimile reprint in *Shandong wenxian jicheng* 3.47).

while the former “employ righteous principles and stern words,” the latter is “full of true feeling, with lyrics sincere,” which will move the hearts and consciences of “even the worst people.”

The three ballads share with each other and with a larger body of texts intended for non-elite audiences the exhortation to filiality within a framework of divine retribution. At the same time, they also share the plots of stories from *Liaozhai zhiyi*. In the shift from classical to vernacular, the stories adopt a host of transformations: the broad strokes of history fade as family dramas come to the forefront; the atmospheres of the strange and the miraculous are woven in between scenes of melodrama; classical diction is exchanged for a raw and earthy vernacular. At the same time, as I show below in one ballad, it is difficult to map from the thematic content alone what distinguishes the “popular” nature of the ballads. Tale and ballad draw from a common repertoire of cultural images surrounding filiality, if elaborated in different forms; the ballad has just as much to share with the classical tale as with the genres of popular performing literature whose moral framework it affects.

Cibei qu 慈悲曲 (Song of Compassion), a story of a family’s separation and reunion, shares the plot of the classical tale “Zhang Cheng” 張誠, one of the most poignant stories in *Liaozhai zhiyi*. The tale is set in the turbulent times at the end of the Ming, when a Shandong merchant Zhang loses his wife to the Manchu troops, and migrates west to the Henan area, where he remarries. His second wife dies leaving him a son, Zhang Ne 張訥 (“Mum”); when Zhang remarries for the third time he has another son, Zhang Cheng 張誠 (“Ernest”). The third wife reveals herself to be a terrible

stepmother, abusing Ne at every chance, and sending him to the hills to cut firewood when her own son attends school. But Cheng cherishes his step-brother very dearly. The tale comes to a dramatic turn when Cheng steals out of school to help his brother cut firewood and is dragged off by a tiger. Exasperated, Ne puts the ax to his own neck, and embarks on a journey through the netherworld looking for Cheng, whom he does not find. Through a fortuitous encounter with Guanyin he is healed and comes back to life; he then travels the provinces in search of Cheng. Eventually, the brothers reunite on the streets of Jinling, when Cheng rides by in the entourage of an assistant magistrate – the latter had adopted Cheng when the boy was left on the roadside by the tiger years earlier. When the facts are pieced together, it turns out that the assistant magistrate is in fact the son of the Zhang and his abducted first wife, now an elderly woman living alone with her son. All three brothers return home to find their lonely father whose evil third wife has died in the meantime, and Zhang is reunited with his first wife of forty years earlier. Among the most moving episode in the tale is the reunion, when Zhang as a grieving old man suddenly sees his long lost son Ne at the door, followed by Cheng, whom he had thought dead; he weeps in extreme joy and astonishment. When his first wife appears after the two sons, the old man stands speechless, and only a little later do husband and wife hold each other in tears. The moment comes as the very end of an extended, intricately unfolding storyline; the long separations tinge the joy of reunion with sorrow and the memory of absence. The concluding comment by the Historian of the Strange betrays a reader's extreme emotions:

The Historian of the Strange said: as I heard these events to the end, my tears streamed down again and again. When the little boy over ten [referring to Zhang Cheng] went to chop firewood to aid his brother, I sighed and said: it must be

Wang Lan appearing once again!⁴⁹⁰ And I wept. When the tiger went away, dragging Cheng in its maw, I couldn't help but wail: How perverted is the Way of Heaven! And I wept. When it came to the part when the brothers suddenly came across each other, I rejoiced, and wept again. When it turned out that they had still one more brother, another sorrow was added, and I wept for the sake of the assistant magistrate. When the entire family reunited, I was amazed and elated, all of it a surprise. My tears streamed down by themselves; I wept for the sake of the old man. I wonder if there are others in later generations who are as fond of weeping as I am?

異史氏曰：余聽此事至終，涕凡數墮：十餘歲童子，斧薪助兄，慨然曰：王覽固再見乎！於是一墮。至虎銜誠去，不禁狂呼曰：天道憤憤如此！於是一墮。及兄弟猝遇，則喜而亦墮；轉增一兄，又益一悲，則為別駕墮。一門團圞，驚出不意，喜出不意，無從之涕，則為翁墮也。不知後世亦有善涕者如某者否。⁴⁹¹

While the *Historian of the Strange* presents a reading of the tale for its moving storyline, the context for the separation and reunion of the Zhang family is the Ming Qing transition, which forms the historical backdrop for many stories in *Liaozhai zhiyi*. It is told at the beginning of the tale that “at the end of Ming, the region of Qi fell into chaos” 明末齊大亂,⁴⁹² which forms the context of the Zhang family's separation. The full narrative of loss and separation is elaborated in the conversation between Zhang Ne and the assistant magistrate's mother as they try to piece together each side of the story. Ne explains his father's migration westwards when Manchu troops invaded during the Ming; the mother tells that she was abducted by a “general Hei” 黑固山 and taken northwards, giving birth to a son half a year later, who with the general's death became a bannerman in his stead (“buzhi qixia” 補秩旗下).⁴⁹³ But it is told that “every so often he was filled

⁴⁹⁰ Wang Lan 王覽 is a figure from the exemplar literature (to be discussed later).

⁴⁹¹ Ren Duxing ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi*, 1: 367-68.

⁴⁹² Ren Duxing ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi*, 1: 362.

⁴⁹³ 固山 is a Manchu term referring to “banner”; here it is abbreviated for 固山額真, a banner's commanding general (Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, p. 159 n32).

with longing for his ancestral country, and so he renounced his [bannerman] status, and restored his original surname” 每刻刻念鄉井，遂出籍，復故譜。 He sent people to Shandong in search of his father, to no avail; only with Ne’s appearance does he learn of his father’s move decades earlier. The eldest Zhang son’s final reunion with his biological father takes on an additional dimension as he restores his ethnic as well as familial loyalties.⁴⁹⁴

All of these details are preserved with remarkable faithfulness in *Cibei qu*, revealing the intimate relationship between tale and ballad.⁴⁹⁵ In both, the gap between the good life which ought to accompany the virtuous and the actual tribulations of the protagonists lends a poignancy to the unfolding human drama. In the tale, the restrained classical diction creates an effect of heightened feeling, while the versified elaborations of the ballad preserve a similar sense of pathos, if elaborated in earthier terms. Compare the renderings of the same scene as Zhang Ne searches arduously for his brother:

[Ne] asked after his brother’s news on every main road; when he exhausted his cash in the course of his journey, he carried on by begging. A year later, he reached Jinling; his clothes were torn to rags, and he crouched over as he went along the road.

⁴⁹⁴ Ren Duxing ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi*, 1: 366. In the sensitive political contexts of Qianlong era, the editor of the Qingke edition of *Liaozhai zhiyi* was not blind to these nuances. In the imprint, the setting of the story is changed from the end of the Ming to the wars of the Yongle usurpation (1399-1402).

Nie Shiqiao 聶石樵, citing Liu Pansui 劉盼遂 (in Nie Shiqiao, “*Liaozhai zhiyi* benshi pangzheng 聊齋志異本事旁證, *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan di 1 ji*, p. 317), has pointed out similarities between “Zhang Cheng” and another story of the Ming Qing transition by Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (1612-1672), in which a man becomes separated and reunited with his abducted wife in the violent upheavals in Jiangnan; as in “Zhang Cheng,” their son was adopted by a general as his own son but eventually returns to his biological parents after the general’s death. The story appears in Zhou Lianggong 周亮工, *Shuying* 書影 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1981), pp. 128-32.

⁴⁹⁵ One might argue that the ballad is even more pronounced in its treatment of the issue. There it is told that Zhang’s first wife took up the name of “Bai Chi” 白持 (“chastity” “uphold”) after being abducted, and after the general died, with her longing for home, her son bought himself out [from slavery] (“shu le shen” 贖了身) and changed his name to Zhang Fu 張復 (the second character means “to restore”); see no. 0715, “di liu duan shi bei zhong xi” 第六段是悲中喜 (the sixth segment is “Joy in Sorrow”).

每於衝衢訪弟耗；途中資斧斷絕，丐而行。逾年，達金陵，懸鶉百結，偃僂道上。

-from “Zhang Cheng” 496

By contrast, in the sixth and last *duan* of *Cibei qu*, “Joy in sorrow,” Ne sings:

To the tune of Silver Threads

I'm covered in rags, my shoes are worn out
There are no sleeves, nor shoulders to my coat
It hardly fends off the cold
I am no different from a hobo
Eating one meal a day
Carrying two sooty baskets⁴⁹⁷
At night I dare not ask to seek a room or an inn.
I've asked after him till I am overcome by thirst
I've looked for him till I can't see out of my eyes
Oh Heavens! When shall I meet my brother again?

銀扭絲
渾身襤褸鞋兒也么穿。
袄少袖又沒肩。
难遮寒。
合那花子是一般。
一日飯一頓。
两个黑采藍。
夜晚不敢找房店。
问他問的口兒乾。
盼他盼的眼兒穿。
見何時來何時見⁴⁹⁸

我的天

This song follows a series of songs narrating Ne's journey through the provinces and the poverty he comes to, and the same scene has Ne standing on the roadside, begging and telling his story to a crowd of passerby. Whereas the quest is delivered with one stroke in the classical tale, the ballad has Ne traveling for three years across the northern provinces; when he finally comes across Cheng on the streets of Ruizhou 瑞州, Jiangxi, joy truly comes at the end of a long path of suffering, echoed in the segment's title, “Joy in sorrow.” Here the ballad elaborates on the common theme of the filial quest,

⁴⁹⁶ Ren Duxing ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi*, 1: 365. In the ballad, the roadside encounter between the brothers takes place in Ruizhou, Jiangxi, instead of Jinling.

⁴⁹⁷ Tentative translation.

⁴⁹⁸ In citing from *Cibei qu*, I refer to catalog no. 0715 unless otherwise noted; I have replicated the punctuation by a reader, and here I have also replicated smaller first three characters in the last line. I have incorporated the corrections made in a number of places to the copied text (a few characters are written over the original ones, which are no longer legible). I have in addition consulted a 1928 imprint of *Cibei qu* with preface by Ye Chunchi 葉春墀 of Rizhao 日照, Shandong, but have not taken to noting differences (either minor differences in phrasing or character variants) from no. 0715 except where they help to clarify the meaning of the line for translation.

widely recorded in the Ming and Qing, only replacing the motif of a son's search for his father with brother for brother.⁴⁹⁹ As in other accounts, the primary motivation of the quest is selfless filial feeling (in the case of *Cibei qu*, brotherly love); the journey is long and difficult; Heaven extends its aid; and the journey leads to the salvation of parents.⁵⁰⁰ One might note that Ne's quest is complemented by the search of the assistant magistrate for his father, and the story culminates in the reunion between a father and his long lost sons.

There is also another quest in the story, that of Ne's travels in the underworld. While "Zhang Cheng" has been categorized as one of the classical tales with little fantastical content, actually it highlights a Guanyin miracle.⁵⁰¹ When Zhang Cheng is dragged off by the tiger, Ne puts the ax to his own neck, and eventually his spirit wanders off to the underworld to look for Cheng. He encounters a medium from the village who happens to be spirit-traveling,⁵⁰² who leads him to an underworld city; they inquire of Cheng's whereabouts from the runner in charge of the circuit, but finds that he has not been taken there. The two enter the city and keep on inquiring after Cheng among its deceased inhabitants, when all clamor with Guanyin's sudden appearance. It is old that "when they looked up they saw in the clouds a colossal figure, whose blazing light

⁴⁹⁹ Lu Miaw-fen (Lü Miaofen) 呂妙芬, in her "Ming Qing Zhongguo wanli xunqin de wenhua shijian" 明清中國萬里尋親的文化實踐, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 78 (2007): 363-65, suggests on the basis of a wide survey of *biji* literature that, whereas in the Song and Yuan filial quests tend to feature sons searching for mothers, in the Ming and Qing the emphasis shifts to sons searching for fathers, including fathers who have traveled far for the sake of commerce (the Zhang father in our story is also a merchant).

⁵⁰⁰ These are the themes summarized by Lu Miaw-fen in her article, pp. 370-86.

⁵⁰¹ Li Wai-yee, "Rhetoric of fantasy and rhetoric of irony," p. 26 n38.

⁵⁰² The medium ("wu" 巫), gender unspecified, is told to be "traveling in the netherworld" 走無常. In the ballad she is an older woman ("mama zi" 媽媽子) who "goes to the shades everyday" 每日過陰 (no. 0715).

penetrated above and below, and all at once the world became illuminated” 仰見雲中有偉人，豪光徹上下，頓覺世界通明。⁵⁰³ The medium tells Ne that Guanyin is making her once-every-few-dozen-years appearance in the underworld to deliver the suffering. The underworld shakes with the cries of all the deceased for the bodhisattva’s mercy; Guanyin answers with dew from her willow branch, whose spray is “fine as dust” 其細如塵, and then vanishes as suddenly as she (?) came. Ne feels the moisture on the ax-wound on his neck, which no longer aches, and returns with the medium to his home in the mortal world.

The spectacular appearance of Guanyin is relayed in similar dramatic fashion in *Cibei qu*, which preserves the details of Ne’s underworld travels with remarkable precision. As the ballad’s title indicates, *Cibei qu* is above all a Guanyin story – “cibei” refers to the compassion of the bodhisattva for all sentient beings, and the term appears also in the title of the fifth segment, “the dew of compassion” (“cibei lu” 慈悲露). The image of the bodhisattva gracing the underworld is an important theme in the popular literature on Guanyin, such as in precious scrolls which describe her acts of saving those suffering in the Avici Hell, the deepest and most terrible of the hells.⁵⁰⁴ There are a few interesting details in the vernacular ballad which differ from the classical tale: Guanyin is said to visit the underworld every three thousand years (instead of every few dozen

⁵⁰³ Ren Duxing ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi*, 1: 364.

⁵⁰⁴ Yü Chün-fang 于君方 mentions Guanyin’s hell tour in the *Sutra of the Venerable King of the Great Vehicle* 大乘莊嚴寶王經 of the 10th century and a similar instance involving Princess Miaoshan in the *Precious Scroll of Incense Mountain* 香山寶卷 formed in the 15th century; see “Baojuan wenxue zhong de Guanyin yu minjian Xinyang” 寶卷文學中的觀音與民間信仰, in *Minjian xinyang yu Zhongguo wenhua guoji yantaohui lunwen ji* 民間信仰與中國文化國際研討會論文集, vol. 1 (Taipei: Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin, 1994), pp. 346-47.

years). And she is referred to as “The Elderly Mother Guanyin” (*guanyin laomu* 觀音老母), which rings with an echo of the female deities of sectarian religions widely venerated in north China in the late Ming and early Qing.⁵⁰⁵

But there is also another meaning of the word *cibei*, in a much more colloquial and this-worldly sense, which is “to take pity on” or “to feel sorry for.” When Ne stands on the roadside later in his quest for Ne, he begs for the mercy (*cibei*) of passerby, and here the story acquires a dimension beyond a simple moral fable to comment on human suffering against the unexpected turns of mortal experience. Zhang Ne’s song as he receives Guanyin’s dew in the underworld stands as a moving testimony to the sorrows he experienced in the mortal world:

He called out “Sound-Observer, Self-Existent,	叫了一声观音自在。
My fortune is truly great to come across you here	造化高就遇着你来。
Ah, suddenly my ax wound aches no more at all.	哎、一霎時刀瘡疼上全無害。

⁵⁰⁵ On “Guanyin laomu,” sectarian scriptures, and Guanyin’s appearance as an old woman, see Yü Chün-fang, *Guanyin*, pp. 428, 452-61, 467-86.

As for Guanyin in the local religion of Qing Zichuan, we can glean glimpses of her worship from several stele inscriptions to a small temple located in the hills of Changshen 長申, now part of Zhangqiu county to Zichuan’s southwest. These inscriptions, dated to 1649, 1699 and 1757, each commemorate an instance of its rebuilding. The 1699 inscription is written by none other than Pu Songling: “Having had somewhat agreeable harvests for successive years, [the villagers] were inspired by simple passion to donate funds and gather money, and build the Temple of the Five Sages, so that when it comes to praying for harvest in the spring and autumn, they would be able to entrust their utmost devotion. They call the temple “gruels” by name, and there are likewise grounds for calling back the soul. Though the term is rustic, it does no harm to matters of principle; truly, one discerns from it the sincerity of the country folk. When [the building] was completed in the early winter, [the villagers] asked me to record the event. I thereby follow the customs and record it for them.” 比歲少豐，共發愚忱，捐資庀財，創為五聖祠，庶幾春秋祈報，可托如在之誠。漿水呼名，亦有招魂之地。詞雖近俚，而固無害于義，鄉人之誠樸，亦誠可知也。初冬落成，使余記之，余亦從俗，而為之記。The local name of the temple as “gruels” and the mention of there being grounds for “calling back the soul” would seem to refer to practices similar to those extant in parts of eastern Shandong where villagers would “send gruels” (*song jiangshui* 送漿水) or “bring back souls” (*linghun* 領魂) at the local temple when someone died in the family. While in Pu’s inscription the temple is primarily devoted to harvest and rituals for the dead, the inscription of 1649, by a Zhao Guangnian 趙光年, emphasized the devotions paid to Guanyin, and includes an interesting meditation on *cibei*. (The information in this paragraph, including the cited inscription, comes from Li Shizhao 李士釗, “Cong Pu Songling zhuan ‘Chuangxiu Wusheng Ci beiji’ de faxian shuoqi” 從蒲松齡撰創修五聖祠碑記的發現說起, in *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan* 3: 330- 338.)

Who had pity for me in the world of light? 陽世三間誰慈悲俺來。
 Yet in the shades I am graced with your 到陰司倒受那楊柳枝兒一洒。
 willow branch's spray....”

Moments such as these stand out from the more “didactic” aspects of *Cibei qu*, such as its overarching framework of a filial tale – as the ending poem suggests, it is a story of filiality being rewarded and answered by Heaven and of the gods and ghosts coming to the aid of filial sons.⁵⁰⁶ Perhaps the ballad’s greatest difference from its classical tale is the explicit adoption of this moral framework and the highlighting of the stepmother and filial step-son theme.⁵⁰⁷ While the comment of the Historian of the Strange in “Zhang Cheng” briefly mentions Wang Lan, in *Cibei qu*, the ballad’s first segment opens with a poem comparing the Zhang brothers to Wang Xiang 王祥 and Wang Lan 王覽, the famous brothers:

In the myriad springs which have come to pass, 古往今來萬萬春
 How few virtuous men have graced the world! 世間能有幾賢人
 Who knew that hundreds of generations after their day, 誰知百世千秋下
 Wang Xiang and Wang Lan would appear once again?⁵⁰⁸ 王祥王覽有後身

⁵⁰⁶ To the tune of *Moon over West River*

It’s all because of the good elder brother and young brother
 That Heaven was moved by their good heartedness;
 If it wasn’t for the help of the spirits
 How could father and sons meet again?

西江月
 因為賢兄賢弟。
 好心腸感動青天。
 不是神鬼共撮攢。
 那得父子相見。

Which family is as virtuous as theirs?
 Their story brings all to tears.
 In the world there are other kinds of brothers;
 May all observe this example.
 (after no. 0715)

誰似他一門賢孝。
 說起來個個悲酸。
 人家兄弟有許多般。
 這一個樣子請看。

⁵⁰⁷ On filial sons and mothers in Qing fiction, see Maram Epstein, “Sons and Mothers: The Social Construction of Filial Piety in Late Imperial China,” in *Love, Hatred, and Other Passions: Questions and Themes on Emotions in Chinese Civilization*, ed. Paolo Santangelo with Donatella Guida (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 285-300.

⁵⁰⁸ The line breaks in the poem are mine.

Wang Xiang and Wang Lan were natives of Langya 琅琊 in eastern Shandong, who had historically occupied high official positions in the beginning of the Western Jin dynasty (265-317 CE).⁵⁰⁹ Xiang is especially famous for his filial piety toward his stepmother. In the *Riji gushi* version of the twenty-four exemplar stories, the episode “Laying on the ice to obtain carp” 臥冰求鯉 tells how Wang Xiang laid down on the ice to obtain fish for his stepmother in the dead of winter, and how miraculously, two carp leapt out of where the ice melted.⁵¹⁰ In other narratives on Wang Xiang, Wan Lan’s love for his brother forms a secondary theme – he is said to have wept upon seeing his mother beat Xiang, and stood by Xiang’s side whenever she mistreated him. Famously, when she tried to poison Xiang with wine, Lan grabbed the wine goblet to drink its contents himself, upon which his mother took it back; thereafter Lan always tasted Xiang’s food first.⁵¹¹ It is not only the theme of filial piety but also the love between two brothers which *Cibei qu* elaborates against the stepmother’s cruelties. In the first segment, the ballad cites the ancient exemplars and then a “rustic ditty” (*lige* 俚歌):

A poem says:	诗曰、
Though the stepmother be mean,	后娘虽不好
The son must of course be filial;	子孝理当然
If not for the event of the reed coat,	不遇芦花变
How would Minzi’s virtue be known?	焉知閔子贤

The filial sons from ancient times – such as emperor Shun who dug the well, Min Ziqian who wore a reed coat – they all encountered stepmothers; even Wang

⁵⁰⁹ Their virtuous deeds are transmitted in a number of early sources from the *Jinshu* to *Shishuo xinyu* and *Soushen ji* (Xu Duanrong, “Ershisi xiao yanjiu,” pp. 208-11).

⁵¹⁰ *Riji gushi* 日記故事, in Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也, *Hekeben leishu jicheng* 和刻本類書集成 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1990), vol. 3, p. 252.

⁵¹¹ This episode appears in both the *Jinshu* and the genealogy of the Wang family of Langya (Wang Xiaojia, “Xiaoyou wenhua,” p. 44).

Xiang, who laid on the ice, went on to serve his stepmother with the fish he got from laying on the ice. There is a rustic ballad which gives proof to this.

自古以来的孝子。如穿井的帝舜。穿芦花的閔子騫。都是遭著后娘的。就是那臥冰的王祥。也是臥了魚来、事奉他后娘。有一篇俚歌為证。

The filial son Wang Xiang is known since antiquity
His stepmother treated him most miserably:
In summer she made him kneel in the scorching heat
In winter she sent him down to the deep valley stream.
Though she ordered him around most brutally
Wang Xiang obeyed promptly, never shrinking

from the ordeals.

His brother Wang Lan was the stepmother's child
He was a good soul, kind and loyal.
Even when it came to hunting fierce tigers in the hills
Wang Lan wouldn't let his brother go ahead of him.
Now, there was a plum tree in the garden of their home
In which his mother found great delight.
She sent Wang Xiang to guard the tree in a storm
With a thousand beatings if the plums were ruined
When suddenly the wind raged and the rain poured
Wang Xiang clung to the tree in tears.
Wang Lan came to join him in the embrace,
Not daring to leave despite the rain and the wind.
Seeing this, his mother pitied her own son to no end
And only then sent the two brothers inside
Then she punished Wang Xiang to kneel all night
Erect he knelt before her blinds.
Wang Lan came to kneel with him;
Before long it was the second watch of night.
His mother found out only when she awoke,
She was filled with ire and pity upon the sight.
She realized then that to torture another's child
Was the same as torturing her own son.
From then onwards she changed her mind a little
And Wang Xiang had peace after that

孝子王祥自古传。
后娘待他甚难堪。
夏天跪在毒日裡。
隆冬差着下深湾。
虽然支使的極暴虐。

王祥就做不辞难
他兄弟王覽是后娘子。
有仁有義的好心田。
就是上山打猛虎。
也不肯叫他哥哥獨当先。
家有园中一樹李。
原是他娘心所懼。
就着王祥去看着。
風雨隕壞打一千。⁵¹²
忽然狂風又大雨。
王祥抱樹哭漣漣。
王覽来合他同相抱。
雨淋風打不敢迁。
他娘見了疼了个死。
纔連王祥都叫还。
又罰王祥正夜跪。
真慄跪在画簾前。⁵¹³
王覽跑来一处跪。
一陪陪到三更天。
母親睡省纔知道。
心中惱恨又哀憐。
思量折掇別人子。
就是折掇親生男。
從此少把心腸改。
王祥以後得安然。

⁵¹² The Ye imprint has 損壞.

⁵¹³ The Ye imprint has 直蹶.

If he wasn't chided by his stepmother back in the day, 當年不遇後娘吟。 514
How would posterity know of the brothers' virtue? 后是那知兄弟賢。 515

It's not clear to me if this "rustic ditty," with its flowing rhythm and easy rhymes, was in fact made up for the narrative, as the lines "there is a song as proof" and "there is a poem as proof" (leading to songs and poems) are common narrative devices in these works. I could not find a reference to the hunting for tigers in records of the historical brothers, which makes it tempting to attribute the episode to "oral culture." But whatever the source, it is clear that, in adopting widely known images and motifs – the quest of a filial son, Guanyin visiting the underworld, the exemplary step-son and brother – the ballad has appropriated them for its own literary purposes. That parts of the plot of *Cibei qu* so closely resembles the classical tale "Zhang Cheng" also corroborates its literary character. While the ballad's general moral framework may tell us something about its identification with popular performing literature, many other things – from the mobility of themes and motifs between tale and ballad to their shared attention to language – reveal the difficulties of identifying just what makes up the ballad's "popular" qualities. The theme of filiality within a framework of divine retribution governs several other ballads, notably *Fan yanyang* and *Hansen qu*, the two works which share *Cibei qu*'s prologue in some manuscripts. Together with this framework, there is a whole set of appropriated images from so-called popular literature. *Hansen qu* portrays a filial son's tour of the underworld, but this episode, ostensibly a son's quest for a parent's salvation,

⁵¹⁴ Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, has 口+岑 for the last character (p. 106); the character represents a topolectal word with the connotation of "to reproach / yell at" (as a form of harassment) when used as a verb. *Liaozhai liqu ji* suggests it is a borrowed character for 嗔 (p. 80).

⁵¹⁵ The Ye imprint has 後世.

is also a satire on official corruption, where even Yama and the underworld gods are subject to venal desire. And while the ballad is also known by the title *Yinyang bao* 陰陽報 (Retribution in this world and the next),⁵¹⁶ the images of underworld retribution are actually deployed as part of its esthetics delighting in grotesquerie.⁵¹⁷ These playful and satirical aspects remind us again and again of the literary character of the ballads, which we examine from a different angle – that of language – in the next section of this chapter.

A village world

While the rustic songs draw from widely known images of filial sons and daughters, they are uniquely set in a village world. Colorful village characters take center stage – from good farmer’s sons to idle gamblers, from capable wives and chaste women to bullies and shrews. In the domestic dramas which they are cast, their speeches and songs teem with idioms, proverbs, and colloquial terms, in vivid mimesis of an oral world. In this part of the chapter I examine the village in the ballads and plays as both moral space and oral stage – where filial piety is presented in earthy terms, where everyday life takes place amid vivacious verbal exchanges, all contributing to an idiosyncratic literary vision which delights in playing with vulgar language and musical forms.

Perhaps the most earthy depiction of filial (un)piety in the entire corpus is

Qiangtou ji (“On the wall”), a play in four acts which vividly portrays two unfilial sons.

⁵¹⁶ Sheng Wei, “Bianding houji,” in *Pu Songling quanji*, 3: 3466, mentions a manuscript of this ballad with the title of *Yinyang bao*.

⁵¹⁷ A partial translation of *Hansen qu* can be found in C.D. Alison Bailey and Bonnie S. McDougall trans., “The Cold and the Dark: extracts,” *Renditions* 70 (2008): 65-88.

As the story goes, Old Zhang, the aging father of Big Goof and Second Goof, is abandoned by his sons after he divided his land and passed it on to them. Both brothers try to shirk responsibility of taking care of their father, and when Big Goof brings Old Zhang to his younger brother's house one day, he finds the door shut with no one there. He hoists his dad up to the wall and tells him to jump down the other side, while the old man, fearing the height, begs to be let down; Big Goof leaves and abandons his dad on the wall (the title of the play refers to this episode). The desperate old man is luckily saved by Silversmith Wang, an old friend who happens to be passing by. The silversmith then devises a clever plan to trick the brothers into thinking that their father has hidden riches. Henceforth the two compete to take care of Old Zhang like model filial sons; when they find out the truth after the old man has died and angrily brings the case to the local official, they and their wives get their deserved share of punishment. The play not only parodies the greed of Big Goof, second Goof and their wives, but also the traditional hope of parents that their sons will become pillars of the family on which they can rely in their old age. The song of the silversmith upon seeing Old Zhang's plight comments tellingly:

A baby comes out into the world crying and screaming,	落了草，叫欢欢，
And when the parents discover that it has a penis they rejoice;	摸摸有*甚喜欢， ⁵¹⁸
When you think about it carefully,	
it's really a bunch of nonsense.	细想来也是精扯淡
All the parents are looking for in their old age	不过指望下半世，
Is to rely on their sons to live a few years longer;	依著几家过几年，
But like Old Brother Zhang,	
what's the purpose of wanting sons? ⁵¹⁹	似张哥待要儿何干？

⁵¹⁸ Where * appears, the character 血+right component of 俊 appears in the text.

⁵¹⁹ The translation comes from Chang and Mair, "The Wall," p. 125. The punctuated Chinese text here and below comes from the version of the play in Guan Dedong ed., *Liaozhai liqu xuan*, on which Chang and

If nourishment and care for parents are an important part of the practice of filial piety, then the ultimate failure to fulfill filial duty is to deprive parents of the comforts of everyday life. While filial exemplars go to extremes to find nourishment for aging or sick parents, indenture themselves to better serve their parents, and attend in person to the most humble chores (such as rinsing the chamber pot) even when they themselves have acquired high office, the unfilial sons of *Qiangtong ji* practice just the opposite in subjecting their father to the most abject conditions. The play opens with the self-introduction of Old Zhang, who sings of his poverty:

(*speaks*) In the beginning everything was fine. My two sons paid their respects to me morning and evening. My daughters-in-law often came to serve me hot soup or water. It couldn't have been better. Who would have expected that they were like Suzhou maidens who don't bind their feet – just make an initial gesture.⁵²⁰ Let me tell what I eat now.

起初甚好，两个儿早晚问侯，两个媳妇热汤热水常来服事，好不那好。谁想是苏州娘子不缠脚--光兴了一个头儿。说说我吃的：

(<i>sings</i>) In December, after the winter solstice,	十一月, 数九天,
They put ice-cold congee in front of me;	冷粥块, 放面前,
As I blow on it, my whole body shivers. ⁵²¹	一行哈着浑身战。
What's more, they are afraid that	
their old man's stomach is weak,	又怕老头脾胃弱,
And that I will have indigestion if I eat grain	吃了干粮消化难,
So the filial sons have cut off their father's wheat flour. ⁵²²	孝顺儿革了他达的面。
For nearly half a year, there's only been a wisp	
of breath left in me,	半年来丝丝两气,
My old belly is giving off smoke from	
the hunger burning inside.	只饿的老肚生烟!

Mair's translation is based. Keio catalog no. 0712, a manuscript of *Qiangtong ji*, has a number of textual differences; I note only the differences that are significant enough to be reflected in translation.

⁵²⁰ The translation of the entire passage comes from Chang and Mair, "The Wall," p. 109. No. 0712 does not have the line "it couldn't have been better." It has, notably, "Suzhou whores" 蘇州婊子 in place of "Suzhou maidens." The punchline has a double meaning of "they only make the effort to deck out the top."

⁵²¹ No. 0712 has "As I eat it, my body shivers" 一行喫著渾身戰.

⁵²² No. 0712 has "The filial sons have cut off their father's rice" 孝顺兒革了他達的飯.

(*speaks*) And now I'll go over what I wear. 我再说说我那穿的：

(<i>sings</i>) O Heaven, how pitiful!	天那天, 好可怜,
If you wouldn't look at what I eat,	不看吃来看我穿,
Please look at what I wear.	
Everybody can see the few threads I put on;	十根两绺人人见。
I still wear my worn-out cotton quilted coat in July	六月还穿破棉袄,
and my old cloth gown in January.	腊月还是旧布衫,
I'd like to enjoy a fire in the winter,	待烤火没人舍筐炭。
But nobody would give me a basket of coal.	
Probably I haven't suffered enough,	想是这罪没受勾,
so heaven orders me to live on for another year.	又着我活了一年。

Poverty is one of the favorite themes of the vernacular corpus, and often comes in a satirical mode. In “A Schoolmaster’s Woes” 鬧館, a scathing parody of the learned figure of the scholar, a starving schoolmaster exploited by his employer voices very similar complaints. Like Old Zhang, who as an aging father is supposed to be a figure of respect, the schoolmaster is subjected to utter deprivation; he quotes from *Mencius* and the *Analecst* to console himself on the virtues of a parsimonious life, but his attempt to affect respectability makes him only more pitiable. In “Song of the Bum” 窮漢詞, a gambler who lost his all pours out his heart to the god of wealth, and there the extremes of bodily deprivation instigates his complaints in the lowest registers of topolectal speech. These satires on the betrayals of the common ideals of wealth, worldly success, and filial piety in society complicate the apparently moralistic qualities in parts of the vernacular oeuvre; *Qiangtou ji*, for instance, is deeply satirical while appearing at the same time to be a moral fable admonishing the unfilial.

While *Qiangtou ji* is scathing parody of how unfilial sons treat their father, *Gufu qu* (“Song of a mother-in-law and her daughters-in-law”) tells a family drama involving a

mother and her two sons, this time with the spotlight on the female members of the family. The ballad, told in three segments (*duan* 段), shares the same plot as the classical tale “Shanhu” 珊瑚. Its opening poem has led scholars to think that it was composed for the mother of the Bi family of Wangcun, where Pu Songling served as tutor for thirty years.⁵²³ The lines suggest that the work was intended for performance before a female audience:

My old friend of over twenty years	二十餘年老友人
Purchased blind singing girls to entertain his mother	買來矇婢樂萱親
I thereby composed a ballad in suites of ten songs to	
tell a story of mother-in-law and daughters-in-law	惟編姑婦十般曲
With a lesson in the music for those of the inner chambers	借爾弦歌勸內賓 ⁵²⁴

Both ballad and classical tale tell the story of a virtuous daughter-in-law wronged by her mother-in-law. As the story goes, Chen Shanhu 陳珊瑚 is married to An Dacheng 安大成, the eldest son of the An family, whose father had passed away early on. The virtuous Shanhu dutifully serves her mother-in-law, yet is always met with the latter’s ire; Dacheng, being filial to his mother, divorces his wife, upon which Shanhu flees to the home of the mother’s sister, who sympathizes with her and keeps her in the household. A few years later, An’s younger brother Ercheng 二成 marries Zanggu 臧姑, who turns out to even more badly-tempered than his mother; not to mention the hen-pecked husband, the roles of daughter-in-law and mother-in-law become inverted as the An mother suffers

⁵²³ See Zou Zongliang 鄒宗良, “Qianyan” 前言, *Liaozhai liqu ji*, pp. 5-6.

⁵²⁴ Catalog no. 0710. In the third line, the versions in both Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, and Liu Jieping, *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu xuanzhu* has 一般曲 instead of 十般曲. I’ve translated after the given text since each of the segments in *Gufu qu* is made up of the same suite of ten tunes (Fujita Yūken, “Liaozhai suqu kao,” pp. 294-94, has observed this to be a special musical feature of both *Cibei qu* and *Gufu qu*, as distinct from the other rustic songs attributed to Pu). Also, in the first segment, the work describes itself as “a ballad in [sets of] ten [songs]” 一套十樣的曲兒.

her own ways at the hands of Zanggu. Eventually she falls sick, and Dacheng goes to call on her sister for help; through the latter's mediation, Shanhu eventually returns to the household and her repentant mother-in-law. By this time Zanggu and Ercheng have split up of the household, taking all the good land, but they are soon forced to sell it after their money dwindles with a lawsuit. Through the ghostly intervention of the deceased An father, the land is returned to Dacheng, who with Shanhu also digs up silver in the yard. The unfilial Zanggu, by contrast, loses her two children and only then repents.

If the ballad conveys a “lesson through the music” about female virtue and vice, it is no less an entertaining family drama, which parodies the unequal power relations between the female members of the household. Shanhu exemplifies all the qualities of *xian* 賢 (“worthiness”) as a daughter-in-law: she diligently attends to all the chores around the house, serves her mother-in-law without complaint, and then when her husband divorces her for no good reason, she doesn't remarry (she even tries once to kill herself) but stays in the house of a female relative Aunt He. But besides the lesson of her ultimate rewards as a retribution for her virtue, the most delicious parts of the ballad involves the horrible mother-in-law getting her due. Towards the end of the first segment, when she goes to hunt down Shanhu in the house of Aunt He, she receives a spectacular share of derision⁵²⁵:

When Aunt He saw Mrs. Yu, she said: “It's said that respectable folks don't alight on the grounds of the poor.” Mrs. Yu said: “Have you gone crazy? You hide day after day the wife that somebody else divorced, and you pretend like you don't know anything about it!” Aunt He got vexed, and said: “What an odd thing for you to say! ‘The old donkey goes up the hill with a haystack on its back’ – just bear with it! Why are you panting so hard? What's Shanhu to you? I've got rice to

⁵²⁵ The Chinese text here and below from no. 0710; while the manuscript is unpunctuated, I have taken the punctuation from an almost identical version in Liu Jieping, *Liaozhai tongsu liqu xuanzhu*, p. 23.

feed her, and I happen to want to make her stay. Who are you to make me stop? It's not like I'm your daughter-in-law who you can bully all you want!"

何大娘見于氏到了，說："貴人不踏賤地呀。"于氏說："你心昏么！人家休了的人，你每日窩藏著，還打乜似不知哩！"何大娘惱了，說："耶耶，好奇呀！‘駝垛子的老驢上山’--你捱著，又濟著喘粗氣哩！那珊瑚罷，他是也東人么？⁵²⁶我有飯給他吃，我只顧留著他，你待嚙著我罷？誰是恁媳婦子，濟你怎麼揉搓哩！"

A little later:

Aunt He, cursing and jabbering, went on deriding Mrs. Yu, until the woman's face was burning with rage. She said: "You're really not going to make Shanhu leave?" Aunt He said: "I was just about to send her away, but since you're trying to come down on me to chase her off, I am just not going to tell her to go. 'The farmer offends the old dragon-king' – I'm afraid that when he takes it to heart, there's going to be no rain coming down on my fields!"

何大娘連罵帶說，數喇了一陣，把于氏氣的臉兒焦黃，便說："你真個不著珊瑚去么？"何大娘說："我已待著他去；你降著我攆他，我就只是不著他去：‘庄家老得罪著老龍王’--只怕怪下來，不上俺那地裏下雨的。"

[<i>She sings</i>] You old hag, you're really foul	老于婆你實是歪，
To come all the way to someone else's door	找上人家門子來。
I'm not afraid if you take things to heart	我可就不怕你怪！
You're a bully at home, now you're taking it out	你家裡降了外頭找，
I'm going to be 'the firewood that's hard to split'	我就是個‘難劈的柴。’
While Shanhu is at my house now;	如今現有個珊瑚在，
Since you 'sit on top of the pots and crush the stove'	你既然‘騎鍋壓灶，’
You can't do anything but fret!	可就才只是發揣！

In this passage the old woman revels in the uses of idioms, from four-character expressions with double meanings to *xiehou yu* 歇後語, two-part idiomatic sayings where the punch-line has a double meaning in context. Thus “just bear with it” in the first instance of the “old donkey” saying describes both the donkey and Mrs. Yu; “no rain coming down on my fields” in the dragon-king saying is also a response to Mrs. Yu's

⁵²⁶ The version in Liu, *Liqu xuanzhu*, has 他是也東人么 for this line.

domineering ways.⁵²⁷ “The firewood that’s hard to split” means someone who’s hard to deal with, while ‘sitting on top of pots and stove’ refers to domineering wives. The language describing the act of bullying is vividly captured by colloquial terms like 降 (lit: “to come down on”; in the line “you’re trying to bully me into chasing her off”) and 揉搓 (lit: “roll over”; in “it’s not like I’m your daughter-in-law who you could bully all you want”).⁵²⁸ In the same scene, as the two carry on, Aunt He gets more and more nasty. Mrs. Yu is finally no longer able to bear her derision and the smiling neighbors watching the scene, and when she is about to walk out,

Aunt He said: “Go ahead and leave! ‘The bad sesame seeds are no good being fried’ – even when you quit [frying them] they make no oil.” Mrs. Yu, going straight out, said biting her teeth: “I’m going to get her back for this, don’t you worry!” Aunt He said: “Really now! Something ugly is popping out of your pants – you’re scaring nothing but my ass!” 何大娘說：“你去罷。‘糝芝麻上不的鍋炒’--歇了還無了油水!”于氏一行走著發恨：“我定是著他試試，你慌嘎哩！”何大娘說：“哎喲！‘褲襠裏鑽出個醜鬼來’--你唬著我這垂子哩。⁵²⁹” Here the language is at the lowest registers of speech, and part of what makes

sections like this one so satisfying is that we get to watch the bully get her just measure, not in divine punishment but in this-worldly terms. The shout-out is described as Mrs. Yu’s “retribution in this life” (*xianshi bao*) 現世報; later, when Zanggu the shrew enters the household, again the same term is used. Divine retribution takes place not with the strike of thunder, but in how bullies get humbled in everyday life. Not that the ballads

⁵²⁷ I am not sure of the import of this expression – Aunt He is clearly deriding Mrs. Yu. “No rain will come down” would seem to be a response to how “you’re trying to come down on me to chase her off” 你降著我攆她; 降 is a frequently appearing term in the corpus with the meaning of “force,” “intimidate,” “bully” while the character literally means to “fall” or “drop”- “no rain will come down” seems to play on both levels of meaning.

⁵²⁸ I do not know the pronunciation of the words represented by these characters in either modern or historical Zichuan topolect.

⁵²⁹ Liu, *Liqu xuanzhu*, p. 25, has 脛垂子 (“buttocks”) here.

lack more dramatic supernatural elements – quite a few times there is gold discovered in the ground by filial sons – but the most delicious parts of these stories are grounded in familiar domestic dramas and verbal spectacles which their portrayals of ill-virtue allow.

In Zichuan topolect there are many terms which vividly describe verbal exchange: 駁嘴 (“to argue”), 折辯 (“to make excuses”), 數喇 (“to disparage”), 巴數 (“to reproach”), 誚撇 (“to deride”). To make things up is 瞎胡巴; to boast is 啦嘴; to fool someone is to 嘮. To yell at a person or shout someone out is literally to “dig” 掘. Captured with these or similar characters, these reflect a wealth of terms on verbal acts in Zichuan topolect, revealing an aspect of the local culture which revels in oral modes.⁵³⁰ A colloquial word which appears frequently in the vernacular corpus is “reprimand” or “disparage” 口+岑 (also written as 砣), a term invariably associated with shrewish wives and mean mothers-in-law. The second segment of *Gufu qu* opens with a “Song of the reproaching women” 口+岑 婦歌 which pokes fun at these domestic verbal competitions:

Every morning she disses [her daughter-in-law]	終朝每日數他砣
Until one day she met a match who’s even more fierce	又遇著砣的比他狠
This one disses as hard she could	這一個砣的砣的緊
Then the other one disses this one out	那一個砣的可才窘 ⁵³¹

The vernacular corpus attributed to Pu abounds with the figures of strong village women, associated often with a vivacious orality. In the short ballad *Jun yecha* (The pretty yaksha), a beautiful but no-frills wife (the “pretty yaksha”) reproaches her gambler

⁵³⁰ See Meng Qingtai and Luo Futeng, *Zichuan fangyan zhi*, especially the section on the vocabulary of social communication (交往), pp. 169-181; pronunciations for the terms are given according to modern Zichuan topolect. All the examples cited above appear in the vernacular corpus.

⁵³¹ No. 0710. Where 砣 appears here, the versions of the ballad in Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, and Liu Jieping’s *Tongsu liqu xuanzhu* both have the character 口+岑.

李氏说、這你些屁、是听的谁放的、必然是小讷子、那小忘八羔子、纂作的、叫他来合我質证質证、

Zhao: It's "the cloth merchant cleared in his shop" – you're making things up now! What does it have to do with little Mumsy? Everybody who lives in the village, you don't think they talk? As for him, he's "an old goat in the tiger's mouth" – you can chew up his bottom half, and he won't utter a word!

七大姑说、賣布的净了店、你没嘎裂扯一裂扯、该小讷子那腿事么、南庄北院的、说的少哩么、就是犸虎咬着老绵羊、就吃下他下半截，他也是不做声、的

<i>To the tune of Mending the Broken Bridge</i>	叠断桥
He is a fine lad by nature, a fine lad by nature	天生的贤。天生的贤。
He keeps it all to himself, whether things go well or wrong	苦甜只在他心间。
Even behind his stepmother's back	
he doesn't complain	就是背的裡他也不曾怨。
He says not a word, not a word he says,	一字不言。一字不言。
But he can't help people passing the story on	止不住行人道路传。
The Tutelary god might be switched,	吊了土地老。
And still it passes on!	他还没传遍。

She said: You "covered your ears while stealing the bell" – were you to tear out your heart, even the dogs won't eat it! You think nobody knows what you did to him? 七⁵³³大姑说、你侮着耳朵偷鈴铛、你那心把出来、那狗也不吃、你道是没人知道么、

You may tear out your heart, tear our your heart,	扒出心肝。扒出心肝。
But even the famished wolf and the drooling dog	餓狼饞狗嫌腥膻。
won't have it for its stench!	
You covered your ears while stealing the bell,	掩耳去偷鈴。
Pretending like no one can hear it!	只当是听不见。
You can't fool Heaven now, can't fool Heaven,	莫要欺天。莫要欺天。
You can't cover it all up under the bedcovers.	一床被子盖不严。
Even if no one were to know,	总是人不知。
The gods and spirits have seen it!	还怕神灵见。

Upon hearing this, Li trembled with rage, and her face became a burnt brown color. Then she said: "As you would have it, you're the good one! Since you're so good, let me leave, and wouldn't you like to sleep with your brother!"

533 In the manuscript, this character appears with a dot on the top, and is apparently a shorthand for 趙.

李氏听说、氣的戰哆嗦的、那臉兒焦黃了、便道、依你说就是你好、你既那
么好、我去了 你给恁弟兄做个老婆、不的么、

Zhao saw that Li had slipped in her words, and pumping with rage, she said:
“What a whore! You’ve got spots in your butt – you can’t see out of your brown
eye!⁵³⁴ You want Mama to get your husband laid for you?” There was a shovel
handle next to her, so she took it up.

七大姑见他失了口、氣冲两肋的说、好科子、屁股裡長出波螺子来 瞎了恁
那腚门子、你着您媽替你做不的老婆么、旁裡一根杌柄、就拿起来了、

Where the virtuous fail to stand up for themselves, the storyteller does; while filial exemplars don’t take up sticks, others do it for them. Whether these scenes evoke the strong personalities of village women is perhaps not as important as the fact that as literary figures – like unfilial sons, starving schoolmasters, poor gamblers and exploitative officials – they allow for the enactment of irreverent exchanges, and in this respect the rustic songs appear to be radical literary experiments embedded within the conservative moral framework of popular performing literature. The conscious uses of the lower registers of speech and ribald dialect marks these works apart from many other vernacular texts on moral subjects, whether drum lyrics with their embedded literary cadences or didactic moral songs written by literati for less literate audiences. Perhaps these works find their match in irony and satire only in certain segments of vernacular fiction, works written by literati for literati – the crudest language, consciously crafted, is a mark of sophistication. One ponders the double audience of these works: while they were performed for local audiences “on the highways and byways,” as Pu Ruo tells us, they must also have kept in mind readers familiar with the written traditions of literati

⁵³⁴ Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, has 波瘰子 in its version, and glosses the term as 白內障 (“cataracts”).

fiction and drama, where vulgarity has its cachet and paves the way for expanded esthetic possibilities.

Conclusion

In his study of *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, Andrew Plaks writes about the “inversion of filiality” in the 17th century novel, where portrayals of grossly unfilial sons form part of the novel’s critique of the entire range of Confucian moral values.⁵³⁵ Many other inversions of filial morality appear elsewhere in Qing fiction – in the early 18th century novel *Rulin Waishi*, for example, filial characters are taken beyond the narrative closures of exemplar biography and the moral closures of filial quests to reveal the disparities between a degenerate social world and the ideal world of Confucian ritual.⁵³⁶ In these literary settings, filial piety is not so much a venerated moral ideal as a means for elaborating critiques of Confucian orthodoxy; while the framework of retribution give works like *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* an apparently didactic scheme, the sense of irony which pervades the novel calls into question the lessons seemingly conveyed.⁵³⁷

In light of these subversive plays upon traditional virtues in vernacular fiction, the filial stories from the corpus attributed to Pu harbor a different ethos. For all their ironic and satirical elements, the moral lessons are in the end straightforward and simple:

⁵³⁵ Andrew H. Plaks, “After the Fall: *Hsing-shih yin-yüan chuan* and the Seventeenth-Century Chinese Novel,” *HJAS* 45.2 (Dec. 1985): 570-75.

⁵³⁶ Shang Wei, *Rulin Waishi and Cultural Transformation in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), pp. 78-83 and pp. 133-138. Tina Lu, in her *Accidental Incest, Filial Cannibalism, and Other Peculiar Encounters in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), pp. 135-174 (“The Arithmetic of Filial Piety”), discusses short stories from the late Ming and early Qing which makes use of filial piety themes.

⁵³⁷ On retribution in *Xingshi*, see Martin Huang, “Karmic Retribution and the Didactic Dilemma in the *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*,” *Hanxue yanjiu* 15.1 (1997): 397-440.

unfilial sons and evil wives get punished, while virtuous sons and daughters get rewarded at the end of their travails. In this respect, these works have much to share with the moral world of other literary works intended for popular audiences – tales of exemplars, morality books, prosimetric stories and songs of admonishment. At the same time, the vivid and deliberate uses of language in the rustic songs rather clue us to their artistry, one which delights in making creative use of vulgar speech and popular musical forms.

Whatever the original intention of these works, the accounts by Zichuan's literati and the extant manuscripts reveal their receptions among local audiences of varying social status. While Pu Ruo's eulogies and Wang Peixun's account from the 18th and 19th centuries describe works performed to humble audiences such as villagers and old women, the two men's descriptions also testify to their own place in the audience, hearing (perhaps watching) the songs and ballads, and perhaps also copying and editing manuscripts. The topolectal flavor of the spoken sections must have been especially vivid to the ears, but they must also have been delightful to spot on the page, even to those unfamiliar with local idioms. We might be reminded of the "ruffian" readers utterly absorbed in reading which the prologue to several ballads parodies; the extant manuscripts themselves reveal varying copyists' hands and reader's punctuations, from those rife with variants and corrections to the finely presented manuscripts copied by Wang Fengzhi in the early 20th century. Perhaps more interesting and more fruitful than mapping out "popular" and "elite" elements in these texts – a project which this chapter shows to be most difficult – is to understand the mechanisms of their mobility as they

shift from book to book and from reader to reader.⁵³⁸ But that is a project beyond the scope of this chapter.

⁵³⁸ In thinking about “mobility” I am inspired by the discussion in Roger Chartier, “France and Spain,” in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, ed. Joad Raymond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 164.

CHAPTER 4

History in the rustic songs

Introduction

Styled as “historian of the strange,” Pu Songling adopted striking narrative and commentarial features from Sima Qian’s *Shiji* in his *Liaozhai zhiyi*, whose ghostly encounters mirrored the haunting memories of dynastic transition in the early Qing.⁵³⁹ The plays and ballads attributed to Pu offer a different mode of discourse, weaving together images from earlier fiction with the history of the recent past. This chapter will treat *Monan qu* (Song of tribulations) 磨難曲, the longest and most ambitious ballad-narrative in Pu Songling’s entire vernacular oeuvre at thirty-six chapters, which shares the plot of Pu’s classical tale “Zhang Hongjian.”⁵⁴⁰ This long vernacular version, at once a fox romance, a bandit tale, and a scathing portrait of official corruption, weaves together history local and imagined through the literary vehicle of prosimetric narrative.

Monan qu does not seem to have been printed before the early 20th century. In 1936 it was published in Tokyo in a lightly annotated volume on the basis of manuscripts collected by Lu Dahuang, and it was also included in the *Liaozhai quanji* published by Shanghai’s Shijie shuju the same year.⁵⁴¹ Perhaps lesser known is an earlier, 1919

⁵³⁹ On *Liaozhai zhiyi* and *Shiji*, see Allan Barr, “Liaozhai zhiyi” and “Shiji,” *Asia Major* 20.1 (2007): 133-153, and Wai-ye Li, “Rhetoric of fantasy and rhetoric of irony,” pp. 18-80. On *Liaozhai*’s ghosts and historical time, see Judith Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-century Chinese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007), pp. 87-130.

⁵⁴⁰ The translation of *Monan qu* as “Song of tribulations” is lightly modified from Wilt Idema, “Prosimetric and verse narrative,” p. 360.

⁵⁴¹ Lu Dahuang ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi waishu Monan qu* 聊齋志異外書磨難曲 (Tokyo: Bunkyoūdō, 1936) and *Zuben Liaozhai quanji* 足本聊齋全集, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1936).

printing, where the work appeared as part of a set of eight volumes which also included another long ballad narrative attributed to Pu Songling.⁵⁴² The extant manuscripts of this work today include a manuscript at Keio University copied by Wang Fengzhi after one in his family collection, and another incomplete manuscript held by Shandong University Library.⁵⁴³ There is also a *Monan qu* in four volumes held at the National Central Library in Taipei, copied in a fine hand, the only manuscript of a rustic song that I know of to have been from outside of Shandong before the 20th century.⁵⁴⁴ Besides these written transmissions, *Monan qu* was also transmitted locally in the oral culture of Zichuan. In the 1960s, in the course of his fieldwork on the rustic songs, the ethnomusicologist Wu Zhao came across an old man from Zichuan who recalled hearing *Monan qu* being sung in its entirety in his childhood, at the end of the 19th century, by a blind female singer from the area.⁵⁴⁵ The fox fairy, the center of the love story in *Monan qu* and *Fugui*

⁵⁴² There is a copy of this imprint held at the library of Jilin University, described in the Xueyuan jigu 學苑汲古 online catalog to be a lithographic edition in eight volumes, thread-bound, printed by Zhoucun's Sanyi Tang 參益堂. The title given in the catalog is *Liaozhai zhiyi bubian Monanqu: 4 juan 36 hui, Xingyun qu 4 juan 28 hui* 聊齋志異補編磨難曲：4 卷 36 回，行雲曲 4 卷 28 回. I have not seen this set of books, but four volumes of what appears to be another copy (held at the University of Michigan) have been digitized by the Hathi Trust. The cover to the first volume indicates that they were “printed by the Hongbao zhai of Shanghai” 上海鴻寶齋代印 and the next pages says “distributed by Sanyi Tang of Zhoucun” 周村參益堂發行. Illustrations of scenes appear at the beginning of each volume; a preface dated to 1919 by a Yuan Zhigen 袁智根 of Siming 四明 explains the context of printing after he (?) was presented manuscripts of *Monan qu* and *Xingyun qu* by a friend from Shandong in spring of the same year.

⁵⁴³ On Wang's manuscript, see Keio catalog no. 0735. The Shandong University library catalog has a “*Monan qu san juan*” 磨難曲三卷, with *juan 2* and *juan 3* being extant, noting the manuscripts to have 14 lines to a page with 32 characters each; see *Shandong daxue tushuguan guji shanben shumu* 山東大學圖書館古籍善本書目 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 2007), p. 432. I was not able to access these books during my visit to Shanda in June 2015 due to their fragmented status.

⁵⁴⁴ The last volume is signed by the copyist at the end: “copied by Qitang in the Wumen inn, in the winter month of the year *wuxu*” 戊戌冬月吳門客次啓堂抄錄. I have no information on Qitang; *wuxu* could be 1718, 1778, 1838 or 1898. Wumen refers to the Suzhou area, which also means that the work reached outside Zichuan by that time.

⁵⁴⁵ Wu Zhao 吳釗, “Pu Songling de liqu” 蒲松齡的俚曲 (orig. published 1962), in idem., *Guyue xun you: Wu Zhao yinyuexue wenji* 古樂尋幽：吳釗音樂學文集 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu, 2011), p. 13.

shenxian 富貴神仙 (Riches and glory: divine immortals), another ballad version of the same classical tale, was also known on the local stage.⁵⁴⁶ Wu noted that by the time of his fieldwork, only a few songs were still extant; in the past they were popular among farmers from Pujiashuang 蒲家莊.⁵⁴⁷

While the oral transmission of the ballad is an intriguing subject, here my focus will be on its literary transmissions, as we have now only the manuscripts and printed editions. In preparing this chapter, I have relied on a microfilm of the National Central Library manuscript while consulting the annotated *Liaozhai liqu ji* by Zou Zongliang and Pu Xianming, the 1936 *Monan qu* annotated by Lu Dahuang, and also the 1962 *Pu Songling ji* edited by Lu.⁵⁴⁸ In the first part of the chapter, I introduce *Monan qu* and its fictional setting, which I relate to the local history of early Qing Zichuan and to the imagined histories of earlier fiction (notably the *Shuihu* story cycles). I examine the double transformations of *Monan qu* from the classical tale “Zhang Hongjian” and the ballad *Fugui shenxian* based upon it, whose worldly concerns and formal experiments with northern and southern tunes contrast tellingly against the forthright political criticisms and popular musical sensibility of *Monan qu*. In the second part of the chapter,

⁵⁴⁶ Ma Ruifang, “Pu Songling liqu de sixiang chengjiu he yuyan tese” 蒲松齡俚曲的思想成就和語言特色, in *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan di 1 ji* 蒲松齡研究集刊第一輯 (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 1980), pp. 201-2. The translation of the title *Fugui shenxian* comes from Wilt Idema, “Prosimetric and verse narrative,” p. 360.

⁵⁴⁷ Wu Zhao, “Pu Songling de liqu,” p. 13; the extant songs are mostly from *Fugui shenxian* (one is shared with *Monan qu*).

⁵⁴⁸ In the 1950s, when Lu Dahuang was asked by the National Cultural Bureau to re-edit the complete works of Pu Songling (which would result in the 1962 *Pu Songling ji*), he apparently no longer possessed many of the manuscripts which formed the basis of his earlier, 1936 *Pu Songling quanji*, *Monan qu* among them. When he returned to Zichuan to look for extant manuscripts to collate against the existing *quanji*, whose version of the play was missing quatrains at the end of several chapters, the copies he was able to find were also missing them (Lu Dahuang, “Zhengli jingguo,” p. 131). These quatrains are also missing from the National Central Library manuscript.

I examine other treatments of local and dynastic history in texts from Shandong, especially in the genre of the drum-lyric, and reflect on the expressive power and formal fluidity of the colloquial prosimetric form as literary medium.

Local and imagined histories

In an early essay on Pu's vernacular compositions, the scholar Gao Mingge proposed a chronology which linked the formal differences in the ballads and plays with a shift in Pu's own interests toward the concerns of the peasantry.⁵⁴⁹ As examples, Gao examines two vernacular narratives sharing the same plot: *Fugui shenxian*, a ballad in fourteen chapters, which displayed great familiarity with the use of northern and southern tunes in the tradition of literati drama composition, and which Gao suggests formed the earlier version; and *Monan qu*, a play in thirty-six chapters, whose use of popular tunes and significant new episodes revealed demotic concerns which are reflected also in other compilations Pu made after the year 1704.⁵⁵⁰ For Gao and others, the latter represented the epitome of both Pu's "turn towards the people" and his literary achievements in vernacular genres. While this is now a commonly accepted view, I would like to take a more nuanced look at the depictions of history in *Monan qu* as tied to its artistic medium.

The plotline of the classical tale "Zhang Hongjian," which forms the core of *Monan qu* and *Fugui shenxian*, is not untypical for *Liaozhai zhiyi*. A righteous man of Yongping 永平 prefecture in north China, Zhang Hongjian, is asked by fellow local

⁵⁴⁹ Gao Mingge 高明閣, "Lun Pu Songling de suqu chuanguo" 論蒲松齡的俗曲創作, in *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan 3 ji* (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1982): 167-195.

⁵⁵⁰ Gao, "Lun Pu Songling de suqu chuanguo," pp. 173-76.

scholars to pen a suit against the corrupt magistrate Ma of Lulong County 盧龍, and becomes implicated as Ma bribes the Inspector General investigating the case to turn on all involved against him.⁵⁵¹ Fleeing his home, Zhang comes to a village in the wilds, whereupon he meets and loves Shunhua 舜華, a beautiful fox spirit. With the years passing, he longs for his own family, and she sends him back after testing out his true feelings. Zhang's reunion with his wife is interrupted by a malicious villager, however, whom Zhang kills in his rage; he reports himself to the yamen and is transported away in shackles. On the way he is saved by Shunhua, who takes him to Shanxi, where he lives for ten years under a different name. When he finds out that his case is laid to rest, he returns home in the night, yet flees again in terror when he hears messengers at the door, who in fact came to report his son's success in the civil examinations. Fleeing this time, Zhang Hongjian is taken in by a prominent family as a tutor to their young son; the boy's cousin soon returns home from the capital with a fellow new degree candidate, whom Hongjian realizes is his own son. The story ends with a happy reunion as father and son together return home.

So it's a lovely fox romance on the one hand, and the story of a family's separation and reunion on the other. In *Fugui shenxian*, the fourteen chapter ballad, these plot features are for the most part preserved, with the addition that Zhang Hongjian himself also succeeds in the examinations and eventually achieves high office. The ballad, elaborating the classical tale, tells a story of the dream of worldly success come

⁵⁵¹ Yongping fu was part of Zhili in the Qing.

true, as the title “Riches and glory” suggests.⁵⁵² But *Monan qu* in thirty chapters builds significantly upon the original plot and transforms it into something else altogether. The setting of official corruption is elaborated against the context of a widespread famine – a local magistrate delays the news of the emperor’s tax pardons while squeezing out taxes for his own gain; villagers are brutalized for not being able to pay them; in this unjust world, the only figures of justice are the bandits in the hills, who aid the weak and punish those abusing their power. Seven chapters near the end of *Monan qu* are devoted to the bandits’ battles against imperial forces, their heroic feats fending off northern raiders, and their eventual incorporation under Ming imperial command through the efforts of Zhang Hongjian (by then a high official). *Monan qu* thus wraps into its story significant new episodes on both local social history and the imaginary history of the empire. Both are to be examined below.

Monan qu begins with a dramatic scene of famine, during which villagers are forced to take to the road due to poor harvests and the brutal coercions of local officials to collect taxes. He Manzi has early on proposed connections between this scene and the situation in Zichuan in 1703-4, suggesting a composition by Pu after these dates.⁵⁵³ Indeed, Pu Songling left a remarkable number of writings from these two years on the subject of crop failure and famine, including two dozen poems and several extended

⁵⁵² Chinese scholars commonly interpret *Monan qu* as an improvement upon *Fugui shenxian*; there are actually some very interesting features to the latter, such as the prologue, where an unnamed character relays prayers to Heaven for riches and glory (the playful way in which the prologue mocks those who seek to become immortals and Buddhas makes it read almost like a reaction to precious scrolls). While this chapter focuses on *Monan qu*, in an improved version I would like to treat it together with *Fugui shenxian*, for which there are some interesting variations among extant manuscripts (I am thinking in particular of a copy held at Shandong University Library, which has less dialogue sections than the others, highlights the tune titles, feels less edited, and may be a version closer to performance).

⁵⁵³ He, Manzi 何滿子, *Pu Songling yu Liaozhai zhiyi* 蒲松齡與聊齋誌異 (Shanghai: Shanghai chuban gongsi, 1955), pp. 69-71.

prose essays detailing the local situation.⁵⁵⁴ In one of the essays, he tells of the failure in 1703 of the staple crops of wheat and barley, of pestilence and incessant floods followed by drought, and of the situation in Zichuan being especially bad compared to other regions in Shandong given its combined devastations of pestilence and banditry.⁵⁵⁵ These writings paint a picture of local devastation unparalleled in official sources. In one poem, “The Famished” 餓人, Pu writes⁵⁵⁶:

Where can one learn of fasting’s way?	何處能求辟穀方
Going door to door begging for food are those fleeing the land.	沿門乞食盡逃亡
Pity the elderly couple, who have no means to survive	可憐翁媪無生計
They sold another of their boys in exchange for a peck of husks	又賣小男易斗糠

In another poem, “In Ji’nan” 歷下,⁵⁵⁷ Pu writes:

The Emperor, possessing the Way, is magnanimous	有道天王自聖明
And sent million piculs of tribute grains from the South	
to relieve the myriad beings	南漕百萬濟蒼生
His Highness reported upswings in the year’s first months	大人已報年初富
Yet in the fifth month the prefectural seat is	
strewn with corpses ⁵⁵⁸	五月橫尸滿郡城

⁵⁵⁴ On Pu’s poems, see Sheng Wei 盛偉, “Shi lun Pu Songling Kangxi jiashen nian ‘liumin’ shi ji xiezu de lishi beijing” 試論蒲松齡康熙甲申年“流民”詩及寫作的歷史背景, *Pu Songling yanjiu* 00 (1986): 48-63.

⁵⁵⁵ Pu Songling, “Kangxi sishi san nian ji zai qian pian” 康熙四十三年記災前篇 (First record of the disasters [of 1703-4]), in Liu Jieping ed., *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu*, 2: 162-65.

⁵⁵⁶ The text for the two poems below come from Zhao Weizhi 趙蔚芝 ed., *Liaozhai shiji jianzhu* 聊齋詩集箋注 (Ji’nan: Shandong daxue, 1996), pp. 463-64; I have consulted Zhao’s annotations in producing the translations.

⁵⁵⁷ Lixia is another name for the city of Ji’nan.

⁵⁵⁸ Zhao Weizhi, *Liaozhai shiji jian zhu*, p. 464. It is not clear to me who “daren” in the third line (“His Highness”) refers to. Zhao suggests that it refers to the governor 巡撫 of Shandong, but it seems unlikely, as (per Zhao’s annotations) the Shandong governor Wang Guochang 王國昌 was dismissed from the post in the first month of 1704, with a Zhao Shixian 趙世顯 replacing him. “Daren” could have been an official sent to Shandong for famine relief, such as the Vice Minister of Works 工部侍郎 Mu Helun 穆和倫, who submitted a memorial to the throne in the fifth month of 1704 reporting that the famished population in Shandong has been relieved and asking for the functionaries sent to the province for the relief efforts to be sent back (*Shengzu shilu* 聖祖實錄, vol. 6 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), *juan* 216, p. 188). “Daren” can of course also refer to local / regional officials in general.

In pitting the image of starving corpses contrasted against the emperor's pardons, Pu paints a bitter picture of official abuses on the ground in Shandong in 1703-4, with successive natural disasters exacerbated by the mismanagement of famine relief and the false reporting of officials.⁵⁵⁹ In a record of local disasters in 1703-4, Pu tells that while the court sent five hundred thousand piculs of grains for famine relief to Shandong, Zichuan did not receive them because natural disaster was not reported there.⁵⁶⁰ In another essay, Pu recounted an incidence in an unnamed county, where a group of local scholars reported a pestilence to the magistrate, only to see their report rejected.⁵⁶¹ In a petition to the Provincial Administration Commission, which seems to have been directed to the newly installed Commissioner in 1704, Pu further questioned why Zichuan's own government granaries were not used for relief, mentioning its licentiates (*shengyuan*) who were "waiting to die" 奄奄待斃 from starvation.⁵⁶² Elsewhere Pu described at length the

⁵⁵⁹ The Kangxi emperor had toured Shandong in 1702, and the widespread crop failures and famine in the province in the two following years had called his personal attention. Given the serious amount of resources mobilized for relief, there would have been incentive on the part of supervising officials to finally report upswings by 1704, even though as Pu reveals, local devastation had hardly ceased (for an account of relief efforts of 1703-1704 from the top, see *Shengzu shilu*, *juan* 217, p. 199). Kangxi appears to have been aware of the problematic reporting of regional officials concerning the famine, judging by the veritable records from 1705 (*Shengzu shilu*, *juan* 219, p. 212). There is a larger story there that needs to be studied. On the larger context of famine relief in Qing China, see Lilian Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Pierre-Étienne Will, *Bureaucracy and Famine in Eighteenth-Century China*, trans. Elborg Forster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Pierre-Étienne Will and R. Bin Wong, with James Lee, *Nourish the People: The State Civilian Granary System in China, 1650-1850* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1991).

⁵⁶⁰ Pu, "Ji zai qianpian," p. 163.

⁵⁶¹ Pu, "Qiu zai jilüe houpian" 秋災記略后篇 (Second record summarizing the autumn disasters [of 1704]), in *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu*, 2: 168. As the story goes, the scholars showed the bugs to the magistrate, who gasped and asked what they were; one of the scholars replied that it was a 'hutu bug' 糊塗蟲 ("muddleheaded critter"), a term for referring to an undiscerning person, thus mocking the magistrate). In the same essay Pu described the wide-spread fear among people with the rumor of taxes to be collected again from those who previously received remissions.

⁵⁶² Pu Songling, "Jiuhuang jice shang Buzhengsi" 救荒急策上布政司 (Petition to the Provincial Administration Commission with urgent measures for famine relief), *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu*, 2: 172.

abuses of tax and grain collection by local functionaries who took advantage of earlier policies, and the large sums of money unaccounted for in taxes collected.⁵⁶³

All of this is dramatized in *Monan qu*, whose account of drought and pestilence, and also of official corruption, strikingly echoes the situation in Zichuan in 1703-4. The first scene opens with a cacophony of complaints from a group of refugees (*liumin* 流民) fleeing the land. While there are rumors of tax remissions from the emperor, those who cannot not pay their taxes in full are beaten fiercely; those who have some store of grain risk being robbed by bandits (one man tells the story of such a degree holder in his village), with the local officials doing nothing even when cases are reported. Another man recalls how, in a previous year of famine, soup kitchens were set up everywhere according to imperial order, yet the relief grain was swallowed up by local functionaries.

He says⁵⁶⁴:

“Before, when there was a year of poor harvest, the Emperor was moved to pity, and sent down millions of piculs of grain for relief. Yet who did they relieve, but the dogs of the yamen and the county and prefectural officials, while millions and millions of famished people starved to death! If it were in the time of the Hongwu Emperor, he’d peel their skins and pile them up high as a mountain”!

前遇着大儉年, 萬歲爺動愛憐, 發了漕米百萬石, 賑濟賑的衙役家狗, 賑濟賑的是州縣官, 飢民餓死了勾千千萬。若遇着洪武皇帝, 剥的皮堆積如山!⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ Pu Songling, “Zi yi liu bi” 淄邑流弊 (Running abuses in Zichuan County) and “Zi yi cao bi” 淄邑漕弊 (Abuses of the collection of grain tax in Zichuan County), in *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu*, 2: 174-78.

⁵⁶⁴ The text below comes from the National Central Library MS; the punctuation is mine.

⁵⁶⁵ I’m not sure of the import of the reference here to the Hongwu Emperor – here the founding emperor of the Ming apparently has a reputation for flaying corrupt officials.

While voicing their woes, the band of men decide that they must find a way to beg for food, and together they come up with a musical act – a powerful plaint of their suffering and the injustice they have seen. I translate the passage in full below.⁵⁶⁶

One of them said, “I’ve begged before in a poor harvest year.”

Everyone said: “How did you do it?”

This Zhu Er said: “I went around singing ‘the lotus falls.’”⁵⁶⁷

Everyone said: “That’s marvelous! Why don’t you be the teacher, and we’ll learn it from you.”

Zhu Er said: “You all better follow along then. Recently there’s a new set of tunes going around, and it took me a good few days to learn it. Now it’s come to good use. Listen now.

The lotus falls;

How the millions suffer in a poor harvest year!

The fields are parched, and the wheat stalks are brown.

The lotus falls.

Are you all dumb or what? Nobody’s made a sound!”

Everyone said: “It’s so embarrassing.”

Zhu Er said: “Look, you’re going begging, and you’re too embarrassed! Let’s go our separate ways, and we can each fend for ourselves.”

The group kept him from going, and said: “Don’t be mad! We’ll sing along.

How the millions suffer in a poor harvest year!

The fields are parched, and the wheat stalks are brown.

From nearly two acres of wheat fields planted,

There’s but a basket’s yield, with roots and all!

The lotus falls, hey, slips the lotus.”

Zhu Er said: “Excellent! This is how we’ll do it. I’ve kept with me a few instruments, which I’ll distribute amongst you. If you don’t get one, just clap along.” And indeed, he took out a little drum and a string of bamboo clappers, which he gave to the group. Then he coughed and said: “Mind you now, let’s get started!

“Late in the sixth month the rain poured down

So we planted for a late harvest round

The fields flourished, growing more and more

Before long the wheat stalks were one foot tall

⁵⁶⁶ The text below comes from the National Central Library MS; the punctuation is mine. I have relied on annotations in Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, in a number of places. While the text is a play, in the manuscript the stage directions are only sometimes indicated in smaller characters (as is the convention); often they appear in the body of the text and simply read as part of the narrative. I translate the following section following the manuscript (where everything reads as part of the narrative except for two instances of tune titles indicated by smaller size characters).

⁵⁶⁷ *Lianhua lao* (“The lotus falls”) is often known as a begging song (see discussion following translation).

We all looked forward to the autumn crop
But who knew Heaven wouldn't help
Swarms of locusts blotched out the sun
Every morning we chased after them

The locusts devoured all the crops
As for the harvest, there was none
With no other resort, we gaped and gawked
In gasping hunger we famished and burned

The litter of children is crying out their guts
The wife is digging up weeds to mix with husks
Her old man got ill and came down with a fever
Not being able to poop, he breathed his last

We brought the famine to the county seat
But the magistrate wouldn't report the calamities
So we took it up to the Superior Commander
Who sent down Old Huang, the Salt Commissioner

The magistrate was afraid he'd report it truthfully
And pleaded with him with lots of bounty
Inside his palanquin Old Huang looked down blindly⁵⁶⁸
And reported just a few villages from the entire county

Finding this out, everybody howled⁵⁶⁹
We shook and shouted, filled with rage
But Old Huang sped off with his entourage
With curses ringing behind, for the wind to gage

The Commander accordingly submitted the cases⁵⁷⁰;
And the villages were relieved of three-tenths of grain tax
While some folks got to smile, others wailed
To the Lady of Justice all reverently prayed⁵⁷¹

How pathetic the folks wandering the roads!
They know not whether they will meet their deaths
Everyone in the villages is scattered and gone
For fear of being beat up in the yamen in town⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁸ Tentative translation; I am interpreting 麻 as something to the effect of 不.

⁵⁶⁹ Tentative translation.

⁵⁷⁰ I.e. to the throne; Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, p. 708, glosses “qi le ben” 起了本 as “wrote a memorial” 寫了奏折.

⁵⁷¹ I have not been able to find out anything about 公道娘 – perhaps she is a deity in popular worship?

⁵⁷² Tentative translation.

It's rumored these days the emperor made a great pardon
But in the yamen they beat people up with ever less abandon
They bring out a few bodies with the date of collection
One after another come the funeral processions⁵⁷³

Instead of having my tush beat up to a paste
I'd rather die whole on the side of the road
At least today I can still move and go
I'm grateful for my life, though my luck be low!

I don't hope for the day of the great pardon
I hope only for meeting kindness on the road
May the entire way of my journey be free from troubles
Until I arrive safely in Bianliang, the old capital!

If Heaven has mercy and spares me a life
I shall be able to return home someday
May the corrupt officials be punished, may the harvest arrive
On that day I will burn whole paper ingots and incense for you!
The lotus falls, hey, slips the lotus.⁵⁷⁴

Zhu Er said: "Terrific! We've got the beat together now, and there's no worry of us starving to death."

Everyone shed tears, and said: "If only it would be easier to leave our home! But let's not speak of these woes; let's go, let's go."

有一个說：儉年裡我曾討過飯。眾人說：你是怎么着討法？這朱二說：我是打蓮荷花落。眾人說：妙，妙！你就是個老師，俺就跟着你學罷。朱二說：您可勝接和着。近来街上新編了一套小曲兒，我學了好幾天纔會了，今日用着他了。您都听着。

蓮花落 萬民造孽年景荒，田地焦乾麥枯黃 蓮花落

您都啞了麼？全不做聲一聲。眾人說：怪囂人的。朱二說：這個待要飯吃，還害囂！咱從散此了，各人顧各人罷。眾人拉住，說：你休焦，俺都接聲便了。

萬民造孽年景荒，田地焦乾麥枯黃。共總種了十畝麥，連根拔了勾一筐！蓮花落哩溜蓮花。

⁵⁷³ Tentative translation.

⁵⁷⁴ The lines with "lotus" serve a more ornamental (rather than semantic) purpose.

朱二說：極好！就是這等。我收拾着幾件樂器，分散給您，沒有的拍手亦可。果然取出梆梆鼓、插兒机，交於衆人。嗽一聲，說：好好着，咱就來。

六月半頭下大雨，晚谷種的甚相當；長來長去極茂盛，眼看就有尺多高。

寔指望秋禾接接口，誰想天爺不在行。遮天影日螞蟥過，朝朝每日言+虎飛蝗。

把谷吃了個罄溜淨，莊稼何曾上上場！大家沒法乾瞪眼，餓的口乾牙又黃。

一窩孩子吱吱叫，老婆挖菜插粗糠。老頭不濟瘟着了，出不下恭來絕氣亡。

大家告災到了縣，知縣不肯報災傷。衆人又往上司告，差下鹽正道老黃。

知縣怕他寔落報，送上厚禮哀哀央。他轎裡低頭麻瞪眼，合縣報了幾個庄。

百姓跟着號啕痛，搖頭怒喝臉郎當。一溜飛顛洋長去，罵聲空在耳邊廂。

軍門炤着起了本，按庄赦了三分糧。哭的哭來笑的笑，人人祝讚他那公道娘。

路上行人多淒涼，暫時不知死合亡。鄉里人民都散盡，城裡大板大比糧。

近日相傳有大赦，越發狠打苦難當。一限抬出好幾個，莊莊矐矐出新喪。

與其臨死臀稀爛，不如囫圇死道傍。今日還能沿地走，運氣極極低算命長。

俺也不指望逢大赦，指望出門逢善良。一路無災又無難，安安稳穩到卞梁。

天爺睜眼不殺死，他日還能返故鄉。貪官拿去年成好，整紙大鏢又燒香。蓮花落哩溜花蓮。

朱二說：好極了！咱可以合打上來了，不愁餓死了！衆人都哭了，說：就是故鄉難離！這也說不的。咱就去罷，去罷。

The sung sequence proceeds from the troubles of pestilence to the greed of officials, and concludes with the pathetic images of the common folk being forced to take to the roads. Here the seven-syllable-line stanzas of “the lotus falls,” with its rhyme and rhythm, forms a powerful expressive medium befitting both the social status of the

refugees and the fierceness of their plaint. The tune is extant in the popular songs and the local *wuyin xi* 五音戲 dramas of the Zichuan area; in Yuan and Ming drama tunes with the same title were cast as the songs of beggars.⁵⁷⁵ Here the song of the refugees – a performance within a play – has a leader, chorus and rhythmic accompaniment on drums and bamboo clappers. The colloquial song sequence reinforces the critical voices preceding the scene, bringing the men’s cacophony of complaints together into a pulsing and unified chorus.

Satire runs throughout *Monan qu*, proceeding from its scathing portrayal of officials at all levels to its mockery of self-important village *xiucai*. In the third chapter, Mrs. Fang, wife of Zhang Hongjian, tries to dissuade her husband from participating in the local scholars’ suit against the magistrate, as they like to be righteous when it comes to their own reputations but the yamen is merciless but for money and power.⁵⁷⁶ Zhang nevertheless gets coaxed by the local scholars into penning the suit, and when the case falls through, he is forced to flee. Magistrate Ma puts an incensed Mrs. Fang into prison despite the pleas of her brother Fang Zhong 方仲. When Fang succeeds in the civil exams, he decides to wreak personal vengeance on Ma, taking the opportunity while in the capital to get cuddly with Yan Shifan 嚴世蕃, son of the corrupt minister Yan Song 嚴

⁵⁷⁵ See Chen Yuchen 陳玉琛, *Liaozhai liqu* 聊齋俚曲 (Ji’nan: Shandong wenyi, 2004), p. 412; Zhou Yibai 周貽白, “Lun ‘lianhua lao’” 論蓮花落, in Shen Xieyuan 沈燮元, ed., *Zhou Yibai xiaoshuo xiqu lunji* 周貽白小說戲曲論集 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1986).

⁵⁷⁶ She sings: “The scholars are careless in their ways; / they all claim credit when there’s a win, / and everyone knows to play gimmicks with words. / But nowadays only money and power matter; / the yamen is merciless otherwise” 秀才們做事鬆 / 得了勝都居功 / 人人會把花鎗弄 / 如今只論錢合勢 / 衙門裡不合你辦青紅.... (MS, 3 *hui*; line breaks mine).

嵩.⁵⁷⁷ Through this relation, he manages to have an investigation of corruption sent down to Lulong from above (this is a particularly ironic turn of the plot), and the magistrate and the inspector general finally receive their due. In the scene of the corruption investigation in the fourteenth chapter, a group of local *xiuca* are further satirized, as they help magistrate Ma plead his innocence despite all their former misgivings (they get their proper share of beatings by the investigating official, who rightfully suspects that they were bribed by Ma).⁵⁷⁸

If the depictions of famine and corruption in *Monan qu* are satires of local social history, there is another part of *Monan qu* which unfolds in the imaginative manner of historical legend. In contrast to the venal officials at every level of officialdom, the heroes of *Monan qu* are a group of bandits in the mountains of north China, somewhere between Lulong County and the northern frontiers of the Ming empire, outside the power of imperial law and order and with the fictional name of Sanshan 三山 (“Three Mountains”). The setting is immediately reminiscent of Liangshan, the mountains of western Shandong known through the *Shuihu* story cycle as the enclave of Song Jiang and his band of outlaws at the end of the northern Song.⁵⁷⁹ *Monan qu* takes place in the

⁵⁷⁷ The historic Yan Shifan (1513-1565) was executed for treason after being charged with corruption in 1562. Yan Song (1480-1565) was grand secretary from 1542-1562 and also extremely corrupt. Chapter 10 of the story narrates Fang Zhong’s getting chummy with Yan Shifan in the capital for the purpose of revenge. Later, speaking to Zhang Hongjian, Fang Zhong comments on how he is embarrassed to have done this (chapter 27).

⁵⁷⁸ One might note that satires such as these appear also in *Liaozhai zhiyi*, which is rife with mockeries of both local officials and lower-level degree holders in all their varieties of hypocrisy and ineptness. In the vernacular corpus, there is also a scathing portrait of underworld injustice in *Hansen qu*. For a study which deals primarily with the satirical aspects of the corpus, see Cai Zaomin 蔡造珉, *Xiegui xieyao, citan cinue—Liaozhai liqu xinlun* 寫鬼寫妖, 刺貪刺虐—聊齋俚曲新論 (Taipei: Wanjuan lou, 2003).

⁵⁷⁹ The stories of the bandits were long known through oral tradition, while the earliest printed editions of the novel *Shuihu zhuan* date to the sixteenth century. For a recent study on the relationship between *Shuihu*’s oral and written traditions, see Ge Liangyan, *Out of the Margins: The Rise of Chinese Vernacular Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001).

reign of the Jiajing Emperor in the late Ming (reign 1522-1566), in the time of a similarly corrupt court under the influence of Yan Song 嚴嵩 (1480-1565). The brotherhood of bandits consists of a ferocious leader Ren Yi 任義 (“Ren the Righteous”) and his two sworn brothers. Ren Yi is the focus – righteous and hot-tempered, he vows to eradicate all corrupt officials and bring peace and justice to the common people. In the fifth chapter, as the group of local scholars who tried to sue the magistrate are shackled up and sent to the frontiers, they are saved on the way by the bandits, who have the skin peeled of one yamen runner and the head cut off of the other. As for the scholars, the bandit king sends them down the mountain with taels of silver, and thus begins a friendship between them, which will play an important part in the later negotiations between the outlaws and the imperial forces.

The main subplot involving the bandits takes place after the protagonist Zhang Hongjian returns to his family upon achieving spectacular examination success. In the 29th chapter, Zhang has served as Hanlin Academician for four years and is now serving in high office in the Ministry of Personnel. The bandits are flourishing in the hills, and against Zhang’s counsel, the emperor sends a hundred thousand men to quell them. The commander-in-chief, a brave but dim-witted General Jin, gets caught alive by the bandits and is courteously sent back alive, and upon his report of defeat the court is split between those who support further military action and those who favor peaceable incorporation (*zhao’an* 招安) following Zhang Hongjian’s proposal. The military faction wins, and the emperor sends the boastful but inept Minister of War with another hundred thousand troops and two experienced generals to Sanshan. There they suffer again a devastating

defeat, with the bandit king displaying not only extraordinary martial prowess but also great stratagem, obliterating half of the ten thousand imperial troops with just a portion of its numbers. The emperor finally agrees to have Zhang Hongjian go on his peace mission with just a dozen men, but insists on sending troops further behind him to provide backing. Before he goes, Zhang sends word to the local scholars back home to inform the bandits, and with their help successfully incorporates Ren Yi and his sworn brothers into the imperial army. At this time, Mongol troops have come to raid the region, killing people and abducting the women, but Commander Yang Fan 楊蕃, in charge of imperial troops twenty-thousand strong, sent by the emperor to back Zhang Hongjian, frustratingly does nothing. Ren Yi leads a night raid on the invaders and kills the Mongolian king; when he returns with Zhang Hongjian to the court, he is enfeoffed for this achievement as Marquis of Righteousness and Loyalty 忠義侯, and put in charge of guarding the twelve northern garrisons.

Here is a glorious portrait of outlaws, valiant and righteous, contrasting starkly with the inept and grandiose officials of the court. The repeated failures of imperial attempts to subdue the bandits, their peaceful incorporation through the mediation of Zhang, and the bandits being deployed to fight foreign forces, are all reminiscent of similar plotlines, elaborated on a much greater scale, in the 16th century editions of the novel *Shuihu zhuan*.⁵⁸⁰ While scholars have written of the complex explorations of moral

⁵⁸⁰ For a brief overview of the complex textual history of *Shuihu zhuan* and a study of the novel in the sixteenth century context, see Andrew Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 279-303.

There are several explicit references to the rebel band of Song Jiang in *Monanqu*, such as a reference to Li Kui 李逵 in chapter 1, and a reference to Liangshan in chapter 17, when Ren Yi refers to Zhang Shuye 張

principle and personal versus political loyalty in *Shuihu zhuan*,⁵⁸¹ however, the central tension in *Monan qu* is not so much between the brotherhood and the imperial order as between officials (*guan* 官) and commoners (*min* 民). The outlaws are depicted unequivocally as the heroes of the people – Ren Yi saves the local scholars and protects the commoners in the vicinity of Sanshan from northern raiders; when he submits under the imperial order and leaves for the capital with Zhang Hongjian, the local people come in tears, trying to keep him. Ren Yi is indignant against corrupt officials, but when the right intermediary comes – Zhang Hongjian, who is himself truly virtuous – the bandit king happily becomes a loyal subject. As he sings just before their meeting: “We will turn around and submit to the Son of Heaven, / we won’t be outlaws of the Ming dynasty” 俺今回首归天子 / 不作名朝化外民.⁵⁸²

Here it is apt for a brief comment on the depictions of the Ming court and its border troubles in *Monan qu*, which, like its depiction of the outlaws, seemed to have played less upon actual history as upon the imagined heroes of fiction and drama. In *Liaozhai zhiyi* and other prose writings, Pu Songling grimly records the troubled history of the province, from Manchu raids and violent suppressions in the early years of the Qing to rife banditry in the time of Pu’s old age.⁵⁸³ While scholars have similarly interpreted anti-Manchu sentiments in *Monan qu* in its depiction of the brutalities of the

叔夜, an official who had historically helped to mediate between the rebel forces and the Song court (see MS; also, Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, p. 789n5).

⁵⁸¹ See, for instance, Andrew Lo, “*San-kuo-chih yen-I* and *Shui-hu chuan* in the context of historiography: An interpretive study,” Ph.D diss, Princeton University, 1981, pp. 146-71.

⁵⁸² I suspect “Ming” written as 名 is due to a taboo for the previous dynasty in certain Qing manuscripts.

⁵⁸³ Allan Barr, “Pu Songling and *Liaozhai zhiyi*,” pp. 111-26; Luo Wei 駱偉 and Xu Ying 徐瑛, “Shi lun *Liaozhai zhiyi* zai shixue shang de jiazhi” 試論聊齋志異在史學上的價值, *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan*, 4 ji (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 1984), pp. 261-71.

northern raiders,⁵⁸⁴ the vernacular narrative actually presents the brief episode in a boisterous manner, with the focus rather on the heroism of the bandits in their night ambush on the Mongolian king. Bandit and raider both appear as boldly colored stage characters, as does the incompetent imperial commander Yang Fan, who holds his twenty-thousand troops in check while the raiders go unrestrained. It is perhaps not so much in the plot itself as in colloquialisms like *dazi* 韃子 (“barbarians”), used to refer to the raiders, which reveals some sense of contemporary derogatory attitudes.⁵⁸⁵ But then such terms occur as part of the diction of fiction, and then they also belong to stereotypical Han images of foreign invaders.⁵⁸⁶

Given *Monan qu*'s themes of outlaws, famine, and satires on official corruption, it is no surprise that the work found a passionate readership amongst 20th century Chinese scholars from Lu Dahuang onwards. Scholars have found in the work Pu's sympathy for the people, his critical stance towards the figures of authority, and anti-Manchu sentiments. But there is a danger of over-reading these political elements in a work which is above all an expressive one, as *qu* (“song”) in the title of *Monan qu* reminds us. When

⁵⁸⁴ In *Cibei qu*, the raiding Manchus from the north are referred to as 北兵, which is also used in *Monan qu*, but here the raiders are referred to specifically as 蒙古韃子 (“Mongol barbarians,” 32 *hui*). This does not seem to have kept Chinese scholars from interpreting them as Manchus (see Pu and Zou eds., *Liaozhai liqu ji*, p. 879n5; Wang Zhizhong 王枝忠, “Cong Zhang Hongjian dao *Monan qu*” – lüetan Pu Songling *Liaozhai zhiyi de gaibian*” 從張鴻漸到磨難曲 – 略談蒲松齡聊齋志異的改編, *Guyuan shizhuan xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 固原師專學報, 1 (1984): 78-79.

⁵⁸⁵ In one place the indignant Ren Yi refers to the raiders as “those troublesome Mongolian savages” 蒙古騷達子 (MS, need end of 32 *hui*). The term *dazi* 韃子 in its early uses had signified “Tartar” but has come to signify northern barbarians in general.

⁵⁸⁶ The contemporary exigencies of the early Qing appear elsewhere in various guises in the vernacular corpus, such as in *Cibei qu*, set at the tumultuous end of the Ming, and *Fan yanyang*, which similarly involves a story of familial reunion and also has an episode involving a fugitive from the banners (these plot elements are present in the classical tale versions of the stories as well). But even so, the stories are centered on family dramas, and to interpret anti-Manchu attitudes in them may be over-reading.

one considers the storyline of the work as a whole, one finds the strands of a love story, bandit tale, and satire of officialdom woven together into a symphonic whole, with moments both lyrical and sardonic, formed in thirty-six chapters through continuous narrative in alternating speech and song. No doubt Pu could have chosen another medium, such as vernacular fiction – passing references in the *liqu* corpus reveal the author’s familiarity with its masterworks. But prosimetric narrative seemed to have offered other artistic possibilities, and perhaps also a wider audience. In the next part of this chapter, we look beyond the vernacular works attributed to Pu to other prosimetric compositions by Shandong literati, and the expressive outlets they found in these forms.

Towards a vernacular poetics

While *Monan qu* uniquely blends lyricism and satire in its depictions of histories local and imagined, it appeared against a larger context of literary compositions using prosimetric narrative from the sixteenth century onwards. Here we will take a look at depictions of history in the genre of the drum ballad (*guci*), the dominant form of long prosimetric narrative in Qing north China, whose frequently historical subject matter is tied to a “rough and heroic” style.⁵⁸⁷ Below I focus on several works from Shandong and

⁵⁸⁷ See Wilt Idema, “Prosimetric and verse narrative,” p. 368-69. *Guci* is also known as *gushu* (“drum-book” 鼓書). While these texts were intimately tied to storytelling performance, here my focus will be on the drum ballad as a literary genre. On the performance of historical stories from Song to Ming times, see Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang, *History and Legend: Ideas and Images in the Ming Historical Novels* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), pp. 12-17. Studies on the performance aspects of northern drum-ballads and related genres utilizing modern fieldwork include Kate Stevens, “Peking Drumsinging,” Ph.D. diss, Harvard University, 1973, and Iguchi Junko 井口淳子, *Chūgoku hoppō nōson no kōshō bunka - katarimono no sho, tekisuto, pafōmansu* 中国北方農村の口承文化—語り物の書、テキスト、パフォーマンス (Tokyo: Fūkyōsha, 1999). See, also, Margaret Wan, “Audiences and Reading Practices for Qing Dynasty Drum Ballads,” in *The Interplay of the Oral and the Written in Chinese Popular Literature*, pp. 61-82.

beyond where history forms the central subject, composed by literati from different levels of society and spanning the period from the mid-Ming to early Qing. I will argue that the drum ballad and its colloquial verse forms allowed for modes of expression uncontained by classical poetic genres while at the same time conditioned by them. Among the wide range of subjects accommodated by the genre are adaptations and re-workings of the events of dynastic history, through which the vernacular medium emerges as an outlet for both dissent and diversion, lament and forthright criticism.⁵⁸⁸

The first work I would like to consider is a little-known work attributed to Pu Lide 蒲立憲 (1683-1751; courtesy name Yi'an 毅庵, sobriquet Donggu 東谷), eldest grandson of Pu Songling, who, like his father and grandfather, was a literatus of local renown but never rose through the ranks of the examination system.⁵⁸⁹ While best remembered for his attempts to assemble and print his grandfather's works, Lide himself was a prolific writer and reader, credited with over fifty *juan* of writings of which only his prose collection is extant. In contrast to these learned works, a vernacular drum ballad *Wentian ci* (Drum ballad interrogating heaven) is also attributed to him.⁵⁹⁰ The drum

⁵⁸⁸ Wilt Idema, "Crossing the Sea in a Leaking Boat: Three Plays by Ding Yaokang," in *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, p. 388, proposes a "Shandong tradition of forthright criticism" in vernacular literature from the region, from novels such as the *Jinpingmei*, the *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, and Ding Yaokang's *Xu Jinpingmei* to the works of Jia Fuxi and Pu Songling.

While in this paper I focus on drum ballads on dynastic history, the genre was also used to record local events. A fine example is the *Gengxu shuizai gu'erci* 庚戌水災鼓兒詞 (Drum Ballad on the Floods of 1790) credited to Ma Yizhu 馬益著 (1722-1807) (see Chapter 2). It is currently being studied by Roland Altenburger. Other examples can be found in Zhang Guixi 張貴喜 and Zhang Wei 張偉 eds., *Shan Shaan guyi mingge sudiaolu* 山陝古逸民歌俗調錄 (Taiyuan: San Jin, 2013).

⁵⁸⁹ The biographical information on Pu Lide below comes from Yuan Shishuo, *Pu Songling shiji zhushu xinkao*, pp. 251-54, and Liu Jieping, *Pu Liuxian zhuan*, 2: 186-88.

⁵⁹⁰ *Wentian ci* was included in the 1929 *Liaozhai baihua yunwen* edited by Ma Lixun as a work by Pu Songling. Lu Dahuang suggests (by the account of his teacher and Pu descendant Pu Guozheng and evidence from manuscripts) that it was authored by Pu Lide (see Lu, "Zuoze wenti," p. 95). The text has also been attributed to a Wang Baichi 王百尺 (Ye Dejun 葉德均, *Song Yuan Ming jiangchang wenxue* 宋元講唱文學 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957), p. 67).

ballad in roughly two hundred fifty lines is comprised of a series of pointed remarks summarizing the contradictions of history against the common Confucian belief in Heaven's just rewards and punishments. Told in a terse colloquial style, the work rather calls into the question the tragic fate of able men and loyal ministers and the fine ends of history's less noble players. It begins⁵⁹¹:

Upon <i>hundun</i> 's first parting an eon begins ⁵⁹²	混沌初分共一元
Above and below are Heaven and the Yellow Springs	下有黃泉上有天
Master Kangjie, with his masterly calculations	康節先生算的準
Had said an eon is a hundred-twenty-nine-thousand and six hundred years ⁵⁹³	他说是十二萬九千六百年
We won't speak of what happened before the Sages ⁵⁹⁴	唐虞以前都不論
For groundless events are unworthy of the ears	荒唐事迹不堪傳
We will only speak of how, from the year when Emperor Yao ascended the throne	且说帝堯登基甲辰歲
To the <i>bingchen</i> year in the Great Qing of the present Qianlong reign ⁵⁹⁵	到而今大清乾隆丙辰年
In the span of these four thousand ninety-four years	四千九十令四載
How many times have things gone wrong!	這其間多少不周全
Father Heaven, you mete out to men riches and glory, poverty and privation;	老天爺 富貴貧賤憑你發落
Whether a man lives a long life, or whether he dies early,	

⁵⁹¹ There are a few manuscripts of this work from Hirai's collection (catalogs no. 3017-22; 0507) with varying titles. The following text comes from no. 0507, a pamphlet of several short works written in a rather poor hand. The drum ballad, appearing under the title *Wentian gu'erci* 問天鼓兒詞 and with its author indicated to be Donggu xiansheng 東谷先生, is preceded by a series of riddles and followed by two short texts attributed to Pu Songling, *Churi ji qiongshen wen* 除日祭窮神文 (Plea on the last day of the year to the Deity of Impoverishment) and *Qiongshen da wen* 窮神答文 (Reply by the Deity of Impoverishment).

I have transcribed the text from the MS using the closest characters in my font pack. A number of variants / orthographic errors are not reflected here; a few are (i.e. 吏 for 史 and 爰 for 受). The line parsings here and in the notes below are mine; I did not transcribe the reader's punctuation. I have also consulted a lightly annotated version of the text contained in Liu Jieping ed., *Qingchu guci liqu xuan*, 1: 185-208.

⁵⁹² *Hundun* is the primordial murkiness from which all arises.

⁵⁹³ Master Kangjie is Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077), the author of *Huangji jingshi* 皇極經世, an elaborate treatise dealing with numerology and prognostication. An "eon" by his definition is divided into twelve "epochs" (*hui* 會), each comprised of thirty "phases" (*yun* 運), which are in turn each made up of twelve "generations" (*shi* 世). Each "generation" is thirty years, and so an "eon" comes out to be a hundred-twenty-nine-thousand and six hundred years.

⁵⁹⁴ Referring to the mythical emperors Yao and Shun.

⁵⁹⁵ The *bingchen* year is the first year of the Qianlong reign, or 1736.

it is all controlled by your hands.	天壽窮通你掌着權
They all say: don't be dishonest, for one is watched from up above	都说是人莫欺心頭上看 離地三尺有青天
That three feet from the ground are the Pure Skies ⁵⁹⁶ ; That those who accumulate good deeds have good things in store	積善人家有餘慶 ⁵⁹⁷ 作惡之人有禍端
While those who commit evil shall suffer disasters; That those with a kind heart will receive rewards in return,	人存好心得好報 奸狡不良愛天譴 人心不平天公道 頭上老天不虧聖賢
While duplicitous men will be punished by Heaven; That though men be partial, Heaven is just; That Heaven above won't fail virtuous men	俺這裡把前聖格言想一想 把那世事人情觀一觀 把眼前的報應對一對 把那二十一吏翻一翻 老天爺
I thought over these axioms of the former sages And took a good look at human affairs I reviewed the retributions before my eyes And perused the twenty-one Histories Father Heaven, how many times you were mistaken in the sentences you doled out!	你從前發落有多少錯 你自來的處分忒也偏 俺鼓肚子寔氣沒處訴 閑來弄筆伸一伸冤
How terribly astray were your judgements! I have nowhere to vent my pent-up frustration: In leisure I take up the brush to voice my complaints	

In its down-to-earth colloquial style, *Wentian ci* questions and refutes the commonly held ideas in the Confucian classics about divine retribution.⁵⁹⁸ In contrast to the cautionary tales of the classics and histories, where virtuous rulers keep Heaven's mandate and evil rulers are punished for their misdeeds, the drum ballad questions Heaven's injustices as manifested through history's unfolding. It proceeds from questioning the fate of the unworthy progeny of the sage kings Yao and Shun to the plight

⁵⁹⁶ "Qingtian" 青天 (here translated as "pure skies") is mostly likely intended to be "Qingtian" 青天 ("Blue skies"), which refers to Heaven as a just arbiter and witness to the affairs of the world.

⁵⁹⁷ The character which I have transcribed as 善 appears to be a shorthand also used elsewhere in this manuscript. There is a blotted out character right after it.

This particular line echoes a line from the commentaries to the hexagram Kun in the *I ching*. The notion of divine rewards and punishments according to one's actions is of course very prominent in morality books such as the *Taishang ganying pian*.

⁵⁹⁸ On ideas about retribution in the early Chinese tradition, see Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, pp. 28-60.

of loyal men such as Bigan 比干, Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊, and goes on to the personal tragedy of Confucius, who was fatherless, lost his son, and separated from his wife during his itinerant life.⁵⁹⁹ It names disasters that occurred during the virtuous reigns of the rulers Yao and Cheng Tang 成湯, contradicting correlative cosmological ideas; it tells of good men such as Boqi 伯奇 and Shensheng 申生 who died unjust deaths, and questions the notion of virtue's rewards.⁶⁰⁰ Part commentary and part narrative, the drum ballad speeds through dynastic history from the Han to the Tang and Song, followed by a slightly longer passage devoted to the Ming.⁶⁰¹ It then gives a long summary of the injustices of Heaven, in ordinary life as in the affairs of rulers and ministers.

In its dialogic setup between the poet and Heaven, and in the manner in which it lays out history in a series of statements and questions, *Wentian ci* evokes the *Tianwen* ("Heavenly questions") ascribed to the great poet Qu Yuan.⁶⁰² Just as the poet of antiquity, banished to the south of the Chu kingdom, is known for his expressions of anguish over the troubles of his court, so a sense of grief and frustration pervades the drum ballad, whose questions, unlike those of *Tianwen*, are not so much riddles evoking

⁵⁹⁹ According to the *Shiji*, Bi Gan, uncle and minister to King Zhou of the Shang dynasty, had his heart torn out as a result of persisting in admonitions to the king. Boyi and Shuqi, princes at the end of the Shang who fled to Zhou to avoid accession, starved themselves to death after King Wu of Zhou put an end to the Shang.

The woes of Confucius's life are recounted in fuller detail in another drum ballad from Shandong, *Kong fuzi gu'er ci* 孔夫子鼓兒詞 (see catalog no. 4027).

⁶⁰⁰ Boqi was the filial eldest son of the minister Yin Jifu 尹吉甫 in the time of King Xuan 宣 of Zhou, who was banished by his father upon his stepmother's slanders. Shensheng 申生 was the eldest son of Duke Xian 獻 of Jin and likewise suffered from the slander of his father's consort; he hung himself.

⁶⁰¹ The historical narrative ends with "Why did the country not fall during the [Tianqi] years, but it happened during the Chongzhen reign?" 爲甚么天得(?)年間不亡國 / 失天下却在年崇禎年 [Liu Jieping text in *Qingchu guci liqu xuan*, 1: 200 has 天啓].

⁶⁰² On Qu Yuan and his *Tianwen*, see "Heavenly Questions" in Victor Mair ed., *The Columbia Anthology of Chinese Literature*, pp. 371-86. In *Wentian ci* Qu Yuan makes an appearance following his traditional image as tragic and banished poet.

the mysteries of creation and kingly succession as rhetorical questions which give expression to the poet's discontent.⁶⁰³ The term *yuan* 冤 (“wronged”) appears a number of times in the text, and near its end, the poet extends his sense of outrage at “unfair events” (不平的事) beyond historical figures to more worldly affairs. Whereas the great classical poem is full of terse and enigmatic aphorisms, the drum ballad's colloquial style brings to life the image of a grumbling village scholar, who emerges in the midst of a series of comments on life's contradictions⁶⁰⁴:

How many beauties have become widowed,	多少红粉做寡婦
How many bachelors end up without a wife! ⁶⁰⁵	多少光棍無有姻緣
Exemplary in-laws get shrews for daughters-in-law,	好型的公婆娶了潑婦
While filial daughters meet strict mothers-in-law.	賢慧媳婦遭着婆婆嚴
Learned scholars do not pass the exams,	宿學秀才不中舉
While the essays for sale get top prize. ⁶⁰⁶	時賣子文章仲魁元
Dunces and douchebags get to ride big horses,	酒囊飯袋騎着馬
While peerless talents have to be on their feet ⁶⁰⁷	才得出重步下顛

One version of the drum ballad reveals its literary ambitions towards the end: “if the men of the world want to thoroughly comprehend my words, they must read through the entire twenty-one histories” 世人參透這些話，二十一史可得讀全, insinuating that the poet himself had done so and condensed its lessons.⁶⁰⁸ The twenty-one histories refer to the voluminous officially compiled dynastic histories, spanning Chinese history from

⁶⁰³ On the riddles in *Tianwen* and the pan-Eurasian qualities of the work, see the extensive notes to “Heavenly Questions” in *The Columbia Anthology of Chinese Literature*, pp. 371-73.

⁶⁰⁴ The text below from no. 0507.

⁶⁰⁵ The version in *Qingchu guci liqu xuan* has 幾千義夫斷了弦 (how many thousands of righteous men have lost their loves).

⁶⁰⁶ Tentative translation.

⁶⁰⁷ The version in *Qingchu guci liqu xuan* has 才德出眾受煎熬 (peerless talents suffer hardships).

⁶⁰⁸ These lines appear in the *Qingchu guci liqu xuan* version of “Wentian ci” (p. 207) but do not appear in no. 0507.

antiquity to the Yuan; mastery of them was a sign of great erudition.⁶⁰⁹ Most people probably encountered the standard histories in abridged form, such as in collections of excerpts and topical selections (*shichao* 史抄).⁶¹⁰ As a schoolmaster, Pu Lide would likely have also been familiar with primers which sought to present historical knowledge in accessible form.⁶¹¹ Like these and other works, *Wentian ci* presents complex historical narratives in an abridged form, while unlike them, it critiques the commonly accepted notions of history as retribution. Its earthy language enhances the effect of protest; its choice of colloquial song-narrative may also have something to do with what seemed to have been a common practice among Shandong literati to adapt existing texts into drum ballad form.⁶¹²

The earliest elaboration of the twenty-one histories in prosimetric form is the *Nianyi shi tanci* 廿一史彈詞 (String ballad on the twenty-one histories) of the eminent

⁶⁰⁹ The twenty-one histories were printed first during the early sixteenth century by the Guozi jian as a set of twenty-one, adding to the seventeen histories of the late Song the *Songshi*, *Liaoshi*, *Jinshi* and *Yuanshi* (Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, p. 628).

On the ascendancy of historical studies (*shixue* 史學) in the Qing, see Elman, “The Social Roles of Literati in Early to Mid-Ch’ing,” p. 396, and “The Changing Role of Historical Knowledge in Southern Provincial Civil Examinations during the Ming and Ch’ing,” *Renwen ji shehui kexue jikan* 人文及社會科學集刊 5.1 (Nov 1992): 265-319.

⁶¹⁰ On *shichao*, see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, pp. 630-31.

⁶¹¹ For example, primers in the tradition of *Mengqiu*. See Bai Liming, *Shaping the Ideal Child*, pp. 29-32; Zhang Zhigong, *Chuantong yuwen jiaoyu chutan*, pp. 69-90. Pu Songling is also credited with a primer *Liren wen* 曆日文 (Chronicle of the Ages), a classical text in four-syllables in roughly 260 lines narrating the famous personages and events of history from mythical beginnings to the end of the Ming (ref. Chap. 2, n277).

⁶¹² An extant *Kong fuzi gu’erci* 孔夫子鼓兒詞 (Drum-lyric on the life of Confucius; no. 4027) advertises its appeal to “youngsters” (*zidi zhi bei* 子弟之輩) who can obtain knowledge of the details of the Sage’s life by simply perusing the text, whose author has taken care to assemble them through consulting a plethora of textual sources on the life of Confucius. Another undated work, the *Zhuangnong zazi gu’erci* 莊農雜字鼓兒詞 (Drum-lyric on the *Farmer’s assorted characters*), which includes sections on agricultural activities, foods and household items, as well as exhortations against gambling, the division of property, and unfilial behavior, appears to have been elaborated from the categories of an assorted characters text. I am grateful to Li Zhenju for sharing with me a manuscript of this text, annotated and hand-copied by him, after an undated Qing manuscript obtained in Shandong.

late Ming literatus Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488-1559), Hanlin Academician and son of the Chief Grand Secretary Yang Tinghe 楊廷和 (1459-1529) during the Jiajing era, who produced a prolific body of writings during his long exile to Yunnan as a result of his involvement in the Great Rites Controversy in the Jiajing emperor's court.⁶¹³ Yang's works reveal a keen interest in the genre of the song-lyric (*ci*) and in colloquial language, which may be best viewed against a larger context of late Ming literary engagements with vernacular languages and genres.⁶¹⁴ The *Nianyi shi tanci*, which displays tremendous erudition in its extensive narration of the dynastic histories, appears to have been part of a larger movement from the late sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries to incorporate prosimetric forms into the literary sphere.⁶¹⁵ While adopting *tanci* ("string ballad") in its title, in its historical subject matter and epic style the *Nianyi shi tanci* has perhaps more to share with the northern drum ballad than with the Jiangnan string ballads known from later times as the representatives of the genre. The expository sections in the beginning of each of its ten segments (*duan* 段) reveal the author's familiarity as well with the literary genre of the song-lyric. The generic complexity of the work is too large of a subject to be treated here; I would simply like to note how the *Nianyi shi tanci* set the precedent for a highly literary use of prosimetric narrative. One late Ming reader, a Song Fengxiang 宋鳳翔 of the Wu region, commented on the dazzling effect of its contradiction of styles⁶¹⁶:

Those who abridge the histories do no more than pare down the prose and the events and complete [the summaries] with admonitions, so as to facilitate the

⁶¹³ See Kang-I Sun Chang, "Literature of the early Ming to mid-Ming (1375-1572), in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, 2: 43-44.

⁶¹⁴ See He Yuming, *Home and the World*, pp. 43-53.

⁶¹⁵ Idema, "Prosimetric and verse narrative," p. 357.

⁶¹⁶ "Nianyi shi tanci jiu xu" 廿一史彈詞舊序, in Yang Shen 楊慎, *Nianyi shi tanci zhu* 廿一史彈詞注, 4 vols. (Guangzhou: Zhonghua shuju, 1938), 1: 1. The preface is signed with the year 1623.

reader's perusal.⁶¹⁷ Yongxiu [Yang Shen] is different. He proceeds with song, followed by narration, mixing in the speech of the villages and the talk of the streets, condensing the [narratives] and developing the contrasts while the rhymes form by themselves. [This string ballad] seems serious, while it seems to be in jest; it seems vulgar, and yet it seems lofty. It seems intimate yet it seems detached. How can it be said that [Yang] merely sought to give vent to his own feelings? He grieved for the fleeting passage of ages past and present; he mourned the transience of dynasties risen and fallen. Yet the men of the masses can hardly perceive [these truths]. Therefore he sends forth his message in song, so that those who voice it will be deeply moved, and those who hear it will easily be led to rumination. 夫世之刪史者。不過節約其文與事。備勸戒。便觀覽而已。用修不然。先之以聲歌。繼之以序說。雜以里語街談。隲括參差。自然成韻。似正似諧。似俗似雅。似近似遠。其意豈徒以自廣已哉。蓋痛古今之須臾。悲興亡之倏忽。而橫目之民。悠悠以難悟也。故為曼聲以送之。使言者足以感。聞者易以思。...

Here the poignant exposition of dynastic events in song is set against the serious task of the transmission of historical knowledge – the work, taking a form most unconventional for the task, is viewed as superior to the conventional forms of the abridged histories for both its power on the affect and its accessibility to the populace. Its contrast between classical erudition and colloquial speech, between lofty sentiments and vulgar language, between serious intent and playful form all contribute to a distinct vernacular poetics elaborated through the prosimetric form. The work's literary ambitions were not lost on early Qing readers, such as one Zhang Sanyi 張三異 (1609-1691) of Hanyang 漢陽, an avid reader of the standard histories and an aficionado of Yang's string ballad, who in the Kangxi era completed a "String ballad on the Ming eras" 明紀彈詞 as a sequel to the *Nianyi shi tanci*, which ended with the Yuan dynasty.⁶¹⁸ In his preface

⁶¹⁷ 刪, here translated as "abridged," has the literal meaning of "crossing out."

⁶¹⁸ In a preface dated to 1710, Zhang's son Zhang Zhonghuang 張仲璜 tells of how nearly four decades ago his father had composed the sequel to Yang Shen's string ballad after finishing with his official duties in Guiji 會稽, and entrusted to him the task of annotating the works. Despite his timely completion of the annotations and attempts to print the work, however, Zhonghuang did not succeed in doing so until

Zhang enthusiastically praised the *tanci* for making accessible the voluminous standard histories to readers, for which it deserved no less credit than the complete histories (*quanshi* 全史) themselves.⁶¹⁹ As for his own ballad, elaborated in Yang's spirit, it aspired to be a "fresh voice from the wilds" 草野新聲 in contrast to official attempts to compile the history of the Ming, with the ambition to make known to the populace the events of the previous dynasty so as to serve as lessons for the present.⁶²⁰

If for late Ming and early Qing readers, the *Nianyi shi tanci* was both a work of popularization and poetic expression, the prosimetric form served as the vehicle for a lively iconoclasm in the work of the Shandong literatus and official Jia Yingchong 賈應寵 (1590-1674; hao Fuxi 鼻西, or "west of the Fu mountain"), who lived a century later during the Ming Qing transition.⁶²¹ While the figure of Yang Shen survives through many late Ming accounts, whose portrayals of his music-making come hand in hand with his image as banished poet and bohème,⁶²² Jia Fuxi is a much more elusive figure, whose life

1710, nineteen year after his father's passing in 1691, when he himself retired from official service to his ancestral Hubei. According to Sanyi's grandson Tanlin 坦麟, who authored a preface dated to 1727 with the text's reprinting, the first printing was a quite successful one and was in wide demand in the Hubei region. See Zhang Zhonghuang 張仲璜, "*Tanci zhu xu*" 彈詞注序, in *Nianyi shi tanci zhu*, 1: 1-3, and Zhang Tanlin 張坦麟, "*Tanci zhu hou ba*" 彈詞注後跋, in *ibid.*, 4: 1-2.

⁶¹⁹ See Zhang Sanyi 張三異, "*Nianyi shi tanci zhu xu*" 廿一史彈詞注序, in *Nianyi shi tanci zhu*, 1: 2.

⁶²⁰ See Zhang Sanyi 張三異, "*Mingji tanci xu*" 明紀彈詞序, in *Nianyi shi tanci zhu*, 1: 2. Zhang's portrayal of his work as such is interesting, given that he was himself a retired official. The *Mingshi*, the official history of the Ming, was not completed until 1735, altogether taking some 95 years in its compilation from the very beginning of the Qing. In the editor's notes to the annotated ballads, Zhang Zhonghuang notes that the *Mingshi* was not yet completed and that his father's string ballad rather drew from a range of other works (a detailed list of titles are given; see Zhang Zhonghuang 張仲璜, "*Tanci zhu fanli*" 彈詞注凡例, in *Nianyi shi tanci zhu*, 1: 5). On the compilation of the *Mingshi*, see Wilkinson, *Manual*, pp. 790-91.

⁶²¹ These dates are from Guan Dedong, *Jia Fuxi mupici jiaozhu* (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1982), p.1. Liu Jieping, *Mupi sanke guci* (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1954), which provides a detailed discussion of the varying accounts of Jia's life (including his service in officialdom at the end of the Ming) together with a chronology, gives the alternate dates of 1589-1671 (pp. 11-16). On Jia's alternative name "Fuxi" as "west of Fu mountain," see *ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶²² See Zhao Yingzhi, "Realm of Shadows and Dreams: Theatrical and Fictional Lyricism in Early Qing Literature," Ph.D diss, Harvard University, 2014, pp. 176-78. In the same chapter she also discusses the

details come to us mostly through a biography of him by the great early Qing dramatist Kong Shangren (1648-1718).⁶²³ There Jia is never mentioned by his real name but is rather introduced by his sobriquet, “Wanderer with the wooden hide” (*mupi sanke* 木皮散客), where the “wooden hide” is none other than his clapper, a synecdoche for both his art and his person and “the instrument of merry jesting and fiery denunciation” (*xixiao numa zhi ju* 嬉笑怒罵之具). Jia is described to have carried his clapper wherever he went, performing in schoolrooms and markets, and in the halls and bureaus of officials alike; as for what he expounded, he cared not for citing the classics and histories but rather performed “huckster ballads” 稗詞 with an astounding, unabashedly pragmatic view of human motivations.⁶²⁴ The biography tells⁶²⁵:

He would often take the *Analects* [as the basis for his] huckster lyrics, sitting upright in the marketplace and beating the drum clapper as he narrated. His chief message was that the sages past and present spoke of nothing but profit, and acted invariably out of the desire for power, and that those who spoke of profit and acted for power and yet deceived the world while harboring other motives were country rogues.

居恆取論語為稗詞，端坐坊市，擊鼓板說之。其大旨謂古今聖賢莫言非利，莫行非勢，言利行勢而違心欺世者，鄉願也。

The *Lidai shilie guci* 歷代史略鼓詞 (A summary of history: A drum ballad)

attributed to Jia is the earliest extant work which refers to itself as a drum ballad,

works of Jia Fuxi. See, also, Zhao Yingzhi, “Literati Use of Oral or Oral-related Genres to Talk About History in the Late Ming and Early Qing: From Yang Shen to Jia Fuxi and Gui Zhuang, and From Education (*Jiaohua*) to Cursing the World (*mashi*),” *CHINOPEARL: Journal of Chinese Oral and Performing Literature* 34.2 (Dec. 2015): 81-114.

⁶²³ See Yunting shanren 云亭山人, “Mupi sanke zhuan” 木皮散客傳, in Guan Dedong, *Mupici jiaozhu*, pp. 161-68. By Kong’s account, Jia Fuxi was acquainted with Kong’s father and took a liking to the young Kong Shangren.

⁶²⁴ The translation of *bai* as “huckster” is inspired by He Yuming’s translation of *baifan* 稗販 as “hucksterish” (*Home and the World*, p. 3).

⁶²⁵ Yunting shanren 云亭山人, “Mupi sanke zhuan” 木皮散客傳, in Guan Dedong, *Mupici jiaozhu*, p. 162.

revealing through its literary art both features of the genre and its own idiosyncratic refashioning.⁶²⁶ The ballad opens with an exposition on the storyteller's art: "as for those who tell of the events of Heaven and Earth and who expound the stories of kings and tyrants: first of all they must avoid being aberrant and bizarre, and secondly they absolutely must not be pedantic and boring" 談天論地，講王說霸，第一件不要支離不經，第二件切忌迂腐少趣。⁶²⁷ Rather, with truths in every line and lessons imparted through every event, the storyteller must be capable of moving listeners to exhilaration and anger and sympathy and sorrow with every person's story. The ballad's opening exposition, full of historical allusions, is a display of erudition, while the storyteller appears no less a figure on a stage, cautioning listeners that his seemingly outrageous words are in fact full of truth and capable of complementing the *Book of Changes* and the *Spring and Autumn*.⁶²⁸ In the course of his narratives, it becomes apparent that despite his initial dismissal of the "aberrant and bizarre," the storyteller's portrayal of historical personages and events deviates in astounding ways from established Confucian views.⁶²⁹ History, being devoid of Heaven's principles (*tianli* 天理), is depicted as the outcome of the strong dominating the weak and the evil the virtuous; the storyteller emerges as a

⁶²⁶ The translation of the title comes from Wilt Idema, "Prosimetric and verse narrative," p. 358. This text has a complicated textual history, with many versions and significant differences between them (see Guan Dedong, "Qianyan" 前言, *Mupici jiaozhu*, pp. 19-25). I have mainly consulted Guan Dedong's annotated edition in my discussions, but it must be noted that the order of the text as it appears in the book is reconstructed by Guan. Liu Jieping, in his *Mupi sanke guci*, pp. 29-42, devotes significant discussion to the drum ballad's textual history.

⁶²⁷ "Lidai shilue guci" 歷代史略鼓詞, in Guan Dedong, *Mupici jiaozhu*, p. 1.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., p. 2. The stage directions of "he coughs and wipes his mouth" 嗽介，拭唇介 appear after he makes this comment, indicating the storyteller to be a stage character.

⁶²⁹ For instance, the Yellow Emperor, the founder of Han civilization, is depicted as the instigator of extraneous politesse, and the sage-kings Yao and Shun, traditionally venerated for their virtue, are depicted as abdicating out of self-interest (see Guan Dedong ed., *Mupici jiaozhu*, pp. 25; 31-32).

commentator both cynical and righteous, presenting the truth behind the guise of things while being himself an eloquent narrator shifting smoothly between multiple styles and dictions.⁶³⁰

The iconoclastic qualities of the *Lidai shilüe guci* was not lost on later readers, who on the one hand praised its candid opinions expressed through the colloquial form, and on the other hand attempted to locate the work in the lineage of canonical literature associated with the expression of discontent.⁶³¹ In two prefaces dated to the beginning of the Qianlong era, a Tongjiu saoren 統九騷人 (“Poet of the nine realms”) passionately praises the ballad, which he refers to as a “heterodox and aberrant book” 畔經離道之書 and “occluded and bizarre treatise” 隱僻怪誕之論 feared and cast away by scholars.⁶³² At the same time, he finds Jia Fuxi’s drum ballad to be a worthy successor to the poetry of Du Fu and Qu Yuan.⁶³³ At the end of his 1737 preface, written in a dense classical language and littered with allusions, he notes his own failures in his literary career, and depicts the drum ballad as his sole consolation, accompanying him through the years and which he savors the more he chants it. He concludes with commenting how “the scholars of the present age are buried in ink and paper, yet their compositions have no substance despite appearances; they match not the drum ballad, which though utterly trivial, can

⁶³⁰ The storyteller eloquently captures his view of history in “*Lidai shilüe guci*,” pp. 12-16.

⁶³¹ On the prefaces and postfaces to the drum ballad by various readers from the Qing to the Republican periods, see Guan Dedong, *Mupici jiaozhu*, pp. 171-90.

⁶³² “Qianlong ernian Tongjiu saoren zai xu” 乾隆二年統九騷人再序, in Guan Dedong ed., *Mupici jiaozhu*, p. 174-8.

⁶³³ “Qianlong yuannian Tongjiu saoren xu” 乾隆元年統九騷人序, in Guan Dedong ed., *Mupici jiaozhu*, p. 172. A passionate reader of vernacular literature, Tongjiu saoren deemed “huckster histories” (*baishi* 稗史) such as *Pipa ji* and *Shuihu zhuan* to be continuations of the classical historiographical tradition, with unmatched depths of feeling and keenness of expression.

inspire in the reader dancing delights” 近世之士，沈沒墨牘，文似而實非，尚不如鼓詞之不拾牙慧，使讀者有須眉起舞之樂也。⁶³⁴

It was not just the discontented Tongjiu saoren who paid extensive attention to *Lidai shilüe guci*, however. The Shandong dramatist Kong Shangren, who penned the biography of Jia Fuxi, appears to have been fascinated by both Jia’s person and his art, both of which he incorporated in his 1699 magnum opus *Taohuashan* (The peach blossom fan).⁶³⁵ In this grand *chuanqi*-drama of forty scenes narrating a love story against the historical backdrop of the fall of the Southern Ming, dramatic representation itself serves as a powerful means of questioning and coming to terms with the ambiguities and traumas of recent history.⁶³⁶ While the relations between historical and theatrical representation in the play have been well studied, here I would like to briefly point out the role of prosimetric performance, embedded boldly within the aesthetic space of *chuanqi*-drama, in the play’s meta-theatrical and meta-historical features.⁶³⁷ In the very first scene, the storyteller Liu Jingting performs a drum ballad elaborating an episode of the *Analects* to a small but notable literati audience, opening the play with a drumming

⁶³⁴ Tongjiu saoren is Ding Kaizeng 丁愷曾 (courtesy name Eting 萼亭) of Rizhao 日照, Shandong; an appended note by Ding Shoucun 丁守存 (signed Kuangshi shanfang zhushi zhuren 曠視山房竹石主人) dated to 1868 tells that he was selected as Graduate for Preeminence 拔貢 in 1723 but never achieved office despite his talents and died discontented (see Guan, *Mupici jiaozhu*, p. 176; and Liu Jieping, *Mupi sanke guci*, pp. 37-39).

⁶³⁵ For a brief overview of Kong’s biography, the play’s debut in the capital, the Kangxi emperor’s interest in the play, and Kong’s dismissal from office in the next year, see the introduction to Wang Jisi 王季思 ed., *Taohuashan* 桃花扇 (Beijing: Renmin, 1959; rpt. 1980) pp. 23-25. I refer to Wang’s edition in my discussions of *Taohuashan* below.

⁶³⁶ See Li Wai-ye, “The Representation of History in the *Peach Blossom Fan*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115.3 (1995): 421-33; Lynn A. Struve, “History and the *Peach Blossom Fan*,” *CLEAR* 2.1 (1980): 55-72.

⁶³⁷ On the meta-theatrical aspects of the play, see Li, “The Representation of History,” and Sophie Volpp, “The Theatricality of the Vernacular in *Taohua shan*,” in her *Worldly Stage: Theatricality in Seventeenth-Century China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), pp. 214-48, where she focuses on the storyteller Liu Jingting.

gusto and presenting its central theme of personal responsibility in times of political crisis.⁶³⁸ The thudding rhythms and candid language of the drum ballad corroborates its righteous message, while contrasting boldly with the refined southern-style songs, more characteristic of *chuanqi* drama, which precede and follow it. While the drum ballad performance serves a direct purpose within the scene, it also has a framing effect. Its episode on ancient musicians who chose the transcendent path of hermitage foreshadows the final destinies of *Taohuashan*'s own performers – including the storyteller himself – following the Ming dynasty's eventual demise.

The artistic use of popular musical forms within the drama is found nowhere better than in the final scene, “Yuyun” 餘韻 (Lingering notes), which takes place after the momentous events near the play's end.⁶³⁹ The dynasty has fallen; its loyal general has committed suicide; the story's central protagonists have parted to pursue the Daoist Way upon realization of love's impermanence. The former musicians of the story have gone on to become mountain hermits, with the storyteller Liu Jingting turned fisherman and the music master Su Kunsheng turned woodcutter. As they gather in the hills for their daily chat, they are joined by the Master of Ceremony who had once officiated in the Imperial Temple, who happens to be passing by, and shares a song he composed on the joyful occasion of a village temple festival dedicated to the birthday of the God of Wealth. The

⁶³⁸ We may be reminded of Kong's biography of Jia Fuxi here, which similarly has Jia telling stories from the *Analects*. Here the drum ballad performed by Liu appears to be an adaptation of a work attributed to Jia Fuxi, “Grandmaster Zhi goes to Qi” 太師拏適齊, a story elaborated from *Analects* 18.9 (see Liu Jieping, *Mupi sanke guci*, pp. 43-44, and Liu ed., *Qingchu guci liqu xuan*, pp. 105-110, which contains Liu's annotated text).

⁶³⁹ The translation of scene and song titles here and below are mine. I have adopted the translations from Chen Shih-hsiang, Harold Acton and Cyril Birch trans., *The Peach Blossom Fan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), for the other names and titles mentioned here.

song, a “Wen cangtian” 問蒼天 (Imploring Heaven) in ten-syllable lines, proceeds from a description of the lively rustic celebration to lament its singer’s own fate, as he has seen no peaceful times and is now reduced to a life of poverty. It concludes with a description of the imperfections of Heaven and Earth and the expression of the old master’s own discontent (the woodcutter appropriately applauds it as approximating Qu Yuan’s famous poems). The fisherman, former storyteller, follows to entertain with his performance, a song in thudding drum-ballad style taking as its subject the recent historical events leading to the Ming’s demise. Finally, the woodcutter, former music-master, concludes the series of songs with a stirring “Ai Jiangnan” 哀江南 (Elegy to Jiangnan) which he sings to the shrill and soaring style of Yiyang 弋陽 music while beating out his rhythm on a block.⁶⁴⁰ The suite of songs, evoking the former glories of the capital and their present ruin, brings home the sense of sorrow for the transience of things and affect a deeply elegiac mood upon the drama’s closing.

The three songs to contrasting styles of popular performance conclude the rich musical tapestry of *Taohuashan*. Just as humble musicians are chosen to be the story’s transcendentals, so the vulgar genres of *guci* and Yiyang music frame the play’s refined southern-style tunes. The genres are not only befitting of the humble social statuses of the performers but importantly provide an appropriate means for a more detached commentary on the play’s central historical and romantic drama. We might recall the joyous village temple festival described by the Master of Ceremony in his song, where the village world is portrayed as a timeless space of celebrations removed from the

⁶⁴⁰ The elegy appears in some versions of Jia Fuxi’s drum ballad. On debates over its authorship, see Zhao, “Realm of Shadows and Dreams,” p. 219 n131.

sorrows of dynastic rise and fall. The Master of Ceremony stands alone in the crowd, a witness to history and a keeper of its memories. In a similarly rustic setting, the two other musicians have become remnants (*yimin* 遺民) of the former dynasty. That they sing of recent historical events using the drum ballad and the Yiyang style is only appropriate, in order to accommodate a grief which finds the refined southern-style songs of *chuanqi*-drama insufficient.

Kong Shangren's imaginative evocation of popular performance genres within his play, like Jia Fuxi's idiosyncratic take on the drum ballad, may be exceptional literary refashionings of existing genres, but they also reveal an interest and receptiveness in vernacular composition shared by more ordinary literati in Shandong – including Pu Lide, Pu Songling in his own time, and many other village literati of varying literary abilities who left not their names but the texts which they composed, copied, and voiced. While the colloquial drum ballad form allowed for expressions of discontent and laments on historical events, it also accommodated a wide range of other subjects. We might perhaps imagine it to have been part of a common, informal vernacular literary medium existing in parallel to classical poetic genres, which allowed for expressions of dissent and diversion uncontained by the prestige forms of literary composition, but which at the same time existed in intimate relation to them. This common vernacular medium would have had a great deal of variety within it. At the more literary end, colloquial song forms found their way into elite drama and fiction⁶⁴¹; on a more common level, they existed as

⁶⁴¹ For example, the *Xu Jingpingmei* of Ding Yaokang, and the earlier example of *Jinpingmei*. On Ding Yaokang's works, see Ling Xiaoqiao, "Re-reading the Seventeenth Century: Ding Yaokang (1599-1669) and His Writings," PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010.

ballads, plays and songs read and written in the gatherings and schoolrooms of lower-level literati, and made available to local audiences of varying social status through performances.

The vernacular compositions attributed to Pu Songling have a different feel from drum ballads in their often familial subject matter, even if history looms large in a work like *Monan qu*. The language of the rustic songs is also of a more colloquial variety than the often quite literary language of *guci*. In venturing further to employ local speech and song, the rustic songs may be viewed as reactions to the drum ballad and other common prosimetric genres. But certainly their appearance was aided by a regional context where there were already many experiments with informal vernacular forms.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation began with sketching the challenges of defining “popular” literature, proposing instead an approach from the perspective of the local. Such an approach, I had hoped, would allow us to re-examine the assumed divides between “classical” and “vernacular,” “high” and “low,” “popular” and “elite” as applied to China’s literary cultures. The varied works ascribed to Pu Songling provided an excellent opportunity to apply such an approach, many having been transmitted through the Qing in one north China locale. While I had set out to study the entire vernacular oeuvre attributed to Pu, this study ended up being both less and more – I treated only a selection of these works in the end; at the same time, I have tried to understand them against the context of local and regional textual culture.

What have we found? In three chapters on assorted characters, moral stories, drum ballads and other prosimetric texts, we have before us a lively and varied vernacular textual culture in Qing Shandong. The colloquial styles of these texts are as varied as the impetuses behind their composition, which ranged from the moral and educational to the playful and experimental, sometimes together informing one text. Pu’s attributed works, while highly idiosyncratic in their narrative forms, appeared against this regional context of interest and receptiveness in vernacular genres. They creatively incorporated local speech and song; they also contained words, images, and themes shared by classical literary culture. That they were transmitted locally through both texts and performances, reaching audiences of even the most humble social status – including

old village women, as literati observers tell us – call our attention to spheres of shared culture where locality and language were of supreme importance.

Pu Songling is often described as a brilliant writer who never succeeded up the ladder of the civil examinations and worldly success, remaining almost his entire life in his native province while earning his livelihood as a schoolmaster. But he was certainly not untypical for an educated man of his time. In the Qing the number of lower degree holders who never made it past the provincial examinations grew ever greater; they comprised a varied and substantial population, being “bi-cultural” agents of sorts, being bearers of both local traditions and the shared classical literary culture.⁶⁴² As we have seen in Shandong, they wrote formal prose essays as well as ballads and ditties; they composed assorted characters texts while being versed in the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*; they negotiated between the local speeches they heard and spoke – and perhaps regional varieties of *guanhua* – and formal and informal written terrains. Being specialists of the written word, they applied their craft to practical use, according to the many kinds of demands for writing in rural and urban life. And they made up a solid base of readers and transmitters of much of what we now call “popular” literature. The multiple cultural domains mediated by these lower level literati, themselves socially and

⁶⁴² I adopt the term “bi-cultural” from Peter Burke, who used it to describe the educated elite in early modern Europe both versed in the lettered “great tradition” and partaking in cultural activities (such as ballads and festivals) shared by commoners, before their withdrawal from the latter in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 27-28). David Johnson suggests the term is not entirely accurate in that it does not capture the different ways in which an educated person may receive the same story as a villager (“Communication, class, and consciousness in late imperial China,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, pp. 39-40). Allan Barr, in “Pu Songling and *Liaozhai zhiyi*,” pp. 127-48, discusses Pu Songling’s unsuccessful examination career as reflective of the experiences of many lower level degree holders in his district, and suggests that it ought to be understood (among other things) in light of restrictions in quotas for provincial graduates in Shandong in the second half of the 17th century. See also, Allan Barr, “Pu Songling and the Qing Examination System,” *Late Imperial China* 7.1 (1986): 87-109.

geographically varied, must have contributed greatly to the complexity in values, themes, and linguistic registers in the popular textual landscapes of premodern China.

The vernacular works attributed to Pu Songling were not “folk oral expressions” but rather belong to a long history of literati adaptation of colloquial languages and genres. The literature extant from the Yuan and Ming reveal complex processes of textualization, where men of letters incorporated, edited, and remolded existing stories and genres from the oral realm.⁶⁴³ Colloquial languages in turn provided new possibilities for literary expression and channels for the transmission of knowledge. One may be reminded of the vibrant vernacular textual cultures of the late Ming, which included not only fiction and drama but also primers, handbooks, glossaries, encyclopedias, and anecdotal writings. The impetuses which governed their production were many and varied, from commerce to personal expression, from aesthetic ideas about the authenticity of feeling to commitments to transmit orthodox morality and learning in accessible forms.⁶⁴⁴ The diversity and depth of these vernacular engagements have yet to be fully studied. Our forays into literature from Qing Shandong suggests that in the region at least, colloquial song and prosimetric narrative forms may have been part of a common, if informal literary medium. The locally transmitted corpus attributed to Pu Songling point not only to the innovations it accommodated but also to the receptiveness to new subjects and forms in the humbler circuits of literary practice.

⁶⁴³ Ge Liangyan defines “textualization” (in the context of the formation of the novel *Shuihu zhuan* from existing stories) as distinct from “transcription” in being “a long process punctuated with successive written versions, both notational and compositional, each representing a certain point on the axis of transition from voice to print” (*Out of the Margins*, p. 7). Written culture must also have impacted oral culture, though that is much harder to study.

⁶⁴⁴ On the last point, see Sakai Tadao, “Confucianism and Popular Educational Works,” *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, pp. 331-64.

Here I should mention a few notable absences from the oeuvre attributed to Pu Songling which I have not treated in this study, which bear important relationships to earlier vernacular tradition. *Xingyun qu* (Song of imperial progress to Datong) and *Rang du zhou* (A mantra to exorcize jealousy) are two of the longest ballads and plays in the oeuvre, with many depictions of games and performances within them. The first, based on a Ming play, tells of the exploits of the Zhengde emperor in the fictional courtesan quarters of Datong, Shanxi. Its vivid depictions of the courtesan world suggest intimate connections to the late Ming print culture of joke books, game manuals, songbooks, and treatises on navigating brothels, while its subject matter of the touring emperor in disguise is shared by a variety of stories from the Ming and Qing. *Rang du zhou*, which shares the plot of a *Liaozhai zhiyi* tale, takes on Pu's familiar subject of the shrew; it contains a feast of performances within it, like *Xingyun qu*, and bears intriguing relationship to *Jinpingmei* and the seventeenth century novel *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*. The shorter ballad *Penglai yan* (Banquet on Penglai) is another interesting one, an elaboration of the legendary love story between Wen Xiao, a scholar, and Wu Cailüan, a celestial maiden cum scribe extraordinaire.⁶⁴⁵ These works on romantic subjects should add a splash of bright colors to the canvas of Pu's attributed works; to omit them is to overlook important links between the oeuvre and the larger vernacular tradition.

In focusing on the vernacular works attributed to Pu, I have given less attention to the variety of his other works of a popularizing nature. No doubt Pu was exceptional for a

⁶⁴⁵ The story, set in the Tang dynasty, appears in a number of literary sources from the medieval period onwards. The *Suishu guang ji* 歲時廣記 compiled by Chen Yuanjing 陳元靚 (fl. late 13th century) credits it to the story collection *Chuanqi* compiled by Pei Xing 裴鏘 (fl. 860-878). The Zichuan playwright Jia Zhongming 賈仲明 (1343-1422) is credited with a *zaju* version; see chapter 1, n198.

man of his time and place in the breadth of his textual engagements, which included not only experiments with colloquial narrative and song but also compilations on farming, medicine, the weather, and the calendar. While Jaroslav Průšek was right to point out Pu's "close bonds with the people," the intended audiences of these works were also specific and local.⁶⁴⁶ Pu compiled his genealogy for the members of his lineage; a selection of excerpts from Zhu Xi's *Elementary Learning* for beginning students; a handbook on auspicious dates for marriage for use in the family; and a handbook on remedies for illness for easy consultation in a country setting where both doctors and medicines are hard to find.⁶⁴⁷ These texts reveal a keen interest in gathering knowledge for practical use and in making accessible voluminous and esoteric texts. Pu was of course exceptional for a rural licentiate in having had access to one of the finest private libraries in the province

⁶⁴⁶ Jaroslav Průšek, "P'u Sung-ling and His Work," in idem., *Chinese History and Literature* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1970), p. 137.

⁶⁴⁷ The genealogy in Pu's own hand is extant at Keio (catalog no. 2601). The second work listed is lost but a postface is extant, as are prefaces to the other two works. See Pu Songling, "Hunjia quanshu xu" 婚嫁全書序, "Yaosui shu xu" 藥崇書序, and "Xiaoxue jieyao ba" 小學節要跋, in *Liaozhai quanji xuanzhu*, 2: 74, 82, 101, respectively. The guidebook on marriage appears to be lost; Ma Zhenfang, studying a manuscript entitled *Hunjia quanshu* 婚嫁全書 (Complete guide to marriage) at Keio (catalog no. 2702) attributed to Pu, reveals it to contain sections from the imperially commissioned *Xieji bianfang shu* 協紀辨方書 of the Qianlong era and has thus deemed the text to be spurious. Another manuscript, dated to the Xianfeng era, entitled *Hunjia shu zhaiyao* 婚嫁書摘要 (no. 2703) is preserved in the collection, but I have not handled it. I did find a text under the same title in a pamphlet preceded by two song-narratives attributed to Pu (no. 0504); while it contains relevant calendrical information on auspicious and inauspicious dates, the way in which the text is advertised as "carefully selected by Pu Songling of Zichuan" 淄川蒲松齡精選 makes the attribution rather dubious.

As for *Yaosui shu* 藥崇書 (Book on remedies and hauntings), Sheng Wei, in his *Liaozhai yiwen jizhu*, pp. 159-90, includes the text to a manuscript discovered in the 1980s in the vicinity of Pujiashuang; the text is also included in his *Pu Songling quanji*, 3: 279-302. Two manuscripts, listed with titles *Yaosui shu* and *Liaozhai suishu* 聊齋崇書, are preserved in the Keio collection (nos. 2301 and 2302; I have not handled them).

As for *Xiaoxue jieyao*, for which only a postface is extant, Pu appears to have compiled it to aid study for the examinations when *Xiaoxue* was put back into the Qing exam curriculum. In the postface, dated 1697, Pu tells of how in recent years the lower-level exam quotas became more stringent, and often forty-year olds are going at it along with boys; the anthology, he divulges, was made "to facilitate the memorization and recitation efforts of elderly beginning students, and not be stolen by children of teeth-changing age" 以便老蒙士之記誦，不許齠齠者竊取之也。

as a tutor in the Bi household – this privilege may well have fueled his prolific activities as a reader, anthologist, compiler, and scribe; it also enabled him to mediate between a broader world of learning and his local, rural world.

We have explored still only a small part of this world – a world which, as Pu’s own activities and the books from Zichuan tell us, was abundant with writing. While I have focused on a small group of local vernacular texts, a fuller evaluation is due of Zichuan’s book culture and Pu’s works within it. Further study of the texts in classical genres in the Keio corpus – from poetry and prose to local manuscripts of *Liaozhai zhiyi* – should offer valuable glimpses into the continuities and ruptures in Zichuan’s literary productions. If classical texts were transmitted in the same channels as vernacular ones, what would that change about our understandings of literacy and literature, about cultures local and shared? What sort of connections were there between vernacular writing and the manuscript medium? And what should we make of a predominantly handwritten corpus of books from a rural north China locale in the Qing, when commercial print reached increasingly social and geographically diverse populations? Did these prolific local scribal activities reflect the dearth of printed books in one area? What proportion of the manuscripts in fact reproduced imprints? What factors motivated their creation – literary community, social occasion, local heritage, daily need, and perhaps also commerce?

If there are answers, they may be found in comparative studies of textual cultures in other regions and locales, an approach familiar to historians but not yet to literary scholars. What this study hoped to do was to bring to light the richness of a small group of stories and songs in connection to both the locality and the broader literary culture. Hopefully it will inspire us to look beyond the common assumptions of “high” and “low”

and “popular” and “elite” to explore the landscapes of Chinese literature in their full complexity and diversity, and seek to better understand the shifting social, geographic, and temporal norms which informed them.

APPENDIX 1

Titles listed on the backside of Pu Songling's tombstone⁶⁴⁸

The backside of Pu's tombstone first lists the birth and death dates of Pu and his wife Liu, after which the following list of titles appear.⁶⁴⁹ After the list of titles, the names of the couple's four sons appear, along with names of eight grandsons, four great-grandsons, and one great-great-grandson.

The inscription on the front-side of the tombstone by Zhang Yuan, dated to 1725, recounting the events of Pu's life and his achievements, has been translated by Jaroslav Průšek in "Two documents relating to the life of P'u Sung-ling," in *Chinese History and Literature* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1970). In his account, Zhang tells of Pu "having composed a collection of prose writings in four *juan*, a collection of poetry in six *juan*, and *Liaozhai zhiyi* in eight *juan*" 所著文集四卷, 詩集六卷, 聊齋志異八卷.⁶⁵⁰ No mention is made of the works on the backside of the tombstone.

⁶⁴⁸ I have consulted a rubbing of the gravestone in Hirai's collection, catalog no. 6008, and "Liuquan Pu xiansheng mubiao" 柳泉蒲先生墓表, in Lu Dahuang ed., *Pu Songling ji*, 2: 1805-6.

⁶⁴⁹ Significantly, there are errors to Pu's birth year and Liu's death date in the inscription. See Hu Shi, "Ba Zhang Yuan de Liuquan Pu xiansheng mubiao," in *Hu Shi wenji* 5: 316-17.

⁶⁵⁰ The punctuation is from Lu Dahuang ed., *Pu Songling ji*, 2: 1805.

“Appended: Miscellaneous works, five fascicles” 附記雜著五冊
Xingshen yulu [省]身語錄⁶⁵¹ (Selected Words for Admonishing the Self)
Huaxing lu 懷刑錄 (Records for Harboring Reverence)
Lizi wen 歷字文 (Document on the Calendar)
Riyong suzi 日用俗字 (Popular Characters for Daily Use)
Nongsang jing 農桑經 (Classic of Farming and Sericulture)
 “Each in one fascicle”各一冊⁶⁵²
 “Three plays” 戲三齣
Kaoci jiuzhuan Huo lang'er 考詞九轉貨郎兒 (Lyrics on the Examinations – Nine Airs to the Tune of the Peddler)
Zhongmei qingshou 鐘妹慶壽 (Zhong Kui’s Sister Sends Gifts for His Birthday)
Naoguan 鬧館 (Teaching’s Troubles)

“Fourteen popular rustic song-narratives”⁶⁵³ 通俗俚曲十四種
Qiangtou ji 牆頭記 (On the Wall)
Gufu qu 姑婦曲 (Song of Mother-in-law and Daughter-in-law)
Cibei qu 慈悲曲 (Song of Compassion)
Fan yanyang 翻魘殃 (The Scoundrel Meets His Ends)
Hansen qu 寒森曲 (Song of the Infernal Realms)
Qinse le 琴瑟樂 (The Delights of Marriage)
Penglai yan 蓬萊宴 (The Banquet on Mt. Penglai)
Jun yecha 俊夜叉 (The Handsome Yaksha)
Qionghan ci 窮漢詞 (A Poor Man’s Plaints)
Chou junba 醜俊巴 (Pigsy in Love)
Kuai qu 快曲 (A Pleasant Song)
 “Each in one fascicle”各一冊⁶⁵⁴
Rang du zhou 禳妒咒 (A Mantra to Exorcize Jealousy)
Fugui shenxian houbian Monanqu 富貴神仙后變磨難曲 (Riches and Glory: Divine Immortals, later changed into Song of Tribulations)
Zengbu xingyun qu 增補幸雲曲 (Expanded Version of the Imperial Progress to Datong)
 “Each in two fascicles”各二冊⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵¹ The first character *xing* 省 is absent on the rubbing.

⁶⁵² This line appears in smaller size characters than the titles of the works on the rubbing.

⁶⁵³ The first two titles and last five titles listed below follow the translations (with minor modifications) in Wilt Idema, “Prosimetric and Verse Narrative,” pp. 359-60.

⁶⁵⁴ This line appears in smaller size characters than the titles of the works on the rubbing.

⁶⁵⁵ This line appears in smaller size characters than the titles of the works on the rubbing.

APPENDIX 2

Table of Contents, *Zhuangnong zazi* and *Riyong suzi* ⁶⁵⁶

Zhuangnong zazi 庄農雜字

庄農糧粟章第一	Farming and crops ⁶⁵⁷
合用器皿章第二	Vessels for use
各樣菓品章第三	Various fruits
各樣菜蔬章第四	Various vegetables
厨子茶食章第五	Meals and snacks ⁶⁵⁸
各樣酒名章第六	Various Wines
養蚕製造章第七	Silkworms and clothing ⁶⁵⁹
南北藥材章第八	Medicines north and south ⁶⁶⁰
雜賀首飾章第九	Goods and ornaments
家野走獸章第十	Livestock and beasts
河海魚類章第十一	The waters' fishes
飛禽鳥類章第十二	Birds and fowls
艷色花名章第十三	Radiant flowers ⁶⁶¹
木匠修蓋章第十四	The carpenter and building
鐵匠爐行章第十五	The blacksmith and welding
石匠打鑿章第十六	The mason and chiseling ⁶⁶²
氈匠鋪赶章第十七	The wooler and coverings ⁶⁶³
皮匠造作章第十八	The tanner and vestments ⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁵⁶ The comparison between the two TOCs was originally made by Li Wanpeng in his article, “*Zhuangnong zazi* yu *Riyong suzi*,” based on the categories in a fragmented imprint *Zhuangnong zazi* in private collection and the version of *Riyong suzi* in the *Pu Songling ji* edited by Lu Dahuang. Based on Li’s descriptions, I believe no. 7015 at Keio resembles a complete version of the fragmented *Zhuangnong zazi* Li worked with (with differences in individual characters, so not the same printing), and have listed its chapter titles here. The TOC for *Riyong suzi* listed below are according to no. 2501. In the translations I have omitted the chapter numbers as indicated in the Chinese texts, listing only the contents of each chapter.

* I have represented the characters with the closest ones I have at my disposal and have left in underline those characters in the imprints which are significantly different.

⁶⁵⁷ This title is missing from Li’s list.

⁶⁵⁸ Literally: “the chef and snacks.”

⁶⁵⁹ Literally, “silkworm rearing and cloth-making.”

⁶⁶⁰ The first two characters are missing from the page in no. 7015; they are from Li’s list.

⁶⁶¹ This and the next two chapter titles are missing from Li’s list.

⁶⁶² Li’s list has “dazuan” 打钻.

⁶⁶³ In no. 7015, the first character is depicted with 毛 as left-side radical.

⁶⁶⁴ Literally, “vestment-making.”

裁縫剪做章第十九 The tailor and tailoring⁶⁶⁵
丹青描畫章第二十 Painting and drawing
皮服名色章第廿一 Coats and furs
感傷疾病章第廿二 Maladies and ailments
僧道超度章第廿三 The monks and rituals of release⁶⁶⁶
前定陰陽章第廿四 Divination and geomancy⁶⁶⁷
賭博無益章第廿五 The ills of gambling
宅園樹株章第廿六 Trees of the garden
醫獸療馬章第廿七 Curing beasts and healing horses
治匠治章第廿八 The smith and firing⁶⁶⁸
娼妓吹彈章第廿九 The courtesan and music-making
異寶奇珍章第三十 Gems and treasures
蟲蟄草虫章第三十一 Insects and other creatures⁶⁶⁹

Riyong suzi 日用俗字

身體章第一 The body
莊農章第二 Farming
養蠶章第三 Silkworms
飲食章第四 Food
菜蔬章第五 Vegetables
器皿章第六 Vessels
雜貨章第七 Goods
果實章第八 Fruits
兵器章第九 Weapons
丹青章第十 Painting
木匠章第十一 The carpenter
泥瓦章第十二 Building (lit: “mud and tiles”)
鐵匠章第十三 The blacksmith
石匠章第十四 The mason
裁縫章第十五 The tailor
皮匠章第十六 The tanner

⁶⁶⁵ 做 is missing from no. 7015, and is filled in from Li's list.

⁶⁶⁶ As applied to the dead.

⁶⁶⁷ Literally, “yin and yang being predetermined.” The short chapter discusses the selection of partners for marriage, lucky and unlucky days, and auspicious and inauspicious sites for building.

⁶⁶⁸ Li has 治匠銃治章. I'm not sure if “smith” is the proper translation – this figure seems to be distinguished from the “tiejiang” 鐵匠 (who makes tools, weapons, locks and keys) by the things he makes (pots and other household objects). The first lines also seem to reference the making of earthenware.

⁶⁶⁹ Li's list, which is in simplified font, has the same 虫 in both places, but in no. 7015 they are two distinct graphs (and the 虫 on the top part of 蟲 and in 虫 have a 丿 stroke on the top).

銀匠章第十七 The silversmith
毡匠章第十八 The wooler
疾病章第十九 Ailments
堪輿章第二十 Geomancy
紙扎章第二十一 Offerings⁶⁷⁰
僧道章第二十二 Monks⁶⁷¹
爭訟章第二十三 Lawsuits
賭博章第二十四 Gambling
行院章第二十五 Courtesans⁶⁷²
花草章第二十六 Flora
樹木章第二十七 Trees
走獸章第二十八 Beasts
禽鳥章第二十九 Birds
鱗介章第三十 Scaly creatures⁶⁷³
昆虫章第三十一 Insects⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷⁰ Specifically, funerary objects made of paper, to be burnt as offerings.

⁶⁷¹ *Seng* has the connotation of Buddhist monks, and *dao* as Daoist priests.

⁶⁷² The term can refer to courtesans, courtesan quarters, and during the Yuan and Ming, to drama troupes, but the passage here talks about courtesans.

⁶⁷³ The third and fourth characters are missing from 2501; I have filled them in with the text from 2504.

⁶⁷⁴ As in *Zhuangnong zazi*, the creatures listed include not only insects but also snails, bats, toads (*Zhuangnong zazi* also includes turtles and kind). For lack of a better translation – in *Riyong suzi* the majority of the creatures listed are in fact insects.

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A. Archival sources: manuscripts and imprints pre-1949

Unless otherwise specified, the materials are from the Keio University libraries. Sources are listed by title and four digit catalog number as given in Fujita Yūken 藤田祐賢 and Yagi Akiyoshi 八木章好, “Keiō gijuku shozō Ryōsai kankei shiryō mokuroku” 慶応義塾所蔵聊齋關係資料目錄, *Geibun Kenkyū* 53 (1988): 118-57, which may be consulted for more bibliographic details. Sources from other libraries and in private collection are specified following the title, with catalog numbers given where available.

With the exception of assorted characters texts, for which I have provided a complete list of items held as part of Keio University’s Ryōsai Bunko, texts listed under other categories represent only a selection of items which I have consulted / cited (they are generally items which I have discussed with some detail in the dissertation).

Printed books are specified with [P]; unless otherwise specified, items are manuscripts. Descriptions are provided for other kinds of items listed under section 4, “Miscellaneous early 20th century materials.”

1. Assorted characters and other educational texts

Assorted characters

- Chongxu liaozhai zazi* 重續聊齋雜字. 2521
Chongxu zazi 重續雜字. 2523
Chongxu zazi 重續雜字. 2524
Liaozhai riyong suzi zhengbian 聊齋日用俗字正編. 2510
Liaozhai riyong suzi zhengbian 聊齋日用俗字正編. 2511
Liaozhai riyong suzi zhengbian 聊齋日用俗字正編. 2512
Liaozhai siyan zazi 聊齋四言雜字. 2515
Liaozhai tongyi zazi 聊齋通一雜字. 2525
Liaozhai xubian riyong suzi suzi 聊齋續編日用俗字. 2516
Liaozhai zazi bieji 聊齋雜字別集. 2517
Liaozhai zazi xubian 聊齋雜字續編. 2522
Liaozhai zazi 聊齋雜字. 2509
Liaozhai zazi 聊齋雜字. 2519
Liaozhai zazi 聊齋雜字. 2520

Liuquan Pu xiansheng riyong suzi 柳泉蒲先生日用俗字. 2513
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2501 [P]
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2502 [P]
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2503 [P]
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2504 [P]
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2505
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2506
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2507
Riyong suzi 日用俗字. 2508
Riyong zazi ben 日用雜字本. 2518
Siyán zazi 四言雜字. 2514
Siyán zazi 四言雜字. 7013 [P]
Wuyan zazi 五言雜字. 7014
Xinbian siyan zazi 新編四言雜字. 7012 [P]
Xinkan yinshi jiaozheng bianyong zhuang zazi 新刊音積校正使用庄雜字. 7015 [P]
Xinkan yinshi jiaozheng bianyong zhuang zazi 新刊音積校正使用庄雜字. 7016 [P]
Xu liaozhai zazi 續聊齋雜字. 3016
Zhuangnong zazi 莊農雜字. 7017
Zhuangong zazi 莊農雜字. 7018

Other educational texts

Ershisi xiao shi 二十四孝詩. 0617
Ershisi xiao shi, liaozhai shicao 二十四孝詩, 聊齋詩草. 0329
Ershisi xiaodi tu shi hekan 二十四孝弟圖詩合刊. 7004 [P]
Liaozhai shifan ge 聊齋十反歌. 0352
Quan xiao lu 勸孝錄. 7005 [P]
Yinzhi wen tushuo 陰鷲文圖說. 7037 [P]

2. Prosimetric and verse narrative

Cibei qu 慈悲曲. 0713
Cibei qu 慈悲曲. 0714
Cibei qu 慈悲曲. 0715
Cibei qu 慈悲曲. Lithographic print; one volume, thread-bound. With preface by Ye Chunchi 葉春墀 dated to 1928. In the collection of Fudan University Library. Call no. 925950. [P]
Ershisi xiao gu'erci 二十四孝鼓兒詞. 0616
Fan yanyang 翻魔殃. 0722
Fan yanyang 翻魔殃. 0723

Fofa yinyuan zhuan 佛法姻緣傳. 0750
Fugui shenxian qu. 富貴神仙曲. Undated Qing MS. Held at Shandong University Library. Call no. 858.62 528 / SX 3724
Gufu qu 姑婦曲. 0710
Hansen qu 寒森曲. 0720
Kong fuzi gu'erci 孔夫子鼓兒詞. 4027
Kuaici 快詞 (*Naoguan qu* 鬧館曲, *Quncan nao xia* 群殘鬧瞎). 0613
Liaozhai quanshi wen. 聊齋勸世文. 2107
Monan qu 磨難曲. Qing MS in 4 vols. Held at National Central Library, Taipei. Microfilm at Harvard University Libraries, call no. FC4009
Qiangtou ji 牆頭記. 0712
Qinse le qu 琴瑟樂曲. 0607
Qinse le qu 琴瑟樂曲. 0608
Wentian gu'erci 問天鼓兒詞. 0507
Yaohui tu 藥會圖. 0745
Yaoxing bangzi qiang 藥性椰子腔. 0748
Zhuangnong zazi gu'erci 莊農雜字鼓兒詞. MS copied and annotated by Li Zhenju 李振聚 after undated Qing MS in his private collection.

3. Poetry and prose; *Liaozhai zhiyi*

Donggu wenji liujuan 東谷文集六卷. 3001
Huxiao ji 虎嘯集. 4001
Liaozhai cao 聊齋草. 0301 [Pu Songling's ms]
Lishan shixuan 笠山詩選. 4008 [P]
Panyang shicui 般陽詩萃. 6027 [P]
Pu Liuquan zhenji gu shiwen chao 蒲柳泉真跡古詩文抄. 2801 [Pu Songling's ms]
Pu Liuquan zhenji gu shiwen chao 蒲柳泉真跡古詩文抄. 2802 [Pu Songling's ms]
Tang dai shixuan 唐代詩選. 7039
Zhiming ji, Qingyun ji 知命集 青雲集. 4012

Liaozhai zhiyi

Liaozhai zhiyi shiba juan 聊齋志異十八卷. 1153 [P]
Xuanyin Liaozhai zhiyi yuangao 選印聊齋志異原稿, 1933. 1101 [P]
Zhiyi jiuchao 志異舊抄. 1131

4. Other archival materials

Nong jing xuji bu huangchong yaofa 農經續集 捕蝗蟲要法. 2408

Pu shi zupu 蒲氏族譜. 2601 [Pu Songling's ms]

5. Miscellaneous early 20th century materials

Guanyu Liaozhai zhiyi zhi yuangao 關於聊齋志異之原稿. 6016 [Typset folio]

Liaozhai huatie 聊齋畫帖. 6014 [Sketchbook]

Liaozhai yanjiu 聊齋研究. 8078 [P]

Liaozhai yigao yiyi shi 聊齋遺稿遺軼事. 8080 [Newspaper clippings]

Liaozhai yiji 聊齋遺跡. 6019 [Photo album]

Pu Liuquan xiansheng mubiao bing beiyin 柳泉蒲先生墓表並碑陰. 6008 [rubblings]

Pu shi zupu 蒲氏族譜. 6001 [large handwritten album]

Pu Songling lici biao 蒲松齡歷次表. 6005 [ms]

Pu Yingchun chidu 蒲英春尺牘. 6023 [Letter]

B. Published primary sources

Period texts accessible through online databases are included here.

Edited works of/attribution to Pu Songling are listed by editor, as cited in the body of the dissertation. Facsimile reprints of Pu's manuscripts and of works credited to him are listed under Pu's name; other facsimile reprints are listed by title.

Abbreviations: SDWXJC stands for *Shandong wenxian jicheng* 山東文獻集成, 200 vols (Ji'nan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, published in four series, 2007-2011). Citations are given by series (*ji* 輯) and volume (i.e. SDWXJC 3.36 stands for vol. 36 in *Shandong wenxian jicheng, di 3 ji*).

Changshan xianzhi 長山縣志 [1716]. Zhongguo fangzhi ku 中國方志庫 online database.
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Abbreviations

PSLYJJK = *Pu Songling yanjiu jikan* 蒲松齡研究集刊. In 4 volumes (*ji* 輯). Ed. Shandong daxue Pu Songling yanjiu shi 山東大學蒲松齡研究室. Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1980-1984.

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