



LU RONG

TRANSLATED AND INTRODUCED
BY MARK HALPERIN

A Ming
Confucian's
World

Selections from
*Miscellaneous Records
from the Bean Garden*

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Some places and periods are special. The names Renaissance Italy, Elizabethan England, Genroku Japan, and Weimar Berlin, for example, call to mind vital chapters in the history of civilization. Ming China (1368–1644) surely belongs on the list. The world's largest, most populous empire of its time, the Ming offers a range of superlatives. Its emperors ranked among China's most ambitious, despotic, and dissolute. Its unmatched economy turned its cities and country markets into thriving commercial centers, sent porcelain and silk around the world, and drew in the lion's share of the precious metals taken from the mines of the New World. Age-old Confucian mores and hierarchies underwent criticism to a degree that would never again be seen until the twentieth century. Its book industry, based on cheap woodblock printing and offering texts on all manner of subjects, constituted the globe's biggest information sector. The arts thrived, be it painting, vernacular literature, or theater, as social groups rarely discussed before now captured the attentions of polite society. Everyone, even historians, likes excitement, and the Ming was exciting.

Excitement, however, is only part of life, and the above portrait, save for the ambitious, despotic monarchs, fits mostly the dynasty's final century or so, starting with the reign of the Jiajing emperor (r. 1522–1566). This epoch, usually called "the late Ming," has attracted most scholarly attention. Good reasons abound, such as accelerated pace of change, the heady transgression of social and cultural boundaries, and the wealth of historical sources. Put simply, the empire underwent major shifts, leading some historians to label the period as "early modern China." These changes, though, need qualification. First, these trends affected some regions far more than others. Second, after the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644–1911) took control, China sobered up in many ways and recovered quickly from its "seventeenth-century crisis." This success derived from political and social structures, economic practices, and cultural attitudes that were present before the late Ming and persisted centuries later.

For a vivid look at basic features of late imperial China, this book turns to *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden* (Shuyuan zaji) by the official Lu Rong (1436–1494). If Lu did not live in the best of times, neither did he

live in the worst of times. China during his era caught its breath. Its emperors deserve attention neither for their virtue nor their cupidity or brutality. Natural disasters aside, China's economy experienced moderate prosperity, recovering from its fourteenth-century calamities. Cotton and silk production expanded, as did textile manufacturing, and opportunities for trade increased, especially in Lu's home region, the Lower Yangzi or Jiangnan (South of the River). The state began to commute tax and service levies to silver payments, easing the commoners' burden. Intellectual life remained tethered to official Neo-Confucian doctrine, contemporary verse and prose was undistinguished, and the period's most lasting contribution to Chinese culture was the "eight-legged" civil service examination essay (*baguwen*). This complex, rigid rhetorical exercise, which all males seeking to climb the ladder of official success needed to master, became eventually synonymous with late imperial cultural conformity and mediocrity, but it served its purpose for centuries: supplying the bureaucracy with learned, disciplined, pliable officials. Models for women also became more sharply defined, as the cult of widow fidelity (and martyrdom) reached a new intensity, with local officials and prominent men constructing shrines to immortalize the sacrifices of these heroines. Although less exalted groups, such as merchants, courtesans, peasants, bond servants, and clergy, were not especially docile, neither did they cause the sort of unease in literati minds that they would later. Pressed for modern analogies for late fifteenth-century China, one might turn to the 1950s, which appears stable and quiet when juxtaposed with earlier and later eras.¹ The late fifteenth century set various standards for men and women, which later Chinese challenged and modified but never overturned until the twentieth century.

Why read *Bean Garden*? First, this book offers a remarkable panorama of late imperial Chinese society. Lu's anecdotes, taken from incidents he witnessed or heard, encompass a broad range of Chinese characters, including valiant scholar-officials, generous empresses, backbiting literati, runaway brides, corrupt Buddhist monks, gullible commoners, fervent Muslims, savvy farmers, unsavory eunuchs, frontier aborigines, diligent salt workers, and greedy merchants. Second, the entries open a window onto late imperial concepts of power, justice, authority, gender, knowledge, political virtue, the supernatural, the body, sickness and health, and foreigners. Finally, one might read anecdotes from similar works and cover areas untouched by Lu, but, as F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "Life is much more successfully looked at from a single window." This view rings true especially here. Lu often did not simply relate the facts; he also frequently voiced his own opinion, expressing a representative yet distinctive Confucian view of the world. Readers would do well to

adopt a bifocal approach and analyze both the observer and observed. Before taking up the author and his work, however, let us first outline some of the fundamental aspects of Lu Rong's world.

ORDER AND EMPIRE

Politics and government dominated the lives of Lu Rong, his cohort, and his readers. Empowered by their literacy and command of the Confucian classics, they took their calling as ordering the world, preferably as officials commissioned by the dynasty. Brilliant scholarship or exceptional verse could win one an admirable reputation, but the overwhelming majority of elite, educated men craved to make a lasting name through their effective, moral use of power. Joining the ranks of the bureaucracy meant untold hours spent studying the Confucian canon and then demonstrating one's learning in the civil service examination system. Competition on these tests was fearsome; gaining the coveted *jinshi* (advanced scholar) degree meant passing examinations successively at the county, provincial, and then nationwide levels. Only a privileged few succeeded; in Lu Rong's time, barely one hundred men annually earned a *jinshi* degree, which placed them in the elite ranks of the bureaucracy, numbering about twenty thousand men and ruling an empire of about 120 million subjects. Small wonder that writers such as Lu often referred to prominent peers by their official titles; they were badges of extraordinary singularity.

Once appointed to office, these literati entered a world of innumerable regulations and assessments, as well as ceaseless uncertainty and struggle. On the one hand, the Ming inherited centuries-old, proven Chinese structures of government. Positions were divided into county, prefectural, provincial, and capital levels. Official duties included tax collection, law enforcement and adjudication, water conservancy, and ritual performance at local shrines. Officials, forbidden to serve in their home regions, rotated generally every three years, with performance reviews determining promotions, demotions, or lateral transfers. At the bureaucracy's apex were six ministries, dealing with personnel, rites, justice, revenue, war, and public works, but accomplished men usually worked in a variety of specializations over their careers. In addition, many new agencies had appeared over the centuries to enhance the coordination of different functions and levels of government. Staffed often by elite personnel, these organs took up, among other things, the matters of grain transportation, tax collection, frontier defense, and surveillance of bureaucratic performance.² Complicating this transparency and meritocracy, however, were ambition, cupidity, and favoritism. Factionalism, founded on kinship

ties, native-place ties, patron-client relations, or policy approaches, was a major part of Chinese political life, and professional competition could turn very bitter and sometimes lethal.

In name, this apparatus devoted its efforts to the will of the emperor. His family possessed the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*) and was charged with undisputable, near-infallible authority. His mere presence on the throne granted him the title of sage, regardless of his performance, and placed him in a line of monarchs extending to high antiquity. Confucian ideology tempered this power, prescribing that the ruling family treat the people with kindness; heed the advice of cultivated, well-intentioned, ethical advisors; and carry out the proper religious rituals in the approved fashion. Failure would lead to revocation of this mandate and dynastic collapse, and the bestowal of the divine charge on new, more deserving leaders. The emperor then played a vital ritual role, linking and ideally harmonizing heaven, earth, and humanity. For literati, the imperial presence was inescapable; they owed their position to his rule and even needed him to tell the time, dating events according to the years elapsed since a given monarch acceded to the throne, such as the "fifteenth year of the Hongwu reign."

In practice, though, politics meant more than emperor and bureaucracy. Three other groups, whose writings and perspectives unfortunately are lost to history, bear mention. First, beside the civil bureaucracy, tens of thousands of military officials directed an army composed of several million men. Their nominal prestige did not match that of their civilian counterparts, but dynasties relied on their expertise to ward off foreign invasion, domestic rebellions, and palace coups d'état.

Second, emperors had kin. The royal clan encompassed thousands of people, related by blood and marriage, and the funds allocated to the imperial household writ large might consume a colossal part of the total state budget. Close relatives, such as empresses, empress dowagers, consorts, brothers, and uncles exerted on occasion key and even decisive influence in political matters, especially in questions of succession.

Third, staffing the imperial household were eunuchs, castrated men whose mutilation granted them access to the palace and its members. Their job descriptions were ambiguous and their education lacking, at least from a Confucian perspective. Some monarchs, however, found their administrative talents very useful. Their organization gave the emperor a parallel government, answerable only to him and free from the age-old stipulations, restrictions, and norms that bound the formal civil and military bureaucracies. By Lu Rong's time, eunuchs numbered more than ten thousand men and truly constituted

a state within a state, composed of no fewer than twenty-four agencies. Assertive eunuchs could use their proximity to the emperor, whom they might have known since his youth, to gain positions of unsanctioned but fearsome power. In fact, starting in the early fifteenth century, Ming emperors, owing to a freakish turn of fate, usually came to the throne at very young ages, which unquestionably enabled the growth of the eunuchs' clout.³ These men proved adept at manipulating the flow of information, determining what memorials and reports the emperor would or would not see. They helped shape policy deliberation and implementation, in the provinces as well as at the capital, especially over financial and military matters. Their most notorious contribution to Ming history, though, was their secret police, the Eastern Depot (Dongchang), which spied on, jailed, tortured, and sometimes killed their foes among the civilian bureaucracy. Scholar-officials regarded eunuchs as anathema, but the latter never would have achieved such power without the collaboration and incompetence of the literati.

Ming Specifics

Three Ming emperors in particular shaped Lu Rong's world. The first was the Ming dynasty's founder, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1398), usually known as Ming Taizu or the Hongwu emperor, in reference to his reign (1368–1398). Taizu assumed power after two full decades of bloody civil war that overthrew the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1260–1368). Once on the throne, he sought to remake the Chinese polity and society, which he found miserably lawless and corrupt after foreign rule. Taizu strove to restore China to an imagined simpler, home-spun utopia of self-sufficient rural communities, which meant ridding the countryside of government clerks and turning over tax collection and adjudication duties to the local people. Villagers were to be organized into units of 110 households, with the ten richest households, rotating each year, conscripted to carry out these tasks. While this structure, known as the *lijia* system, rid rural China of many sorts of official corruption, it also imposed heavy, uneven burdens on commoners. Furthermore, in previous dynasties, as China had become more commercialized, the state had drawn most of its revenues from commercial taxes and the salt monopoly, but Taizu saw land as the only true source of wealth and taxes. Accordingly, the Hongwu regime carried out the most effective, comprehensive census and land registration survey in Chinese dynastic history. The state also exerted greater control over religious practice, banning the worship of most local gods and severely restricting Buddhism and Daoism's institutional presences. Finally, the emperor commissioned a new law code and, dissatisfied with the results, revised it personally.

Taizu frequently found himself dissatisfied, and the Chinese people paid a terrifying price. Powerful ministers became a target of suspicion, supposed malfeasance and conspiracies were revealed, and the guilty parties were tried, convicted, and executed. Over the 1380s and 1390s, the circle of alleged accomplices and incompetent officials widened, and Taizu abolished several offices and became his own prime minister. Most of the guilty parties came from the Lower Yangzi, which by the twelfth century had become the most urbanized, richest, and best-educated part of the country. In the early Ming, its wealthy families bore the brunt of the state's new emphasis on land taxes. Scores of families, due to political or economic missteps, saw their property confiscated and were deported. Historians estimate the victims of Taizu's remarkable energy and paranoia to number over forty thousand people, with countless more dispossessed.⁴ This reign of terror set back China's economy and left its literati elite traumatized for decades. That said, Taizu had created the Ming world, and later writers referred to him as "the Lofty (or Loftiest) Emperor" or "the August Patriarch."

Upon Taizu's passing, scholar-officials hoped for a measure of calm and a return to the ritual order governing the relations of sovereign and official. It was not to be. Taizu's grandson and successor, the Jianwen emperor (r. 1399–1402), soon fell prey to his uncle, the Prince of Yan, usually known as the Yongle emperor (r. 1403–1424), who usurped the throne after another civil war. Yongle demanded the support of prominent scholar-officials, but many defied him, leading to their own deaths and that of hundreds of their relatives. Their slaughter completed the intimidation of the educated strata. The new emperor proved as ambitious as his father, conducting personally five costly military campaigns north of the Great Wall against the Mongols. They scored some successes but failed to secure long-term security, as did a prolonged quest to bring Vietnam into the Ming empire. Other notable projects included the sponsorship of naval fleets of unprecedented size on expeditions to South and Southeast Asia. These armadas, under the eunuch Zheng He (1371–ca. 1435), did not aim to explore new lands or expand trade but to demonstrate Ming glory. For the cowed literati, Yongle underwrote massive bibliographic projects, revived the civil service examination system, and promoted the Confucian orthodoxy of the philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200). Finally, he moved the dynasty's main capital from the Yangzi metropolis Nanjing to the Mongol capital, Dadu, or present-day Beijing. This colossal enterprise took fifteen years and enlisted the labor of hundreds of thousands. Supplying the new metropolis required another extraordinary public work, the extension of the Grand Canal

from south China. Despite these ordeals, later generations commonly referred to this monarch as “Grand Ancestor” or Taizong.

A final key emperor, Yingzong (r. 1436–1449, 1457–1464), cut a very different figure from these two autocratic, immensely able, relentless, even Stalin-esque predecessors. Unlike Hongwu and Yongle, this sovereign came to the throne as a child, only eight years old, and was dominated by his female relatives and later court eunuchs, especially Wang Zhen (?–1449). The latter’s influence proved disastrous. When the Oirat Mongol confederation again threatened the northern frontier in 1449, Wang persuaded Yingzong to emulate Yongle and take his place among the troops defending the realm. Botched planning and crack Mongol cavalry led to a crushing defeat at Tumu, perilously close to Beijing. Wang was killed, and Yingzong was taken prisoner. Ming officialdom, however, led by Yu Qian (1398–1457), mobilized the capital’s defenses and made Yingzong’s half-brother Jingtai the new emperor (r. 1450–1456). Eventually, the Mongols chose not to press the issue and in fact returned Yingzong in 1450.

The Tumu catastrophe hardened antiforeign sentiment among the elite, and its effects would be felt for centuries. In the short term, though, the next six unusual, uneasy years saw Beijing with two Sons of Heaven. In 1456, Yingzong’s supporters staged a coup d’état against the ill Jingtai emperor and restored Yingzong to power. There followed a wholesale purge of officials who had served in Jingtai’s administration, involving demotions, punishments in exile, imprisonments, and executions. Eventually, even the coup masterminds overstepped and met a similar grim fate. Yingzong’s reigns began a pattern that lasted throughout the dynasty, which saw weak, capricious emperors, only occasionally interested in government, and the levers of state falling into the hands of powerful eunuchs and domineering scholar-officials. A life in office promised professional and perhaps financial rewards but also instability and risk.

CLASSICS AND HISTORY

Lu Rong and his readers grounded their worldview in the Confucian classics. This canon, first called the Five Classics, comprised *The Book of Changes* (Yijing or Zhouyi), *The Book of Songs* (Shijing), *The Book of Rites* (Liji), *The Book of Documents* (Shangshu), and *The Spring and Autumn Annals* (Chunqiu). Their contents and commentaries dealt with cosmology, divination, poetry, ritual theory and practice, and ancient history. Composed over centuries, they portrayed China’s golden age, which meant primarily the Western Zhou

dynasty (c. 1045–771 BCE), and had received the Han state's imprimatur in 121 BCE. Over time, literati wrote countless commentaries, seeking the true meaning of the classics. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the canon's importance grew, as the Song dynasty (960–1279) made classical learning and examination success necessary for official appointment. Scholars probed and elaborated its texts with unprecedented intensity.

By 1200, a forceful, highly articulate, and self-conscious school of Confucian thought, eventually called the Learning of Principle (*lixue*, also known today as neo-Confucianism), had emerged, spearheaded by Zhu Xi. Zhu reconfigured the Confucian curriculum, assigning the Five Classics a secondary role and focusing on four shorter texts. This quartet, known as the Four Books (Sishu), included *The Analects* (attributed to Confucius), *Mengzi* (attributed to his famous disciple, Mencius), and two short chapters from *The Book of Rites*, *Great Learning* (Daxue) and *The Doctrine of the Mean* (Zhongyong). In later centuries, the Four Books and Zhu's commentaries on them became state orthodoxy, to be mastered by all seeking an official career. These works defined, explicated, and displayed what was correct and what was perverse, how the cosmos worked, how governments ought to wield power, and how men and women ought to behave. This explicitly moral, didactic approach extolled the virtues of benevolence (*ren*), right conduct (*yi*), ritual propriety (*li*), sincerity (*cheng*), and unconditional devotion to one's parents and ancestors, usually labeled filial piety (*xiao*). The canon lay at the core of Confucian literati identity and provided the framework by which educated men would carry out the central task of transforming the world through education (*jiaohua*).

Much of the canon concerned history, which exercised an abiding hold on the educated imagination. Writing history was part of the state's functions as early as the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). Unofficial historians abounded; the past offered countless admirable exempla and deplorable incidents and people. Writers such as Lu Rong sought to clarify these affairs, as substantial disagreements about their significance and fine points sometimes persisted for centuries. In relating the past to the present, literati generally proposed two trajectories. The first one proposed progress, finding the present dynasty to have surpassed earlier eras (with the exception of the Western Zhou), often because of its line of sage, benevolent monarchs. The second one, found in many genres, took history as a tale of tragic decline, as the sage-kings grew ever more distant in time. This deterioration at times looked unceasing, as even worthy cases from the recent Song dynasty could put fifteenth-century contemporaries to shame. Most of Lu's historical notes, though, took up Ming

matters and sought to record events that official annals might overlook but that posterity, in Lu's view, needed to know and would enjoy reading about.

WORK AND FAMILY

Only a fraction of Lu Rong's contemporaries, however, could read. The lives of most Ming people were taken up not with political life and classical study but with making a living and maintaining a household. The overwhelming majority of fifteenth-century Chinese were farmers, preoccupied with cultivating the land, marketing its produce, and paying rents, debts, and taxes. While tenure conditions differed widely across the empire, most farmers were not bound to the land. Since the eleventh century, the economy had become much more specialized and commercialized, leading to nationwide markets in many commodities and sophisticated financial tools, such as the world's first paper currency. Nowhere were these changes felt more deeply than in the Lower Yangzi region, blessed with fertile soil, a mild climate, and well-developed irrigation and canal transportation networks. In the fourteenth century, civil war, major population losses, and restrictive state policies stifled this dynamism. By the late fifteenth century, though, the tight control of the Hongwu and Yongle eras had slackened considerably. Landlords and peasants found ways to escape government tax rolls, local officials devised ad hoc arrangements, and the economy revived. By Lu's time, his home region, near contemporary Suzhou, concentrated on cotton and silk production, and imported its grain from provinces hundreds of miles away.

Great numbers of men, however, engaged in other occupations. Millions served in the Ming military, bound originally to the soldier's life by the state household registration system. The cities and market towns abounded with artisans. The largest enterprises supplied the court and government, producing its paper, porcelain, silk, and even musical entertainment. Salt, an essential commodity, was a state monopoly. These occupations were not mutually exclusive; individuals might take up several lines of work. A farmer's household during the slack season might make hemp, wood, or bamboo products, or the males might even leave home to fish or mine. At the bottom of social scale, nominally, were merchants, condemned in Confucian dogma as parasites. This category spanned an enormous social range. On the one hand, they included petty shopkeepers, small pawnbrokers, and struggling peddlers who sold to local farmers. On the other, they comprised large, sophisticated magnates, shipping basic necessities and luxury goods throughout the empire. The state, in fact, found their logistical skills indispensable and commissioned merchants

to provision its frontier garrisons, in exchange for monopoly rights to sell salt. The merchants' heyday would arrive in the late Ming, and mercantile wealth and influence would arouse literati admiration, envy, and unease.

The main social unit for most Ming subjects was the household. A hierarchical system governed all classes, wherein elders dominated their juniors, and women were subject to men. Females, ideally, stayed in the home, leaving only to marry and join their husband's family. As one ascended the social ladder, gender segregation took on increasing importance, as Confucian strictures governed women's conduct and relationships. A household's ability to enforce strict standards of conduct enhanced the family's reputation as community paragons. Among males, partible inheritance among sons at once promised them a basic minimum but also sowed the seeds of suspicion and competition. At the top of any family's hierarchy were its dead ancestors, whose souls looked down on the living and required periodic prayers and offerings, at home and at the gravesites. To neglect these ceremonial duties was nearly unthinkable. In the eleventh century, scholar-officials had begun exploring and creating means to give the expression of filial piety and family solidarity greater institutional permanence. By Lu Rong's time, elite kin groups often compiled genealogies, conducted large-scale rituals, and buried their dead in family gravesites. In some notable cases, they created lineages with corporate property, ancestral halls, and lineage-run schools and businesses.

SPIRITS, DEITIES, AND CLERGY

For most Chinese, their ancestors constituted the most important residents of the unseen world, but the family dead had plenty of company. The supernatural realm was a crowded, complicated place. One may say that Ming China had five overlapping religions. The most basic one was the ancestor cult, practiced by virtually all people of any means. The next, and the most rarified, was the state cult, a sophisticated panoply of sacrifices, conducted by the emperor, his family, and his officials. Those worshipped in this state-sponsored devotion included the imperial ancestors, as well as the gods of heaven and earth, the spirits of China's important mountains and rivers, and, finally, Confucius (551–479 BCE). Regular, correct offerings and communication with these celestial beings certified the dynasty's authority.

Next were the Daoist and Buddhist churches. The former, China's higher religion, had for centuries assisted the court in supernatural affairs and aided elites and commoners with its prophylactic and exorcistic rituals, for the living and the dead. Outnumbering the Daoists were the Buddhists, whose temples

dotted the Chinese landscape and whose concepts of good works, karmic retribution, and salvation had become basic parts of the Chinese worldview. Finally, the most ubiquitous “religion” was the innumerable local cults, which often lacked formal patrons, fixed dogmas, or set practices. Their shrines were devoted to rivers, mountains, cities, neighborhoods, upright officials, filial children, trees, foxes, tortoises, or any other source of perceived spiritual efficacy. Daoists, Buddhists, and government officials at times looked askance at some of these cults, labeling them as “licentious cults” (*yinci*) and suspecting them as seedbeds of wasteful, immoral, and violent behavior. At times, they took forceful measures and destroyed them. On other occasions, however, state and religious authorities chose to regulate local cult practice and assign the questionable deities a fixed, if inferior, position in their own systems. Between these five general categories, in fact, we see much more borrowing than fighting, as their relationships evolved over the centuries. For example, the court at times commissioned Daoist priests to conduct state rites at important mountains and rivers. Confucian scholar-officials might chant Buddhist scriptures on behalf of their parents, and Buddhist temples might house shrines to local gods.

The religious scene of Lu Rong's time had its distinctive features. In particular, literati attitudes toward the Buddhist church, when compared with those expressed in the Song and Yuan dynasties, had undergone a sea change. Despite neo-Confucianism's growing strength during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, most scholar-officials did not adopt Zhu Xi's uncompromising anti-Buddhism. By the late fifteenth century, though, Zhu's views had become much more widespread, and the Buddhists had lost considerable favor among literati. Similarly, cult worship and accounts of the uncanny came under greater suspicion. To explain this shift, one could point to repressive state policies and intensified intellectual dogmatism, as well as to the new salience of kin-centered religious practice and ideology.⁵ These changes did not mean that educated Chinese men had become atheistic, let alone “scientific”; they “knew” that spirits existed, that the natural world and humanity responded to each other, and that occasionally inexplicable, wondrous turns of events took place.

THE GENRE

Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden belongs to a particular traditional literary genre, called *biji*, or “brushed records,” among other things.⁶ Generic conventions meant a great deal in Chinese writing, prescribing what authors

must say, what they must not say, and what they might hint about. Most genres of writing, composed “on duty” while serving in the government or mourning the dead, offered clear, time-honored guidelines about what ought to go down on paper. Other literary forms, such as personal letters (which often were copied and won a wide distribution), prefaces for books or to send off traveling acquaintances, or commemorations for rebuilt schools and temples, allowed writers more freedom, but most abided by clear norms. They concentrated on the subject at hand and praised the individual or subject under consideration. If the discussion shifted to larger issues, readers still could find the threads of thought leading from the specific to the general.

Biji were different. To begin with, this genre went by several names, such as “miscellaneous histories” (*zashi*), “miscellaneous learning” (*zaxue*), “miscellaneous affairs” (*zashi*), or “small talk” (*xiaoshuo*). Put simply, *biji* were anthologies of stories and observations about all sorts of subjects. They appeared in the first century, grew in the ninth century, and then proliferated in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, abetted by the expansion of the literati and woodblock printing. Most entries were short but detailed, presented one after the other, lacking any systematic order. Unlike other genres, they had an informal air, without any particular audience or didactic purpose. Topics included the supernatural, the court and famous officials, local customs and products, medical miracles, crimes, and social trends; they also included commentary on noteworthy poems. Prefaces occasionally reported that the compiler had seen and heard much during his life and wished to record these matters, lest they be lost to posterity. *Biji* writers necessarily were literati, but they often were lesser-known men, having never served in high office or won a reputation for their classical scholarship or poetry. Some scholars suggest that these men compiled such works partly to gain a name for erudition and judgment; anthologists announced their fidelity to the truth and listed their sources. Writing history in dynastic China, however, meant more than reporting the facts and explaining why and how past events took one course and not another. The historian’s responsibilities included moral assessments of individuals and events, illustrating how they did or did not embody Confucian virtues. That being said, *biji* were also part of what educated men wrote and read for fun.

Lu Rong’s anthology stands out in several ways. First, Chinese bibliographies show a curious shift in the genre’s history. In the Southern Song (1127–1279) and Yuan (1260–1368) dynasties, we see many works of substantial length, with five, ten, or even thirty chapters, if not more. *Biji* continued to appear in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but most are only a single

chapter, containing several dozen entries.⁷ Lu's work, being fifteen chapters of over five hundred entries, is a far richer collection and presages the genre's remarkable rebirth in the mid-sixteenth century. Second, when compared with the only two contemporaneous collections of a similar size, *Bean Garden's* anecdotes span a much wider range of social classes and experiences.⁸ Like many literati, Lu met many sorts of people, but unlike his peers, he decided to write about them. Third, Lu's presentation offers an unusually outspoken, distinctive Confucian persona. On some matters, he remained silent. We hear almost nothing about his immediate family, his health, or his sources of income, although he might touch on those subjects in other genres. Never, of course, does Lu voice dissatisfaction with the Sons of Heaven from his own dynasty; such statements would have lethal consequences for his person, his reputation, and the lives of his kin and associates.

Biographers credit Lu Rong with writing many works, but only *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden* had a wide circulation. The collection's brief preface, unfortunately, says nothing about Lu's intentions and simply records the praise of two contemporaries. Literati readers assigned Lu considerable authority; trawling through online databases turns up dozens of references to *Bean Garden's* entries in books from later centuries. In the eighteenth century, the work numbered among the handful of Ming *biji* included in the colossal compendium, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries* (Siku quanshu). Its bibliographers commended its detail and usefulness as a historical reference, noting also the diverse range of subjects typical of the genre. This variety won the attention of the historian Xie Guozhen (1901–1982), whose survey of Ming-Qing *biji* highlighted *Bean Garden's* entries concerning social hierarchies and customs, peasant life, manufacturing tools, and handicraft production.⁹ Historians of the Ming have made plentiful use of Lu's collection, using its materials concerning politics, mining, language, publishing, taxation, local customs, and religion.¹⁰

THE AUTHOR

As noted, Lu Rong had the good fortune to hail from the Lower Yangzi region. His home, Suzhou Prefecture (specifically Kunshan County), produced many illustrious statesmen, poets, and painters, and contributed an outsized portion of the realm's taxes and first-place examination candidates. Lu showed his talents early, becoming a student at the state-run county school at age fifteen. Most of his classmates focused exclusively on the Confucian classics, which served as the civil service examination material. Lu, on the other hand, read

voraciously, studying histories and philosophers, as well as works on law, war, ritual, grain transport, and water conservancy. In other words, with his strong practical bent, he educated himself in public policy long before his first appointment. His peers teased him, but he won the esteem of his fellow Kunshan native, the redoubtable scholar-official Ye Sheng (1420–1474) and eventually passed the *jinshi* examinations in 1466. Most newly minted *jinshi* received local positions at first, demonstrated their abilities, and then worked their way up the ladder. Lu, however, started in the Ming's secondary capital, Nanjing, where he became a secretary in the Board of Honors in the Ministry of Personnel. Soon after, his father died, and the dictates of filial piety demanded that Lu leave his post and spend twenty-seven months in ritual mourning.

Returning to office, Lu spent his career largely in the Ministry of War and won a reputation for energy and integrity. Over the 1470s and 1480s, he served as director in the Board of Operations, the Board of Provisions, and the Board of Military Personnel. His reports to the capital, whether on the management of government horses in north China, strategic topography and troop concentrations on the Mongol frontier, or local garrisons in Taicang Prefecture, were legendary. Biographers portray Lu composing memorials in his own hand, deep into the night, and producing sometimes three or four reports daily, on all manner of subjects. His recommendations, we are told, found approval and wide application. At times he was a voice for moderation. In 1480 Lu advised against plans to punish Annam (contemporary northern Vietnam) for its incursions into Champa (contemporary central and southern Vietnam). When pirates menaced southeast China in 1481, Lu dismissed plans for an expedition and urged that they be lured into surrender with promises of clemency. In the same year, merchants from the Timurid Empire again came to present lions as part of their tribute goods for the Ming court. They requested that high officials greet them at the northwest frontier (in contemporary west Gansu) and that troops escort them to Beijing. Lu objected and urged the court to halt the acceptance of exotic, useless beasts. This protest is the sole incident mentioned in his brief biography in the Ming dynastic history, finished in 1739, during the Qing dynasty.¹¹

Ming biographies also portray a man of considerable nerve. On one occasion, a demoted official from the Imperial Bodyguard (*Jinyiwei*), which functioned as the imperial secret police, arrested many people and accused them of plotting a rebellion. Lu persuaded authorities to investigate further, with the result that the charges were exposed as baseless and the official was

executed. The arrest of “rumormongers” had previously led to promotions and hereditary appointments for Imperial Bodyguard personnel. This practice resulted in the deaths of people guilty of nothing but idle remarks, and Lu prevailed on the court to end the policy. In other cases, he defeated efforts by powerful eunuchs to gain plum positions for their favorites among military officials. His memorials minced no words, denouncing the candidates for their incompetence and urging that the eunuchs be disciplined. The most celebrated example came in 1488, when Lu managed to reverse a court edict and have the appointments rescinded.¹²

Crossing the eunuchs and their official allies, however, had its costs. Two months later, the Chenghua emperor (r. 1465–1487) died, and the Hongzhi emperor (r. 1488–1505) replaced him on the throne. A new Son of Heaven often filled literati with hope for renewal, and Lu submitted a long memorial with suggestions to improve government. The Grand Secretary Liu Ji (1427–1493) and others, upset that Lu had encroached on their authority, planned to strike back. Fortunately for Lu, another high official persuaded the Ministry of Personnel to transfer him to the post of administrative vice-commissioner of the right in Zhejiang. This move removed him from the capital and returned him to south China. The change gave him a higher rank, less authority, and perhaps saved his life. In Zhejiang, his efforts did not slacken. He energized literati morale, stamped out unregistered, “licentious cults,” and continued to send to the capital extensive memorials detailing local problems. In 1493, however, his report about grain transport problems received no answer from the court, and, emmeshed in a larger purge of southern officials, he failed to pass a performance review later that year. Contemporaries were astonished. Lu returned home and, in his final year, constructed his bean garden and lived simply, writing in his study and never speaking of political matters.

Accounts of Lu's life at home portray a model Confucian, as well as some of the complexities of Chinese families. His great-great-grandfather, apparently a merchant, died in Liaodong (in Liaoning), in northeastern China, when civil war broke out in the mid-fourteenth century. The wife's family, surnamed Xu, took in their orphaned son, Lu's great-grandfather, and gave him their surname. His grandfather and father also used the Xu surname, as did he. After passing the *jinshi* examination in 1466, he decided to restore the extinct patriline and go by the surname Lu. Other feats of outstanding filial piety included his ritual performance in mourning his mother. Despite bitter cold and being in his fifties, Lu went barefoot and stamped his feet as he grieved

in the prescribed manner. He lived at a hut by her grave for twenty-seven months, and no one saw him enter his own home or even smile. As a young man, we are told, he once returned home drunk, much to his mother's displeasure, and he vowed later only to drink half-cups of wine. After his marriage and before his own son's birth, his wife repeatedly urged him to take a concubine to continue the family line. Lu refused, saying his ancestors had never done so. He governed his household and his person in strict fashion, but also generously took care of the children of his late brother. Biographers do not mention any officials or scholars among his father's or mother's relatives, suggesting that Lu rose into elite circles mostly through his own efforts. His wife hailed from Taicang as well, and her father, a provincial graduate, served as an assistant prefect.

Lu Rong had three children. Chinese biographies say little about daughters, but Lu's funeral inscription reports that both women married military officials. Civil officials might nominally have been superior matches, but Lu spent most of his career at the Ministry of War and presumably knew men of good character. His son, Lu Shen (?–1508), who emulated his father in his passion for books and ritual, also scaled the heights of the examination ladder, winning a *jinshi* degree in 1508. He married into a Suzhou scholar-official family and counted among his brothers-in-law the mid-Ming's most prominent scholar-painter, Wen Zhengming (1470–1559). Unfortunately, unlike his father, he failed to escape the wrath of powerful eunuchs. When an anonymous memorial turned up attacking the notorious eunuch Liu Jin (1451–1510), Liu forced Lu Shen and scores of other court officials to kneel for hours in the summer heat so as to exact a confession. Like many others, Lu Shen succumbed to heatstroke, and he died that evening in the prison of the Imperial Bodyguard. This episode served as the opening act of a new, turbulent era in Ming politics and society, which would end only with the dynasty's passing in the next century.

Where did Lu Rong fit in the pecking order of Ming scholar-officials? He never became a high official, rising to be grand secretary, grand coordinator, vice-minister, or commissioner. The official history of the Ming dynasty, compiled over two centuries after his death, includes an entry for Lu that was only three lines long. His contemporaries and immediate posterity, however, gave Lu higher marks. His funeral epitaph was written by Wu Kuan (1435–1504), supervisor of the household of the heir apparent and secretary of the Ministry of Rites.¹³ Cheng Minzheng (1444–1499), the most famous scholar-official of Ming-era Huizhou Prefecture, wrote a biography for him.¹⁴ Local gazetteers and biographical anthologies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries frequently included an entry for Lu Rong.¹⁵ Wang Ao (1450–1524), whose

examination essays exerted a powerful influence on later centuries, composed a preface for Lu's collected works, *The Collected Works of the Gentleman of Model Studio* (Shizhai xiansheng wenji; "The Gentleman of Model Studio" was Lu's sobriquet).¹⁶ Writers sometimes furnished such texts for men that they had not known well or even met, but both Wu and Wang report they had associated with Lu for decades.

The content and fate of *The Collected Works* opens another window on the writer of *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden*. Wang Ao's preface notes that Lu Rong's writings were very scattered, and the collection is much smaller than those of Wu Kuan, Cheng, and Wang.¹⁷ Although most biographies stress Lu's constant production of official memoranda, no less than twenty-two of *The Collected Works'* thirty-seven chapters are devoted to poetry. Only three chapters deal with memorials. In short, most records of his decades of official service are lost. They disappeared very quickly, for the collection was printed by the Lu family in 1501, less than a decade after his death. The collected works of individual writers often owe their long-term survival to inclusion in massive later collectanea, but no Ming-Qing compiler saw fit to make room for Lu Rong's oeuvre.¹⁸ What do these absences signify? Do they reflect the unwritten, critical judgments of posterity? Or do they simply illustrate that the vast majority of works of mid-level fifteenth-century Chinese literati is lost? Was Lu in his own time a relatively obscure figure?¹⁹ These questions, unfortunately, remain unanswerable.

More constructively, what does *The Collected Works* tell us about Lu Rong? Although memorials, prefaces, essays, commemorations, and encomia inevitably have their conventions, writers might bend these genres, in varying degrees, to their own purposes. Lu was no exception, and so let us look at two texts in particular. In the 1488 memorial that led to his dismissal, Lu held forth on a wide range of problems.²⁰ Several topics involved military administration, which Lu knew well from years of service. The capital's armies, he charged, were undermanned, poorly trained, and badly disciplined, which might later fail the throne. In addition, he censured descendants of distinguished imperial relatives, who owed their nobility to their ancestors' valor on the battlefield, for their sloth and high-handed ways. Another point faulted the civilian bureaucracy for nepotism and careerism, which led officials to prize capital posts and belittle assignments in the hinterland. One section, titled innocuously "Cherishing Talent," chastised the court for its abrupt demotions of high officials. Citing Mencius, Lu urged extreme caution in personnel matters and stressed that these affairs belonged properly to the Ministry of Personnel (rather than the throne). In making his case, Lu Rong

supplied vivid examples and named offending parties. To correct these problems, he prescribed further moral and technical instruction and supplied detailed curricula. His last two suggestions took up comparatively minor concerns: (a) the cash gifts bestowed by the court to commoners on New Year's Day and other occasions ought to use fresh notes, not old, ragged ones; and (b) too many unqualified people attended policy meetings, especially on military affairs, which stifled debate among informed officials. In this memorial, we hear a thoughtful, confident scholar-official, by turns critical and optimistic, and endowed with considerable courage and meticulousness.

A second text, written for his own family, further fleshes out Lu's penchant for moral instruction and supplying revealing details. It is a preface, written in 1494, at the end of his life, for his daughter. As a teenager, twenty-five years earlier, she had enjoyed looking at pictures, and so Lu had commissioned a painter to make twenty-four illustrations of exemplary women from China's past and then explained to her their stories and significance.²¹ This assortment of women, Lu informs us, included four daughters, fourteen wives, and six mothers. Now, living in retirement at her home, he notes that his daughter uses the illustrations to teach her own daughters, moving him to fulfill his wish to append comments to each picture, as well as the short preface. The work suggests an attentive, loving father and grandfather.

Many writers would have simply supplied this information and left it at that, but Lu did not. Rather, he framed his subject in distinctive, telling ways. First, the conclusion faulted the illustrations for various anachronisms concerning the subjects' dress and sitting postures. Later viewers might understandably wish to rectify these mistakes, Lu said, but such flaws might be overlooked if the pictures succeeded in their didactic purposes. Most curious is the text's beginning, which recounts how another scholar-official had sought to teach his own children. According to Lu, Xu Tai (1429–1479) gave each of his three daughters a sword, urging them to use it should they (and by extension their families) risk defilement and dishonor. Xu then asked Lu if he had more to add, presumably in the form of a celebratory text. Lu rejected him unequivocally and, quoting Confucius and Mencius, ruled out any place for violence and weapons in family instruction. The only necessary materials, he maintained, were good words, good conduct, and the Confucian classics. This exchange took place at least fifteen years before the preface's composition, and Xu had long since passed away.²² That Lu still saw fit to refer to this incident and the illustrations' inaccuracies reflects a relentless drive to correct, instruct, and improve, even on the most innocuous private occasions.

Other texts in *The Collected Works* suggest that Lu took *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden* and its genre very seriously. For example, one postface tells us that Lu had obtained two famous miscellanies by the late thirteenth-century literatus Zhou Mi (1232–1308) and spent his free time collating them.²³ Another postface comments on one of the most important mid-fifteenth-century miscellanies, compiled by Lu's one-time patron, Ye Sheng.²⁴ Lu recounts Ye's conflict-ridden career and laments being unable to find Ye's collected works.²⁵ He praises the collection, noting that it "does not leave out the good, extol the bad, record oddities, or mix in jokes." Despite its value, Lu notes that the work still requires editing and hopes that Ye's worthy descendants can carry out this task. One may assume that Lu also anticipated that the *Bean Garden* would be read widely and critically.

Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden appeared when China, as well as much of the rest of the world, stood on the eve of major transformations. If time travel had allowed Lu Rong to see China in 1694, two centuries later, he would have witnessed many differences. For one, an alien dynasty ruled the empire, and its regulations decreed that males wear their hair in a queue or risk arrest and execution. For another, the Chinese economy produced a greater variety of goods, be it food, textiles, or books, and they were purchased with far more silver in many more markets than was true in 1494. On the other hand, much would have been familiar, such as the state's structure, its laws, and its examination system and curriculum. The Qing dynasty's Eight Banners institution (*baqi zhidu*), with its Manchu military installations throughout the empire, might have reminded him of the Ming's garrison system; he might also have compared Manchu bondservants, especially their power and access to the court, to the eunuchs of his own day. Other aspects of late seventeenth-century life, such as near-universal gender segregation, kinship models, and religious practices, would have required little or no explanation. In vital ways, much of Lu's world endured for many, many years to come.

If the Ming dynasty was a "resilient empire," the realm owed its stability to a great extent to scholar-officials like Lu Rong.²⁶ He did not often engage in canonical exegesis, but classical standards guided what he wrote and did. Combined with his Confucian commitment was an intense curiosity about the details of everyday life, about how things were made and grown, to a degree that far surpassed most of his contemporaries. Pressed to characterize him, I would call Lu "the inquisitive Confucian," to befit the orthodox yet fresh perspective found in *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden*.

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION

The text survives in three different versions. The most common version of *Shuyuan zaji*, contained in the *Siku quanshu*, has fifteen chapters; it was published in a punctuated, annotated edition by Zhonghua Shuju in 1985. The book also appears in the late Ming collectanea *Guochao diangu* (Classics of the dynasty, hereafter called “the *Classics* edition”), published in a punctuated, annotated edition by Beijing Daxue Chubanshe in 1993: chapters 73–83 bear the name *Shuyuan zaji* and contain chapters 1–11 of the Zhonghua Shuju edition.²⁷; chapters 68–71 bear the name *Pengxuan leiji* (Classified records of the Untended Studio) and are chapters 12–15 of the Zhonghua Shuju edition. In comparing the two versions called *Shuyuan zaji*, the *Classics* edition has forty more entries. The entries found in both editions are very similar, but in some cases the *Classics* edition's language is clearer. In addition, the Zhonghua edition occasionally leaves out comments placed at the entries' conclusions, which are preserved in the *Classics* edition. In contrast, despite their different book titles, the common entries in the Zhonghua *Shuyuan zaji* and *Pengxuan leiji* are virtually identical.

I have used the 1985 Zhonghua edition as a base text and at the end of each entry cite the chapter and page (e.g., SZ 1.10). In places where I have added material from the *Classics* edition, I cite also the chapter and page number from the 1993 edition (e.g., GD 74.1552). Some translated entries appear only in the *Classics* edition of *Shuyuan zaji*. *Pengxuan leiji* also contains entries not in *Shuyuan zaji*, but I have not used them, because they have never appeared in a collection with that name. This translation thus constitutes a composite text, to create the fullest picture possible.

In the original Chinese, the compilation had no apparent organizing principle, and each chapter's entries dealt with diverse subjects. Neither did the entries have titles. To clarify matters, I have organized the translated entries into five thematic categories and titled each entry. Within these chapters, I have preserved Lu's original sequence. This order may produce a sense of randomness, which nonetheless was (and remains) part of the genre's appeal. One hundred and thirty-four entries are translated here, or about one-quarter of the fifteen-chapter book. Some entries here have been translated before, but most often only partially, or they have been summarized or simply footnoted, according to a historian's need. I have drawn from these translations in places, sometimes modifying them. Most entries, it bears emphasis, have never appeared in full English translation. I have excluded brief entries, as well as comments on poetry or language, where much would be lost in translation. In addition, I have left out technical discussions of geography, bureaucracy, ritual,

and classical commentary. In supplementary sidebars interspersed throughout the main text, I have included background information and supplied selections from *The Collected Works*, as well as works by other writers, where Lu joins conversations begun centuries earlier. I have sought to limit annotation to supply only the explanations necessary for understanding the entry.

Finally, classical Chinese is a very economical language, often omitting nouns, verbs, verb tenses, and prepositions. Staying faithful to the original while writing good English often can be very difficult. In this translation, I have striven to make clarity the top priority, occasionally reworking sentence syntax, replacing pronouns with nouns, and providing words omitted in the original.

Romanization

I use the pinyin system of phonetic transliteration for the Chinese names and terms in this book.

Personal Names

Chinese scholar-officials went by many names. Beyond their surname, they had their birth name, a style name (given at their coming-of-age ceremony), and sobriquets, which they might coin later in life. If they had served with distinction, the court would also bestow them with a posthumous name. The author of *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden*, for example, was surnamed Lu, had a birth name of Rong, a style name of Wenliang, and a nickname of Shizhai. While modern historians almost exclusively use given names, writers in dynastic China often used style names or sobriquets to refer to their peers. At times, in expressions of respect, they would use both the given and style names. In this translation, for the sake of simplicity, I refer to individuals only by their given names.

Lu, like other writers, often appends the term *gong* to personal names. *Gong* in ancient times meant “duke,” but by late imperial times, it had lost this specificity and expressed respect. To convey the senses of respect and archaism, I have translated *gong* as “excellency” to express Lu’s high opinion of the given individual. Finally, I have supplied birth and death dates in brackets whenever possible.

Emperors were known by a variety of names. Being Sons of Heaven, they existed in a different realm in subjects’ eyes, and so were never referred to by their surnames and given names. After their death, they often were cited by their ancestral temple name, for example, Ming Xiaozong (Ming Filial Ancestor), the appellation given to Zhu Youtang, who ruled from 1488 to 1505. In addition, Ming emperors, unlike their predecessors, used one reign title to

mark their rule, and modern scholars often employ this title to label the monarch in question. Ming Xiaozong's reign title was Hongzhi (Grand Order), leading historians to commonly refer to him as "the Hongzhi emperor." Moreover, the dynasty's first and third emperors received other lofty titles, and Lu uses these expressions. To minimize confusion, however, I refer to emperors simply by their reign title, in the hope the gains from greater simplicity will outweigh the losses of neglected nuances. The sole Ming exception lies with Zhu Qizhen, who ruled first as the Zhengtong emperor, from 1436 to 1449, and then as the Tianshun emperor from 1457 to 1464, after his restoration to the throne. In the interests of clarity, I refer to him by his ancestral temple name, Yingzong (Excellent Ancestor). Finally, because monarchs in earlier dynasties often had several reign titles, I adhere to common practice and refer to these men by their ancestral temple names.

Official Titles

English translations for offices and government agency titles follow those given by Charles O. Hucker in *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. In addition to the ministers, vice-ministers, and directors in the six ministries, key positions during the Ming included grand secretaries, a small group that gave recommendations on memorials and proposals and then drafted edicts concerning policy implementation. Below them was the Hanlin Academy, an elite corps that drafted more routine sorts of imperial pronouncements, as well as the court history. Outside the capital, provincial governors, prefects, and district magistrates constituted the main parts of the bureaucracy's skeleton. Supervising and orchestrating their operations were grand coordinators, who enjoyed high rank and considerable prestige. Their work, in theory, enhanced the central government's control over the provinces. They also carried the title of censor-in-chief, which gave them powers of impeachment and access to the throne. In addition, some positions were held by two men at once, and the terms "right" or "left" were added to their job titles. Those on the left were higher than those on the right. Finally, the court occasionally granted officials titles from the preimperial era, such as "marquis" or "earl." Such fortunate men and women were said to be "enfeoffed," another archaic expression that here meant the bestowal of an illustrious name, not a fief.

Place-Names

I keep all the Ming dynasty place-names, as found in the text, and provide their modern provincial locations in brackets. The names follow those given in *Zhongguo lishi da cidian*, *lishi dili juan*.

Time

The Chinese recorded time in two different ways. One way was to note the number of years since the adoption of a reign title, which usually had two characters. Emperors in earlier dynasties often had a series of reign titles. In the Ming, however, emperors kept the same title throughout their reign. In addition, Chinese employed a sixty-unit cycle to mark days and years. This cycle comprised two smaller cycles, one with ten units (called the stem cycle) and another with twelve units (called the branch cycle), which meshed like two cogs and created the sixty units. Lu uses both methods, referring to the “seventh year of the Chenghua reign” and to the examination class of “the *bingxu* year [1466].” As done here, I translate the former, romanize and italicize the latter, and supply the modern, Gregorian date in brackets.

Weights and Measures

Historians tell us that Ming measures varied over time and place. Those below follow the approximations given in *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, vol. 7 of *The Cambridge History of China*.

Length: 1 *chi*, or Chinese foot, is a bit longer than 12 inches. Ten *chi* make one *zhang*. (In the text I refer to *chi* as foot or feet.)

Weight: 1 *liang* is about 1.3 ounces. 1 *jin* is about 1.33 pounds.

Capacity: 1 *dou* is about 10 quarts. 1 *hu* (or 5 *dou*) is about 1.65 bushels. 1 *dan* (or 2 *hu*) is about 3.1 bushels.

Area: 1 *mu* is one-sixth of an acre. A *qing* is 100 *mu*, or about 16.7 acres.

Distance: 1 *li* is one-third of a mile.

Money and Prices

Finding reliable sources of prices and wages has long bedeviled Ming historians, as they varied widely over time and place. For a baseline indicator, in Huizhou Prefecture (in Anhui), the price for one *mu* of land in the late fifteenth century averaged 13.19 *liang* of silver.²⁸

CHRONOLOGY OF DYNASTIES
AND HISTORICAL PERIODS

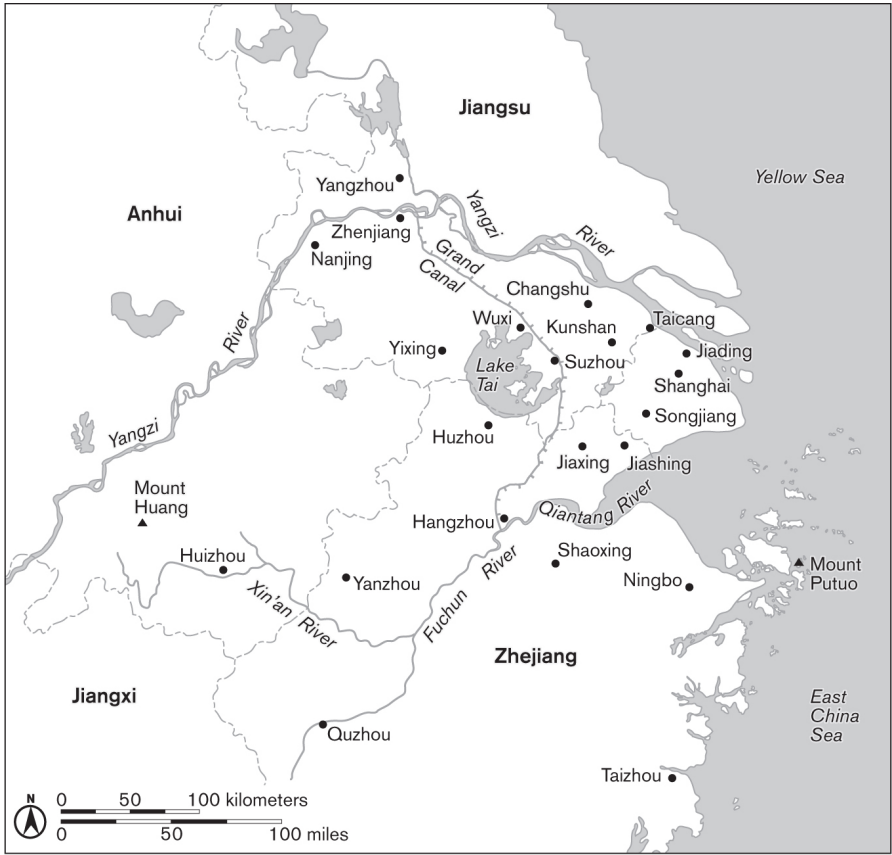
Xia	high antiquity
Shang	c. 1600–c.1045 BCE
Zhou	c. 1045–256 BCE
Western Zhou	c. 1045–771 BCE
Eastern Zhou	771–256 BCE
Spring and Autumn Era	771–403 BCE
Warring States Era	403–221 BCE
Qin	221–206 BCE
Han	206 BCE–220 CE
Era of Disunion	220–581
Sui	581–617
Tang	618–907
Five Dynasties	907–960
Song	960–1279
Northern Song	960–1127
Southern Song	1127–1279
Jin	1115–1234
Yuan	1260–1368
Ming	1368–1644
Qing	1644–1911

MING REIGN PERIODS

Hongwu	1368–1398
Jianwen	1399–1402
Yongle	1403–1424
Hongxi	1425
Xuande	1426–1435
Zhengtong (Yingzong)	1436–1449
Jingtai	1450–1456
Tianshun (Yingzong)	1457–1464
Chenghua	1465–1487
Hongzhi	1488–1505
Zhengde	1506–1521
Jiajing	1522–1566
Longqing	1567–1572
Wanli	1573–1619
Taichang	1620
Tianqi	1621–1627
Chongzhen	1628–1644



MODERN CHINA.



Detail of lower Yangtze region (Jiangnan).

Selections from
Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden

CHAPTER ONE

Social Life

FASHION TRENDS, 1

I heard a weaver for the Directorate for Imperial Apparel say, “The emperor’s undergarments are all made with Songjiang [Jiangsu] fine cotton drill.” This dynasty’s family ways are like this. “For the red ramie and silk lapelled garments, used at the ancestral temple rites, the bottom part is red cotton.” Its class and restraint were further like this. Today, there are irresponsible young men from rich and noble households who use ramie, silk, damask, and satin for their pants. Such extravagance is most egregious! (*Shuyuan zaji*, hereafter SZ 1.1)

A LOYAL FOLLOWER

When Si Zheng, the Shaanxi regional military commissioner, was a young man, he organized many young men of ill repute into a “righteous brotherhood.” If one member was attacked, they would combine forces and take revenge. Zheng had beaten to death a man at a singing loft in the provincial capital.¹ The owner was powerless to apprehend him, and Zheng escaped. They seized a certain Mr. Liu, who associated with Zheng, and took him to the officials to investigate Zheng’s whereabouts. Liu said, “Actually it was me who killed him. It was not Zheng.” Many people verified that the murderer was Zheng, and Liu grew increasingly insistent in his admission of guilt. The judicial authorities could not change his mind and then condemned him to death. Later, he obtained a reduced sentence and was sent to serve in the army at the Sanwan Garrison in Liaodong [Liaoning]. Zheng regarded him as virtuous and every year sent funds to his military unit.

At the time, Zheng had an old mother, and so Liu falsely confessed and took his place. The knights-errant of ancient times could not surpass him. (SZ 1.5–6)

IDEAS ABOUT MUSLIMS

Muslim teachings are different from those in China. They do not give offerings to the Buddha, do not provide sacrifices to the gods, and do not revere the dead ancestors. What they honor and respect is only the single character, "Heaven." Outside of Heaven, they most respect the sage Confucius. So they say:

Buddhist monks say that the Buddha resides in the western sky.

Daoists say that Penglai is in the eastern sea.²

Only Confucians handle practical matters.

In the here and now, every day is a spring breeze.³

When they see Chinese set up vegetarian feasts and conduct *jiao* offerings, they laugh at them.⁴

When they give birth to a child, they first put cooked mutton fat in the mouth. They do not let the child spit it out or swallow it. After the fat is fully dissolved, then they breastfeed the child. Then the child will be strong and have no illnesses.

Their customs excel in matters of personal care, but they have no special methods. The only thing is that they protect their testicles and do not let them become extremely cold. When they see southerners wearing summer split trousers, they disapprove very strongly and fear that the cold will harm the testicles. It is said, "At night while sleeping, one ought to hold them in the hand to keep them warm," and they say, "They are the roots of human life; one must protect them." This explanation makes great sense. (SZ 2.17)

ANCIENT IDEALS

During the time of the Three Dynasties, people received residences of five *mu* in area and farmland of one hundred *mu*. It was not like later ages, where rich households had properties that connected immense estates, and poor households did not have enough land to stick an awl in. At the time, no one had yet heard of cases where people had surplus or inadequate farmland or residential property. The men farmed, and the women worked with silk and hemp, in order to feed and clothe themselves. If they lacked adequate possessions, they took what they had to trade for what they did not have. Those who worked at the fundamental occupation [agriculture] did not become poor, and those who pursued secondary occupations [crafts and commerce] did not become

MUSLIMS IN THE MING

Islam had been practiced in China since the seventh century, brought there by Arab traders residing mostly in the southeastern cities of present-day Guangzhou and Quanzhou, as well as northern Vietnam. Many more Muslims, mostly merchants from Central Asia, arrived with the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Many of the top financial advisors to Khubilai Khan (r. 1260–1298) were Muslim, and Yuan rulers supported mosque construction and granted Muslims tax exemptions. The architect of the Yuan capital, Dadu (contemporary Beijing), was Muslim, as were many craftsmen who worked on the city's construction. In addition, government bureaus were established to manage Islamic calendars, as well as the medical knowledge and geography of the Muslim world. Muslim wealth and influence at times led to tension with Confucian (and Buddhist) officials and other Han, but Muslims escaped wholesale persecution.¹

Although the Ming dynasty sharply restricted foreign trade and rejected Yuan cosmopolitanism, the return to Han rule did not harm the general status of Chinese Muslims. Mosque construction continued in the early Ming, and the Yongle emperor entrusted the command of his seven extraordinary maritime expeditions to the Muslim eunuch Zheng He (1371–ca. 1435). Muslims served in the Ming government but had nowhere near the influence they possessed in the Yuan or even the latter parts of the Southern Song. Islam's compatibility with Chinese ways received a ringing endorsement from Wang Ao in his 1492 commemoration of two mosques in Nanjing, which began, "The teachings of the western regions are refined and subtle, hidden and deep, encompassing and expansive. From the proper [Confucian] relations between lord and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, friend and friend, and extending to the techniques of astronomy, medicine, divination, horticulture, and the minor arts, all [of their ways] have a place and all resemble Chinese customs."² These similarities and this expertise allowed Muslims to fit readily into Ming society, but Lu's entry shows that notable distinctions remained.

1 For an overview of Muslims during the Song and Yuan eras, see Chaffee, *Muslim Merchants*. Chaffee's subjects largely are expatriates, hailing from Southeast Asia, southern India, and the Middle East. The ethnicity and origins of the Muslims referred to by Lu are unclear.

2 "Chi jian Jingjue Libai ersi beiji," in *Qingzhen shiyi buji*, 106b; *Tianfang zhisheng baolu*, 20.10b.

rich. Put simply, no one at that time lacked for wealth. Sons served their fathers, younger brothers served their elder brothers, and the young served the old. As for slaves and servants, only government offices had them. Commoner households did not dare to keep them.

As for the Sons of Heaven, the feudal lords, dukes and ministers, grandees, officers, and commoners, along with the empresses, consorts, secondary consorts, wives, and concubines, each had their own fixed standards. When boys turned twenty years of age, they were capped in coming-of-age ceremonies, and at thirty, they established families. When girls turned fifteen, they received their hairpins in coming-of-age ceremonies, and at twenty, they were married. Each had their regulations. With regard to marriage ages and numbers of wives and concubines, variations were not allowed. "Neither in burying the dead, nor in changing his abode, did a man go beyond the confines of his village."⁵ At that time, how could discussions arise about moving to somewhere else? At forty years of age, the men began to serve in office. At fifty, they were appointed to be grandees, and at seventy, they retired from service. How could discussions arise about the pace of one's career and the prestige of one's official position?

We can say that in later ages there was no Way (*dao*) with which those in high positions could manage affairs and no model for those in low positions to follow. Consequently, minor ways and perverse theories spread. Even intelligent and wise gentlemen were unavoidably confused by them. Why? The mission of transformation through instruction was inadequate to deeply penetrate into people's minds. The people naturally then were not steadfast in their beliefs, and when they met others, they easily changed their views.⁶ (SZ 2.18–19; *Guochao diangu*, hereafter GD 74.1625)

RITUAL PRACTICE AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

"The rules of ceremony do not go down to the common people."⁷ This is not to say that the common people should not practice them. Because of particular circumstances, commoners cannot carry them out.

For example, if one has [been married to] a woman for three months, she is later to present herself at the ancestral temple and meet the [spirits of her] deceased parents-in-law and the living parents-in-law. Only feudal lords and grandees practiced this ritual. In the case of commoners, they mostly would take a wife so that she could take care of the parents. How much more so when the living spaces are not large? The family's father and sons are in plain sight day and night. How could they wait three months? Furthermore, if inner and

outer do not share a well, they do not share bathing quarters.⁸ If they do not share bathing quarters, then the ritual still could be practiced.

When it comes to drilling wells, the north has the greatest difficulties. Today even the great families in Shandong and at the northern capital drill their own wells. Commoner families even order their wives and daughters to draw water from rivers. Shanxi has few rivers and ditches. Powerful families use small carts to carry ropes for drawing water. They travel several *li* to draw from the wells. Powerless people use vessels to collect rain and snow water, and use it only to drink. How can they regularly have leftover water for bathing?

If we infer from these sorts of cases, the ancients generally said that the rituals ought to be conducted like this. They did not necessarily intend that each family would be able to practice them. (SZ 2.20)

GOSSIP ABOUT THE FAMOUS

Most narratives belonging to the small-talk genre concern the affairs of court nobles and famous gentlemen. For the most part, they are stories obtained and passed on by gossipy busybodies. The stories are not all necessarily true.

For example, the sentence “The old son-in-law becomes the new son-in-law; the elder brother-in-law serves as the younger brother-in-law” is taken to refer to his excellency Ouyang Xiu [1007–1072].⁹ Later ages regarded the expression as spoken truth, evidence of his marriage to his former wife’s younger sister.

I have investigated his excellency’s chronology. His excellency first married Madame Xu. She was the daughter of Yan, the Hanlin academician. Subsequently, he married Madame Yang. She was the daughter of Daya, academician of the Hall of Assembled Worthies and grand master of remonstrance. The third time he married Madame Xue. She was the daughter of Kui, academician at the Hall for Aid in Governance and vice-minister of revenue. The record of conduct (*xingzhuang*) and entombed inscription (*muzhi*) are identical.¹⁰ This is how we know that this account was made up by gossipy busybodies. This still is not considered to be a pernicious matter.

Certain works of poetry criticism record that Sima Guang [1019–1086] secretly patronized an official courtesan and that Wang Anshi [1021–1086] pursued her.¹¹ The courtesan climbed over the house wall and ran away. Thereupon Wang wrote the couplet to tease him:

Startled, I awake from a dream of roaming with the immortal
To pursue again the fleeing oriole over the wall!¹²

This greatly soils their virtuous reputations. In fact, Sima did not have the affair in the first place. Wang Anshi was an upright man. He also probably would not have regarded pursuing the courtesan and teasing Sima as things worth doing. It is best to put the affair aside and not believe it. (SZ 3.29–30; GD 75.1638)

BURYING THE FAMOUS

Master Song Lian [1310–1381], thanks to his literary learning, came to meet the Hongwu emperor. The court cherished him with special favor. In the fourteenth year of the Hongwu reign [1381], his son Shen committed an offense, and the whole family was to be executed. The emperor could not bear it and gave them special clemency and installed him in Maozhou in Sichuan. Before Song arrived there, he died in Kuifu [eastern Sichuan] and was buried below Lianhua Pond. During the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], the grave fell into disrepair, and the grand coordinator censor, his excellency Sun Ren of Chizhou [Anhui], moved the grave to Chengdu [western Sichuan]. It happened then that Attendant Song Chang, in the Prince of Shu's household, had made a new tomb outside the east gates of Chengdu.¹³ His excellency Sun sent people and ordered that it be used to bury the master. Because Song Lian was a famous person with the same surname, the attendant accepted the plan with enthusiasm and then buried him there. He calculated that the cost could be one thousand taels.

Since the beginning of the dynasty, there have been many generals, grand councilors, high officials, and rich and noble men known for their accomplishments, who were powerful and influential in their time. After they died, their families' fortunes changed, and some could not protect their tombs. If the dynasty did not have compassion, who could have managed their gravesites? The master's death was over one hundred years ago, but there was this fortunate turn of events. So there increasingly are people who keep in mind to maintain good customs and are fond of virtue. They do not make distinctions over the closeness or distance in the kinship relationship. (SZ 4.50)

NEW YEAR'S CUSTOMS

After New Year's Day in the capital, from the court officials down to the commoners, people stroll back and forth on the streets for days on end. They call this "New Year visits." When literati and commoners call on their relatives and friends, the visits for the most part are truly from the heart. When court

officials visit each other, it is mostly a vague kindness without any particular affection. The residences of court officials are mostly in the east and west Chang'an districts. Those who go there do not care if the residents know them, but look at the gates and toss in their visiting cards. Some do not get off their horses. Some do not go to the gates and instead order people to deliver the visiting cards. When they meet clever servants answering the door, the latter sometimes refuse and do not take their cards. Sometimes there are servants who keep the door shut and do not receive them.

For capital officials, as soon as they leave the court, they form groups, going every day. When they go into other people's residences, they get even more drunk and then go home. Three or four days later, they start to have time to visit their parents. I do not understand this custom and also do not know when it started. I heard that matters during the Tianshun reign [1457–1464] had not gotten so out of control. (SZ 5.52)

FANS

One name for "folding fans" is "spreading fans." It's that they are folded when put away, and opened and spread when used. Those that call them *sha* are wrong. *Sha* are round fans. Round fans can hide the face and thus are called "face-conveniencers." We can already know this by looking at poems and paintings by people in the past. I heard that they already had them in the Song period [960–1279]. Some say that they began in the Yongle era [1403–1424], because the Chosŏn kingdom [Korea] presented to the throne fans made from pine bark. The emperor delighted at the ease with which they folded and spread, and commanded craftsmen to make them according to the model. Women in the south all used round fans, and only courtesans used folding fans. In recent years, there are women of good families who use spreading fans. From this we can see how customs are getting worse by the day. (SZ 5.52–53)

A DESPISED STUDENT

The student Gu Qing in Qingzhou [Shandong] took advantage of his talent to do as he pleased and bully his village. After he died and was buried, people disinterred his corpse, took it apart limb from limb, and hung the remains up in the trees. The father of Censor-in-Chief Wang Yue [1426–1499] of Jun County [Henan] buried what had been disinterred but lost the head. He looked for it but could not find it. So he made a wooden carving as a substitute and then buried it. Later, as Wang was eating fermented bean paste, when he

got to the bottom of the pot, the head was there. Wang for the rest of his life never ate fermented bean paste. I heard about this from the senior official Zhang Wenjin. (SZ 5.57)

MISUNDERSTANDING CHINESE

When the strength of Zhang Xun [709–757] was exhausted, he faced west and bowed twice, saying, “In life I have nothing with which to repay Your Majesty. In death I should be a violent (*li* 厲) ghost and kill bandits.”¹⁴ The sense of the character for “vengeful” is different from the “vengeful” of “Boyou was vengeful.”¹⁵ In tracing the origins of its meaning, it is simply a pledge to be a fierce, vengeful ghost and kill bandits. The congratulatory declaration of Li Han [fl. eighth century] said, “Your subject has heard that those who die a wrongful death become vengeful ghosts and that wandering spirits become unexpected calamities. If they have places to return to, they do not create disasters.” This is exactly the meaning of “vengeful” in “Boyou was vengeful.” Han’s intention in fact was to request to make a tomb to summon Xun’s spirit and have him buried. That is all he said. It was not to explain the meaning of the characters “vengeful ghost.”

Later people misunderstood this character, which eventually led to twisted conceptions. It came to the point where they took the character “violent” to be the ancient character for “epidemic” (*li* 癘), and they said that Xun would be the one to control the demons that bring epidemics. It became such that at Daoist temples they made images of Xun and gave him the appearance of a blue-faced demon. The world’s absurd misunderstandings are like this. It was precisely because they misunderstood the character. At the temple for the Yulin 羽林 Army in Wu, they mistook the word for Yulin 雨淋 and so did not put a cover on the structure.¹⁶ The Sangu 三孤 Temple was wrongly made into the Sangu 三姑 Temple, and so they made images of three women there.¹⁷ Shanxi has Danzhu Ridge. It was enfeoffed to Yao’s son.¹⁸ But they carved the likeness of a pig (*zhu*) and painted it red (*dan*).¹⁹ The transmissions of these mistakes by contemporary customs are pathetic, and there are many like this. (SZ 6.67)

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ETHNICITY

Foreign groups protect their own people. Their basic natures are all inherently like this, but Muslims are especially so. I heard that during the Jingtai reign [1450–1456], when the Buddhist Dalongfu Temple was finished, the monks

allowed people to enter as they wished and take a look. The monks had just assembled at the basilica when a Muslim carrying an axe suddenly came up to the basilica, killed two monks, and wounded two or three others. He was immediately apprehended and taken to the judicial authorities for interrogation. He said, "The temple had newly constructed a revolving canon.²⁰ Those below turning the wheel were all carved in the image of the people of my teachings.²¹ I pitied the suffering of their being turned year after year. I hated the monks and killed them. There was no other reason." The authorities sent the case to the throne, and it was ordered that he be cut in two at the waist in the market.

I say that this man committed a capital crime, and his motives derived from the utmost ignorance. Yet his action drew from his sense of righteousness, and not even death could make him turn back. As for Chinese people, as soon as they encounter a difficult situation, there are those who will shove their way back into their own kind to save themselves. If we compare them with this man, moved by righteousness but blinded by ignorance, it is a lamentable situation! (SZ 6.76; GD 78.1690)

SHAMELESS SOCIAL CLIMBING

These days rich households that arose from humble origins often attach themselves to famous clans. They wrong other people and their descendants, and do not understand how this practice violates common sense and forgets one's parents. These mistakes are grievous. This trend is especially severe in Wu.

For example, there was in Taicang [Jiangsu] a man named Kong Yuan, courtesy name Shisheng. He was a fifty-third-generation descendant of Confucius. His ancestor from six generations before, Duanyue, served the Song dynasty and came south with the fall of the Northern Song. Yuan's father Zhijing served the Yuan dynasty as the Tongzhou [Jiangsu] tax inspector and moved his family to Kunshan. At the beginning of the Yanyou reign [1313], the prefectural seat moved to Taicang. They made a new school, planned mostly by Shisheng. Then he managed the school's affairs and his title was "Old Man of the Shen Wilds." His son was Kerang and his grandson Shixue, and both were able to continue the enterprise. Shixue's family was very poor. A rich family from a certain county in Changzhou Prefecture [Jiangsu] sought to be counted as part of his line because of their common surname, and Shixue firmly rejected them. After he died there were no sons, and his household could not survive on their own. The rich family then exchanged a boatload of rice for the genealogy and left.

Looking at the matter from this perspective, after the passing of the sages and worthies, there are many cases where petty people baselessly pretend to be their descendants and deceive the world.²² (SZ 7.85–86)

IMPOSTERS AND VICTIMS

In the capital there are women who marry people from outside the capital to become wives and concubines. In the beginning, when matchmakers let others see them, they take the beautiful ones out to greet them. When it comes time for marrying, they are replaced by the ugly ones. The name of this sort is “package switchers” (*chuobao'er*). There are men who visit people and spend two nights, stealing everything that they can carry off. The name for them is “bringers of calamity” (*nayang'er*). These are simply local riff-raff.

Then there are boys who impersonate girls. They apply powder to their faces and bind their feet. Their appearance comes close to being authentic. When they come to the groom's gates, they take advantage of people's inattention and then run away. During the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], there was one who married a National University student. It happened that there was no chance to run away. When night fell, the groom approached, and the bride turned out to be a male. They took him to the officials and had him punished along with the matchmaker.

There are men who impersonate women teachers. Households inside and outside the capital keep them to teach needlepoint. There are many women who are violated, but they cannot speak out on their own behalf. Later, one came to a student's household in Zhending [Hebei]. The student wanted to take advantage of the situation, but the teacher forcefully refused and would not submit. The student forced his will on the teacher, who turned out to be a male. The student then had the teacher bound and taken to the officials. They sent him in the cangue to the capital judicial offices. Officials denounced his conduct as perverse and memorialized that he be sentenced to death by slicing in the market. All of these are what we call the ultimate monstrosities of the human world. (SZ 7.88–89; GD 79.1706–7)

A FORTUNATE ESCAPE

Censor Dai Yong, whose courtesy name was Tingxian, was a native of Gao'an in Jiangxi. Before he passed the *jinshi* examinations, he had invited a teacher to his house. The family teacher excelled at writing litigation documents for

other people, and Yong's father threw him out. It is customary that teachers who have been thrown out by others have no place to go, and so this teacher resented him. He hid in a neighboring commandery and had the family sued in court. The suit said that the teacher had a classical essay degree, was worth such-and-such amount of silver, and that Yong plotted his death. Yong could not endure the torture and interrogation, and so he submitted and incriminated himself. Yong's family sent out a substantial reward for anyone who could find the teacher's whereabouts. After over a year, someone suddenly reported his hiding place. The family had him lead the way for the district authorities, and in the end they apprehended the teacher. Only then was the matter clarified. Later Yong passed the *jinshi* examination in the *bingxu* year of the Chenghua reign [1466], and his service took him to be Guizhou's assistant administration commissioner.

If he had been unlucky, would not Yong have become a wronged ghost?²³ Looking at it from this perspective, there are many people who have died because of unjust verdicts. This is why those who pronounce death sentences must be respectful and careful. (SZ 8.97; GD 80.1720)

A RIGHTEOUS BANDIT

A merchant, a Mr. Cai of Suzhou city, once docked his boat at Jingkou [Jiangsu]. He saw a tall traveler with an awe-inspiring appearance. His beard covered his belly, and his mustache extended several inches and concealed his mouth. Cai reckoned that it obstructed his eating and drinking, and so he invited him into a restaurant to watch him. As the traveler looked over his food, he took off his hat, removed two hairpins from his chignon, used them to coil up his mustache, and inserted them into his side whiskers. He took long gulps and ate with big bites, as if there was no one around him. When he finished eating, he took his leave, saying, "I am moved by milord's generosity. How can I repay you?" Then he ordered that a wooden club be taken from his boat and given to Cai. The traveler said, "When you are sailing, if there are people raiding and bullying others, you should show this to them. Say it is an old bearded official's club to help people to come to their senses. They certainly will back off and leave."

Later, while sailing on the river, Cai suddenly encountered violent highwaymen. Cai did as the man had said. As predicted, they did not rob him and left. The same thing happened repeatedly. Only then did Cai understand that he was the bandit leader of the violent highwaymen. He always behaved with

dignity and trustworthiness among people. Cai later died at Jiujiang [Jiangxi]. The guest learned about it and paid for the funeral expenses with gold. He sent people to take care of the coffin as it went to Jingkou, and then they left.

Out of consideration for a single meal, a bandit in this fashion did not forget. His worthiness is far greater than those these days who gorge themselves without feelings for others. (SZ 8.103; GD 80.1727)

THEFT AND RETRIBUTION

A shopkeeper family at Chang Gate in Suzhou were Muslims who specialized in selling jade. A Muslim entrusted his wealth to the family, left, and did not return. The household, suspecting that the man had no descendants, used his wealth to manage their business, eventually becoming rich. When the Muslim's son arrived, the shopkeeper concealed the extent of his father's wealth. The son did not know if the shopkeeper's claims were true or not. He wished to ask the officials but had no basis to determine the matter. So the officials measured out travel costs and sent him off.

Later the shopkeeper family had a son. He loved to drink and did not value money. He did everything that might destroy a family. The father could not stop him and tied him up in an empty room. The mother felt sorry for him and peeked at him through a crack in the wall. It was the original Muslim. She hastened to tell her husband, and both peeked at him. The husband sighed, "This is simply Heaven's plot against us." They then released him.

Several years later, the family's wealth was completely gone, and the son also died. I heard this from a student, surnamed Pu. Although the affair verges on the ridiculous, it still can warn those who hide other people's wealth. (GD 81.1743)

RETURNING BOOKS

When collecting books on a large scale, one cannot read them all, but one should not be stingy about others borrowing them to read them. This indeed is one aspect of putting oneself in the place of others. If a certain person has always acted badly, one ought to be careful and thoughtful toward them from start to finish, and not giving them books is permissible.

At present there is a saying, "To lend books is to be a fool; to return books is to be a fool." This is a saying of petty people. The original character for "fool" (*chi*) is "cup" (*chi*), a vessel to store wine. It says that when one borrows

something, a cup is used as an introduction gift and that when one returns it, one uses a cup as a thank-you gift, and that is all. To lend a book to someone else is a benevolent and worthy act of virtue. To borrow a book and not return it is an act of theft. How can one view it only as foolishness? (SZ 9.116)

COSMETIC IMPROVEMENTS

Lu Zhan [d. 454] dyed his white hair to please his concubine, and Kou Jun [961–1023] sped up the greying of his whiskers to gain the post of grand councillor. Both were mired in their desires and did not follow the natural course of events. Yet *The Treatise on Manifold Topics* (Bowuzhi) by Zhang Hua [232–300] has a method for dyeing the whiskers white. Tang and Song people have poems about plucking out white hairs. So we know that this custom goes way back. However, today few men do so to please their concubines. For the most part, they are only those awaiting their first official appointments or who wish to hang on to their positions. On the bulletin board in the front of the Ministry of Personnel, there are notices for herbs that can dye hair white and methods for fixing one's front teeth. One can see them and then know about this. (SZ 9.117)

TOYING WITH THE SKEPTICAL

A traveling gentleman from Jiangxi excelled at wondrous tricks. High officials mostly treated him with ritual deference. Only a certain surveillance vice-commissioner did not believe him. The traveling gentleman wanted to present himself and requested to show his tricks for fun, and the official consented. Then the gentleman cut paper to make two chopping cleavers. He made a show as he played with them. The two cleavers then flew up and danced together in front of him. They gradually came closer to the vice-commissioner, and the vice-commissioner sat straight up and did not move. A while later the cleavers touched his face, and the vice-commissioner brushed them away with his sleeve. The gentleman then put his cleavers away and left. Only then did they see that the vice-commissioner's eyebrows had been shaved off. He sent people to arrest and punish the gentleman. No one knew where he went. I heard about this from the *jinshi* Jiang Hengfu [1472], who was sent to Jiangxi. (SZ 10.123)

FASHION TRENDS, 2

Skirts decorated with horsetails (*mawei qun*) started in Korea and came into the capital. The people of the capital bought and wore them. There was no

OPERA

Opera, or musical drama, was far and away the most popular form of entertainment in late imperial China. Its origins lay in the Tang-dynasty Music Bureau, a state agency whose performing artists supplied entertainment to the court. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as cities grew, disposable income increased, and stringent curfew laws fell away, a separate, private entertainment industry took shape. Consequently, opera appeared not only in the palace but in theaters, wine shops, brothels, markets, and temples, and at occasions such as festivals, weddings, funerals, and banquets. Plots might involve famous historical episodes, romances, supernatural tales, and accounts of crime and punishment, spiced with clever wordplay and slapstick humor. Singing was paramount, props and sets were minimal, and symbolic gestures communicated vital elements of the stories. Over time, the genre's prestige rose, and literati themselves came to compose opera librettos, as the most important playwright of the early Ming was none other than Zhu Youdun (1379–1439), a grandson of the Ming founder.

If opera won widespread acclaim, its performers did not. Actors ranked at the bottom of the social ladder and formed in the Ming a separate, formal, hereditary occupational category. The state punished female relatives of male convicts and female war prisoners by sentencing them to this despised status. Opera troupes frequently doubled as fronts for prostitution. Although exceptional performers and troupes might find generous patrons, most were often on the road, living from hand to mouth. Ming society was preoccupied with the clear boundaries and hierarchies between generations, genders, social strata, and ethnicities, but opera stood apart, regularly violating these strictures. Performers pretended to be what they were not: officials, outlaws, generals, daughters of elite families, servants, merchants, and clergy. Actors commonly played women characters, and actresses likewise took on male roles. That being said, opera fleshed out the traditional Chinese imagination, and for most Chinese, unable to read, opera performances furnished a vital means for them to learn their heritage and its values.

one yet who knew how to make them. Those who first wore them were only rich merchants, noble princesses, and singing courtesans. Later they were mostly worn by military officials, and the capital began to have people who could weave and sell them. Subsequently, regardless of social status, those who wore them grew more numerous by the day. By the last years of the

Chenghua reign [1465–1487], most court officials wore them. In general, those who wore them left the lower part empty and open, just for looks.²⁴ The grand secretary, his excellency Wan An [?–1489] never took his off in winter or summer. His excellency Zhou Hongmou [1419–1490] of Zongbo wore two layers. Young marquises, earls, and imperial sons-in-law even had bowstrings threading the hems of their robes. The only high official who did not wear them was Li Chun [*jinshi* 1450], vice-minister in the Ministry of Personnel. Laws prohibiting cross-dressing began in the Hongzhi reign [1488–1505]. (SZ 10.123–24)

OPERA AFICIONADOS

Jiaxing's Haiyan County, Shaoxing's Yuyao County, Ningbo's Cixi County, Taizhou's Huangyan County, and Wenzhou's Yongjia County all have people who practice to become actors. Their name is drama's disciples (*xiwen dizi*). Even sons of good families are not ashamed of doing this. They perform *chuanqi*.²⁵ Each opera has women, and each one has crying. When people are made to hear them, they become saddened very easily. The arias are mostly the tones of the lost Southern Song dynasty [1127–1279]. I do not know why people from Zhejiang enjoy and esteem them. Those who pretend to be women are named powdered female leads (*zhuangdan*). They have soft voices and walk slowly. When they perform the ritual double bow, it usually looks like the real thing.²⁶ Every time I see them, they make me feel embarrassed, and I cannot look directly at them. Yet no-good sorts are often on familiar terms with them, to the point where they have their concubines comb the actors' hair and arrange their dress. Moreover, the women forget themselves and chat and joke with them. There are cases where the women are secretly violated by them. For literati who wish to run a proper household, it is appropriate that they strictly forbid this practice and completely cut it off. (SZ 10.124–25; GD 82.1757)

TATTOOS

When I was young, I went into a god's shrine and saw the images of the attending spirit guards. There were naked ones, whose arms and legs were all painted in black shapes of flowers, birds, clouds, and dragons. At first I did not understand why.

Recently in Wenzhou and Taizhou [Zhejiang], and other places, I saw that at beginning of the dynasty, there were people sentenced to the frontier for

being “carved in black.” I asked how “carved in black” got its name. An elder said, “This is a name for ‘needling floral embroidery.’ It is simply what the ancients called ‘patterned bodies’ (*wenshen*, i.e., tattooed bodies). During the Yuan, followers of knights-errant all wanted to do this. They all had tattooed dragons, phoenixes, and flowers on their arms and legs. The complicated, finely detailed ones were regarded as the best. During the Hongwu reign [1368–1398], the prohibitions were very strict, and from then on no one dared to violate the rules.”

Then I suddenly realized what I had seen when I was young. They were images of tattooed bodies. I learned that tattooed bodies in ancient times started with foreigners from the islands. For the most part, these people often went into the water to make a living. They tattooed their bodies to keep away strange things in the water, and that was all. Commoners who have been touched by classical teachings compete to do the right thing. But if they harm their bodies’ skin, how would they differ from island foreigners? To prohibit such things truly is correct.

Looking at the matter from this perspective, if the authorities’ laws and commands are strict and enlightened, then there is nothing that cannot be changed when it comes to bad customs. In all cases, it is slipshod government to believe we should follow popular customs, or prioritize official policy as most urgent but then not follow through. (SZ 10.127)

GRAVE GOODS

Censor Zhang said, “During the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], bandits opened the tomb of Han Qi [1008–1075]. They got many articles of gold and silver, and thirty-six golden belts, and so the extent of his wealth can be known.” I believe that these belts certainly were bestowed on him by rulers. If he had bought them, then the mistake lies in his not being frugal. If he received them from others, then the mistake lies in his lacking integrity. Such burials with grave goods not only bring no benefit, but instead they harm the person. At the time, Han Qi in his majesty was admired by many. It must have been the ignorance of his sons and grandsons that led to this, and that is all.

Looking at this matter, we then understand why *Master Zhu’s Family Rituals* (*Zhuji jiali*), in the matter of grave goods and jewels to be placed in the deceased’s mouth, prohibits the use of pearls and jade, and gold and silver.²⁷ Moreover, the rules make relatives and friends assemble and observe in order to understand this. Zhu Xi’s worries were profound and his thinking farsighted, and truly are a warning and reminder for later generations.

A BURIAL APPRAISAL BY YE SHENG

“If buried in less than three feet of earth, it will be difficult to keep the body intact for a hundred years. If buried in more than three feet of earth, it will be difficult to keep the tomb intact for a hundred years.” I do not know whose words these are, but the essential point makes great sense.

There was a recent granary official at Yongning. He was a native of Anyang County in Zhangde [Henan] and had been a National University student. I asked him about the descendants of Han Qi. He said, “His descendants are known to be in Zhezong [Zhejiang]. There are none of his people at all in Anyang. Although there was a magistrate Han Pan, he is not from their clan. In the city there is a temple dedicated to his excellency Han, and the authorities make offerings to it once a year. ‘The Record of the Morning Brocade Hall’ is inside, and Cai Xiang [1012–1067] did the calligraphy.¹

“The tomb is less than twenty *li* from the county seat. None of the stone rams and tigers from the stone steles remain. Most were used in recent years when they constructed Prince Zhao’s residence, cut them away, and smelted them completely. Several years before, bandits had opened it. At present it is only an abandoned, overgrown spot.” Hearing him stirred my feelings, and I am increasingly moved by his words.²

1 “The Record of the Morning Brocade Hall,” written by the scholar-official Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072), celebrated Han’s gravitas and concern for the public interest. The scholar-official Cai Xiang was famous for his calligraphy in Ye, *Shuidong riji*, 33.328

2 Ye, *Shuidong riji*, 33.328.

According to the query of Ye Sheng [1420–1474] to the Yongning granary officials, they said that his excellency’s grave was less than twenty *li* from the Zhangde County seat [Henan]. The stele’s carved rams and tigers were completely cut away and melted down for construction of the residence of Prince Zhao.²⁸ Several years earlier, the tomb also had been opened by bandits. This entry ought to have been written when his excellency Ye, as Shanxi administration vice-commissioner, was repairing the eight walls in Xuanfu [Shanxi]. So his excellency Han’s tomb had been opened for a long time. This one probably belonged to another person surnamed Han. (sz 11.139; GD 83.1774)

LITERATI AND BAD COMPANY

After the first-place *jinshi* examination student Luo Lun [1431–1478] returned to his official position, he announced that he would go back to his home district due to illness. Many people there associated with him, and then he set up a group with its own covenant.²⁹ If there was anyone who committed a misdeed, the group would not pay attention to him. In cases of great misdeeds, they would expel him from the group.

There were among the group one or two headstrong, violent men. Both were seized and thrown into the river to drown. The local people felt it was unfair and pressed charges with the officials. Luo Lun, however, had already died of his illness. Over ten of his followers were punished for plotting murder, on the grounds that they were followers of Luo Lun. If Luo had already not died, the authorities would have executed him, and no one would have objected. Luo was fortunate not to be executed and exposed in public. However, his reputation for killing people besmirched official documents, and the affair was transmitted by word of mouth. Didn't clerks in the law offices slander and laugh at him?

If Luo had been of humble origins, then he would have never studied the law. Yet to be an official is to do good and majestic things. It is not be a teacher of gentlemen on the one hand but kill people on the other. The classics and the commentaries all have enlightened instructions, but his followers acted wantonly like this. Why?

When I first heard this, I did not believe it. Recently, I examined it with Liu Shiyong. Only then did I know it truly was the case and have always deeply lamented it.³⁰ (SZ 11.140)

MONUMENTS TO VIRTUE AND SUCCESS

At present the court recognizes and commends filial sons, loyal wives, *jinshi* degree holders, and provincial graduates. The authorities install memorial archways at the gates of their homes to inform and inspire others. It is simply the intention passed down from the ancients to commend officials who retired to their villages.

I have heard that at the beginning of the dynasty there were memorial archways only for filial sons and virtuous women. In the Xuande [1426–1435] and Zhengtong [1436–1449] reigns, the government began to have them erected for *jinshi* degree holders and provincial graduates. There were also archways for those who had passed the first level of the examinations. When

their service took them to prominent positions, then the archways were gone. Since the Tianshun reign [1457–1464], each site has begun to have titles, such as minister of state, minister of education, and censor-in-chief. These all derive from the authorities' intentions.

In recent years, the households of powerful ministers treat these archways as landmarks, and there are households with three or four of them. These are still felt to be inadequate, and there are those who further build arches that straddle the house gates. In addition, many request the authorities to erect them. Moreover, the language on them is very unrefined, such as Shouguang's "Pillar of the Dynasty and Chancellor of the Nation" (Zhuguo Xiangfu) and Jiaying's "Minister for Generations to the August Ming" (Huangming shichen).³¹ These indeed are gross exaggerations.

Recently I obtained *Records of Things Heard in Central Wu* (Zhongwu jiwen) and read it. I saw that Vice-Minister Jiang Xilu [980–1054] during the Song dynasty was not willing to have a memorial archway. I sighed deeply because what the ancients nurtured is what contemporary people cannot approach. Zheng Jie'an from my Kunshan in his later years had the *jinshi* memorial archway at his home removed. He said that he did not want to leave behind what people later would laugh at. (SZ 12.145–46; GD 68.1519)

VAINGLORY

The gentlemen of ancient times would have regarded accepting rewards for their military accomplishments as shameful. Yet in recent times, with grand coordinator civil officials at every frontier, as soon as they have a victory, they use them to deceptively and excessively promote and reward their followers and sons-in-law. When important gentlemen deceive Heaven, such shamelessness is extraordinary.

Among high ministers that I have met, the only ones who did not use military accomplishments to personally aid their followers were only the two excellencies, Bai Gongmin [1419–1475] and Yu Sumin [1429–1489]. After Bai died, his son Ji made a request, and the court gave him an official position. After Yu died, the court wished to make his son an official. Because his son really was a provincial graduate, the court made his grandson an official. (SZ 12.153)

PAPER CONSUMPTION

In Quzhou in Zhe[jiang], the common people make paper for a living. Every year they provide the supply for official stationery. The enormous public and

private expenses are incalculable. Yet the imperial household and noble officials at first did not pay attention to it.

I heard that in the Tianshun reign [1457–1464], there was an old eunuch returning from Jiangxi. He saw that the imperial household used stationery to cover the walls. He choked with sobs as he looked at it. It probably was that he knew making paper was not easy and felt pity at the extremity of the extraordinary waste.

I further learned from an elder who said, “During the Hongwu reign [1368–1398], the National University student classroom records and paper used for calligraphy practice were sent each month to the Ministry of Rites. The calligraphy practice paper was later sent to wrap up noodles for the Court of Imperial Entertainments. The classroom registers were later sent to serve as reverse-side draft paper for the judicial offices. They spared expenses like this.

During the Yongle [1403–1424] and Xuande [1426–1435] reigns, given the expenses of the New Year’s Lantern Festival and fireworks, they still used old paper on both occasions. Later it was not like this anymore. During the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], they always used placard paper for shooting star fireworks and such. Its costs were incalculable!

The world now has no eunuchs like that man. It is difficult to speak about. (SZ 12.153)

OFFICIAL RECTITUDE

Wang Qi’s courtesy name was Wenjin, and he was a native of Renhe [Zhejiang]. At the provincial examinations, he placed into the second class for the Ministry of Rites and was appointed an instructor in Ruzhou [Henan]. He was named investigating censor and was praised for his learning and probity. He was promoted to Shanxi assistant surveillance commissioner. He superintended schools, and due to him, the customs of the scholars were transformed. He was transferred to Sichuan, was unhappy, and requested to retire from service. His age was only fifty.

Qi conducted himself with purity and uprightness. While in office, he had no visitors who came on private business. All his life he did not work to amass wealth, and he lived contented in poverty. At a time of great dearth, he had nothing to meet his daily needs. As winter continued, it snowed heavily. Every day he lay stiff in bed and did not leave his gates. There were gifts of food. If they did not come from his old friends, he did not accept them. Even if they were old friends, they would come many times, and he would reject their gifts.

A neighbor had consoling words: "Being an official greatly burdened Your Excellency. With your single word, you could give relief to anyone. Why then make yourself suffer like this?" Qi said, "I seek only not to be ashamed in my heart, and that is all. Although I am hungry and cold, nothing makes me unhappy. Why should there be any consolation?"

In the Tianshun reign [1457–1464], he finally died of hunger and cold. The prefect of Hangzhou, Hu Jun, learned about this and mourned him. He informed the provincial and surveillance commissions. He memorialized on his behalf to have him enshrined at the shrine for district worthies. This story comes from the shrine records. (SZ 12.154)

LEARNING AND LAVATORIES

His excellency Ouyang Xiu [1007–1072] recorded that Qian Weiyan [962–1034] read the classics and histories when he was seated. When he lay down, he read minor narratives (*xiaoshuo*). When he went to the toilet, he read short verse. Never for an instant did he let go of books. When his excellency Song was at the Historiography Bureau, he had a book tucked under his arm every time that he went to the toilet. The sound of recited verse could be clearly heard from outside.

Although these cases are enough to show the scholarly devotion of these two excellencies, the toilet is a filthy place. One goes there only because one has no choice. How is it a place to read books? As for Buddhist and Daoist disciples, they will not recite scriptures unless they burn incense. So how can we Confucians disrespect our calling like this? If his excellency Ouyang in this case was thinking about the composition of verse and prose, then there is no harm to the cause of righteousness.³² (SZ 13.158)

RETRIBUTION FOR A SPENDTHRIFT

A Mr. Chen was a native of Tusong in Changshu [Jiangsu]. His household was very rich, but they were extravagant and lacked restraint. Every time they had a large banquet, when it came to food such as chicken and geese, they would always set a complete bird, with head and tail, before each guest. He once docked his boat at Shapentan in Suzhou [Jiangsu] and bought crabs to make crab claw soup. Because the claws were extremely small, he threw them all in the river. He was on familiar terms with a courtesan and had gold and silver head ornaments made for her. The courtesan mocked his stinginess and dumped them all in the river. He ordered that ornaments be made again.

For many years he owed taxes and money for official goods and materials. The officials pursued him for repayment, and he then went bankrupt. He rented a house to live in and personally grew vegetables. His wife wove hemp sandals to support the household. An old man who lived next door pitied their suffering. He brought a jug of Chinese clear liquor and a plate of tofu to give to them. With one bite, the man became ill for several days. His wife asked, "What if the head ornaments from Shapen had been kept to pay for daily expenses?" He said, "Now you are killing me too!" (SZ 14.169-70)

DRINKING HABITS

When the ancients drank liquor, they did so with a sense of measure, and most sessions did not go into the night. As for

Happily and long into the night we drink;—
Till all are drunk, there is no retiring,

it was simply the Son of Heaven feasting the feudal lords and showing his compassionate grace.³³ It was an unusual banquet. So the gentleman condemns drinking long into the night. In the capital, it was only officials linked with the six ministries and thirteen circuits who often drank into the night. In general, only when the yamen's business is finished can they move to the banquet tables. Under the circumstances, they had to drink into the night. Those in the Hanlin Academy, the six offices of scrutiny, and the less taxing positions all drank during the day. At my district covenant banquet, we usually dispersed as dusk fell. In recent years, this covenant banquet custom has been revived by the younger generation.

Drinking late into the night does not take into account the feelings of the host, who naturally should finish the affair. One also must feel for the difficulties of servants and attendants, and the earnest concerns of the parents. The academician Li Binzhi did not drink much, but when it came to the linked-verse composition and chess playing that accompanied the drinking, he was delighted and never got tired. Once he returned home in the middle of the night after drinking. His father had not gone to bed and was waiting for him. Binzhi deeply regretted it. From then on, he pledged that when he went to banquets, he swore not to stay so late as to see candles lit. When sunset approached, he invariably would be first to take his leave and return home. This is the kind of son that people should want to be. (SZ 14.179)

THE GRIEF INDUSTRY

In the poetry collections of ancient men, there are works of grieving elegies and tearful expressions of sorrow. In general, they drew from deep friendship and profound admiration, in which writers could not stop themselves and did not wait for requests from other people.

Upon the deaths of their parents, officials now always search everywhere for elegiac verses and make a book of them. Literati force themselves to follow their intentions. It is the same everywhere. In general, upon the deaths of high officials, there are those who compose the spirit road steles (*shendaobei*) and those who compose the grave declarations (*mubiao*).³⁴ For example, in cases of cabinet high ministers, there are three people. One is asked to do the spirit road stele and one is asked to do the burial record (*zangzhi*). With the remaining one, he fears that he will be left out, and so they ask him to write the preface for the elegiac verses. In each case, supplicants bring substantial amounts of cash and gifts at the visits and also use the works as sample texts for later on. After they have a preface for the poems, then they cannot be without the poems. So they search everywhere for poems and stanzas to finish the book.

There are also officials with undistinguished records. The next-of-kin take these funerary accounts and return to show them to the people of their district. They believe that the deceased was highly regarded by famous people for his whole life. Moreover, people so cherish and respect their parents that if they did not do this, then something would be missing in their mourning rituals.

Consequently, everyone strives in these tasks and does not know that they should not regard them as important matters. In extreme cases, we have filthy-rich Jiangnan households who have never associated with court officials. They too invariably curry favor and associate with these writers, tossing them gifts and requesting elegiac verses. Those who accept the gifts never inquire if the person was worthy or not, and fulfill their requests however they like. The filthy rich take them and not only bring them together and make a book but in some cases carve them in stone at gravesite pavilions or carve them in wood at the family schools. Those that profit from their gifts but are tired of their requests make several ready-to-use, generic poems in preparation for dealing with these matters. When it comes time to print and circulate the poems, then this one and that one are completely identical. This is most pathetic. (SZ 15.189)

CHAPTER TWO

Family and Gender

A GOOD DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

A commoner from Dangtu [Anhui], a menial surnamed Shao, made his living weaving reeds. He served his mother with filial piety. His mother had suffered from blindness for a long time. Every day as Shao returned home to wait on her, he always would buy food to give to her. His mother cherished him. One day Shao went out, and his wife got several scarab larvae and cooked them to give to her mother-in-law. She lied, saying, "These are fine delicacies from my parents." The mother-in-law ate them, thought them very tasty, and saved two or three to give to her son. The son saw them and was speechless as he cried in sorrow. The mother was startled, and she suddenly could see as clearly as she had in the past. Shao wanted to drive his wife away. His mother said, "It was not your wife poisoning me. My eyes are fit to see again. Heaven sent the wife to use these things to cure me." Shao then kept his wife for his whole life. I heard this from Jiang Mengzhen from the Ministry of Personnel. (SZ 3.31; GD 75.1639-40)

MURDER AND VENGEANCE

During the Hongwu reign [1368-1398], there was a Mr. Shi, a commoner in the capital. He worked as a servant for a friend. Shi's wife was beautiful, and the friend plotted in his heart to get her. The men were on business outside the capital, and Shi drowned in a river. The wife had no children and lived alone as a widow. After she finished her mourning duties, the friend requested that she become his wife, and she accepted. After several years, they had two sons.

One day heavy rains fell, and the accumulated water filled the courtyard. A toad fleeing the water climbed the stairs. One of the sons played with it and

knocked it into the water with a stick. Later the second husband said to the wife, "When Mr. Shi died, it was just like that." The wife asked how and only then understood that her second husband had plotted to get her. The next day, she waited for him to leave the house. She then killed her two sons and rushed to lodge a complaint at the court. The Hongwu emperor lauded her passion. Then the government tried her second husband according to the law and acknowledged her with a celebratory banner. An enthusiastic individual made the *The Biography of the Toad* (Xiama zhuan) to extol her good deed. It has not been transmitted to the present day.¹ (SZ 3.31–32)

ADULTERY AND HONOR

During the Hongwu reign [1368–1398], there was a beautiful wife of a commandant in the capital. Every day she leaned on the outside gates of her home and showed herself off. There was a youth who admired her, and so he caught her eye. As night fell, the youth entered her home and hid under the bed. On the fifth night, she rushed her husband to go out on duty. He had not gone two or three strides and then came back. He covered his wife with a robe, sealed off the place, and left. The youth heard it. Having already become intimate with her, he asked, "Does your husband love you like this?" The wife spoke in detail how her husband had loved her in the past. When dawn came, they separated and again made an evening appointment. When the time came, the youth entered, carrying a sharp knife. As soon as they met, he cut the wife's throat and left. No one in the household knew what had happened. They reported the husband to the authorities. When he returned home, he seized one or two people with whom he had bad blood and made accusations to the officials. One person could not endure the torture and recklessly implicated himself. The youth could not bear this injustice, turned himself in, and admitted to the crime. He said, "I saw that the husband was devoted and loving like that, but this wife betrayed him. So I killed her." The judicial authorities submitted the information to the emperor and asked that he deliberate. The emperor said, "To be able to kill the unrighteous—this is a righteous man." Then the emperor pardoned him. (SZ 3.32–33)

THE DISAPPEARING BRIDE

During the Jingtai reign [1450–1456], a family living outside Jiagang Gate in Nanjing took a wife. When the bridal procession reached the groom's family gates, the procession was led in, and the sedan chair was empty. The groom's family suspected that they had been tricked and made accusations to the judicial

PHARMACOLOGICAL EXPERTISE

China's traditional medical heritage enlisted the perceived attributes of multifarious natural phenomena to cure human illness. The fruits of this effort appeared in encyclopedias of materia medica, starting from the second century BCE. These investigations climaxed with the vast *Bencao gangmu* (literally "Outline and Detail of Roots and Plants") of Li Shizhen (1518–1593). The passage below, an excerpt from Li's compendium, concerns scarab larvae, also known as dung beetles. As is typical of traditional Chinese encyclopedias, the work openly draws on earlier collections and makes comments and corrections where deemed appropriate.

Pharmaceutical preparation: [Lei] Xiao [fl. early fifth century]: All collected [scarab larvae] are to be dried in the shade and then they are fried together with glutinous rice until the rice is scorched or has turned black. Then [the larvae] are taken out, with the rice being discarded, and also the hair from their body and to the side of their mouth, as well as the black dust. They are cut into three or four segments, ground to powder, and then made use of.

[Li] Shizhen: All [relevant] recipes include either those dried and ground, or those [pounded] alive to obtain their juice. One need not cling to the one example [of preparing them] provided here [by Lei Xiao].

Explication: [Tao] Hongjing [456–536]: When eaten prepared together with pig trotters to a thick soup, they cause a profuse flow of a mother's milk.

[Su] Song [1020–1101]: In his treatment of various diseases, Zhang Zhongjing

authorities. They arrested the porters and attendants and interrogated them. All verified the matter, saying, "The woman got into the sedan chair." The judicial authorities could not decide and then ordered that she be searched for everywhere. They found her in an abandoned cemetery. They asked her what happened, and she said, "Along the way, they rested and put down the cart. Two men pulled me into the gates. At the time, I already felt faint and confused. Moreover, there was something covering my face, and I did not exactly understand what was going on. When daylight came, I was startled at first to be in a wooded graveyard, and that is all." The ancients had *Records of Beauties and Miraculous Wonders* (*Yanfen lingguai ji*), a one-chapter work. Looking at this story, I know that this book is not all nonsense. (SZ 3.34–35; GD 75.1644)

[fl. 168–196] made use of them in his “major recipe for pills with wingless cockroaches” to eliminate sensations of hardness and fullness from below the flanks. [Li] Shizhen: . . . According to *Chen shi jing yan fang*, “the mother, a Ms. Wang, of Sheng Yan, a library official in Wu, as reported in *Jinshu*, lost her eyesight. One of her servant girls obtained scarab larvae, steamed them thoroughly, and had her eat them. [Ms.] Wang considered them to be delicious. When [Sheng] Yan returned home and learned of this, he embraced his mother, felt deeply sorry for her [to have been given such detestable food], and wept. The mother, though, opened her eyes [and could see again]. This is in agreement with the records in *Bencao* that [scarab larvae] ‘cure greenish shades and white membranes in the eyes,’ and in the *Yao xing lun* that ‘their juice dropped into the eyes will eliminate shades and screens.’” I myself have often successfully treated others with them, and hence have recorded it here to spread the message to everybody.¹

1 Li Shizhen, *Clothes, Utensils, Worms, Insects*, 342.

ANOTHER DISAPPEARING BRIDE

My friend and colleague, Office Manager Sun Hui, was a native of Xiao County in Xuzhou [Jiangsu]. He said that during the Zhengtong reign [1436–1449], a daughter of Mr. Wang in his village had married. On the road to the groom’s home, she got down from the cart to relieve herself. Suddenly a great wind raised the dust and blew the daughter into the sky. Soon she was nowhere to be seen. The villagers rumored that ghosts and spirits had taken her off. The parents and relatives cried without stopping. That day, she fell fifty *li* away onto someone’s mulberry trees. They asked her and learned that she was the daughter of such-and-such family from such-and-such village and that she had been blown away by the wind. They asked what she had seen in the sky. She said, “I only heard the wind by my ears, going *huo-huo*. Beyond that I saw nothing. The higher I went, the colder the wind became. My mind and body could not take it.” The families probably were old friends. The next day they sent her back and finished the wedding. (sz 3.35)

BURYING MOTHER

Among the commoners in Huating [Jiangsu], there was a mother who gave birth to a son, remarried, and then gave birth to another son. On the day she

died, her two sons fought in their desire to bury her. They made inquiries to the officials. The verdict of county magistrate so-and-so read, "When she was alive, she remarried. In the end, she did not love in her heart the first son. After she has died and gone to the grave, it will be difficult for her to look in the face of her first husband. It is fitting to have the second son take her and bury her." My paternal uncle Songting passed down this story.² (SZ 3.36)

TIGERS AND DAUGHTERS

The two daughters of Mr. Zhang during the Tang dynasty were picking mulberry leaves, and their mother was taken off by a tiger. The daughters howled and beat the tiger. The tiger then let her go and left, and the mother was saved.

Madame Nie of Dangtu [Anhui] during the Southern Tang dynasty went with her mother to collect firewood. The mother was taken off by a tiger. The daughter took out a knife and jumped on the tiger's back. She grabbed the tiger's neck and stabbed it to death. Then she brought back home her mother's corpse.

During the Jiayou reign [1056–1063] of the Song dynasty, a daughter of the Peng family in Fenning in Nanchang [Jiangxi] accompanied her father to the mountains to chop firewood. Her father encountered a tiger. The daughter took out her knife and beheaded the tiger, and the father's life was spared. The event was made known to the court, which bestowed the family an award of grain and silk.

In the case of the daughter of the Tong family in Yin County [Zhejiang] during the Song, a tiger had her grandmother in its mouth. The daughter held onto the tiger's tail and prayed to take her place. The tiger abandoned the grandmother, took the granddaughter in its mouth, and left. The affair was made known to the court, and a shrine was established to make sacrifices to her.

A daughter of the Lu family in Yongjia [Zhejiang] was walking with her mother. A tiger was about to eat her mother, and the daughter used herself to substitute for the mother. The tiger got the daughter, and the mother was saved. During the reign of Emperor Song Lizong [r. 1225–1264] in the Song, the court enfeoffed her with a temple and called it "Filial Woman."

As for the daughter of the Yao family in Yuhang [Zhejiang] during the Yuan dynasty, her mother was drawing water from a stream and encountered a tiger. The daughter beat the tiger's flank with her fists, and the neighbors picked up tools and followed suit. The tiger put the mother aside and left.

In the case of Madame Guan in Jianning [Fujian] during the Yuan dynasty, her husband was hoeing in the fields and was taken off by a tiger. Guan put aside the food she was taking to him, jumped up, and struck the tiger repeatedly. The tiger let go of the husband and left. She took her husband on her back, and he died on the road. The affair was made known to the court, and the government gave the family a celebratory banner.

In the case of Madame Hu, the wife of Liu Ping in Binzhou [Shandong] during the Yuan dynasty, she accompanied her husband [who was] deployed on the Zaoyang frontier. They spent the night by the roadside, and the husband was being eaten by a tiger. Hu took her knife and stabbed it to death. The husband escaped, but she died while they were on the road.

The father of Madame Wang of Jiande [Fujian] during the Zhida reign [1308–1311] of the Yuan dynasty was weeding in the fields beside their house. He was taken off by a leopard. It dragged him and climbed the mountain. The father yelled loudly. Wang took a saw, which the father had thrown aside. She used it to strike the leopard's head repeatedly, killing it, and then the father was saved.

A guest had a picture of Liu Ping's wife killing the tiger and asked me for a colophon for it. I investigated this sort of matter and found these people. (SZ 4.39)

AN HONORED MAID

When his excellency Yang Shiqi [1365–1444] was at the Grand Secretariat, his wife had already passed away. Only one maid waited on him with towel and comb, and that was all.³ One day, the Empress Dowager held a celebration. Titled wives of high civil and military officials all paid court and sent their felicitations.⁴ The Empress Dowager learned that his excellency did not have a wife with a title and ordered her attendants to summon the maid. When she arrived, the titled wives had already withdrawn. The Empress Dowager saw that her appearance was indeed dispirited, and her clothes were simple and shabby. She ordered the imperial consorts to comb her hair and tidy up her appearance, change her clothes, give her a headdress and clothes for the palace, and send her off. She also said with a laugh, "This time Mr. Yang won't be able to recognize her!"

The next day the court ordered the responsible authorities to enfeoff the maid according to the usual system. It was not to be taken to be used as a precedent. The grandeur of the Empress Dowager's ritual generosity was like this. I heard that the maid was the mother of Yang Dao [d. 1483], vice-minister

of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices in Nanjing. Dao's courtesy name was Shujian. He was skilled at poetry and prose, and was fond of discussing affairs. It was through being chief minister of the Seals Office that he rose to be vice-minister. (SZ 5.63)

FRATERNAL ENMITY

In the Zhang family from Wubao in Kunshan County [Jiangsu], two brothers worked as surgeons. Whoever wanted to be cured would invariably go to the younger brother and not to the elder brother. Subsequently, the younger brother daily grew richer, and the elder brother daily withered away. The elder brother was jealous and wanted to wait for him to leave the house. Then he would gratify his feelings and take revenge.

One day the younger brother hired a boat to go into the county seat. The elder brother prepared and hid in the boat. When it got to Xinyang River [Jiangsu], he rose suddenly and seized his younger brother. The people on the boat were scared and quickly punted the boat to the shore, and the younger brother was able to get away.

The younger brother was about to press charges in court. At the county seat, there were elders who said, "That course of action lacks heavenly principle and will bring you harm. Now since his plan failed, this turn of events accords with heavenly principle. If you press charges against him, it will entangle witnesses and certainly will bring harm to the people on the boat. It would be best to stop." The younger brother obeyed this advice.

A while later, the elder brother one evening slept until dawn the next day. He could not open his eyes. In the end, he went blind and died in poverty. People took his fate as brought on by his unethical behavior. (SZ 8.100–101; GD 80.1723–24)

FULFILLED PREDICTIONS

A capital official from Songjiang [Jiangsu] lived at home while tending to his illness. According to the words of an astrologer, it was unclear if he would die or not. Each day, with wine and poetry, he lingered by the pond and garden. Although neighbors invited him to drink, he still did not go out. One day while playing the zither beneath the artificial mountain in the garden, a stone fell and crushed him to death.

In Fujian, a courtesan's looks were fading. She wanted to marry as she planned for the rest of her life. Others slighted her, and there was no one to

turn to take care of her. Then she decided to go to a physiognomist fortune-teller. He said that when she reached sixty, she would enjoy the care of someone noble and rich. The courtesan did not take this to be so.

Several years later, there was a Fujian native who entered the court and became a high-ranking eunuch. After he learned that his mother was still alive, he sent people to search for and find her, and lodged her at a residence outside the palace. The next day he went to pay a visit to her. He saw from a distance that she looked decrepit and was ashamed of her. He left without visiting her. He said to his aides, "This is not my mother. You should search for her again." The aides took note of his intentions. They went to Fujian to search for someone with a beautiful appearance, got the old courtesan, and returned. When she arrived, she and the eunuch looked at each other and cried with great sorrow. Every day he served her in extravagant fashion. Over ten years passed, and then she died.

When the Earl of Weining, his excellency Wang Yue [1426–1499], was regional commander of Datong [Shanxi], a man of the occult surnamed Yu one day visited the government quarters. I questioned him. He said, "It will not be long before Wang is ruined." I asked him what year it should take place. He said, "This year." In a short while the court sent down an edict to tell him in person. The court stripped him of his honors, made him into a commoner, and settled him in Anluzhou [Hubei].⁵ I heard about these two matters from guests and can personally attest to Wang's downfall. (SZ 8.102; GD 80.1725)

A FILIAL SON

Chen Zongxun [fl. late twelfth century] was the elder paternal uncle of a Great Lady of Suitability (*Taiyiren*). He dabbled in the Confucian classics and histories, and served his mother with the utmost filial piety. Each time he ate and drank at homes of relatives and friends, if there were new foods and his mother had not tasted them, he inevitably would offer the excuse that his mother would be envious and so he would never reach with his chopsticks to take them. The next day he always would enter the city and buy these foods to serve his mother. Sometimes he would travel to distant places and come upon things rarely acquired. If he could carry them on his person, he would always take them back home. His mother delighted in him, and he never slackened in old age. The Great Lady of Suitability had served her late mother-in-law with complete filial piety and prudence, and this was the source of her conduct. (SZ 9.106)

SHAMELESS RELATIVES

Among the local people, there was a son ill with measles. The family prepared blood sacrifices and wine to pray to a god.⁶ The father spoke clumsily and could not find the words to express himself. So he wanted his father-in-law to pray to the god. The father-in-law's grandson [by his son] also happened to be sick with the same illness. The father-in-law then secretly spoke to the god and prayed for his own grandson [by his son]. At the time, the son-in-law was bowing behind him. He felt it strange that his father-in-law mumbled his words. He advanced on his knees and listened to them, understood their intent, and did not dare to speak. Later the father-in-law's grandson got better, and the son-in-law's son died. Consequently, the son-in-law was extremely furious with him and told others about the affair. Other people thought the story was amusing.

During the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], a grand coordinator censor-in-chief faced accusations at court. Among his relatives was a supervising secretary. The grand coordinator entrusted him with considerable bribes to pay off the eunuchs and ask for help. The supervising secretary took the bribes as his own funds, submitted them to the eunuchs, and asked for a promotion. Consequently, he became vice-director in the Ministry of Personnel, and the grand coordinator was sentenced to exile at the frontier and died.

Furthermore, a position as director of war was unfilled at one point. A vice-director in the Ministry of War wanted to get it. Among his relatives was a man who had been a director in the Ministry of Justice. He was familiar with the eunuchs, and so the vice-director entrusted the matter to him, using bribes. The director's scheme for himself indeed resembled the affair with the supervising secretary. Thereupon the director left the Ministry of Punishments and shifted to the Ministry of War. The vice-director knew about this, was bitterly resentful, developed a gangrene infection on his neck, and died. Contemporary opinion regarded the affair as contemptible.

The cases of the two men and the father-in-law who used his son-in-law were very similar. Alas! One was a high official and one was a remonstrating official. If they acted like bandits in such fashion, how can one criticize a humble man from a village? (SZ 9.109; GD 81.1735)

VIRTUOUS COURTESANS

The Nanjing courtesan Liu Yinjing as a young girl was doted on by a merchant. The merchant died, and Liu dressed in mourning clothes. On seasonal

occasions, she made vegetarian meals [in accord with Buddhist mourning rites] and presented offerings. Her crying was most sorrowful. Every day she supported herself with women's work and vowed never to take customers. Her family could not change her will. The merchant's family later declined, and she was able to pass on her property to provide for the wife and children. A rich old man heard of her worthiness and wanted to marry her. Liu refused, and that was that.

Guo Qigongzi of the capital was a nephew of Guo Deng, Earl of Dingxiang [?-1472]. He was on intimate terms with a courtesan, who was just entering her prime. The son died, and the courtesan cut off her hair, untied her foot bindings, and became a nun.

Tu Baoshi was a big merchant in the capital. He committed a crime and was sent to Liaodong [Liaoning] to serve in the army. Because his family was poor and had nothing to rely on, he took ten thousand pieces of gold and entrusted it to the household of a courtesan he was on intimate terms with. Several years later, there was an amnesty, and he was pardoned and returned. The courtesan's household returned to him the money he had entrusted, sealed up as in the beginning.

This world has places where the rich and noble reside, and they are licentious and shameless. When disaster strikes, most are greedy and forget righteousness. How can one know that, amid the wind and dust, there are outstanding exceptions?⁷ Human nature in each case is good; how can one not believe it? That being so, in observing people, one cannot judge them by their category. (SZ 9.109)

A GREAT ROMANCE

I have heard the story of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai since I was a child, and because it had no basis, I had not recorded it.

Recently I looked at the Ningbo gazetteer. Liang and Zhu were people of the Eastern Jin dynasty [317-420]. The Liang family was from Guiji [Zhejiang], and the Zhu family was from Shangyu [Zhejiang]. They had been classmates. Zhu first was engaged to be married. Liang later passed through Shangyu. He sought to visit the Zhu family and only then first learned that she was a woman.⁸ He returned home and informed his parents. He wanted to marry her, but Zhu had already been promised to the son of the Ma family. Liang was crestfallen and at a loss.

Three years later, Liang became county magistrate of Yin [Zhejiang] and died of illness. In his will, he instructed that he be buried below Mount Qingdao.

The following year, Zhu married Ma. As she passed the spot, there were great winds and waves, and the boat could not go forward. Zhu then went to Liang's tomb and was so grief-stricken that she could not speak and shook in her sorrow. Suddenly the earth split open. Zhu threw herself in and died there.

Ma made the event known to the court. The chancellor Xie An [320–385] asked that she be enfeoffed as a Righteous Woman. During the reign of Emperor An [r. 397–418], Liang's spirit further performed wondrous miracles. He served the dynasty in meritorious fashion and was enfeoffed as Loyal and Righteous. The authorities built a temple for him in Yin County.⁹

Wu has colored butterflies, which are the metamorphoses of orange larvae. Women and children call them Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai.¹⁰ (sz 11.135–36)

FRONTIER POLYANDRY

In Leqing County in Wenzhou, near the sea, there is a village called Sanshan Huangdu. Among the commoners, brothers shared a single wife. If there were no brothers, the women's families did not willingly associate with them. It is because the families feared that they would be unable to support the women if the husbands were by themselves. After they married, the brothers each would use a hand towel as a signal. In the evening, if the elder brother first hung up the hand towel, then the younger brother did not dare to enter. At times, if the younger brother first hung it up, then the elder brother did not dare to enter. So they also named the place Hand Towel Lair.

During the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], Taizhou Prefecture [Zhejiang] established Taiping County. The authorities cut away the village and attached it to the new county. When I first heard about this custom, I did not believe it. Later I made the rounds in Taiping and visited it. It turned out to be so. I dare say it is a custom of foreign islanders. It has come down from previous ages, and they have followed it for a long time.

In the fourth year [1491] of the Hongzhi reign, I first discussed it at court and requested that it be prohibited. If there were those who could not correct their behavior, they would be expelled to places beyond civilization. The judicial authorities discussed it. They proposed that, before the order was promulgated, the authorities should send out an accompanying set of prohibitions. Later, if there were violators, their cases would be discussed in accord with the statute concerning wives who committed adultery with their brothers-in-law. The emperor approved it. There are precedents where this law has been enforced. (sz 11.141)

A MARTYR AND HER MEMORY

Qingfeng [Pure Customs] Crest is on the border of Sheng County [Zhejiang]. At the end of the Song dynasty, the chaste woman Wang of Taizhou [Zhejiang] was taken there by the caitiffs.¹¹ She threw herself in the river and drowned. The crest's original name was Qingfeng [Green Peak]. People later prized her chastity and so changed the crest to its present name. The events are set down in full in the biography written by Li Xiaoguang [1270–1348], and literati have recorded them.

Only Yang Weizhen [1296–1370] expressed a different opinion. He made a poem, which reads:

The horses at the border are laden and packed, a hundred-*li* journey,
 At Green Peak late at night, a letter is written in blood.
 She just was the same as Liu and Ruan at Peach Blossom River
 and does not match the purity of the Han River or Mount Baling.¹²

Ye Sheng recorded the words of Censor Xia: “In the past there was someone who regarded the death of Chaste Wife Wang as a bad affair. He made a poem and condemned it as wrong. This person later had no descendants. The poem said:

Biting her finger and composing a poem, it seems pitiable.
 in great profusion the words climb the green moss.
 At first the poem seemed to carry the meaning
 did she consent to follow the general as he came on horseback.¹³

His meaning was the same as that of Yang Weizhen. His lack of descendants was not necessarily linked to this poem. But chaste women and gentlemen of integrity are just what those people, who stoop to anything to survive and will endure humiliation, detest to hear about. These people invariably want to secretly find the weaknesses of worthy individuals and then ruin them. How can gentlemen of substantial virtue bear to abet the abuse by such sorts of people? Every time I read this poem, I always feel pity for Yang Weizhen. (SZ 12.145; GD 58.1518)

CHANCE MARRIAGES

Mr. Xia of Kuncheng [Jiangsu] was a relative and friend of a Chuzhou [Zhejiang] garrison commander. The commander learned that Mr. Xia had a

MADAME WANG'S POEM AND LI XIAOGUANG'S BIOGRAPHY

"WRITTEN ON THE CLIFF STONE AT PURE CUSTOMS CREST"

My lord was unfortunate, this concubine faced disaster,
Amid abandoned girls and discarded boys, the pursuing horses
come.

My husband's face—I know not what day I will see it,
This concubine—when will she return?¹

Two lines of bitter tears—ceaseless, secret drops,
A pair of distressed brows—how can they relax?

Gazing in the distance for my hometown, where is it?

The two words, "survival" and "death," how bitter and sorrowful!²

"THE BIOGRAPHY OF CHASTE WIFE WANG"

In the winter of 1275, the royal [Mongol] armies went south. The Chaste Wife, her husband, and parents-in-law were all taken prisoner. A battalion commander in the army noticed the wife's beauty. He quickly then killed her parents-in-law and husband, and wanted to have her for his own. The Chaste Wife was furious and sorrowful, and set about to kill herself. The commander seized her and held her, and she was unable to commit suicide. He ordered various women prisoners to guard her. The wife wanted to die and could not find an opportunity to die. She herself thought that she faced violation.

So she cleverly said, "You are the one who killed my parents-in-law and husband, and seek me for your own to be your wife and concubine. You desire that I serve my lord and master well for the rest of my life. My parents-in-law and husband are dead. If I do not grieve for them, this is not in accord with Heaven. If I do not act in accord with Heaven, how could milord use me? I wish permission for you to allow me to mourn for them the prescribed full year. If you do not heed me, then I will simply die in the end and cannot be your wife." The commander feared that she did not regard dying as a calamity and so consented to her request. Yet he increasingly kept her under guard.

In the spring of the following year, the army returned north. They took her through the Tu and Sheng Mountains in Zhejiang. The guards trusted her and

1 "Concubine" here is used as a form of humble self-address, used often by wives.

2 Guojia Tushuguan Shanben Jinshi Zu. *Liangzhe jinshi zhi*, 356 (15.40b in the original pagination).

gradually slackened their watch. As they passed through Qingfeng [Green Maple] Ridge, the wife looked up to Heaven and sighed to herself, "I have found the place to die now." Then she bit her thumb and drew blood, and, just as it came to her, wrote a poem on the mountain rocks. When she was finished, she faced south, looked into the distance, and cried. Then she threw herself off the cliff and died.

Some saw the blood seep into the rocks. When it stopped, it had already become stone. A while later, the skies darkened and rained, and they again saw the blood bubble up as it had originally. At the time, empresses and imperial consorts did not die because of this [sense of loyalty]; the Three Dukes and the Nine Chief Ministers did not die because of this; the country's great officials at the frontier did not die because of this. On the contrary, only a chaste wife died preserving her virtue. She descended and followed her parents-in-law and husband.

Yet what kind of person was this? There always exists a human nature that is grounded in normative good customs. When common men and women demonstrate it, their behavior startles and moves people for all time. If everyone considered it, then metal walls and boiling moats would not be enough to illustrate its steadfastness, spears and halberds would not be enough to illustrate its keenness, and brave warriors would not be enough to illustrate its strength. How could there be anxiety over the loss of the nation and the collapse of the family? What would that chaste wife do? She was stirred and did what ardent men would not necessarily do. How tragic, when it is fitting to act so but not to do so!

Assistant Magistrate Cheng in Guiji [Zhejiang] made a stone building for her sake and set up a stele in the temple to honor her spirit there. I said, "At first I see that the elders said that chaste wives could not follow their relatives in death. It was tragic. Later I personally passed by this place and saw that her thumb's blood had turned to stone. I recalled the time when the Chaste Wife decided to die. Grief-stricken, I hesitated and could not leave. Could it be that her spirit was not yet extinguished and still could move people? Alas! Commoner men and women suffer mightily as they are forced from their homes and must wander. It truly can move Heaven like this. How can Heaven keep its distance from people? How can Heaven keep its distance from people?"³

3 Li Xiaoguang (1297–1348), "Wang Zhenfu zhuan," in Liu, *Quan Yuanwen*, vol. 36, 24–25. For an analysis of this tale, see Bossler, *Courtesans*, 373–75.

beautiful daughter. He wanted her for his son's wife. After several years, the betrothal remained uncompleted, and his requests grew more insistent. All family members approved except the grandfather. So they assembled the guests and used dominoes to decide who would take charge of the drinking game. The grandfather set up a scheme that was difficult to bring off. He said to those who sought the marriage, "If we play *chaupur*, and you can get all the heaven, earth, and humanity game pieces and the four colors; then we can make a match."¹⁴ As soon as they drew them, the four colors came out perfectly. Everyone was astonished, and then they agreed to the marriage.

Cao Yongwen and Zha Yongchun of Taicang had long been good friends. It happened that their concubines were both pregnant. One day they were drinking at a banquet and playing with dominoes to tell their fortunes. They said that if the two of them at a single throw turned up all six pieces red, then the children would certainly be a boy and girl, and there should be a marriage match. At one throw, everything came as they had divined. Later Zha's concubine gave birth to a boy, and Cao's concubine gave birth to a girl. Zha married off his son to be Cao's son-in-law. These two events were extremely similar, and I daresay were not a coincidence. (SZ 15.184)

POWERFUL ABORIGINAL WOMEN

At present in several places in Yunnan and Guangxi, when native officials have died without heirs, wives and daughters replace them in office.¹⁵ The local people call them "mother aboriginal officials." During the Sui dynasty [581–617], there was Madame Shen, Lady of the Qiao Kingdom. She was the wife of Feng Bao [507–557], governor of Gaoliang [Guangdong].¹⁶ His family for generations had been leaders in southern Yue. They occupied the mountain caves, and their villages had over one hundred thousand households. The madam resided at her mother's home. She comforted and relieved the villagers, and was skillful at carrying out military operations and using troops, as she subdued and brought to heel the various Yue tribes. Later, because of her accomplishments, the court extended honors to her and enfeoffed her. This was the start of aboriginal women officials.

Only the madam's father's family had elder brothers, and her husband's family had sons, which is different from the present-day situation.¹⁷ (SZ 15.189)

CHAPTER THREE

Politics and Government

FESTIVALS AND CONFUCIANS

At every Duanwu festival, the palace bestows court officials with cakes and *zongzi* outside the Meridian Gate.¹ There are several rounds of toasting with wine, and then they leave. High civil officials accompany the emperor to the Rear Gardens. They watch military officials perform the Willow Shoot.² When the activities are finished, all leave. The emperor greets his mother, and they go to the Inner Pool.³ They watch the dragon boats, and the sound of the cannons does not stop. For the most part, these activities have gone on since the Xuande reign [1426–1435].

In the *bingxu* year [1466], no one heard the cannons sound. People wondered about it. Later they heard a court attendant say, “That day the eunuchs memorialized about setting off the cannons. The emperor stopped them, saying, ‘If the sourpuss Confucians hear of it, then there will be lots of criticism and discussion.’” The emperor’s compassionate concern for the words of others was like this, and we can look up to his sagely virtue. (SZ 1.1)

A CELEBRATED OFFICIAL

When his excellency Chen Yi [1389–1456], courtesy name Ximin, of our Suzhou served as grand coordinator in Shaanxi, he employed the law with lenience and fairness. In managing affairs, he was unassuming. Over several years, the rain and sunshine arrived in a timely fashion, and good annual harvests came repeatedly. The common people trusted and cherished him. Because of his fine whiskers, they called him “The Bearded Grandpa.” At one point he had to return to the court to discuss matters. Commoners spread a rumor that he would be replaced, and several thousand people blocked the road to detain him. His excellency told them that he would return, and

then they slowly dispersed. When he came back, they lit incense and welcomed him.

When commoners or their parents became sick, they would make a vow to carry his excellency's sedan chair. They would not use doctors and medicines, or offer prayers, but they always recovered. As soon as he left his office quarters, people fought to carry him. Even though he forbade it, they did not stop. When his excellency left his post, someone painted this scene. He gained the people's hearts like this.

The one who replaced his excellency wanted to put a stop to this problem and remedy it with fierceness. Knowledgeable people also regarded it as appropriate. Commoners outwardly respected the new man but inwardly were really furious with him. Moreover, droughts and floods came one after the next, and fighting on the frontier broke out daily. He did not restore the previous ambience. So those that enjoyed discussing his excellency believed not only that his virtue benefited the people but also that his blessed protection of the people had an extensive reach.⁴ (SZ 1.5)

CHASTISING THE COURT

During the Hongwu reign [1368–1398], the court sought people proficient in calendrical calculation, who could tabulate the past and know the future. Those who turned in flawless results on the examinations would certainly be enfeoffed as marquis and be granted a salary of 1500 *dan*.⁵

The Shandong native and National University student Zhou Jingxin memorialized, "The longevity of the dynasty's destiny lies in the depth of its virtue. It is not decided by calendrical calculation. It is a matter of fact that the Three Dynasties possessed the Way for a long time. After the Three Dynasties, only the Han, Tang, and Song had profound benevolence and immense virtue. Starting with Emperor Han Gaozu's [r. 206–195 BCE] expansive benevolence, the Han continued with Emperors Wen's [r. 179–157 BCE] and Jing's [156–141 BCE] respectfulness and thrift, Emperors Zhao's [r. 86–72 BCE] and Xuan's [71–48 BCE] worthiness and brilliance, Emperor Guangwu's [r. 25–57 CE] restoration, and Emperor Zhang's [r. 76–88] longevity. There later was Tang Taizong's [r. 627–649] forceful implementation of benevolence and righteousness, and Song Taizu's [r. 960–975] sincere mind and love for the common people. Consequently, their dynasties possessed the Way for a long time. No dynasty had a shorter destiny than the Qin [221–206 BCE]. Next was the Sui [581–617], and then next were the Five Dynasties [907–960]. As for

Emperor Qin Shihuang's [r. 221–209 BCE] cruelty, Sui Yangdi's [r. 605–617] violence, and the Five Dynasties' evil, it was all brought on by human affairs. How could the fault lie with calendrical calculation?

“Respectfully considering how his Sage Highness responded to Heaven and revered the mandate, swept away the many stalwarts, rescued those caught in disorder, and executed the violent, his merit is great. That said, his divine martial prowess surpasses that of Emperor Gaozu, but his expansive benevolence does not match his. His worthy brilliance surpasses that of Tang Taizong, but his loyalty and generosity does not match his. Consequently, since the unification, the dynasty's policies and instruction have not yet been disseminated, and the four quarters have yet to be brought to order. Prostrate, I request that you emulate Emperor Han Gaozu's expansive benevolence, join with Tang Taizong's sincere earnestness, and take the Three Dynasties' tax collection policies as your model. Then the dynasty's fortunes can be extended for myriad generations. So why must you make inquiries of these men with their divination techniques?”

He further said, “His majesty for successive years has embarked on distant campaigns. All the people are of one word. All know that you would take it as shameful to be unable to transmit the nation's treasure. You need only to wish to take it and that is all. Your subject has heard that the transmission of the nation's treasure comes from the time of King Ping of Chu in the Warring States era [403–221 BCE]. He took the jade that Bian He found and had it carved. Qin Shihuang hid it and called it the jade seal. Since then, successive ages have treasured it, and later it had this fame.

“The *Changes* says, ‘The sages' great treasure is called “the high position.” How can they keep that position? It is called benevolence.’⁶ This remark understands that benevolence is the ruler's treasure. The jade seal is not a treasure. Moreover, as for the lords of the Warring States, the lord of Zhao first obtained the treasure, but he could not keep his kingdom. The lords of the Five Dynasties all obtained this treasure, and their dynasties were all quickly lost. In sum, it was because they only knew to view a jade seal as a treasure but did not know to view benevolence and righteousness as greater treasures. No government that brought peace to the empire and ruled the world for a long time matches those of the Three Dynasties.⁷ During the Three Dynasties, the jade seal did not yet exist. This indeed makes it very clear that possessing the empire lies in benevolence and righteousness, and not in this seal. Today you use the military repeatedly to obtain treasure. The troops and common people are hard pressed and suffer. This is to mistake the real, true, great treasure and exchange it for a useless, small treasure. The Sage One's wisdom flows through the empire and

brightly illuminates the myriad things. How then can one slight benevolence but value jade, or cherish jade but not cherish benevolence?"

He further said, "At present the labor service requirements are many and difficult. Although the population is abundant, the people's burdens are numerous and taxes are excessive. Although the field harvests are plentiful, there are poor commoners. The transformation by Confucian instruction is extensive, but the people remain unhappy. This is what is called 'goodness alone.' The laws and systems are strict, but the people do not submit. This is what is called 'the law alone.'"⁸ In ancient times Ji An said to Emperor Wu of the Han [r. 140–87 BCE], "Your majesty inwardly has many desires but outwardly extends benevolence and righteousness. How can you desire to emulate the rule of Tang and Yu?"⁹ At present you desire a wealthy nation, a strong army, high walls and deep moats, magnificent and beautiful palaces, extensive territory, and an abundant population of commoners. So you acquire many soldiers, amass wealth on a grand scale, go on campaign without missing a day, and the work of civil construction never ceases. How can the empire be ruled like this?"

He further said, "In the fourth year of the Hongwu reign [1371], Your Majesty selected the empire's officials and functionaries. In the thirteenth year [1380], they together were charged with being the Hu faction.¹⁰ In the nineteenth year [1386], the people's misfortunes began and went on for repeated years. In the twenty-third year [1390], there was the great massacre of the capital's commoners.¹¹ The measure recklessly labeled them as criminals, not distinguishing between the good and the bad, and all were killed. How could there be no loyal subjects and ardent gentlemen? Good men and gentlemen were mistakenly put on the list. Thereupon we see that His Majesty's virtue is slight, but his desire for slaughter is deep-seated. Since ancient times those who were not addicted to killing people could unify the empire, but most of those who later killed did not prosper. The lords of the Qin, Sui, and Yuan dynasties were fond of killing without end, and their descendants were extinguished. During the Han, the government mistakenly killed a filial woman, and then Donghai had three years of drought. At present we have had floods and droughts for successive years and have not had a bountiful harvest. It was perhaps brought on by how the slaughter of innocents stirs and injures harmonious qi."¹²

He further said, "The systems of the enlightened ruler reward without surfeit and punish without excess. Today punishments already are excessive, and rewards have no sense of restraint. The elders of the empire have no merit and no virtue, yet others give them five ingots of silver. As for the military officials

who leave to campaign, their positions are high and their salaries substantial. They pacify the bandits and defend against humiliation. They fulfill their duties as a matter of course. Today the rewards have no limit. Taxes are heavy, and the punishments burdensome. The poor people are straitened and distressed, but the state excessively rewards people without merit. It truly is senseless. It is fitting to limit the rewards for those without merit and be lenient with the taxes on poor people. Then the empire will be very fortunate, and the commoners will be very fortunate.” The rest, which treated such matters as the circulation of paper money and the abolition of sentencing criminals to frontier labor service, addressed the problems of the time.

The memorial ran over three thousand characters long, and I have recorded it, summarizing the essentials. It is not known what Shandong prefecture or county Jingxin was from or what office he later held. I asked men from Shandong who served at court, and none knew him. How impressive! He was one who had no office or charge to offer his opinions¹³ but still could speak in such a straightforward way! It cannot be forgotten.¹⁴ (SZ 1.8–10)

CRIME, CONSULTATION, AND REDEMPTION

In the third year of the Tianshun reign [1459], Nanzhili [Anhui and Jiangsu] Troop Purification Censor Guo Guan upheld the law with considerable strictness. In Kunshan County [Jiangsu], there was a man who made baseless accusations, until twenty-four people were implicated and sent off into the army. My family at the time were village heads and were among those sent away.

We were going to explain this injustice to his excellency, the grand coordinator. We heard that Zha Yongchun of Taicang [Jiangsu] was familiar with the ways of government and discussed our plans with him. Zha said, “Grand coordinators and censors receive edicts and put them into practice. Appealing to him would be no help.” We further discussed our plans with Gao Siping of Kuncheng [Jiangsu]. Gao said, “You could appeal to the grand coordinator.” Someone asked him about Zha’s remarks. Gao said, “These are not the words of a knowledgeable person. At the capital, criminal cases at the censorate of the Ministry of Punishments inevitably fall to the Court of Judicial Review. It dares to render a decision only after assessing matters appropriately and without any interference. If the censor is outside the capital carrying out official business, it is as if there is no one by his side. If there is injustice in a criminal case, who but a grand coordinator can straighten matters out and correctly reverse the verdict? Appealing to him will be helpful.”

Thereupon we went to appeal. As it turned out, his excellency Cui, the censor-in-chief grand coordinator, reversed the verdict. The twenty-four men were all returned to civilian life. As the saying goes, "If you want things done right, ask three old men." I believe it is so. (SZ 2.12)

EUNUCHS, 1

Commoner families in the capital envied the wealth and high status of the eunuchs. They privately castrated their boys and requested that the court accept and employ them. There also were young scoundrels as well as married men who had castrated themselves. The Ministry of Rites each time would memorialize and request instructions in these matters.

For the most part, the emperor would approve that they be expelled, and they all avoided the death penalty. They were registered and sent to garrisons north of the Great Wall. Their name was the Pure Armies. When there was an amnesty, the authorities, according to precedent, would memorialize that the men be sent to the South Garden to grow vegetables.¹⁵ When there was a vacant spot in the eunuch ranks, then the authorities chose someone to come in and carry out their duties. There were also those who were intelligent and quick in solving matters, and they rose to important positions. Yet these were only those who had been at the front and then filled positions as eunuchs in the palace storehouses. They could be selected and sent to schools to study. Later many succeeded as court attendants. Their moral caliber was very high.

Those who castrated themselves were even slighted by their own kind. Knowledgeable people believed that the court's laws and prohibitions were too slack. Consequently this mutilation became a trend over time like this. If one wanted to eliminate this trend, the best thing would be that they not be dispatched to cultivate vegetables when amnesties were granted. I submit that they should have their heads shaved and become monks. If those that later grew their hair were under arrest for their whole life, then this trend would naturally disappear. Such a pity! None dare to speak of how people harm their own kind. (SZ 2.19; GD 74.1625)

MEMORIES OF THE FOUNDER'S RIVAL

The Hongwu emperor once went out incognito to the Sanshan district [Nanjing]. He saw an old woman who had a seat and tatami at her door. When he used it to sit down for a while, he asked the old woman where she was from. She replied that she was from Suzhou [Jiangsu]. He further asked how things

went when Zhang Shicheng [?-1367] was in Suzhou.¹⁶ The old woman said, “When the emperor of the Great Ming made his move, Prince Zhang [Zhang Shicheng] himself knew that he was not the Son of Heaven with the true mandate. The entire city was turned over to the emperor. The people of Suzhou did not suffer then from the hardships of war. We are moved by his virtue up to the present day.” He asked her name and then left.

The next day, the emperor said to his court ministers, “Zhang Shicheng originally displayed no profound benevolence or generosity toward the people of Suzhou. Yesterday I met an old woman from Suzhou. She was deeply moved by his virtue. Why, out of the multitudes of people in the capital, do we not have this woman?”

After the twenty-fourth year of the Hongwu reign [1391], the state moved people and populated the capital in full. That most were inhabitants of Suzhou and Songjiang was because of this incident. (SZ 3.33)

RASH PROPOSALS

When younger men have just passed the examinations and discuss political affairs, it is most appropriate that they be careful. In sum it is simply the common sense found in the classics. With respect to old statutes of the ancestral patriarchs [the Hongwu and Yongle emperors] and the court’s new statutes, if these men do not understand them or know them completely, and should they say things that are wrong or absurd, it will be more than a laughing matter for others.

I remember that after I had just passed the *jinshi* examinations, I heard several men who had passed in my year discuss the restrictions against marrying courtesans, proposed by the censor-in-chief, his excellency Li Kan [1407–1485]. Some asked, “What if the rule makes them change their profession so as to not break the law?” Li Zhao, who also passed the examinations that year, said, “They inevitably would tattoo her face. If the punishment made her someone that no one would want, then no one naturally would do this.” Everyone praised it as a good idea. I also had known him for a long time.

Recently I obtained *August Ming Ancestral Injunctions* (Huang Ming zuxun).¹⁷ Its opening chapter says, “When the imperial descendants become emperor, they need only adhere to the statutes and *Grand Pronouncements* (Dagao).¹⁸ Neither uses the punishments of tattooing, cutting off the feet, cutting off the nose, or castration.¹⁹ If any subject dares to memorialize for the use of these punishments, the various civil and military officials will memorialize immediately for their impeachment. The offender shall be sentenced to death

by slicing, and his entire family shall be put to death." It makes one's hair stand up on end.

In discussing official matters and systems, the sages had to inform those who entered official ranks to study the ancients. When it comes to the various books setting out this dynasty's legal system, one must look at everything and then have a broad understanding. (SZ 3.33)

ADVICE TO THE COURT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The Jingtai emperor assumed the throne on the sixth day of the ninth month of the fourteenth year of the Zhengtong reign [1449]. The present emperor, at the time, was already the heir apparent. The next year was the first year of the Jingtai reign [1450]. The Yingzong emperor returned from the northern courtyard and resided in the southern palace.²⁰ The next year, the Jingtai emperor registered his own son to be heir apparent and further enfeoffed the present emperor as the Prince of Qi. A while later, the heir apparent passed away, and disasters came one after the other.

The present Nanjing personnel attendant, his excellency Zhang Lun [1413–1483], at the time was a director at the Bureau of Ceremonies. He responded to an imperial rescript and discussed fourteen matters of cultivating virtue and mitigating disasters. Among them, the matter of "earnestness in filial piety and righteousness" was viewed as especially pressing. The main message was that the emperor emeritus [the Yingzong emperor] had reigned over the world for fourteen years [1436–1449], and his majesty previously had personally accepted the registered enfeoffment as Yingzong's subject. This made Yingzong the empire's father. When the throne was passed down to his majesty, he would honor him as emperor emeritus. This made [the Yingzong emperor] the most honored one in the empire. Each month, during the days of the new and full moons, as well as on annual seasonal holidays, it was appropriate that [the Jingtai emperor] would lead various officials to pay court at Yan'an Gate to carry out fully the Way of veneration and honor. As for the position of heir apparent, it could not be left vacant for long. It would have been fitting to extend the righteousness of treating him as if he were his own son. If the court ordered that the Prince of Qi be restored to the position of heir apparent, then harmonious qi would fill the world, the sounds of joy would be bountiful and spread widely, the mind of Heaven would return on its own accord, and disasters would naturally cease.

The memorial was sent in, and the Jingtai emperor was furious. They arrested Zhang, detained him in the imperial prison, and tortured him for five

TORTURE

Torture was part of accepted Chinese judicial procedure, as it was in many countries elsewhere in the fifteenth century. Ming officials drew on codified practices first composed centuries earlier in the Tang dynasty. In theory, officials turned to torture when suspects, in the face of strong, persuasive evidence, refused to admit their guilt or supply further evidence. These practices, in theory, were strictly regulated. Only supervising officials could command that torture be employed, which was then carried out by specific individuals, with specific implements and specific limitations. Women, children, the ill, and the elderly were subject to different rules than healthy adult men. Officials who violated these guidelines were liable for censure and punishment. Judicial torture had a central role in the Chinese literary and theatrical imagination, with many accounts, sometimes highly exaggerated, in Yuan-Ming-era operas and stories. Unfortunately, we lack adequate historical sources that tell us how or how often torture truly was applied.

Ming-dynasty torture had its special features. First, Ming emperors, beginning with the founder, continued Mongol Yuan-dynasty practices and had officials beaten and otherwise mutilated at court. These brutal habits differed from those of the Song (960–1279), the previous Han dynasty, where the stiffest punishments given officials generally were demotion, long-term exile, and proscription of their written works. Chinese political culture, albeit an abstract term, assumed more violent forms in the fifteenth century than in the eleventh. Second, the court and palace eunuchs employed their own large-scale, de facto secret police forces and prisons, which operated freely, without any oversight or codes. It was at their hands that most of the dynasty's most spectacular cases of elite torture (and martyrdom) took place, well into the seventeenth century.

days, until his body bled everywhere. There suddenly were great winds, and it rained sand. The prison guards then eased up slightly, and Zhang was able to survive. In the beginning, the censor Zhong Tong [1424–1455] had criticized the Ministry of Rites over this matter, and so he was arrested as well.

The next year, the vice-minister of the Nanjing Court of Judicial Review, his excellency Liao Zhuang [?–1462], also followed his excellency and made a statement. It was ordered that he be whipped eighty times at court, and he almost died. Moreover, they whipped his excellency together with Tong, and Tong

died in prison. In the first year of the Tianshun reign [1457], it was ordered that they release his excellency Zhang. He was promoted to be vice-minister of the right of the Ministry of Rites. Later, his assignment was changed to the Nanjing Ministry of Rites and converted to the present post. (SZ 4.37)

CAREER COUNSELING

After I passed the *jinshi* examinations, I served in the Ministry of Works. My father's friends Xu Weng and Meng Zhang said, "The road of official service is a place where vipers gather. You, milord, in the past were utterly straight and nothing could make you crafty. Today, however, it is not appropriate to be like this. When you sit among them, you may not only not discuss other people's strong points and weak points, their successes and failures, but you must be very careful even when discussing their prose and poetry. Otherwise, we fear that slander and criticism will break out."

At first I did not think this to be the case. Later I was appointed to be a director of the Bureau of Operations in the Ministry of War. After serving my term, there was a falling-out between myself and others who passed the *jinshi* examinations my year. They happened to be in the Henan Circuit and nailed me in the performance evaluations. The Ministry of Rites made inquiries among public opinion and put the matter to rest. Moreover, in one year I was transferred twice. I began to believe that Xu Weng's words were not baseless, but I further appreciated that people have their own destiny, which cannot be harmed by those who commit evil acts. (SZ 4.40-41; GD 76.1652)

EUNUCHS, 2

During the Hongwu reign [1368-1398], eunuchs could only read and did not understand the concepts of righteousness and principle. During the Yongle reign [1403-1424], the court began to order the Ministry of Personnel to send educational officials awaiting assignment to enter the palace and teach. At the start of the Zhengtong reign [1436-1449], the eunuch Wang Zhen [?-1449] founded a school in the palace treasury. He chose examining editors and proof-readers from the Hanlin Academy to come in and teach. As a result, there were many intelligent men among the eunuchs who understood culture and righteousness. Yet at the time, their positions only handled palace treasury and yamen matters. Few at that point left the palace on outside assignments. During the Xuande reign [1426-1435], many were sent out, but they returned when they finished their work.

Today, though, eunuchs are engaged with matters outside the court, such as frontier defense; supervising troops at the capital; training divisions; managing internal and external capital granaries; and superintending construction, pearl excavation ponds, silver mining, maritime trade, weaving and dyeing factories, and other affairs. They are everywhere.

Once, in Tongzhou [Jiangsu], I met eunuch Zhang, a native of Jiaozhi [northern Vietnam]. He said that in the Yongle reign, when the court dispatched eunuchs to conduct business at the five military commissions and the six ministries, the eunuchs all would greet the commission and ministry officials at a distance of ten feet.²¹ On the road, if eunuchs encountered dukes, marquises, imperial sons-in-law, or earls, the eunuchs would have to dismount their horses or carts, and stand to the side. Now, eunuchs shout at the officials of the treasuries and ministries as if they were the eunuchs' subordinates. When dukes, marquises, imperial sons-in-law, or earls encounter eunuchs on the road, they turn back and avoid them. In addition, they call eunuchs "respected grandfather." (SZ 4.41)

THE CATASTROPHE REVISITED

During the northern campaign in the *jiawu* year [1474], our return route south went through Xuanfu [Shanxi] and passed through Tumu.²² I asked about when the imperial palanquin (*chejia*) fled and lost the throne in the *jisi* year [1449].²³ There was an old commoner who said, "In the beginning, the great army exited the pass as it went north. Because this area had the benefits of water and pastureland, they used it to set up camp and offices. At first, when owls suddenly gathered above, people suspected in their hearts that something was amiss.²⁴ Moreover, the mountain in previous times had a spring, which flowed into the Hun River and never ran dry. When it dried out, they discussed moving the camp near the Hun River to be near water. The enemy from far away saw the movement of troops and horses. They made a great cry, and the battle was joined. Before the armies met, our generals were confused and could not make any plans. The troops lay piled like pillows under the hoofs of foreign horses. Consequently, the imperial palanquin fled, and the emperor lost the throne. No one knows what happened to the great general the Duke of Ying, the Minister of War Kuang [Ye], and the others."²⁵ One can say that the leaders of the northern troops invariably waited for us to move before they made their move. If our troops had been as resolute as a wall and had not moved, then the defeat would not have been nearly so swift.

THE MONGOL THREAT, ACCORDING TO HUANG YU
(FL. LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY)

The calamity at Tumu, many historians suggest, led to long-term changes in Ming northern-frontier policy. Aggressive pacification campaigns were replaced by a defensive posture, relying on the Great Wall and a network of garrisons, stretching hundreds of miles in forbidding terrain. Despite Lu Rong's assertion that Chinese officials deserved the blame for the battlefield defeat, for his peers, such as Huang Yu, the Mongols remained a formidable, alien adversary, as seen in *Shuanghuai suichao*, a contemporary anthology:

Although the Mongols revere our righteousness and come to the court, their people always number over a thousand and their horses come to the ten thousands.¹ They scrutinize the strengths and weaknesses of our deployments. We cannot know if they are deceiving China for the time being, harboring plans to attack. By custom they tend camels, horses, cattle, and sheep. They drink koumiss and eat meat, and dress in animal pelts and leather. They make bows, arrows, knives, and spears for weapons. They gallop and hunt, and are brave in combat. Each time they enter China to raid, a single man rotates among three horses. For food, they take cheese stuffed in leather bags and do not use supply carts. So the people and horses do not stop, and their keenness for battle is undiminished. They come like the wind and rain, and nothing can stop them. They depart like arrows shot from a bowstring, so fast that we cannot catch up. Yet attacking cities and infantry combat are not their strong suits. That being so, what should be our defense policy? It is simply to provide adequate food and troops, to set up camp and keep watch, to wait for the horde's ambitions to become arrogant and their minds rebellious, and then defeat them with planning.²

- 1 These visits to the court constituted foreign tribute missions, in an effort to expand trade between the Ming and its neighbors. The Mongols and other states eagerly pursued this trade, but some Ming officials viewed this relationship with suspicion. The expression "admire our righteousness" (*muyi*), used for centuries, referred to foreign submission to the supposed superior moral force of the Chinese throne.
- 2 Huang Yu, *Shuanghuai suichao*, 86.

Before this, high officials had memorialized seven times, urging the emperor to bring back the army. All suggestions were ignored. I dare say it was that Wang Zhen was in charge. Consequently Esen [?-1454/1455] took advantage of the victory and invaded the territory, annihilating fortifications, stampeding and plundering people and livestock, and attacking and capturing prefectural and county seats until he pressed close to the capital.²⁶ I would say that the eunuch Xi Ning [?-1450] was originally of foreign stock, and the defeat at Tumu and surrender to the caitiffs was due to him.²⁷ That is why later it became so senseless and violent. At the time, our forces relied on the junior guardian, his excellency Yu Qian [1398-1457].²⁸ Internally, he had general control of the essential state business; externally, he cultivated the military administration. Also, the Wuqiang marquis Yang Hong [1381-1451] and the Wuqing marquis Shi Heng [?-1460] both resisted with murderous force.²⁹ Thus they were able to resolutely protect the capital and the dynasty's altars of soil and grain.³⁰

Recently civil officials at the Hanlin Academy have related these events. They say we met them in battle and lost. In fact, their understanding is incorrect. (SZ 4.45; GD 76.1656)

WORTHLESS IMPORTS

In the *xinchou* year of the Chenghua reign [1481], the western foreigners from Samarkand presented two lions as tribute goods.³¹ When they arrived at Jiayuguan [Gansu], they memorialized that the court send high officials to meet them and that the court dispatch troops to protect and escort them along the way to the capital. The matter was given to the Ministry of War. I said that the presentation of tribute goods was a matter for the Ministry of Rites. The Ministry of War only transmitted the documents and dispatched soldiers to protect and escort them.

At the time, his excellency Chen Yue [1429-1488] from Hejian was a director of the Department of State Affairs and would certainly want to review the memorial. I drafted the memorial and said in sum that lions inherently were rare animals. However, they could not be used as sacrificial goods at the imperial suburban temples and could not be used as harnessed beasts for the imperial palanquin.³² In general, they are useless things and are not fit to be accepted. Moreover, I elaborated that unusual birds and rare animals are not raised in China and that it was taken as a rule that we do not value odd things, contemptible articles, and the like. I said forcefully that we ought to

AN OBJECTION TO ANIMALS, BY CHEN XUAN (1429–1486)

On the *guihai* day of the fifth month of the twenty-first year of the Chenghua reign [1485], Guangdong Provincial Administration Commissioner of the Left Chen Xuan memorialized, “It has been transmitted that the Samarkand envoys have returned to their country from Guangdong. They will go to Malacca, seeking to buy lions to offer as tribute. I judge lions to be useless wild beasts. Guangdong for repeated years has had floods and drought. In addition, there are earthquakes and comets. Such disasters are unusual, and the people are unsettled. I request that we quickly stop these gifts.” The petition was sent down to the Ministry of Rites. It proposed, “It is appropriate to order those accompanying the Department of Language Translators to order the foreign envoys to return quickly when they get to Guangdong. They are not permitted to make trouble.” Approved by the court.¹

1 *Ming Xianzong jing huangdi shilu*, 266.3b.

refuse them. If the court perhaps worried that it would come to be passed down that the court praised the prudence of frontier states that came bearing tribute, then we should allow that they come on their own. This would fulfill the ritual of submitting tribute goods. If the court dispatched high officials to meet the envoys, this would be construed as our requesting the goods. In ancient times the Son of Heaven requested chariots and gold from the feudal lords. *The Spring and Autumn Annals* censured it.³³ How much more so for the Chinese emperor? To request wondrous things from foreigners—how could this not be laughed at by the whole world in later generations?

His excellency Chen looked it over and feared that the emperor would object to it. Then we consulted with the Ministry of Rites. At the time, his excellency Zhou from Sichuan was director of the Department of State Affairs. He also said that we should not send officials to meet and accept them. The matter was then put to rest. But they sent eunuchs to meet them. The animals looked simply like yellow dogs, only that their heads were big and their tails long. The heads and tails were hairier, and that was all. Basically, there was no great difference from dogs. What *Chuogenglu* (Notes taken during breaks in farming) says is complete nonsense.³⁴ Every day a lion eats one live sheep and a bottle of sweet and sour yogurt. Those who take care of the lions are all

given government positions. The Court of Imperial Entertainments daily gave them wine and food. The costs were incalculable. At court no one was aware that when lions are in the mountains and forests, there are no people to mix sweet and sour yogurt to feed them. I daresay that the foreigners do this just to deceive and manipulate the Chinese. Chinese know only to take their superiors' orders. Why are they happy to be deceived and manipulated, and do not wake up? (SZ 6.69–70; GD 78.1684)

A PASSION FOR DETAIL

As for the great ministers who were grand coordinators in Jiangnan, I consider his excellency Zhou Chen [1381–1453] to be the most renowned. In fact, his excellency's ability and understanding were inherently superior to those of other people. His care and concentration on official matters also were what other people could not match.³⁵

I heard that his excellency had a journal. He personally wrote there what he did each day and did not leave out the smallest detail. Each day, he would invariably record in detail whether the weather was overcast or sunny, or windy and rainy. For example, it would say, "in the morning of such-and-such a day, it was sunny, and in the afternoon, it was overcast. Such-and-such a day there was an east wind, and such-and-such a day there was a west wind. Such-and-such a day it was sunny in the daytime and rainy at night."

People at first did not know why. One day, some commoners in a certain county declared that a transport boat had been lost on the river because of the wind. His excellency asked, what day was the boat lost? Was it in the morning or afternoon? Was it an east wind or a west wind? The person did not know and gave wild answers. His excellency reported the facts point by point, and the person submitted in astonishment. A deceptive scheme thus failed. His excellency's compulsive recording of the wind and rain in fact was official business and not idle jotting. (SZ 7.81–82; GD 79.1698–99)

TAX WOES

Surveying farmland is simply good government. If the task is entrusted to the right people, who will do their duty and survey, they will see the true *mu* and *qing* numbers. They can clarify in each case who has plenty and who is lacking. Then those who have plenty cannot secretly harm the poor, and those who are lacking will not wrongly pay grain taxes. It will eliminate problems and bring forth benefits.

When Zhou Chen [1381–1453] was grand coordinator, he undertook this measure. But he entrusted a secretary of the Ministry of Revenue, He Yin, with the task, and every day He was just sunk in his wine. He never went through the farmland and wastes to oversee and view personally the surveying. He only relied on the clerks to provide reports and always allowed them to measure and handle matters. He did not consider that, with the things of this world, there sometimes is abundance, sometimes shortage, and sometimes neither abundance nor shortage. One cannot even them out with a single standard.

In cases where they assessed property holdings that had grown by a small amount, the clerks invariably called them “increased-output” households. When they assessed holdings that were less than the original number, they invariably called them “identical-amount” households and did not deduct a single item. With respect to the residences of the soldiers and commoners inside the Taicang prefectural seat, the wards and river routes were all treated as grain-submitting farmlands. The survey extended to the Twenty-Seven Security Wards in the northern suburbs. It further yielded farmland with a certain number of *mu*, and 293 odd *mu* were given to the Taicang government school to collect rents from them.³⁶ In sum, taxed lands shrunk in the city and grew in the suburbs and villages. So there are increased-output households, which are not reported to have land beyond the original quotas. Other places that produced grain in abundance were households that sent officials to the capital.

From the beginning of the Zhengtong reign [1436–1449] until now, the identical-amount households have paid grain taxes to the government when they had no land, and the households of capital officials have enjoyed the benefits of no taxes. In this case, although He Yin left behind problems for the common people, Zhou Chen was content with this finished state of affairs and did not examine the problems. In fact, he too cannot be without responsibility.

Yin was a native of Nanhai in Guangdong. I asked about his family line, and it certainly was a mess. Isn't this perhaps retribution for his serving as an official and not doing his job in good faith? (SZ 7.84; GD 79.1701–2)

THE DECLINE OF LEARNING

Each time I read *Zuozhuan*, the feudal lords, whether discussing events or remonstrating with their superiors, refer to the ancient systems as readily as if pointing to their palms. For example, the mother of Gongfu Wenbo [fl. early fifth century BCE], although she was only a woman, related the whole section of the ancient system about how the kings and queens personally wove their headdress

strings. If she missed nothing from start to finish like this, then we can know about the erudition of scholars of that time. On this point, not only do we see that the talented ancients all had useful learning, but we can also divine the success of the ancestral kings' work of transformation through instruction.

Today, each time the Ministry of Personnel tests National University students on the meaning of the classics, there are some students that cannot remember the basics. They recklessly write whatever language they do every day and fill up the blank pages. They call them "essays for getting taken out to dinner." Indeed, these essays can land them an official position. When I first learned this, I was shocked and thought it strange. This trend has existed since the Xuande [1426–1435] and Zhengtong [1436–1449] reigns. Although contemporary writings and ancient principles of conduct are very different, there is nothing worse than this when it comes to slipshod government!

Alas! Can one entrust the people's affairs to these sorts of people and expect that commoners will not suffer? (SZ 8.93–94; GD 80.1716)

POWER AND ITS PERILS

When their excellencies Yu Qian [1398–1457] and Wang Wen [1393–1457] were killed, they were falsely accused of greeting a prince living outside the capital and setting him up as ruler. Wen said he had been wronged, and Qian simply that those princes who did not have gold tallies could not be summoned to court, and that ought to straighten things out.³⁷

At the time the eunuchs from the Directorate of Credentials and the Directorate of Palace Seals learned about this. They inspected the tallies of each princely establishment. The tallies were all present, save that of Prince Xiang's household. Everyone fell under suspicion and did not know why the tally was missing. Then they asked an old retired eunuch. He said that he had remembered that an old woman during the Xuande era [1426–1435] had an edict to take it away, but he did not know where it was. An old palace woman was still alive and would certainly know the details.

Subsequently they went to ask her. She said that when the Xuande emperor passed away, "the old lady" believed that if the nation had an older ruler, it would be a blessing for the dynasty. She wanted to summon Prince Xiang and so took the edict and entered the palace.³⁸ Later the three scholars surnamed Yang discussed the matter but could not come to an agreement, and so the plan stopped.³⁹ At the time the tally was in a small heated room in the rear palace. "The old lady" was the then-Empress Dowager Zhang (?–1442). They sent a message to the current empress dowager requesting it, and the edict, as it

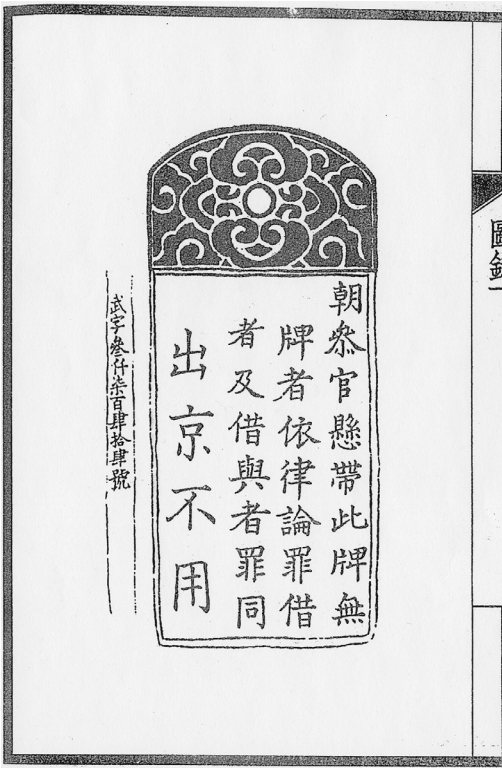


FIG. 3.1. A Ming palace tally. The face reads, "Officials attending court wear this tally. Those without the tally will be punished according to the law. Those who borrow or lend it will be punished identically. Not for use outside the capital." The smaller characters, which went on the side, read, "Military. Number 3744." From Luo Zhenyu, *Zengding lidai fupai tulu* (Beijing: Dongfang Xuehui, 1925), 102.

INSIGNIAS OF POWER

Tallies (*fu*) played many roles in traditional Chinese life. As in other cultures, Chinese entered contracts by splitting tallies, in which one side of the tally fitted the other side in a unique way. Tallies also conferred political authority and served as credentials. In high antiquity, Heaven had bestowed tallies on worthy leaders-to-be. Emperors and governments granted tallies to envoys and officials taking up posts outside the capital. By Yuan and Ming times, tallies no longer were split and functioned more as tablets (*pai*). Over the centuries, tallies were made in different materials, such as gold, silver, jade, and ivory, and sometimes took the shape of tigers, dragons, fish, or mythical beasts. Different materials and designs accorded with different categories of nobles and officials. Officials generally wore them at the waist, attaching them at the belt. In other contexts, different sorts of tallies, made of paper, functioned as religious talismans and were thought to ward off demonic forces and cure disease.

turned out, was just in that place. It was already buried under more than an inch of dust. It is also the case that if the old eunuch and the old woman had not been there, then these officials would have died unjustly.⁴⁰ Later, it was because of this incident that the Tianshun emperor became aware of the injustice done to these two men and regretted it. In adjudicating capital cases, one must be careful! (SZ 8.97; GD 80.1719–20)

FOREIGN OCCUPATION, 1

It was inherent grand destiny that the Mongols entered and ruled China. That being said, it also was the force of numbers that won the battle. At the time, figures such as Liu Binzhong [1216–1274], Xu Heng [1209–1281], Dou Mo [1196–1280], Yao Shu [1201–1278], Yao Sui [1239–1314], Hao Tianting [1247–1313], and Wang Pan [1202–1293] were all talented men from the Song.⁴¹ If they could have been like Boyi and Shuqi's not eating the Zhou grain, or Lu Zhonglian's not treating the Qin as emperor, or Tian Heng and his guests not being Han dynasty subjects, or Gong Sheng and his ilk not serving Wang Mang, then who would have accompanied those foreign rulers, standing apart above the people, establishing standards and arranging regulations, making rituals and performing music, in order that the Mongols might be secure for extended rule in China?

That being so, the reason that the Yuan lords occupied China for as long as ninety-odd years was actually because Chinese people supported and assisted them. Bingzhong and his cohort were gentlemen who followed the times and made a name for themselves. His excellency Xu himself undertook the study of the sages and worthies, but did they not also submit to the foreign master?⁴² The model of *The Spring and Autumn Annals* is to honor China and expel the barbarian clans. In that work, the Chinese states of Lu and Qi lacked the power to expel barbarian clans. It would have been acceptable not to serve in office, like Liu Yin [1249–1293], so I must criticize them. (SZ 8.100)

CURRYING FAVOR

In the latter years of the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], Grand Eunuch Liang Fang and others led rich merchants in the capital to collect and purchase ancient and new articles, and submit them to the court, in order to stimulate the emperor's fondness for fine things. Subsequently, the doors opened wide for those hoping to get lucky. Sons of rich families tried to submit rare articles but lacked proper credentials. They then gathered at various Buddhist and

Daoist temples, wrote Buddhist and Daoist astrological works, and submitted them. Then they received official positions.

Those originally who were at the palace, serving as ushers at the Department of State Affairs, were promoted to various levels, up to the ranks of vice-minister at the Court of State Ceremonial, the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, and the Court of Imperial Stud. Commoners received ranks such as recorder and usher at the Court of State Ceremonial. Government students, Confucian gentlemen, craftsmen, and musicians, as well as workers in the households of distinguished imperial relatives, presented together various sorts of valuable goods. It was called “transmitting tribute goods.” In fact, the orders came from the palace, and these people had been selected by the Ministry of Personnel. So they gave that name. The flood of famous treasures into the palace was unmatched by any other reign.

A while later, because there were strange astral events, the emperor cultivated his person and restrained his appetites. The court discussed eliminating these people. They examined the numbers, and there were 36 men who originally held office and received promotions, and there were 538 commoners who received offices. All were stripped of their offices, and an edict ordered them to return to their original hometowns and stay there, never to be employed by the government again. The military officials who received promotions ought to have amounted to many times this number, and they did not have time to register them. (SZ 9.116–17; GD 81.1744)

SERVICE AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

At the upper and lower narrows of the Si River at Baibu Hong and Lüliang in Xuzhou [Jiangsu], the stone corners are steep and forbidding. The current is swift, and it is extremely dangerous. During the Zhengtong reign [1436–1449], the assistant regional commander of the Transport Office, Tang Jie [fl. 1435–1449], proposed constructing a sluice gate by the narrows’ side to accumulate water so that people could avoid the hazard.⁴³ The sluice gate was built but could not work, and later was abandoned.

In the sixth year of the Chenghua reign [1470], Guo Sheng [fl. 1470], secretary in the Ministry of Works, dredged over three hundred rocks from Baibu’s outer narrows, where boats capsized. He also dredged in the middle channel of the narrows, piled up the stones, and built a stone wall to reinforce the outer narrows banks. It was over 130 *zhang* long and 1 *zhang* high. In the eighth year [1472], Secretary Xie Jingxiu [fl. 1472] rebuilt the stone wall for the

bank of Lüliang upper narrows, which was 36 *zhang* long, 9 *chi* across, and 5 *chi* high. At the bank of the lower narrows, it was 35 *zhang* long, 1 *zhang* and 4 *chi* across, and 5 *chi* high. In the twenty-first year [1485], Secretary Fei Xuan [1475 *jinshi*] renovated Lüling's upper and lower towing paths for a certain number of *zhang*.

All were fine projects that benefited the people, but the three men suffered slander and criticism, and their careers ended in failure. In sum, those with ambitions to accomplish things and make a name for themselves usually cannot avoid minor disputes. Those officials who do not initiate anything are usually jealous; the authorities cannot inspect the critics' charges, usually believe them without any doubts, and then discard the projects and the people. Knowledgeable and clever people have their ways of punishing others. People follow set routines, and even if there is business that should be done, they put it all off, so as to avoid slander and criticism. Alas! The difficulties of the way of official service are like this. (SZ 10.119–20)

THE FOUNDER AND HIS FAILURES

At the beginning of the dynasty, the nation suffered from the problems of the Yuan. The government used strict laws and severe punishments to renew the world. Thus the commands were carried out, the prohibitions halted bad conduct, and society was like grass bending before the wind. Yet there were many matters in which people submitted to the laws for a time but in their hearts violated them behind the back of the authorities.

Hongwu-era [1368–1398] coin, Ming paper currency, the *Grand Pronouncements* (Dagao) of the Ming founder, and *Hongwu Rhymes* (Hongwu yun) are just such examples.⁴⁴ Hongwu coins did not circulate at all among the people. When I was young, I saw them, but today I do not see a single specimen. For the most part, people smelted and destroyed the coins, and made implements from them. As for the paper money, today only government offices use it, and one string is worth only three *li* of silver or two units of coin.⁴⁵ When the common people get them, they just put them aside and do not use them.

Grand Pronouncements is used only when judicial authorities are determining punishments. They say, "There is *Grand Pronouncements*, which reduces the punishment by one degree," and that is all. The common people have never seen it. How much more so for their even reading and discussing it? *Hongwu Rhymes* partly incorporates *Tang Rhymes* (Tang yun), which comes closest to human feelings.⁴⁶ But now the book is used only as a model for

calligraphy for state memorials. For composing poetry, people still use *Tang Rhymes*, both for official or unofficial works. No one has ever followed *Hongwu Rhymes*.⁴⁷ (SZ 10.122–23; GD 82.1754)

FOREIGN OCCUPATION, 2

The world has fixed, unchanging principles. Even mediocre people can understand them. When it comes to the transformations of destiny and the arrival of opportunities, however, even superior intellects and great worthies cannot predict them. Chen Liang's [1143–1194] *An Inquiry into History* (Zhuo gu lun) says, "Fu Jian [338–385], a crafty, foreign strongman, took over three kingdoms as if he were pulling down dead trees. He believed no one in the world could match him. His greedy mind had been aroused, and he immediately wanted to deploy his armies and swallow the Jin dynasty [266–419]. Although Jin was weak, it was the Central Kingdom [China]. Although the Former Qin dynasty [350–394, ruled by Fu Jian] was strong, it was foreign. Since ancient times, how could there be any foreigners who could completely swallow China!"⁴⁸

Chen's discussion was about fixed principles. Who knew that a century later, the Yuan clan would enter and master China, and unify the Chinese and foreigners? This had never happened before. Yet were not the Song Chinese and the Mongols foreign? Did not Chen think that women could not be placed above men, just as foreigners cannot be placed above Chinese? Several centuries earlier, there already had been women who changed their surnames, altered their titles, and were lords ruling the world, like Wu Zhao [624–705].⁴⁹ Yet how do the Chinese and foreigners in later ages share the world but still have this definite unchanging principle? (SZ 10.124; GD 82.1756)

CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS

The Chenghua emperor's court [1465–1487] did not lightly kill people. In its later years, it killed two and made people extremely happy.

The itinerant commoner Wang Chen used his illusory techniques to make his way among noble families. He accompanied Grand Eunuch Wang Jing [fl. 1483] on official duties. Wherever he went, he took wealth and goods, and plundered gifts and all kinds of precious, rare things, disturbing others without end. The affair was discovered, and he was executed in the market. His head was displayed in Suzhou and other places.

Company Commander Wei Ying was an assistant to Grand Eunuch Wang Zhi (fl. 1476–1482). He stirred things up and killed people, and people were angry at him. Zhi fell and was transferred to a post north of the Great Wall, but his intentions to hurt others did not cease. He had over ten people arrested and sent manacled to the capital, accusing them of being rebels. The emperor ordered the city officials to interrogate them, and all had been slandered falsely. In fact, Ying had framed them and sent in the accusation. He wanted to use it to win honor, and that is all.⁵⁰ Yet he was accused and executed in the market, and his head was displayed at the place of the arrest.⁵¹ (SZ 10.124)

EDUCATION AND SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

Promoting schools fundamentally is good government, but what they call today promoting schools is only such activities as reporting and selecting government students, and constructing buildings, and that is all. They are all secondary activities and are not those undertaken by people who understand the essentials. The essentials lie in raising scholars' morale, making scholars forthright and generous, and rewarding and encouraging scholars' good conduct. Presently people neglect all of these and only strive in secondary matters.

Among them, constructing buildings is an especially harmful matter. In general, high officials estimate the costs, and they always run to several thousand *liang* of silver. The prefectural and county officials entrust the project to their accomplices. The expenses are incalculable, and the embezzlement truly is immense. Consequently, they waste resources for nothing, and after a short time the schools again fall into disrepair. This is what is called a harmful matter.

How much more so now when school houses are repeatedly repaired, but students do not return to academic work. One enters these courtyards and does not see people. They resemble abandoned Buddhist temples. This can be deeply sighed over. In general, authorities in recent times only seek the fame that comes with a stele carved to commemorate their having done the construction, but they do not know the essential reasons to promote schools. (SZ 13.158; GD 69.1535)

A SHAMEFUL PEACE AND ITS CULPRITS

The Song [960–1279] and Jin [1115–1234] dynasties made a peace agreement, and the world's later ages have blamed only Qin Gui [1090–1155].⁵² I

AN EMPEROR IN RETIREMENT, BY ZHOU MI (1232-98)

During the Chunxi reign (1174-1179), the retired emperor Gaozong enjoyed the empire. Every time that Emperor Xiaozong (r. 1163-1189) visited Gaozong at his retirement palace,¹ they went on outings to the lakes and hills, and rode in great dragon boats. High ministers and attending officials, the powerful eunuchs serving at the various palace agencies, and the capital's public security forces would ride in big boats, numbering without question in the several hundred. At the time, the world had long been at peace, and the emperor shared his happiness with the commoners. On each outing, he would go observe those selling things, and there was no sense of restraint. Smaller boats with painted oars would cling to their boats' sides as if woven together . . . Occasionally, he would hail small boats and offer them gifts. For example, the emperor once praised the fish broth of Fifth Sister-in-Law Song. People then together hastened to her shop, and she eventually became a rich old woman.²

On the fifteenth day of the third lunar month of the sixth year of the Chunxi reign (1179) . . . [Gaozong during an outing at West Lake in Hangzhou] commanded that all the turtles and fish being sold at West Lake be released.³ He also summoned all the merchants at the lake. The eunuch palace attendants

- 1 Literally, "pay his respects to the three basilicas of Virtuous Longevity." The three basilicas refer to the imperial palace, and Virtuous Longevity was the title taken by Gaozong after he abdicated in 1164.
- 2 Zhou, *Wulin jiushi*, 3:375.
- 3 Buddhists believed that the liberation of living things, an act of compassion, would win karmic merit.

have examined the matter. There inherently is no escaping Gui's crimes. But if we trace the root of the matter, it truly originates in Emperor Song Gaozong's [r. 1127-1162] central objective of saving himself by any means he could, and the absence of any intention to wipe away the shame and take vengeance on the enemy. There is evidence to see Gui's perfidy. He flattered his lord to please him and consolidate imperial favor, and that is all.

If Gaozong could have been like Gou Jian [r. 496-465 BCE], sleeping on firewood and eating his bile, he certainly would have made his central objective taking vengeance and wiping away shame, and the Central Plain would have always been in his dreams and the two emperors would have been in his

used small colored banners to call them, and each was bestowed with gifts. At the time there was a Fifth Sister-in-Law Song, who sold fish broth. She answered His Majesty and introduced herself, “I am a native of the Eastern Capital [the Northern Song capital of Kaifeng in Henan] and came here to Lin’an, following the imperial palanquin.”⁴ The emperor emeritus specially announced that she should board his boat and sit with him. He took note of her advanced years and gave her ten strings of gold cash, one hundred strings of silver cash, and ten bolts of silk. He further ordered the eunuchs of the Rear Garden to provide her with his own refreshments.

At the time, Grand Councilor Zhao Xiong (1129–1193), Military Affairs Commissioner Wang Huai (1126–1189), and Participant in Determining Government Matters Qian Liangchen (?–1189) accompanied the imperial palanquin and were on duty at the western studio of Xianying Abbey. The emperor bestowed them with wine and food, and fans inlaid with kingfisher feathers. At the *shen* hours (3–5 p.m.), the imperial boat docked at Huaguang Gazebo, and the group went to Huifang to rest a bit. At the time, the emperor emeritus was already drunk, and the officials had to support him as he got on the boat. Together they rode in sedan chairs and returned to the palace. Everyone in the capital went to watch and praised his sage filial piety.⁵

4 That is, she numbered among the tens of millions of refugees who fled south after the collapse of the Northern Song.

5 Zhou, *Wulin jiushi*, 7.471–72.

thoughts.⁵³ He probably could not have lived his whole reign in that remote nook, Lin’an.⁵⁴ He would have been so busy with restoration plans—how could he have noticed the fine landscape?⁵⁵

Jujing, Yujin, and other gardens now in Hangzhou are said to have all begun in the Shaoxing reign [1131–1162]. Emperor Xiaozong [r. 1163–1189] then made them into places to take care of his parents. Recently I strolled through Bao’en Temple. On the top of the mountain to the rear, there was a flat clearing. It is said to be Gaozong’s Kuaihuo [Joyful Living] Terrace. At the time he ate Fifth Sister-in-Law Song’s varieties of fish broth, he was treating the empire as a source of enjoyment and paid no attention to the enmities of

rulers and fathers.⁵⁶ How can the crime of the peace agreement be attributed only to Gui! (SZ 13.165; GD 69.1544)

RIGHTING INJUSTICE

Recently while traveling on a road in Tonglu [Zhejiang], I saw a woman across a stream sorrowfully accusing someone of killing her husband. But the stream was deep and the water wide. I was thinking about how to handle the situation. The attendants thought that she was crazy and said that the matter was not worth inquiring into. I believed that she was extremely grief-stricken, and that she certainly was not crazy. There happened to be a county official accompanying me, and I prevented him from sending her away. I ordered him to go hear what she had to say and return.

She was a commoner surnamed Chen. The husband and wife played with a monkey as they performed in public and begged for food. In the evenings, they stayed at a family's house in the mountains. That family made its living by fishing. The family's brothers had not married and together took care of their own mother. They saw that Chen's wife was hard-working and plotted to get her. One night they said to Chen, "What you earn by performing with a monkey is nothing. Our family each day gets several times as much profit as you do. Tomorrow, why not come with us and try?"

So the next day they went out together. At dusk the brothers came back together, but Chen did not arrive. The wife asked them about it. They said, "Your husband was snatched away by a tiger." The wife did not believe them. She howled and cried, and did not sleep. The fisherman's mother spoke to her with tender words and wanted to make her the wife of her son. The woman did not consent. She also said that she would press charges with officials and seek the whereabouts of her husband.

The brothers were terrified and then tried to kill her and the monkey. They threw the monkey into the river and buried the wife in an abandoned tomb. After two nights, the wife revived. She realized that someone was stamping on the side of her body and shouting, "A bright star has arrived. Why not hurry up and press charges?" The wife opened her eyes dimly and still did not know where she was. She happened to see a crack of light, as the sunlight penetrated inside. Then through the crack she smashed through and came out. Then she finally knew it had been an empty coffin. She ran back and forth, waiting like mad for an official to come by. So people called her crazy.

I ordered the authorities in this case to arrest and question the family. The monkey also had revived and returned to their house. The family had gotten

THE STATE AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Extraordinary officials, in the popular mind, had ties with the unseen world or possessed supernatural powers. In operas and stories, famous magistrates, such as Judge Bao and Judge Dee, often solved cases through divine assistance and visions.¹ This notion helped spur the development of shrines to officials, who were thought to continue serving as investigators and judges in administrative positions in the afterlife. These conceptions gave people a ready means to understand Lu's achievement. Many biographies of Lu mention this incident.

1 See, for example, Idema, *Judge Bao*; and van Gulik, *Celebrated Cases*.

the monkey into a bamboo cage and tossed fire into it, but the fire could not burn it. The authorities got the full truth, and the fisherman brothers were condemned to death.

This certainly was not a coincidence. Recently I have heard village rumors go around that I have heard ghosts make charges of wrongful deaths and that I have personally adjudicated in these matters. It is all wild talk. (SZ 13.166)

IMAGE ISSUES

The Hongwu emperor once assembled artists at the court to paint the imperial countenance. Most works did not receive his approval. There was one man with a brush who wanted to make his work lifelike. He thought it would certainly be appreciated by the emperor. When he presented it for the emperor to see, such indeed was the case. The painter had sought to understand the emperor's intentions. Besides touching up the likeness a bit, he made the face appear more majestic and then presented it. The emperor was greatly delighted and then ordered many copies made and distributed to the princes. In sum, it was that the emperor had his own intentions, and the other artists could not understand it.

I also heard that the image of the local earth god (*tudi shen*) at Heavenly King Temple in Suzhou had been made by a painter at the palace during the Hongwu reign [1368–1398]. At the start of the Yongle reign [1403–1424], there was Company Commander He. As he went to serve at the Suzhou garrison, he happened to see it. He bowed and cried, and someone asked him the reason. He said that he had served as an aide to the Hongwu emperor for a long time and recognized the emperor's face. In sum, this image was lifelike! (SZ 14.170)

RELEASING A THIEF

When his excellency Wei Ji [1375–1472] was vice-director in the Ministry of Rites, he once accumulated over one hundred *liang* of silver as payment from those requesting texts from him, and put the money in his studio, but the money disappeared. A patrolman investigated and learned it had been stolen by a clerk. They discovered the loot, and the clerk had already spent one paper bundle's worth, but the rest was still there. They sent him to the judicial authorities to be tried and punished. His excellency pitied the man's poverty. As he went to get his official cap and belt, he said, "If we handle it according to the law, not only will it ruin this clerk, but his wife and children will probably have no place to go to." Then they released the man. (SZ 15.187)

CHAPTER FOUR

Deities, Spirits, and Clergy

MOURNING THE WAR DEAD

When the northern caitiffs came and pastured south of the bend of the Yellow River, the emperor ordered the Earl of Zhangwu, Yang Xin [fl. 1465], to lead the army and exterminate them. Subsequently the court transferred three thousand crack troops each from the garrisons at Datong, Xuanfu, and Ningxia to encircle them. Given such numbers, the court supplied them with winter clothes from the palace storehouse and sent officials to toast the troops.

I had the assignment at Ningxia. On the second day of the seventh month, I was promoted to be supervisor of the Number Two Palace Storehouse. I saw a eunuch holding a string of prayer beads. Their color looked like ivory, and a reddish gleam suffused them. I asked what they were for. He said, "At the Yongle emperor's great battle at Baigou River [Hebei], the soldiers' corpses were piled in heaps all over the countryside.¹ The emperor remembered them and ordered that their skeletons be gathered together. He commanded that prayer beads be made for the eunuchs. They would perform Buddhists chants in the hope of a favorable rebirth for the soldiers." Moreover, there were large deep skulls that they filled with holy water to offer to the Buddha. They named them heavenly spirit bowls (*tianlingwan*). These are all teachings of foreign monks. (SZ 1.3; GD 73.1602)

COMMUNICATING WITH THE SPIRITS

There was a native of Shaanxi who summoned a poet-immortal. The stylus moved, and he asked which immortal was present. The spirit wrote a single character: "ghost." The man further asked, "Since you are a ghost, why not seek to be reborn?" Then the stylus wrote a poem:

SOOTHING SOULS

The Chinese commonly believed that those who died before their time, in violent fashion, might become unruly spirits, sometimes wreaking havoc on the living. Soldiers who perished in battle were no exception. Beginning with the Sui dynasty (581–617), which reunified the empire after nearly four hundred years of division, governments regularly sponsored large-scale Buddhist rituals and monasteries expressly aimed at relieving the afterlife suffering of the war dead. These performances, addressing allies and enemies, strove to protect the regime against malevolent forces and manifest its enormous compassion, as well as accumulating vast karmic merit that would aid its fortunes in the future.

One dream, so long, forty autumns,
 no vexations and no worries.
 People all urge me to return to the dusty world,
 I fear only that I would not become a full person.

After the spirit stopped writing, the man requested that the spirit leave behind a name, and the spirit again wrote the character “ghost,” and then left. I say that this ghost did not rashly have the title of “divine immortal.” It could be said to be wondrous. But to know that ghosts cannot return to be humans and yet say that one does not wish to return to be human—this indeed is being deceptive.² (GD 73.1609)

OMENS AND EXAMINATIONS

At the metropolitan examinations in the *kuiwei* year of the Tianshun reign [1463], I stayed at an inn at the capital. Once for fun I made a picture of the *kui* star.³ Above I wrote, “Below Heaven’s gates, the ghost kicks a ladle. For first place in *kuiwei*, brush and ingot will fall into his hands.”⁴ I put it on the wall at my spot. Soon after it disappeared.

At the time Lu Dingyi was staying at the home of my friend Wen Bingzhong. He took out the picture and played with it. I was mystified and asked where it came from. He said, “Yesterday, as I was leaning against the gate. A child had it in his hand and showed me. I traded him a piece of fruit for it.” I was silent and took it as an omen of our fates. Soon after, Dingyi placed first on the examinations, and I failed to pass. (SZ 2.12–13)

THE FOUNDER'S MUNIFICENCE

When the imperial tombs were first being constructed, officials measured and established boundaries. As they were about to build an encircling wall around the area, the authorities memorialized to the court that the commoners' graves by its side would have to be moved. The Hongwu emperor said, "These graves are all my family's former neighbors. You need not move them out." The graves have remained in the precincts of the imperial tombs to the present day. At seasonal occasions in spring and autumn, they receive offerings and are swept clean. Commoners are allowed to come and go among them without restriction. When this situation was made known to Fengyang Magistrate Du Chang, he said, "Here we can see how imperial magnanimity is extraordinarily encompassing and naturally differs from the common multitude."⁵ (SZ 3.26)

A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

There was a man who faced imminent execution and avoided death, thanks to three case reviews. Someone asked him what his thoughts and spirits were at that time. He said, "I already was muddled and not aware of anything. I remember only that I myself was sitting on top of a roof and saw below a person with his hands bound behind him. My wife, children, relatives, and friends were all at his side. After a while, the pardon arrived, and only then could I get down from the roof." Probably the one on the roof was his soul, and the one he saw with his hands bound behind his back was his body. As I observe this account, I truly believe in the common notion of the departed soul. (SZ 3.27–28)

A GHOSTBUSTER

At a Buddha hall in a temple in Nanfeng County in Jiangxi, there were demons that came and went. People did not dare go there. A student surnamed Xu, who always was reckless, went there at night with his cohort. They also made a pact, saying, "Beforehand we will place an object in the hall. If the next day Xu would take it away as proof, then the group would bring out the wine and toast him. If he does not, then there will be punishment."

When dusk fell, the student Xu drank until he was drunk and then went. He did not carry a weapon or knife, but only tiles and bricks to protect himself, and that was all. After about the first watch [7–9 p.m.], there were, as expected, several demons who came in through the window. They had just gone up to

the beam when the student let out a great yell and threw the tiles and bricks and struck them. The demons all left through the window. The student saw where they went, and they had all gone into the waterhole below the window. He noted this to himself and lay down to sleep.

The next day, the sun was high, and the student had not yet risen. The others suspected that he had died. Only then did he come down, nonchalantly carrying the object. The others brought together the money and toasted him. On the following day, he led the youngsters in the family to dig up that place and found a pit with gold, amounting to over sixty *jīn*. From then on, the Buddha hall had no ghosts. (SZ 3.35; GD 75.1644)

GHOSTWRITERS AND THE INEXPLICABLE

Zhuge Jing was a native of Jiangpu [Jiangsu]. He once took out some paper and composed poetry. He went out and did some thinking outside his studio. When he got some lines, he then went into his studio, and there already was poetry written on the paper. Jing thought this was strange and did not tell anyone about it.

On another day, he tried this several times and always had the same result. He thought it was becoming increasingly strange. Thereupon he called it the work of a great immortal and each day lit incense and treated him with ritual. Whenever he had poems or texts to write, he always requested the immortal to write for him. Once he wished to view the immortal, and the writing paper said, "I do not consent." As his requests grew more earnest, they made an appointment to meet at dusk. Jing himself was terrified and dragged along a friend to accompany him. When night came, they heard outside the door the sound of someone snapping his fingers. They opened the door to welcome him, and it was a headless man. Jing fainted in shock. Afterward, when he wished the immortal to write for him, there was no response.

The son-in-law of Li Duan [fl. 1450s], Hangzhou prefect, at night rose to go to the toilet and did not return. His family searched for him. The doors and windows were locked as before, and no one knew where he went. Li was alarmed and thought the matter was odd. Then he went to the ancestral hall and rang the bell. He assembled the many functionaries and questioned all of them but did not find him.

At dusk the next day, the son-in-law suddenly dropped down from the roof. People asked about his coming and going, and he knew nothing. They saw that his clothes were soaked and soiled. There were yellow and green marks. It was as if he had brushed against plants and trees, but none understood it.

I learned of these matters from Censor Jiang Zongyi, who received his *jinshi* degree the same year that I did [1466]. Zhuge was Zongyi's father's friend. Li had been a judge when Jiang was his superior. So he could speak about these things in detail. (SZ 4.38-39; GD 76.1649-50)

COFFINS AND TABOOS

The court did not permit funeral processions in Nanjing to exit the Hongwu, Chaoyang, Tongji and Hanxi Gates.⁶ None dared to send a funeral procession through the Zhengyang Gate in Beijing, and there were no prohibitions at the other gates. In front of the Daming Gate, even if it were an empty coffin, it still was not allowed to pass in front. At each gate, empty coffins were not allowed to be carried in.

In the past there were those that did not know about this restriction. A civil official's family lived to the west of the palace and brought a coffin east of the palace. They could not pass through with the coffin, so they went through the Beishang Gate, circled the palace wall, and then arrived at their house.⁷ There were also those who brought coffins to the capital. They knew about the restrictions and lodged them outside the gates. People thought it was funny. There indeed are reasons why the ancients asked about the restrictions when they entered a new domain.

Outside of the capital, there were no restrictions. If there were restrictions, guards used the prohibition as a technique to collect bribes. For example, for those who died in office in Liaodong [Liaoning], the returning coffin inevitably passed through the Shanhai Gate. For those who died in office in Shanxi, the returning coffin inevitably went through the Tongguan Wall. Those who died in office north of the Great Wall invariably passed through Juyong and other gates. Beyond these, there were no other roads. (SZ 4.40; GD 76.1651)

MONKS AND DIPLOMACY

Among foreign monks there are those with the title dharma king (*fawang*), which is like preceptor of the state (*guoshi*).⁸ The court receives them with special ritual treatment and gives them lavish provisions. Remonstrating officials always remark about them.

In general, with the customs of the western regions [Central Asia], as soon as there are rebellions or deadly feuds that cannot be suppressed from a distance, the court uses the Buddhist dharma to warn and instruct them. Then, in a ritual with sharp swords and Buddhist scriptures, they make an oath to be

trustworthy and prudent. The key to controlling foreigners probably lies in this method. So although the provisions are said to be excessively lavish, we still do not have to bother with the expenses of weapons and grain supplies. Moreover, if the state submits, and these perverse elements are made to return to their proper hidden places, then there are ample rewards. Newly appointed officials do not know about this practice, and the court does not want to speak about them openly. So these matters are never announced publicly.

In sum, these are simply the techniques of previous dynasties to control distant foreigners. It was not that they regarded Buddhism as something divine. Later ages did not realize this. Sometimes they passed down precepts and warnings, and sometimes they studied their techniques. Sometimes there were Chinese clergy who falsely took on their trappings and usurped their title. These are the ills of later eras. During the early Chinghua reign [1465–1487], as one preceptor of the state was ill and about to die, he said to others, “I am going to pass away on such-and-such day at such-and-such hour.” The time came, and he was not dead. The disciples were embarrassed that the prediction did not come true and so strangled him in secret.

All dharma kings and preceptors of the state who die in China, according to established precedent, should have a tomb stupa constructed for them. When his excellency Wang of Gu’an [fl. 1465] returned to be secretary in the Ministry of Works, he memorialized that the government’s gifts and provisions to these monks had grown extremely lavish. It would be appropriate that no official funds be used in the construction of their tomb stupas. People viewed this as appropriate. (SZ 4.42)

REGULATING IMAGES

In ancient times, city gods were not in the Register of Sacrifices.⁹ In later ages, because people used high walls and deep moats to protect against external and internal threats, they invariably had gods to rule them. Then they began to have shrines. Confused people made likenesses, dressed in official robes and caps. They added honors and titles. We have continued these practices from earlier ages, and it has gone on for a long time.

In the first year of the Hongwu reign [1368], the city god of each place was enfeoffed to investigate and command the common people. Gods for superior prefectures were to be called “duke,” those of prefectures were to be called “marquis,” and those of counties were to be called “earl,” and moreover there were edicts to carry out these instructions. In general the Hongwu emperor at the time did not yet have a fixed opinion. In the third year [1370], the court

then rectified the Register of Sacrifices. It was ordered that, “for all of the empire’s city gods, they shall be only called such-and-such superior prefecture’s city god, such-and-such prefecture’s city god, and such-and-such county’s city god. The previous honors and titles are all abolished.”

A while later, the court further ordered authorities to remove any of the various gods mixed inside city god temples. In cases where city god temples had earthen images in the center, the authorities were to wash them away. In cases where images were placed into the center wall, the authorities were to screen them off with paintings of clouds and mountains. For images in the side corridors, they were to cover them over with mud. As soon as this order was promulgated, a thousand years of bad practices were abolished, and all was made anew.

How pitiful! Today’s authorities mostly cannot accomplish this goal. They often make images with official robes and caps, and in extreme cases create female images to accompany them. Customs are difficult to change, and the ignorant are difficult to enlighten. Subsequently, they cause the Hongwu emperor’s bright instructions to become empty talk. This can be called a crime! (SZ 5.55)

CORRUPT CLERGY

The two huge Buddhist temples in the capital, Daxinglong and Dalongfu, are cloisters that conduct services on behalf of the dynasty.¹⁰ Other temples with plaques bestowed by the court were all constructed by eunuchs.¹¹ Temples must have a monk official managing them. When eunuchs leave the palace on official business, they always stay at temples. Cunning eunuchs all make arrangements beforehand with monk officials. The monks wait for the eunuchs’ departure and then go to meet them. In cases where eunuchs ask for favors of civil officials, it is always the monk officials who make the secret payments on their behalf.

In recent times, many high ministers associate with monk officials like this. Zhihua Temple, east of the capital’s military school, is where Grand Eunuch Xu An [date unknown] and his sort burned incense for Wang Zhen. During the Tianshun reign [1457–1464], the manager was the monk official Ransheng. He was learned and understood literary matters. At the time, Yan Yuxi [1426–1476], aide at the Directorate of Education, was in charge of military school matters. Ransheng then went to visit him. Yuxi used excuses not to meet with him. On another day, Ransheng gave him tea and cakes, and Yuxi refused him. Ransheng bestowed poetry on him, and Yuxi refused him. He never

associated with him at all. Yuxi can be called a steadfast gentleman, whose worthiness stood far apart from others. (SZ 5.59–60)

SPIRIT MARRIAGES

According to the customs of Shizhou in Shanxi, anytime that a son dies before marrying, his parents wait for the death of a local girl and then invariably request that she be matched with him. They discuss ritual wedding gifts to the bride's family, as if she were living. On the day of burial, they also give a banquet for the bride's family. If a girl dies, the parents want to make a dead son a son-in-law who would move in with them. Their ritual resembles this one.¹² (SZ 5.62)

CONVENTS AND THEIR VICTIMS

The capital has many Buddhist convents. Yet only in the district east of Prince Ying's residence is there a place where idle imperial consorts and concubines enter the clergy. The gate restrictions are strictly adhered to, and people do not dare to enter. None of the other places are like this. That said, some places regard it as taboo that people know about them and some places do not. In places that do not regard such knowledge as taboo, gentlemen prudently suspect them and do not enter as a matter of course. Places that do regard such knowledge as taboo have experienced strange disasters, and gentlemen certainly may not enter.

In the Tianshun reign [1457–1464], a nominated scholar at the departmental examinations left the test site and went strolling. He did not return for seven days, and no one knew where he went. He had entered a convent and was detained. Each day the nun would lock the door and exit. At night she returned, secretly bringing wine and delicacies. So no one knew about it. One day the student took fright and then jumped over the wall and left. When he left, he had become an emaciated stalk.

I also heard that during the Yongle reign [1403–1424], there was a mason repairing a convent. He found a hat made of horsehair in a dustpan. The hat had crystals and pearls. The worker took the pearls and sold them in the market. The boss recognized them and seized the man. They asked where he got them, and he told them the truth. Only then did they learn that a youth had secretly entered the convent and then died from lust. His corpse could not be taken out, and the nuns had dismembered and buried it under the wall. The court recommended that the arrested nuns be punished with the death

penalty, and that their temple be destroyed. The grass lot northeast of the palace today is said to be the abandoned site. (SZ 6.68)

MOUNTAINS AND THEIR BIRTHDAYS

Popular custom has passed down that the twenty-eighth day of the third lunar month is the birthday of the Eastern Marchmount [Dongyue], but it does not appear in the records.¹³ In his excellency Xu Bin's [fl. mid-fifteenth century] "Commemoration of the Reconstruction of Haoli Shrine," it reads, "Every year on the twenty-eighth day of the third lunar month, we call on the thearch (*di*) of the Eastern Marchmount to celebrate his birthday.¹⁴ The people of the empire do not regard thousands and hundreds of *li* as a long way, and so all arrive eagerly with incense and cloth and animal sacrifices to offer." This is seen in the text.

Now heaven opened in the first stage of creation, and the earth split in the second stage. When they opened and split, the mountains and rivers of the world, regardless of size, were all formed completely at the same time. It is not as if today one mountain was born, the next day another mountain was born, and that there is a sequence of days and months that can be recorded and called "birthdays." This absurdity does not need further discussion to be clarified. I do not understand on what basis his excellency Xu had it written on stone! Yet his collected works do not have this text. Could it be that someone else used his name? (SZ 7.82; GD 79.1700)

SHAMANS AND CHARLATANS

In the capital's wards, most people believe in shamanesses. There was a military man, Chen Wu. He was tired of his family's devotion to them and could not control it. One day he put a green pear inside his cheek and told his family that the boil was very painful. He did not eat but lay down the entire day. His wife was very worried and summoned a shamaness to cure him. The shamaness caused the god to descend, and it said that what ailed Wu was a god named Ding Boil. Because he had never respected this god, the god would not save him. The family members lined up and bowed, praying earnestly, and afterward the shamaness consented to help. Wu pretended to cry out with great urgency. He said to his family, "It would definitely be acceptable for you to get a divine master to come in and observe and save me." The shamaness entered, and Wu calmly spat out the green pear and displayed it. He seized the shamaness, slapped her face, and sent her out of the house. From then on, none of his

MOUNTAINS, IMAGES, AND CONFUCIANS

The relationship between the state, Chinese religion, and Confucians often took complex forms, and the Eastern Marchmount offers a prime example. The Confucian canon sharply circumscribed who might worship what. The Son of Heaven might worship universal deities, such as Heaven and Earth, feudal lords could provide offerings to mountains and rivers within their realm, commoners were left to express their devotion only to their ancestors. This neat hierarchy broke down, however, early in imperial Chinese history, as some Han emperors went on lavish pilgrimages to Mount Tai, thanking its deity for blessing their reigns with peace and prosperity. Monarchs in subsequent dynasties followed suit, and as the centuries wore on, the mountain became a widespread cult, with its temples found everywhere. Apologists cited the longevity of these practices and claimed that Mount Tai's beneficent qi extended throughout the empire. In 1291, the Mongol court formally included the Mount Tai cult within the state's Register of Sacrifices, to be worshiped in spring and fall by prefects and magistrates, and commoners turned to the deity to relieve them of drought and plague. In addition, the god was accorded imperial status, fully outfitted with seventy-odd bureaucratic offices to aid him in his celestial and terrestrial duties. During the Yuan and Ming dynasties, most scholar-officials accepted this state of affairs as a *fait accompli*, and some viewed this piety as an aid in governing the people.

Not so Lu Rong. In two inscriptions for public buildings in his native district, the public house (*gongguan*) and city-god temple, he denounced the Eastern Marchmount cult.¹ These construction projects involved the destruction of the temple's image and conversion of the temple to new uses. Many writers would have touched on the facts only briefly or not at all, but they

1 See "Taicang cheng chenghuang miao ji," SXW, 31.6a–7b, and "Kunshan xian gongguan ji," SXW, 31.9b–11a.

family revered them. I heard this from Zeng, from the Bureau of Honors, who talked and laughed about it. (SZ 7.87; GD 79.1705)

EXORCISMS AND MONSTERS

My colleague Liu Shiyong spoke of a girl from his county who became afflicted with an odd illness. In the middle of every night, there was something that

occupied major sections in both essays. Lu based his objections on Confucian grounds. First, the mountain was located in the north, and its cult worship then ought to stay in the north; it was illegitimate for devotion to spill south of the Huai and Yangzi Rivers. Second, the human representation of the god, attended by images of officials and bearing fulsome titles from the court, lacked any canonical basis. Third, temple images of hellish and heavenly afterlives played on the fear and greed of ignorant commoners. Although officials understood that matters were amiss, most acquiesced to accepted practices, and few had the fortitude to properly carry on in the spirit of the Hongwu emperor and curb the excesses of popular devotion. Other temples for nationwide cults, such as to five Tang dynasty generals who perished fighting against rebels, also drew Lu's opposition. The men had shown unquestioned loyalty, but only one figure had ties with the region. Consequently, Lu rearranged the images, putting the local man alone in the front chamber and consigning the other four to a building at the rear.²

Lu took an impeccably Confucian position, which remained, however, a minority view. The Eastern Marchmount cult continued to thrive in the Ming, and renovated temples in its honor received due commemoration from Lu's scholar-official colleagues. Sanction for this devotion indeed came from the throne itself, as Emperor Yingzong composed an inscription in 1447 for a rebuilt temple in Beijing.³ Virtually all records duly noted the presence of images and lodged no objections. Centuries later, a Kunshan local gazetteer noted that the public house celebrated by Lu Rong had become again an Eastern Marchmount temple.⁴

2 "Yu Zhu Taipu shu," SXW, 32.1a–2a.

3 For the text and a translation, see Schipper and Marsone, "Inscription pour la reconstruction."

4 *Kunxin liangxian xuxiu hezhi*, 3.19a.

would come and couple with her. As the days went on, she grew thinner and more emaciated, and none of the doctors could cure her.

They heard of a Daoist who could drive away perverse sprits, and they asked that he cure her. The Daoist requested two young boys, had them bathe and change clothes, and gave them each a sword. He then said a spell, spat water on them, and made them dance. As the dance was about to end, he scolded them and sent them off. The two boys hastened away and threw themselves in the river. For a long time, they did not come up, and everyone believed that things had taken a dangerous turn. After about half a day, the boys suddenly

burst forth from the water, carrying a big snakehead. The head had small horns and probably belonged to the kraken species.¹⁵

The two boys fell to the ground in a faint and revived only after a long time. That night the girl started to sleep peacefully, and her sickness did not recur. As for the Daoist, from then on, his reputation amazed the public. Later there were people who summoned him. In the end, he was ineffective. Some suspected that he had become licentious and polluted, and so ruined himself.

Krakens are evil things. Long ago Zhou Chu [236–297] and Xu Xun [trad. 239–374] decapitated krakens.¹⁶ I suspect that between heaven and earth there naturally are these sorts of divine techniques. If people can with the utmost sincerity move the gods, then divine beings will curse demons and defend people, and these techniques will take effect. Otherwise, krakens and dragons coil and stay at the bottom of deep pools. Even for people with upright qi and martial abilities, these places are not where one simply goes to farm.¹⁷ People would lose their lives if they go there, and most are destroyed by their maws and teeth. How can one hope to be able to come out holding the krakens' skeletons? (SZ 7.90)

FILIAL PIETY AND CULTS

There is a Five Sons temple in a village in Guangling [Jiangsu]. It is said that during the Five Dynasties era [907–960], many bandits made a sworn brotherhood. They roamed and looted in the Jiang-Huai area. Their clothing and food were plentiful. All regretted not nurturing their parents. Then they sought out a poor old woman to be their mother and served her with the utmost filial piety. In whatever they did, they only followed her orders. As a result, they changed and did good deeds. The local people regarded them as righteous. After she died, divine and strange events occurred. So they established a temple for her. In Wu those who worship the Wutong gods always include one they call the Great Mother. I suspect that it is precisely this demon.

Alas! People all excel at being bandits, but they also have filial feelings. Heavenly principle abides in the human heart. When has it ever completely disappeared? How much more so that she was not their real mother, but all followed her instructions and in the end became good people. Isn't there a great deal to be gained here? In this world, there are cases where the parents are still alive but children do not follow their instructions. For those rich and noble sorts who do not think of their parents, if they saw the Five Sons, how could they not be ashamed? (SZ 8.94; GD 80.1716)

NAMING GODS

The origins of the title celestial consort (*tianfei*), are very old. The ancients treated Heaven as thearch (*di*) and Earth as empress (*hou*) and regarded Water as consort (*fei*). That being so, celestial consort in general referred to water gods. During the Yuan, when grain transports traveled to the capital by sea, the deified daughter of the Lin family of Putian [Fujian] had divine powers over the rivers and seas, and people called her Celestial Consort.¹⁸ This is just like calling Zhang Daoling [fl. 142] of Qibo Celestial Master.¹⁹ It is a term of ultimate honor and reverence, and that is all.

Some say, "Water is of the yin category. Thus, for all water gods, people make statues of women."²⁰ Moreover, they use famous people as models, such as at the Xiang River temple [Hunan] using Shun's consort, and at the Gudui temple [Shanxi] using Yao's empress.²¹ I daresay that the common people do not know that the gods of mountains and rivers cannot be sought with physical likenesses, and so they mistakenly create them. (SZ 8.95)

BUDDHIST MONUMENTS

Longxing Buddhist Temple in Zhending was built by the Song emperor Taizu [r. 960–975] in the fourth year of the Kaibao reign [963]. The Buddha hall is extremely imposing and majestic. One day I excused myself from work and went up to look at the view. The hall was five stories high and had nine bays.²² We ascended by a staircase that encircled the structure. On the wall was an engraved stone signature of Cai Guibo.²³ The calligraphy was lovely. Inside the hall was a bronze cast image of Guanyin. Its head went to the very top.

A monk said, "The hall's height is thirteen *zhang* [about 145 feet]. The bronze image is seven *zhang*, five *chi* [about 84 feet]. Forty-two arms extend from it. The whole body is adorned with gold." He did not know how much it cost. Looking at it, one could not help but be moved and sigh. The day I climbed up was the fifteenth day of the intercalary second month of the *ding-you* year of the Chenghua reign [March 15, 1477].

Long ago, Emperor Zhou Shizong [r. 954–959], because the common people lacked coin, ordered that all bronze Buddhist images be destroyed. The metal was to be cast into coin to relieve the common people. Earlier Confucians deeply approved this measure, but the Song founder cast the metal back into images like this. We can know from this the understandings of these two monarchs. (GD 80.1718)

MOUNTAIN DANGERS

The father of Zhou Hongmou [1419–1490] was an assistant instructor in Changyang [Hubei]. He wrote *Explanations about Sprites and Fiends* (Yaomei shuo). He said that one of his pupils, He Zan, and his younger brother were drinking at a commoner's house. Zan returned home drunk and lost track of his brother. He searched for him in the mountains for several days and found him in a tree. He asked his brother how he got there. His brother said, "A man led me here. Now he saw that all of you came, and he hid away." He probably was a mountain demon.

Moreover, a pupil's father, Elder Zheng, went into the mountains to search for herbs. He encountered a tree with a large fungi specimen, which he took. He went on for several *li*, Someone chased and fought him, saying "How could you hurt my ear? You should give it back." Elder Zheng was a shaman. He had techniques for driving away demons. The person could not hurt him and left. Yet Zheng's spirit was shaken, and he lost his way home. Several days later, people searched for and found him. They asked Zheng to return. Zheng was stubborn and unwilling to do so. Then they seized him and brought him back. They made him drink herbal medicine, and then he revived. He told them the whole story, and it was like one long dream. In general it is said that in the deep mountains and secluded valleys, there are those who died in previous ages fleeing soldiers. So there are many hungry ghosts. Moreover, these are mixed in with tree, stone, bird, and animal goblins. People do not understand the rules and so there are cases of people travelling alone and coming to harm. I write this to show people. Anyone who goes into deep mountains should carry a sharp knife, and it is not right to go alone. (SZ 8.102; GD 80.1725–26)

VIRTUOUS WOMEN AND DEMONS

In Wu there are demons fond of lechery. In general, amorous girls are usually corrupted by them. Those girls who like being with them steal money, silk, and head ornaments to give to the demons.

A girl from a commoner family in Zhenyi in my Kun Prefecture [Jiangsu] was about to be corrupted. The girl said, "There's a girl from a certain family in Jingxi who has beautiful looks. Why do you not go there but instead come here?" The demon said, "That girl's mind is proper." The girl said angrily, "Isn't my mind proper?" The demon then left and did not come again. Thus we know there is something to the notion that the perverse will not violate the upright. (SZ 8.103)

A SPECTRAL ENCOUNTER

A man in the village, Zeng Mengyuan, once was walking at night. There was a river he had to cross. He encountered an old acquaintance, who said, "I will carry you across." Mengyuan happily followed his instructions. He got on his back and suddenly realized: "This man is already dead. How can he be here? It must be a ghost that wants to trick me." Then he firmly clung to its back. When they reached the bank, the one carrying him said, "You can get down now." Mengyuan clung even tighter, and suddenly it transformed into a board. He embraced it as he arrived at a commoner's home. He knocked on the door and asked for a torch to illuminate it. It was a charred coffin board. Then he split it and burned it. He regarded the incident as profoundly inauspicious and that his own fate would certainly be death. But in the end, he was without trouble. Later he died after living past seventy years of age. (SZ 8.105)

REINCARNATION

Yu Ji [1272–1348] wrote the epitaph for Zhu Zemin's [1294–1365] mother, the Lady of Suitability of Ji. It said:

In 1294, as the Lady of Suitability of Ji was about to give birth, her mother-in-law, Madame Shi, was very ill. She sighed, "This wife of ours behaves with the utmost filial piety. Heaven will soon bestow her with a fine son. I must survive to see him." Later, as her illness grew grave, she put her affairs in order. The grandfather of Zhu Zemin divined a flat area at Mount Yangbao [Jiangsu] and sent people to build a pit for her burial. Madame Shi said, "How strange! I dreamed of a great man in an official robe and cap who told me, 'Do not take away my home. I will be the madame's grandson.'"

Later the workers dug a spot five feet deep and found a stone there. Its seal said, "Grave of the governor, His Lord Lu Ji [188–219]." In addition, there was a carved stone to the side. It said, "When this stone rots, people will come and replace it." As it turned out, the stone had split. The grandfather ordered that the spot be immediately covered up and then divined another place. Madame Shi further dreamed that the great man in robe and cap came again and said, "I am moved by the madam's flourishing virtue. I truly will be able to become Madame Shi's grandson." Derun was born, and the grandfather gave him the courtesy name of Shunsun [Obedient Grandson]. Madame Shi died. People believed Derun had been brought forth by filial feelings.

Derun was Zemin's given name. Zemin served the Yuan dynasty. He was the eastern branch secretariat supervisor of Confucian schools and the great-

great-grandfather of today's Censor Zhu Wentian Zhao. As the inscription shows, Zemin is a descendant of his excellency Lu Ji.

I have seen reincarnation stories of previous ages and still did not believe them. Now I see this text and understand that one cannot say that wondrous events do not happen in this world. I scribble this to provide for conversation and laughs. (SZ 9.112–13; GD 81.1738–39)

AN UNWORTHY CULT FIGURE

Xie Yingfang, courtesy name Zilan [1295–1392] of Piling [Jiangsu], proposed that the Three Eminences Shrine should not enshrine Fan Li. He said, “Zhang Han [early fourth century] and Lu Guimeng [?–881] came from Wu [Jiangsu]. The people of Wu see Fan as their eastern neighbor and that is all.”²⁴

Fan Li from beginning to end served Yue [Zhejiang]. Occasionally in his travels he stayed in Wu. His mind never for a single day forgot Yue. He presented beautiful women and offered precious things to confuse the Wu lord and ministers. Yue took advantage of its opportunity, sent forth its troops, and destroyed the state of Wu and its ancestral shrine. For the most part, it was all Fan Li's plot. When the Yue people discussed great accomplishments, Fan Li is at the top. How could he not be a great enemy of Wu?

Yet as he finished his accomplishments and his reputation followed, he hid his tracks and left.²⁵ His understanding and vision were inherently loftier than those of normal people. That being so, he floated on the seas, his cargo bound and packed, carrying pearls and jade. In Qi [Shandong], his business amassed thousands of cash. In Qi he resided in Tao [Shandong]. Father and son plowed and raised livestock, traded goods and pursued profit, and further accumulated untold amounts of wealth.

The Grand Historian did not write about these matters at all.²⁶ I daresay he deeply despised Fan Li and did not regard him as a good person. If we compare him to how Zhang Liang left the Han and, untrammelled, followed Master Red-pine (Chisongzi) in his roaming, there are many differences.²⁷ Du Mu [803–852] and Su Shi [1037–1101] both said that Fan Li had intimate relations with Xishi and compared those with the relations between the Lord of Shen and Consort Xia.²⁸

Looking at the matter from this perspective, I say that this person, Fan Li, acted in greedy and licentious ways but did not regard his conduct as excessive. So how is such conduct worthy of admiration? At present, we use the fragrant grain from the people of Wu to feast a greedy, immoral foe from an enemy state. What sense is there in that? *The [Book of] Rites* says, “The people do not sacrifice to those not of their clan.”²⁹ How much more so for one's enemies?

Wu has three eminences. People simply have not thought about them, and that is all. As for Taibo, Zhongyong, and Yanling Jizi, the whole world truly regards them as eminent.³⁰ All were Wu natives. If there are no buildings, there would be no thoughts of towering virtue.³¹ It is fitting to honor sages of absolute virtue, who refused the throne three times and enshrine them in the hall. They should be accompanied by two worthies, Jiyong and Luwang, who would receive supplementary sacrifices. If it were so, then it would correct the absurd perversities of earlier people and renew the eyes and ears of contemporaries. It would stimulate noble customs and cause people to revere ritual propriety and deference. How could this reform be only a small boost, to stir the miserable customs of a declining age and urge people toward moral transformation?

If one says that Fan Li had achievements and so desires to offer sacrifices to his spirit, then it is appropriate that the people of Yue offer it sacrifices. (SZ 9.113–14)

DREAMS, POEMS, AND OMENS

Before I passed the *jinshi* examinations, I had never written verse in the *ci* style.³² In the *jimao* year of the Tianshun reign [1459], when I went to the metropolitan examinations, I dreamed of arriving at a Buddhist temple. An old monk took out a book and asked for a text. I made a song lyric and gave it to him. When I awoke, I still remembered half of it. It went:

A single white cloud— no one can keep it from leaving.
 A single lake and mountain—no one can move them away.
 Kingfisher bamboos recite the wind.
 Dark green pines gather the rain.
 This is a place to delight one's feelings.

When I returned after failing the test, I studied in Haining Temple. The monk Wengong took out *The Book on the White Cloud Lair Fascicle* and asked for a text. It was like the dream.

At the metropolitan examinations in the *guiwei* year [1463], I dreamed that someone gave me a poem that said:

A single punting pole, and the spring waters become all muddied.
 I enter and point, not seeing the marks of the waves and billows.
 A thunderclap opens heaven's gates for me.

When the time came, the examination site had a fire. In fact, the diviner's household had the name "Lightning Fires." Moreover, "completely muddy" and "without a mark" were like the omen.³³

In the *guisi* year [1473], when I first entered office, I dreamed of visiting Grand Secretary Li. I wrote on his wall:

The sun's reflection in the green mountain's rain,
 Patterned heavens in the cyan sea's rosy clouds.
 The subject speaks and the fine lord listens,
 Riding his horse, he returns home at night.

In the *wuxu* year [1478], when I was at the Bureau of Provisions, I dreamed I made a short *ci* poem, which read:

The wind slices, the flowers and branches topple over.
 One sound of the bell cord startles the sleeping dog.
 The one I wish to see does not come.
 The bright moonlight in the half window, and the jeweled curtain
 is rolled up.

In the *yisi* year [1485], when I was in mourning for my parent, I dreamed I wrote a poem, which read:

In the sea I planted coral,
 In my lofty intentions, they were like children.
 For ten years I failed to collect them,
 on one sprig there suddenly are several.

I cannot explain what any of them mean. (SZ 10.118)

OFFICIALS AND THEIR GODS

To represent the earth god of the Zhejiang Provincial Administration Commission, they made a black-faced demonic figure. The sign read, "Black-faced functionary, the god King Kimnara."³⁴ I spoke about this to the provincial administration commissioner, his excellency Xu, and wanted to get rid of it. Xu said, "There are more urgent matters than this." Then I knew that those who get a reputation in this world for keeping things tranquil mostly do their job and do not take matters in hand and change them.

I remember the Nanjing Ministry of Personnel earth god shrine. On the days of the first and full moons of each month, ministry officials, together with agency dependents, would kneel and bow there in ritual fashion. The god's image and that of his wife sat together, and images of his attending guards were arrayed to the left and right. When I first took office, I saw and despised it. At the time, his excellency Zhang Lun [1413–1483] of Leqing [County] was the vice-minister of the right. I spoke to his excellency about getting rid of the image and replacing it with a wooden tablet. He did not permit it. A while later, his excellency moved to serve in the Ministry of Rites, and it happened that I was provisionally put in charge of matters. Then I sunk the clay images in a well and burned all the pennants and banners. I wrote in big characters on a wooden tablet, "Earth God of the Nanjing Ministry of Personnel." People all approved of it. (GD 82.1755)

A SCRIPTURE AND ITS STORY

My family has the volume *The Book of Transformations* (Hua shu). It says that it was written by Song Qiqiu [887–959]. The academician Song Lian [1310–1381] in his *Discussions of the Masters* (Zhuzi bian) says, "Master Qiqiu, six chapters. One name is *The Book of Transformations*. For generations people have said that it was written by Master Song Qiqiu, given name Song, of the pretender Tang dynasty [Later Tang, 923–937].³⁵ This is wrong. The author was the recluse Tan Qiao, courtesy name Jingsheng, of Mount Zhongnan [Shaanxi]. Qiqiu stole the authorship."

Later I read the book. There was this passage: "Jingsheng traveled to Mount Mao [Jiangsu], and his route passed through Jinling [another name for Nanjing]. He met Song Qiqiu, took out *The Book of Transformations*, and gave it to him. He said, 'The transformations in this book are endless. I hope that you can write a preface and transmit it to later generations.' Qiqiu toasted Jingsheng with wine and got him very drunk. He put Jingsheng inside a leather sack and sewed it up. Then he threw him in a deep pool. He stole the book and took it as his own, writing a preface and transmitting it to the world.

"Later there was a recluse fishing at the pool. He got the leather sack, split it, and looked at it. There was a man sleeping and snoring inside. The fisherman yelled, and only then did Jingsheng wake up. The fisherman asked him his name, and he said, 'I am Tan Jingsheng. Song Qiqiu stole my *Book of Transformations* and sunk me in the pool. Does *The Book of Transformations* circulate today?' The fisherman answered, '*The Book of Transformations* has circulated for a long time.' Jingsheng said, 'If *The Book of Transformations* circulates, I will

not go back into the world. I sleep in this sack and can get a lot of rest. May I trouble milord to resew the sack and throw me back into this pool? This is indeed my wish.' The fisherman did as he said and sank him again. Qiqiu later became grand councilor in the Southern Tang dynasty and met with an untimely death. How fitting!"

This record of Qiqiu stealing the book is very detailed but seems to border on the ridiculous. *The Book of Transformations* is also in the Daoist canon. It says that the Perfected One Tan Jingsheng wrote it.³⁶ If there truly was the affair of being sunk in the pool, Jingsheng would then be what they call a perfected one.³⁷ (SZ 11.130–31)

A FILIAL DAUGHTER AND HER HONORS

The Song court revered and believed in Daoist teachings. Most of the palaces, abbeys, temples, and cloisters of the time had plaques bestowed by the court. Most ghosts and spirits were enfeoffed with honors and titles.

For example, at Shangyu [Zhejiang], the authorities erected a temple for Cao E [130–143].³⁸ The declaration said, "It began in the Han era." It was indeed enough to show people the story and urge them to be filial. In the eighth month of fourth year of the Song Daguan reign [1110], the court enfeoffed her as Madame of Numinous Filial Piety. In the eleventh month of the fifth year of the Zhenghe reign [1115], the court enfeoffed her as Madame of Numinous Filial Piety and Brilliant Docility. In the sixth month of the sixth year of the Chunyou reign [1246], the court enfeoffed her as Madame of Numinous Filial Piety, Brilliant Docility, and Pure Beauty. The court further enfeoffed E's father as Marquis of Harmonious Response and her mother as Madame of Felicitous Goodness. Each one has an enfeoffment edict that still survives.

I have said that the Secretariat officials then spent half of their time dealing with spirits and ghosts. The ministers who wrote the edicts were especially careless. For example, the Han stele said that E's father Xu could on seasonal occasions sing and dance for the *posuo* music god. *Posuo* means "the appearance of dancing." The edict that enfeoffs him as Marquis of Harmonious Response says, "He welcomed the dancing spirit in this fashion until he drowned." Isn't it pathetic?

Upon the present dynasty's order, the authorities at the prescribed times in spring and autumn give offerings to the spirit tablet, which says, "Spirit of the Han Filial Daughter Cao E." They eliminated the enfeoffed honors of previous dynasties. The name is proper, and the language is appropriate. It truly can be said to be the model for all time.

Yet as for E's filial piety, how could it rely on honors and titles to be manifested? At present the river, garrison, lodge, post station, salt yard, weir, dike, express courier station, and so forth all take Cao E for their name. One may say her name will last for a myriad of ages and never be extinguished! (SZ 11.134)

A BUDDHIST LANDMARK AND ITS VISITORS

Mount Pudanluojia [Mount Putuo], sometimes known as Butuoluojia, lies in the sea in Dinghai County in Ningbo Superior Prefecture [Zhejiang]. It is over 200 *li* from the county seat. It has been passed down through ages that the Great One Guanyin lives here.³⁹ Many foolish people make vows to cross the sea and worship her image. If they happen to see a bird or animal en route, they construe it as a responsive incarnation of the Great One. The Yuyao County gazetteer records that Jia Sidao [1213–1275] once went to this mountain.⁴⁰ He met an old monk, who divined his physiognomy, said that Jia would certainly rise to a high position, and then left. Jia tried to find him again but was unable to do so. He too took the matter as verification of the Great One's responsiveness.

I say that deceitful and perverse types since ancient times take what is not theirs and always pass it off as the assistance of ghosts and spirits, so as to confuse the eyes and ears of the people. Sidao himself knew that he rose to high position owing to chance and feared that others would criticize him. So he made up this story for the deaf and blind, the foolish and vulgar, and that is all. Otherwise, good fortune comes to the good and ill fortune comes to the evil; it is the constant way of the gods. If Guanyin did not choose right and wrong, and respond correctly as she received a request, how could she be a proper god? (SZ 12.147)

GRAVE RITES

The ancients said that offerings at the grave did not accord with ritual propriety. Thus the rituals did not include grave offering rites. Yet Master Zhu Xi said that they do not harm the dictates of righteousness. In general, it is because filial sons are moved at the unexpected changes in affairs over time, and their minds cannot bear the sudden death of their parents. They cannot do otherwise. This explanation is correct.

Yet there is more that can be said about this. For the written spirit tablets after burial, they say that the parent's spiritual cloud-soul (*hun*) is attached to

the tablet.⁴¹ So all offerings are to honor and draw close to this ancestor. Yet the wood of the tablet has nothing to do with our parent's spiritual cloud-souls. It is only because the ritual system put it there, and people's hearts were attached there. The parent's corporeal white-soul (*po*) is where the spiritual cloud-soul always resided. How does one know that, after casting off the white-soul body, the cloud-soul does not still abide there? In fact, the white-soul has a fixed place, but the cloud-soul is everywhere. In the offerings of the ancients, they sought it sometimes in the yang, sometimes in the yin, sometimes sought it among the yang and yin, and did not dare to be certain.

Thus, as for those who consider gravesite offerings as ritually improper and do not practice them, they are mired in ancient ways and forget their parents. There is no harm in practicing them. (SZ 12.151)

A GOD'S EXTINCTION

Wang Mian was a native of Shaoxing [Zhejiang]. At the start of the dynasty, he was a famous gentleman. His residence was very close to a god's temple. His hearth lacked firewood, and so he hacked up the god's image and used the wood to make fires. A neighboring family served the god with thoughtful care. When they encountered Wang destroying the god's image, they always chopped more wood and repaired it. This happened three or four times.

Later Wang's household for years was without trouble. In the household that did the repairs, the wife had constant problems with her pregnancies. One day they invited a shaman to summon the god. They questioned the god, "Wang repeatedly destroyed the god, and the god did not punish him. I have always rebuilt the image for you. Why does the god not protect me?" The shaman was distressed and had nothing to reply. Then he said angrily, "If you did not install the image, how then could he burn it?" Subsequently, this man did not repair the image again, and the temple was gradually abandoned. People today still treat it as a funny story. (SZ 12.153-54)

DEFACED LANDSCAPES

In the hills near West Lake [Hangzhou], such as Feilai Peak, Shiwusi, Yanxia Grotto and others, there are hidden cliffs and caves everywhere that one can cherish. But at each one there are carved Buddhist images. They break the mountain's face and make people resentful. At Feilai Peak there are scattered sculptures outside the cave. At Shiwusi, they are carved inside the cave. Between the large and small ones, they amount to over five hundred. At Yanxia

Grotto, the sculptures are especially numerous. In general, all were made by people during the Wuyue [907–978] and Song [960–1279] dynasties. My “Poem at Yanxia Grotto” has the line:

Carved Buddhas abound in excess,
pure customs are destroyed.

They truly make one resentful, and that is all. (SZ 13.157)

Knowledge, Technology, and the Natural World

WATER CREATURES, NAMES, AND INJUSTICES

At the dynasty's beginning, the Yangzi River's banks crumbled easily. Local people said that they were that way because there were water animals, [alligators] called *zhupolong*, digging away below them.¹ When the court asked about the reason for the erosion, the people avoided saying the truth, because *zhu* and the imperial family's surname [Zhu] were homophones. So they blamed the problem on great sea turtles (*yuan*). Because *yuan* is the same sound as the Yuan [dynasty], the emperor further detested them. Then the court sent down an order to catch great sea turtles. Great sea turtles from the Yangzi, regardless of size, were hunted and captured until they were almost extinct.

There was an old sea turtle that evaded capture, not rising to the sandy shallow areas. The people used roasted pork to hook it. The strength of many people pulling on the line could not bring it up. An old fisherman said, "It's probably only that its four feet are in the mud and gravel. We should take a big urn and pierce its bottom, then thread the fishing line down through. The urn will cover the turtle's head, and it certainly will use its front feet to resist. Then if we combine our strength and pull on it, that will be enough to make it float and rise." They did as he said, and it turned out to be so. It was said that the *zhupolong* had four feet and a long tail. It had scales, and they suspected it was an alligator (*tuo*) but were not sure.²

I have heard that giant sea turtles eat people. This indeed is detestable. Yet digging away at the river bank is not such a crime. Because of the Hongwu emperor's intelligence and divine wisdom, as soon as people's explanations yielded to the force of circumstances and compromised, calamity came to

innocent creatures like this. At the time when criminal cases abounded because of factions, there was no end of people who died because others yielded to the force of circumstances and compromised!³ (SZ 3.32)

STUDENT HEALTH

For literati, studying books and composing essays takes a lot of effort, and it is appropriate to limit one's desires. In general, if one taxes his mind but does not limit his desires, then his fire properties will be stirred.⁴ If the fire properties are stirred, then the kidney water will grow more depleted each day. If the water is depleted and the fire rages, then the metal of the lungs will be harmed. As the condition develops, the person will be subject to fatigue and illness. I have heard that the theory comes from the book *How a Confucian Scholar Serves His Parents* (Rumen shiqin), but I have not yet seen this book.⁵ When people sit for a long time immersed in books, their blood and qi become sluggish, and they lose the ability to produce children. I heard this from Doctor Sun from Jinchi [Yunnan]. (GD 73.1601)

PRENATAL PRECAUTIONS

When women realize that they are pregnant, men ought not to come into contact with them. If men do not avoid them, there often are miscarriages. In general, when women and men meet, their desires move and feelings take over, and there certainly will be flowing and leaking. In addition, the womb is not sealed, and of course it results often in miscarriages.

After cattle and horses are with fetus, should the males approach them, the females will kick them away. We call this "protecting the fetus." That is why they have no miscarriages. Yet people have many desires and do not avoid each other, and so often they have miscarriages. Neither the discussions of *The Birth Treasury* (Chanbao lun) nor books on gynecology have this explanation.⁶ This explanation could be said to elaborate on concepts that people earlier did not develop. I heard it from Director Dai Jingyuan [1464 *jinshi*] of the Evaluations Bureau. I daresay there must be a basis for this. (GD 74.1620-21)

ANNALS OF PREGNANCY, 1

The ancients believed that when they were ill, abstaining from medicine was the appropriate treatment. In general, they said that if one took medicine and it was the wrong one, then death would come quickly. If one did not take

PREGNANCY AND SEX, ACCORDING TO SUN YIKUI
(1522–1619)

As Lu Rong suggests, the growing literature on gynecology and obstetrics in the Song and Ming dynasties did not make his point. However, a famous doctor and medical theorist in the late Ming, Sun Yikui, read *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden* and agreed with Lu. In the two passages below, Sun cites Lu and elaborates this view:

One should warn all women, after they become pregnant. If they are not prudent with sex, and their desires are moved and their womb reopens, how can it not lead to miscarriages in most cases? If they give birth to a child, then most have early deaths due to sores and toxic swellings. Why? It is that licentious fires have burned the fetus.

As for species such as horses and oxen, after [the females] are pregnant, if the males approach them, the females always kick them and prevent them from getting close. It is called “protecting the fetus.” How can they have miscarriages? It only that people are lustful and so usually do not know how to protect it. The *Birth Treasury* discussions and books on gynecology lack this item. So I use what *Miscellaneous Records from the Bean Garden* records to add to the matter like this.¹

As for miscarriages today, if they do not derive from the inadequacies of the Highway channel and the Conception channel,² then they inevitably are

1 Sun, *Yizhi xuyi*, xia 13b–14a.

2 Channels (also known as “conduit vessels”), or *mo*, refer to pulses or flows of energy in the body. The three channels named here were thought to be central in the reproductive process. See Unschuld, *Medicine*, 75–77; and Furth, *Flourishing Yin*, 28, 42–44.

medicine, death would come slower. If one happened to find an enlightened person to cure their ailment, one could in some situations take medicine, and that was all. Using what I have heard and seen to test this notion, the idea that it is an appropriate treatment has its basis.

The household of Magistrate Zhou Jingxing from Kunshan [Jiangsu] had a woman who suffered from a painful lump in her belly. An obstetrics specialist diagnosed her and believed that she had excessively accumulated qi. He prepared a dose of medicine to make her qi flow and break up the accumulated

caused by licentious fire. As soon as the fires are moved, then they shake the Superintendent channel. The uterus's door consequently is open, and the fetus drops from it. The fetus's drop inevitably leaves the waist in pain. The Waist Flesh and the Vital Gate are passed through by the Superintendent channel.³ It is because the fetus is also attached to the Vital Gate.

If we observe the protection of the fetus by female animals, we can make inferences from their prudence. The association of male and female animals has its due restraint. After the females are pregnant, should the males approach them, the females will kick and keep them at a distance. Thus meetings inevitably result in pregnancies, and pregnancies inevitably result in births. So their association has its due restraint.

If one is pregnant but does not put lust aside, then one will be fortunate to not miscarry. If one does give birth to a child, it inevitably will be weak and have many illnesses. Smallpox cases also abound. These dangers are all brought on by the intense heat of licentious fires.⁴

3 The Vital Gate (also known as "Gate of Life"), or Mingmen, was a complex concept, linked with reproduction and the kidneys. See Unschuld, *Medicine*, 200–202; and Furth, *Flourishing Yin*, 29, 53. The Waist Flesh is also an acupoint, commonly located at the base of the coccyx. For a visual representation of the Superintendent channel and its components, see Furth, *Flourishing Yin*, 42.

4 Sun, *Chishui yuanzhu*, 2.1.32b.

qi. He also ordered soup and cakes to pierce and strike it. It was ineffective. They learned of a shaman who had great prowess in bringing down the spirits to help people, and they went to consult him. He said, "This is fetus qi. Do not use medicine." They believed him, and later it turned out that she gave birth to a boy.

The wife of Han Wenliang, secretary of the Nanjing Ministry of Revenue, fell ill, and her belly was in pain. They pressed on her belly, and it was as if there was something around her navel. At the time a famous doctor from Zhezong came to the southern capital. They asked him to look and diagnose her. He said it was obstruction of the bowels. She took a dose of a bur reed and zedoary herbal medicine compound.⁷ After ten days, her feelings grew more intense, and, because the treatment was ineffective, they stopped. Later, after several months, she gave birth to two boys.

In all these cases human life was involved. One must be careful! (sz 4.37–38)

ANNALS OF PREGNANCY, 2

The wife of Section Head Tu in the Autumn Office had no children but was jealous. She feared that her husband would buy a concubine.⁸ She often would pretend to be pregnant in order to prevent it. One year she actually was pregnant. She carried the pregnancy to term and gave birth. It was a fetus made of forty-seven bird eggs. They broke them and inside there was only blood and water.

The daughter of Director of State Affairs Xiang had no husband but was pregnant. Her relatives feared the unsightliness of her appearance and had her drink cold herbs to destroy the fetus, but in the end it did not work. When she came to term and gave birth, the placenta contained several snakes, and she died of fright. None knew what had afflicted her. (SZ 6.72–73)

THE SPREAD OF CABBAGE

People in the northern regions sow *song* cabbage. In the first year of sowing, half become rape-turnips, and in the second year the cabbage seeds are all gone. In the southern regions, they also sow rape-turnip. In general, cabbage varieties do not grow in northern soil. It is akin to the change with tangerines north of the Huai River. This view is found in Suzhou gazetteers. Note: *song* cabbage is white cabbage.⁹ Today at the end of every autumn in the capital, the households pickle and store it in preparation for winter. What they call “arrow stalks” are as good as what Suzhou produces.

I heard this from older people: During the Yongle era [1403–1424], when they sowed southern flowers, trees, and vegetables, no sprouts would come. What did sprout never grew well. In recent years, they have all the southern vegetables, and they are not going back to the old ways. “Tangerines do not cross the Huai River; racoons do not cross the Wen River [Shandong]; crested mynahs do not cross the Ji River [Shandong].” These are established views.

Today *song* cabbage from the Suzhou area thrives in Yan [Hebei] and does not change to become rape-turnip. Was there a vegetable growing method that people in the past did not know but that people today know? Or is it climate change, with things adapting to it and then thriving? In the future, won’t tangerines and pomelos be alongside them? (SZ 6.77–78)

WONDEROUS BIRTHS

As recorded in the histories, Xiuji’s back split, and she gave birth to Yü.¹⁰ Jiandi’s chest split, and she gave birth to Qi.¹¹ Mr. Luzhong married the

daughter of Guifang. He opened her left and right flanks and she gave birth to six people, Kunwu and the others.¹² The Buddhists say that in the case of Shakyamuni's birth, he emerged from his mother's right flank. The Daoists say that in the case of Laozi's birth, he dropped from his mother's armpit. Previous Confucians regarded these stories as ridiculous.

In the fifth year of the Huangchu reign of the Wei dynasty [225], the wife of Qu Yong from Runan [Henan], Madame Wang, gave birth to a son. He came from below her right armpit and above her navel. During the Song, the wife of a Putian [Fujian] native, who resided at the left side of the commandant's quarters, gave birth to a son. It came from between her hip and buttocks. The wound closed, and mother and son were without harm. In both cases there is more evidence than before, but I dare not believe them entirely. Recently I have seen that Fengyang [Anhui] Regional Inspector Zhou Fan memorialized that a commoner household in Lingbi County [Anhui] gave birth to a son. They split open the area below the mother's navel, and he came out. Later the split area healed. The authorities examined the case and made it known to the court.

According to this, then the births of the two sons in Runan and Putian also ought not to be fabrications. In my foolish opinion, when the wound broke out, it broke only the abdomen. Before the child is born, the child is kept in the womb. It is not in some open space outside the viscera. Today, if the abdomen breaks, would not the womb split as well? If the womb broke, then the woman would die, and there would be no birth. Yet she was fine, and I cannot understand why. What cannot be completely investigated and explained with heavenly principle is simply bizarre.¹³ If it can be comprehensively explained with heavenly principle, then it is not bizarre. If I do not speak of bizarre things, it is not that bizarre things do not exist. It is that I cannot completely investigate them, and so do not speak of them, and that is all. (SZ 8.98–99; GD 80.1721–22)

ABSTINENCE AND LONGEVITY

General Wei was over seventy. He wore his armor and went to the palace. While accompanying the imperial palanquin on its rounds exiting and entering the palace, he was the equal of younger men. Someone asked about his life. He said that when he was forty-five, he had already cut off his desire for sex.

The monk Zhou was a native of Luling. He traveled around the capital. He was over ninety, he was able to walk for long distances, and his hair did not turn white. I asked him about his techniques for self-cultivation. He said that there were no special techniques. Since he had become a man, he could restrain his desires and that was all. He also said, "When men's sperm is passed to

women, it can give birth to people. If it can be retained and preserved, how can one not use it to nurture oneself?"

The Taicang painter Zhang Hui [fl. 1478] was over ninety. His sight and hearing were acute, and he could still paint. I asked him how he cultivated himself to be so. He said that his desiring mind had been very mild for his whole life, and that in matters of desire he could restrain himself. Some people only rely on these guidelines, without any special techniques. (SZ 9.113)

QUESTIONS ON THE CLASSICS

I have read the poem "In the Wilds There Is a Dead Antelope" from the "South of Shao" chapter in *The Book of Songs*.¹⁴ Because it is a lewd sort of poem, I have been dubious about its authenticity. But due to Zhu Xi's [1130–1200] commentary, I dare not let groundless, dissenting views arise. Recently I saw Wang Bo's [1197–1274] "Paired Pictures of the 'Two Souths.'" Only then did I understand how the ancients could "similarly approve what is in our hearts."¹⁵ My suspicions of many years were all removed by him. In fact, Wang Bo treated the two "South" chapters as each having eleven poems. [The "South of Zhou" chapter has eleven poems, and the "South of Shao" chapter has fourteen poems. Wang removed the offending three works from the second group to make eleven pairs.] The "South of Shao" poem "Sweet Pear Tree" appeared because people later missed Lord Shao and so composed it. "Gorgeous in Their Beauty" was made because of the corruption of the kingly way. "In the Wilds There Is a Dead Antelope" is a lewd poem. None of them is worthy of being in *The Book of Songs*.

His general meaning was, how could all of the 305 poems in *The Book of Songs* today have been edited by the hand of Confucius? What he removed perhaps still remained in the mouths of glib, insincere village folk, and Handynasty Confucians just used the poems to fill in the gaps in the collection. Then they matched the poems with pictures. This opinion indeed is best. If Wang Bo had lived in Zhu Xi's time, he could have discussed it with him, and Zhu Xi would not have been able to say such things about "Sweet Pear Tree" and "Gorgeous in Their Beauty." My understanding cannot grasp these two poems. (SZ 10.119; GD 82.1750)

BOOKS: THEIR AVAILABILITY AND USES

The books of the ancients were not printed. All were hand-copied records. I have heard that the printing of the Five Classics began with Feng Dao [881–954]. Today many scholars have received his blessing. At the beginning of the

THE BOOK OF SONGS, THE OFFENDING POEM, AND THE
VIEWS OF ZHU XI (1130–1200) AND WANG BO
(1197–1274)

The Book of Songs lay at the heart of the learned tradition. Composed of 305 poems and reputedly compiled by Confucius, the *Songs* contained works probably dating from about 1000 to 600 BCE. The book was part of the Five Classics, and its verses were read, chanted, memorized, and cited probably more than any other canonical text. Confucius himself, in a memorable passage, outlined its many vital functions: “[*The Book of*] *Songs* can be used to stimulate [moral insight], to observe [character], to reaffirm one’s commitment to the group, or to express resentment. Close at hand one can serve his father and farther away his lord, and you can increase your acquaintance with the names of birds, beasts, plants, and trees.”¹ Crucially, scholar-officials insisted on their moral content and purpose. They possessed transformative powers. As a modern scholar elaborates, “The poems of *The Book of Songs* were meant to give paradigmatic expression to human feeling; and those who learned and recited [it] would naturally internalize correct values.”² In this respect, *The Book of Songs* constituted an indispensable foundation stone in orthodox Chinese civilization.

The Book of Songs fulfilled this function only if people interpreted its verses correctly. As with the Bible, achieving this consensus potentially could prove difficult. First, the songs’ language was already centuries old before the first commentators began to explain them in a comprehensive fashion. In the second century, the scholar Zheng Xuan (127–200) wrote a detailed, learned, often allegorical exegesis that became orthodoxy for nearly a millennium. Eleventh- and twelfth-century Confucians, however, took strong issue with Zheng’s approach, finding its allegories strained and preferring more literal interpretations. Second, the songs came from pre-Confucian societies. In some cases, their sentiments reflect worlds where lords and subjects, and men and women “knew their place” and observed normative hierarchies. In other cases, they seemed to flout Confucian norms, such as with the “lewd poems”;

1 Adopting the translation of *Analects* 17.9 used in Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 44–45.

2 Owen, *Readings*, 39.

(continued)

their presence in this canonical work troubled some (but not all) readers. Below are the offending song and two of the best-known responses:

“IN THE WILDS THERE IS A DEAD ANTELOPE”

In the wild there is a dead antelope,
And it is wrapped up with the white grass.
There is a young lady with thoughts natural to spring,
And a fine gentleman would lead her astray.

In the forest there are the scrubby oaks,
In the wild there is a dead deer,
And it is bound round with the white grass;
There is a young lady like a gem.

[She says] Slowly; gently, gently;
Do not move my handkerchief;
Do not make my dog bark.³

ZHU XI

Someone asked, “What about lewd poems?” I said, “Lewd poems were originally depraved. Yet if we turn it around, they are not depraved.” So someone said, “The good examples can move people’s good hearts; the bad examples can warn people against their unrestrained ambitions.”⁴

WANG BO

I say that in ancient times the various Confucians excessively honored *The Minor Prefaces* [Han-dynasty commentaries on *The Book of Songs*]. The prefaces dared not to view them as lewd poems. They drew farfetched analogies and made distorted explanations. They sought to put the poems in accord with the prefaces. How dare one get rid of them?

In fact, the prefaces to these thirty-odd poems mostly say, “They criticize the times.” Or they say, “They criticize disorder.” . . . They never point to them

3 Legge, *She King*, 34.

4 Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, 23:542–43.

as lewd poems and rectify matters by labeling them. It is because if it said, “Debauched Poems,” then they should be discarded. Since Master Zhu Xi belittled *The Minor Prefaces* and began to search for the meaning of the poems, he pointed to them directly and said, “These are lewd poems.”

I have repeatedly investigated and recited them. I believe that Zhu’s opinion is correct and irrefutable. If we regulate matters according to the sagely model, then we should discard them without question. One says, “That being so, why then did Master Zhu Xi not get rid of them?” . . . At present, later scholars, having heard Master Zhu Xi’s words, truly understand that *The Minor Prefaces* are absurd. They truly understand that these poems are lewd but still want to read them. Where is the sense in that?⁵

5 Wang Bo, *Shiyi*, 1.17a–b.

dynasty, only the Directorate of Education had printed works, and I suspect that commanderies and counties outside the capital did not have them. One knows this by looking at Song Lian’s [1310–1381] “Preface Sending Off Student Ma of Dongyang.” During the Xuande [1426–1435] and Zhengtong [1436–1449] reigns, printed books were still not very widespread. Printed books today increase by the day and month. The world’s ancient prose increasingly is in much better shape than in the past.

But the work of today’s gentlemen is very ornamental and elegant. Few can print and revise the great ancient books to help scholars of later generations. The printed books are all ancient and contemporary poetry and literary collections. Their contents are worthless and detestable. *Graded Collection of Tang Poems* (Tangshi pinhui), *The Poetry Mountain of Myriad Treasures* (Wanbao shishan), *Assembled Compilation of Elegant Tones* (Yayin huibian), and *Essence of the Regulated Verse from the Isle of the Immortals and the Constellations* (Yingkui lüsui) are just such examples. Moreover, high officials usually use these books to bestow as gifts in their visits back and forth. They usually print up to a hundred volumes, and the official expenses indeed are very high. In remote prefectures and minor counties, many poor scholars who want to read cannot get a single look.

I like how the Yuan dynasty ordered that books had to first pass through the examination of the Department of State Affairs and have their mistakes criticized. The matter then would be sent down to the authorities, and only then did publishers dare to carve the blocks and print the books. I think that

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF BEING A YOUNG STUDENT,
BY SONG LIAN (1310–1381)

When I was young, I already loved studying. My family was poor and had no means to provide me with books to read. Each one was borrowed from households of book collectors. I would copy it by hand and count the days and return it. If the weather was very cold, my inkstone would freeze and harden, my fingers could not stretch out, and I did not slack off. When I had finished copying, I would hasten to send the book back and did not dare to miss the deadline even by a little bit. Therefore many people lent books to me, and so I was able to read many books.¹

1 “Song Dongyang Ma sheng xu,” in Luo, *Song Lian quanji*, 1679.

then no one simply printed on their own authority, and that this method is very good. To correct today’s problems, it is necessary to do things like this, but no one discusses it. It is probably because it would border on stinginess. (SZ 10.128–29; GD 82.1761)

IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGY

The irrigation method in the Yanzhou Mountains [Zhejiang] uses water-wheels.¹⁶ In their system, they measure more or less the number of *chi* between the water’s surface and the top of the bank in order to make a wheel. For the wheel’s spokes, they use small tree trunks. At each spoke where the rack protrudes, they attach bamboo cylinders. They tie them only lightly around the middle and let the two ends be free, able to “look” up and down. They place the axle in the middle of the bank [between the water surface and the bank’s top] and thread the wheel on it. Atop the bank near the wheel, they place wooden troughs to catch the water. If the creek’s water is spread out and the current runs slow, they use stones to channel the water toward the wheel’s bottom and make it run swiftly. If the water is swift, then the wheel turns as if it were flying. Each time the cylinders catch the water, then the bottom is heavy, and the tube’s opening looks up. When the cycle reaches the top, then the tube’s opening looks down. The water rushes into the wooden trough and spreads to flow into the paddies. It does not tax the people’s strength, and the water is sufficient. In sum, it is a beneficial instrument.

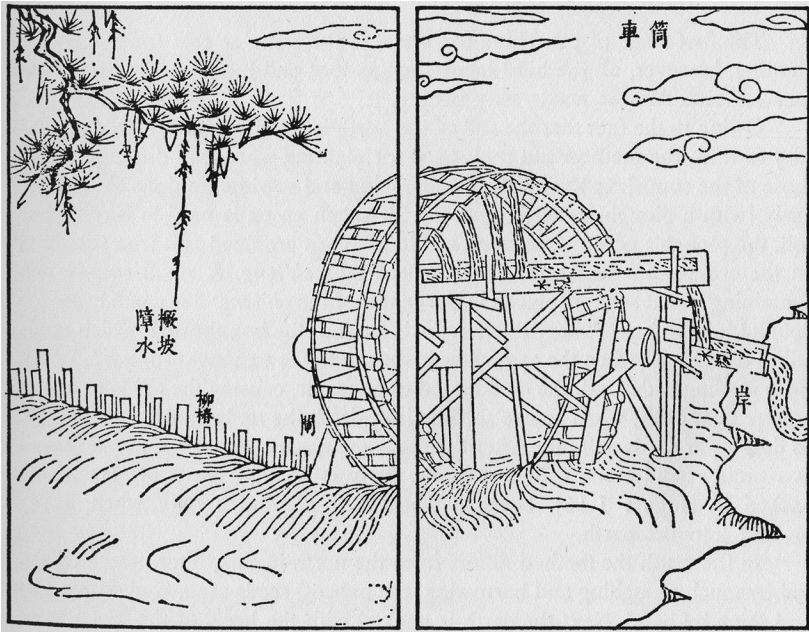


FIG. 5.1. Cylinder wheel. It revolves in a clockwise direction. From Sung Ying-hsing, *T'ien-kung k'ai-wu: Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, translated by E-tu Zen Sun and Shiou-chuan Sun (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), 13.

Now counterweight levers are found everywhere to draw water. Sometimes they are operated by hand, sometimes by foot, and sometimes by ox. Nothing matches the ingenuity of these devices. In the mountains, with deep creeks and high banks, the ingenuity of the counterweight lever cannot be used. So there is the waterwheel method. In general, if there are benefits to this world in the employment of manufactured things, then the gentleman uses them. As for the idea of embracing pitchers in Hanyin, that is only what people do when they are furious with the world and hate perversity.¹⁷ The idea of not using beneficial machines is not fit for widespread application. (SZ 12.143-44)

SALT PRODUCTION

The Liangzhe [Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu] Salt Distribution Commission manages altogether thirty-five salt production fields.¹⁸ The thirteen fields of Qingpu and the others in Su, Song, and Jiaying lie in the western part of Zhe, but the Tianci field lies at a remove at the seashore in Chongming County. The twelve fields at Xixing and other places in Shaoxing, Ning, Wen, and Tai Prefectures lie in the eastern part of Zhe, and the Yüquan field lies at a remove at

the seashore in Xiangshan County. For the two fields in Renhe and Xucun in Hangzhou Prefecture, although they lie in Zhe's western part, their allotment belongs to Zhe's eastern part.

Zhedong's total salt revenues amount to over 207,500 salt vouchers.¹⁹ Excluding the water districts' silver taxes, its salt revenues come to over 106,190 vouchers. Zhexi's total salt revenues amount to over 114,700 vouchers. Excluding the water districts' silver taxes, its salt revenues come to over 72,600 vouchers. In both cases half of the production is exchanged for cash and sent to the capital. The other half is retained and provided to traveling merchants.

Most of Zhexi's fields are on flat wastes and extensive marshes, which are suitable for water transport. The salt is easily obtained, and so there are ample profits. For the silver sent to the capital, each large voucher makes a profit of six silver cash. In Zhedong, most fields are among mountains and crests, and are difficult to access. Few boats can pass through, and it is hard for traveling merchants. So there is little profit. For the silver sent to the capital, each large voucher makes a profit of three and a half silver cash.

All are saltern households.²⁰ Success in making a profit in salt necessarily relies on briny water. Yet the leaching and extraction of salt in each case is different. There are sandy soils where the salt seeps through, and it cannot become briny soil. They must burn grasses to make ash and spread it on the drying fields. Later they take salt water and soak the ash. They wait for the salt to crystalize in the sunlight, as it floats and turns white. Then they sweep off the salt and leach the ashes again.

There are soils that are fine and moist, and often have a briny vapor. They need only to scrape off the surface mud and move it to a drying field. Then they still leach it with seawater. They wait for the sunshine to make it dry and hard, gather it together, and leach it again. In the summer they do this process for two days. If done in winter, they use twice the time.

To start making salt that can be used, they take briny mud that has been exposed to the sun. It comes to about fifty to sixty loads. They carry them and make large salt mounds and pools, ten feet across. They install troughs and dig wells next to them. They use bamboo pipes to connect underneath the wells and pools. Then they take seawater and tip the briny soil into the seeping pools, which causes the briny water to flow through to the wells.

Later they test it with two batches of three dried lotus seeds. Before that, they first take small bamboo pipes, fill them with brine, and put the lotus seeds inside. If they float and fall over, then it is extremely briny and can be cooked. If the seeds stand up on the surface, the saline content is somewhat bland. If



FIG. 5.2. This illustration represents a variation on salt-making techniques described by Lu Rong, as a worker pours briny water through a reed mat to drain into a pit below. From Sung Ying-hsing, *T'ien-kung k'ai-wu: Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, translated by E-tu Zen Sun and Shiou-chuan Sun (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), 111.

the seeds sink and do not rise again, the saline level is completely bland. Then they do not use the soil again and discard it completely. It is because the seashore areas will later get new mud and there will be rainwater. (SZ 12.147-48; GD 68.1521)

MARINE ODDITIES

During the Jingtai reign [1450-1456] in Leqing County in Wenzhou [Zhejiang], there was a great fish. It followed the tide and entered the harbor. When the tide ebbed, it could not leave. From time to time it spouted water, and the whole sky was like rain. The residents assembled to cut open up its flesh. Suddenly the fish turned, and over a hundred people drowned. From then on, the people did not dare to approach it. At dusk there was thunder and rain, and it leaped up and left. It was suspected that it was a type of dragon.

Another day as the tide was high, several thousand big and small fish, without heads, blocked the river as they came through. The people thought it was

strange, and they did not dare to eat them. They suspected that the sea must have an evil creature that bit their heads off. It bit them but did not eat them. How many there were could not be known. I was lodging at Yandang [Zhejiang] and heard this from an old monk. (SZ 12.154)

LOCAL HORTICULTURE AND AGRICULTURE

Suzhou and Hangzhou are both praised among Jiangnan's famous prefectures, but the rich households in Suzhou city and the various counties usually have surpassing gazebos, lodges, flowers, and gardens. Hangzhou city has none of that. It is because Hangzhou's customs are simpler and more frugal than those of Suzhou. The households of Huzhou do not even plant peonies. Because they are working with mulberries and silkworms in spring when the flowers bloom, they have no spare time to go back and forth visiting relatives and friends. In Yanzhou down to Yuqian and other counties, commoners mostly plant paulownia, mangroves, mulberries, cypress, hemp, and ramie. In Shaoxing, it is mostly mulberries, tea, and ramie. In Taizhou they mostly plant mulberries and cypress. Their customs are diligent and frugal, even more than Hangzhou. In vacant lots, Suzhou people mostly have elm, willows, pagoda, ailanthus, and chinaberry tree varieties. In Zhejiang's various prefectures, those trees are only in the mountains. They are completely absent in other places. At Mount Dongting in Suzhou, people grow oranges for a living and also do not keep inferior tree varieties. We can see commoners' customs from these cases. (SZ 13.156)

THE FISHING INDUSTRY

The croaker fish is found in the fourth and fifth lunar months. Commoners near the ocean in Wenzhou, Taizhou, and Ningbo in Zhejiang [eastern Zhejiang] every year put out to sea and sail their boats. They go straight to places near Jinshan [near the Yangzi River's mouth in Jiangsu] and Taicang to net them. In general, this is where the fresh water of Lake Tai [Jiangsu] flows east, and the fish all gather there. Other spots, like the battalion headquarters at Jiantiao [Zhejiang], used to have them but not in such numbers. The people in Jinshan and Taicang who live near the sea only take what is fresh. The commoners of Wenzhou, Taizhou, and Ningbo salt them or use them for fish paste. Their uses are many, and the profits are great.

I have said that people on the seacoast took fish and salt as sources of profit. If the state completely banned this business, the measure truly would not be

beneficial. Yet today's profit is completely monopolized by powerful households. Poor commoners can only gain by being hired by them. Their ships put out to sea, catch fish, return, and that is it. Otherwise, if they encounter a ship with fish, if they can overcome the other boat, they kill its people and seize the ship. These matters must be stopped. If they have secret trade with foreigners, this will bring about problems on the frontier. If there are conflicts, as in Fujian and Guangdong, then we will forbid these activities. Fishermen catching mussels, sea anemones, and *hijiki* seaweed must go to the islands near Japan to get them. Sometimes they go to stir up trouble. This is what those who have inquired about local customs say, and what those with sea patrol duties inherently should know. (SZ 13.156; GD 69.1533–34)

PAPER MANUFACTURING

In Changshan, Kaihua, and other counties in Qu [Zhejiang], they make paper for a living. This is their manufacturing method: after they select the mulberry bark and steam it, they split it and remove the coarse parts. They mix in lime and soak it for three nights and then stamp on it to make it just right. They remove the lime, soak it further in water for seven days, and steam it again. They wash out the dirt and grit, and let it dry in the sun for ten days. They grind it into a pulp and rinse it. They add herbs, such as kiwi fruit vine, and put the pulp on screens made of bamboo threads. After waiting for it to congeal to a greater consistency, they lift off the frame and put the sheet on a white surface, drying it with heat. The white surface is made of bricks and boards, and looks like a table. They use a trowel to plaster it with lime and apply heat underneath. (SZ 13.157)

PRESCRIPTIONS, 1

Wang Ting, an administrator in the Prince of Shen's principality, is my friend from school. When he was an instructor second-class at the National University, he took ill and there was blood in his stool. His situation was critical. One day, when he was muddled and confused, he heard someone say, "Taking medicines is a mistake. Drinking urine is better." Ting believed it and drank a bowl. Soon he revived. Then he drank it every day, and his illness gradually went away. He made it his medicine and was cured.

Mr. Wang, assistant prefect of Hangzhou, was a native of Hejian [Hebei]. He took ill with a swollen belly, and taking medicine was ineffective. He dreamed someone said to him, "Spanish needles can cure it."²¹ Wang then

sought and found it. He cooked it and drank the liquid. The pain was unbearable. A while later he completely evacuated his bowels, and there burst forth a creature, over ten feet long. Later, he got better.

Those two people were on the verge of death and did not deserve to die. Did the ghosts and spirits silently protect them because they had unknown acts of merit?²² (SZ 13.160)

PRESCRIPTIONS, 2

“Transmigration wine” is human urine. Those with serious illnesses sometimes drink a small bowl and use wine to rinse out their mouths. After a long time, it proves effective. It is especially fit for use for those who have fallen down and been injured, or whose chests feel swollen and blocked. After women have given birth, people mix the urine with wine, cook it, and take it, so as to avoid various postpartum ailments. When the Nanjing vice-director, his excellency Zhang Lun [1413–1483], was in the Imperial Bodyguard’s prison, he did not have herbal medicine for six or seven years. Whenever his chest cavities felt blocked, or he had eye pain or headaches, he would always drink it, and it was always effective. (SZ 13.160; GD 69.1538)

COMPASSIONATE CREATURES

Shen Zongzheng of Mount Han in Songjiang [Jiangsu] in late autumn would always set up a barrier in the pond, catch crabs, and then cook them. One day he saw two or three crabs climbing up, which looked attached to each other. He looked closer and saw that one of them was missing all of its eight legs and could not move. The other two crabs carried it to cross over the barrier. He then sighed and said, “People are the most elevated and spiritual of the myriad beings. Brothers and friends fight with and sue each other, to the point where they take advantage of others’ misfortunes to deliberately ruin them. Yet such insignificant sea creatures have such righteousness.” He then ordered the barrier taken down and for the rest of his life never again ate crabs. I heard this from my younger paternal uncle.

Zhang Yongliang of Taicang [Jiangsu] is my wife’s elder brother. He always hated how hornets stung people. When he saw them, he would promptly strike and kill them. Once he saw a flying insect enmeshed in a spider’s web. The spider had tied it very tightly. A hornet came to sting the spider, and the spider avoided it and went away. Several hornets carrying water moistened the insect, and after a long time it was able to get free and leave. Thereupon, Zhang was

moved at the hornets' righteousness and from then on never again killed hornets. I personally heard this from Yongliang. The ancients said that animals had souls. I believe it more after seeing these examples. (SZ 13.167; GD 69.1546)

DANGEROUS BOOKS

The book *Extended Meanings of the Great Learning* (Daxue yanyi) discusses the techniques for the ruler to cultivate himself, regulate his family, rule the country, and bring peace to the world.²³ They are the most pressing, most essential matters, and are not obscure and difficult to practice. Within the work, chapters 39 and 40 concern the essentials of ordering the family and cite the matters concerning eunuchs from earlier ages. There are only eight entries about the blessings of eunuchs' loyalty and prudence. But there are four times as many entries about the disasters of eunuchs' participation in government. Even if one were to propose that the ruler read it, how could the attendants permit a single glance?

The Suzhou native Chen Zuo [fl. 1431] during the Xuande reign [1426–1435] served as censor. He sent up a petition urging the emperor to read the book. The emperor was furious and had Zuo and eight or nine of his sons and nephews arrested. All were sent down to the Imperial Bodyguard's jail and incarcerated for several years. Only when the emperor passed away were they finally released.

At the beginning of the Chenghua reign [1465–1487], I heard that Ye Sheng [1420–1474] also spoke about this book. The court did not reply. Recently the Libation Master Qiu Jun [1421–1495] presented his *Supplement to Extended Meanings of the Great Learning* (Daxue yanyi bu) in several chapters. The court ordered that it be printed and circulated. What he supplemented only concerned the two matters of ruling the country and bringing peace to the world.

This foolish one, myself, says that if one can fully accomplish the tasks of regulating the family, then ruling the country and bringing peace to the world would follow. The book would be fine even without supplements. I feel it a shame that most rulers of later times do not want to look at it. (SZ 14.170–71; GD 70.1553)

MINING SILVER

Various kinds of ore deposits arise amid rugged mountain ranges and winding rivers, on lofty peaks and imposing ridges. When they initially appear, one can only barely make out veins of ore in coarse rocks. They are as slight as a hair. Those who understand ore take them, boring through the rock to obtain and

test them. The colors and shapes of the ores are uneven, and their quality also varies. When they obtain silver from the ore deposits, the amounts are unfixed. In some cases, a single basket weighs twenty-five *jin*. At the most, the silver they acquire came to two or three *liang*, and at the least, it is worth three or four cash.

The depth of ore veins cannot be fathomed. In some cases, as soon as the ground is turned, the ore is quickly exhausted. In some cases, they dig several tens of feet deep and only then are the veins exhausted. In some cases, they obtain very little and only after a long time do the veins broaden out. In some cases, the veins break off in the middle, but the miners continue to bore through without stopping, and later the veins revive. They name this “passing through the jade disk” (*guobi*). In some cases, just as they are finding ore in one place, suddenly the vein disappears. Then, within eight feet, they find the vein again. They name this “jumping toads” (*xiamia tiao*). In general, when miners dig for ore, it looks like worms eating through wood. Sometimes they go tens of feet, sometimes several hundreds of feet, and sometimes they go several thousands of feet. Whatever depth they go, they stop only when the vein ends. In the past, acquiring ore meant taking along iron picks and iron hammers. They struck with all their might, tens of times, and only got small slivers. Today they do not use hammers and picks, but only burn and set off explosions to obtain ore.

Whatever the amount of rocks and ore, it is pounded by pedal-tilt hammers until it becomes a fine powder. They are called “ore ends” (*kuangmo*). Next, they take large barrels and fill them with water, throw the ore powder inside, stirring it several hundred times. They call this “mixing the paste” (*jiaonian*). The paste in the barrels separates into three levels. The part that floats on the surface is called “fine paste” (*xinian*). The sort in the middle is called “plum sands” (*meisha*). What sinks to the bottom is called “coarse ore flesh” (*cu kuangrou*).

For the fine paste and plum grains, they use a washing pan with a sharp [i.e., V-shaped] bottom. They pick and weed through what floats in the pan, throwing out the gangue and keeping the good pieces. For the coarse ore body, they use a wooden basin that resembles a small boat. They weed out the materials using the method just described. In sum, they try to weed out the gangue and keep the real ore. They store it in full baskets. They are beautiful and glitter, making a fine sight. They call it “ore flesh” (*kuangrou*).²⁴

Next, they take rice paste and mix it in, making pieces round and big as a fist. They lay the pieces out in rows on the charcoal and further cover them with about a foot of charcoal. They start the fire at dawn. At the *shen* hours [3–5 p.m.], they put the fire out and wait for it to cool. They call them “pit bricks” (*jiaotuan*). Next, they use [unidentified character] a silver furnace to

SILVER

The history of silver in the Ming is a tale of two centuries. The better-known one, from 1540 to 1644, saw an immense growth in silver imports, from Japan and later the Americas. This influx led to the large-scale commutation of grain taxes and state labor service duties into silver payments and quickened immeasurably the commercialization of major sectors of the Chinese economy. The scale of this rise was remarkable. One authoritative study estimates that the imports of silver in the second half of the sixteenth century amounted to eight times the amount of domestic production.

This transformation, of course, took place decades after Lu Rong's death. In Lu's own time, though, Chinese already prized silver bullion far more than alternative means of exchange, be it official or private coin, or state-issued paper notes. Silver mines, operated by private concerns but subject to excise taxes and state supervision, had opened apace in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In the 1430s, Chinese officials already began commuting some labor service and grain payments to silver to ease the burdens and inequities of the Ming founder's taxation and service systems. Later, however, production fell, and the state closed mines, but excise taxes remained in place, resulting in hardships for commoners and local officials. Despite the widespread preference for silver, Chinese silver deposits were limited, and extraction techniques remained complex. As Lu noted in *Bean Garden* a few entries later, "The five items above come from the Longquan County gazetteer [Zhejiang]. The silver, copper, and ceramics production techniques are all certainly employed by commoners, and those for ceramics can be seen especially easily. I daresay that I did not understand the difficulties of making them. If one understood them, how could one bear to waste them?"¹

1 SZ 14.178–79.

burn the charcoal. They put lead in the furnace, wait for it to react, and then add the pit bricks. They fan it with a leather bellows, their hands never stopping. In general, lead's nature is to absorb the silver. When the silver has all sunk to the furnace bottom, only the dross remains on top. They open up the furnace to expose the hot fire and remove the dross on the furnace surface, doing so many times. After it has been smelted for a long time, they douse the fire with water, and the lead and silver fuse together. This is called the "lead camel" (*yantuo*).

Next, at the first furnace, they use high-grade charcoal. They examine the size of the silver camel, make a shallow ash pit, and place the lead camel inside the ash pit. They pile ash around the sides, fanning the fire ceaselessly. At first the lead and silver are mixed, as they are deep in the ash pit. One sees that the wide surface has vapors of “smoky clouds,” which fly about in shifting shapes.

After a long time, it dissipates somewhat, and then “snowflakes” (*xuehua*) burst up. After the snowflakes have all gone, it is stable and transparent. A while later, its appearance from one side begins to change to a muddled color. This is called “the overturned nest” (*kefan*) (this is the name of smelted silver). The clouds of smoke and the “snowflakes” are simply lead vapors that have not yet disappeared. The nature of lead is to fear ash. So they use ash to capture lead. After the lead has entered the charcoal, only the silver remains. The process lasts from the *chen* hours [7–9 a.m.] to the *wu* hours [11 a.m.–1 p.m.], and only then does one see finished silver. When the lead enters the unfired ash, it then gives rise to the mineral litharge. (SZ 14.175–76; GD 70.1557–58)

ETHICAL LIGHTNING

In the fifth year of the Hongzhi reign [1492], at a spot in Guazhou [Jiangsu] where boats assembled, a rice merchant’s boat was struck by lightning, which snapped off its mast. People approached the scene, and there was an assortment of big and small rats, which were all dead. Probably they had gnawed an opening and nested inside. One large rat had a weight of seven *jin*. The smaller rats weighed about two *jin*. The local man Yin Shouchu heard about it but did not believe it. He personally asked the boat captain, who said it was so. Probably Heaven feared that if the wind snapped the mast when the sails were up, it might unjustly bring about people’s deaths. So it struck the rats. (SZ 15.181–82; GD 71.1567)

AUSPICIOUS FAMILY FLORA

I remember that in the tenth year of the Zhengtong reign [1446], my ancestors planted in the garden two bamboo trees. When they grew several joints tall, they split into two stalks. We loved how the kingfisher green leaves joined together. The family servants waited for them to grow older. They cut away the side branches and used them to slice waterweed to feed the pigs.

In the second year of the Jingtai reign [1451], I moved to the rear garden. One snake gourd vine grew five branches. The places where the fruit left the stalk and the buds had fallen off had split to form five sections, and the backs

FAVORABLE OMENS

In dynastic China, heaven, earth, and humanity composed an organic whole. Human affairs resonated in the unseen and natural worlds, manifested in the movements of ghosts, heavenly bodies, weather patterns, earthquakes, or manifestations of unusual fauna and flora. Cases of remarkable, prodigious vegetation thus signified for the educated and uneducated alike divine approval of terrestrial events, especially extraordinary conduct by the emperor and his officials.¹

1 See especially Schneewind, *Tale of Two Melons*.

of the gourds then were stuck together. The orchard workers picked them and brought them in. Everyone played with them for a bit, and the children struck them to crack them open, and then ate them.

Later I served at court. There were those who asked for a colophon to praise *Pictures of Auspicious Bamboo and Auspicious Squash* (Ruizhu ruigua tu). I read it, and its samples were all what my family had possessed. Moreover, their auspicious bamboo pictures had one stalk, and my family gave birth to two stalks. Their squashes came only in two and threes, and also were not linked together. My family had five squashes that grew from the same root. Were they not extremely auspicious?

At the time, had there been rumormongers and busybodies among the family elders, fathers, and elder brothers, the flattery would have made its way back to the government offices, and the exaggerations would have made their way back to the family. They would have provoked everyone and ruined our wealth, and there would have a great deal of disruption. Yet my relatives were sincere and guileless, and so what people call auspicious portents did not move their hearts at all. Because it did not move their hearts, arrogance and extravagance did not take shape, and disasters did not break out. Consequently, my relatives could preserve the family for a long time.

It has been passed down, "The world originally has no troubles; vulgar people themselves disorder it." Isn't this case what this expression means? (SZ 15.182)

CHINESE CHARACTER GLOSSARY

- Anluzhou 安陸州
Anyang 安陽
- baguwen 八股文
Bai Gongmin 白恭敏
Baibu Hong 百步洪
Baigou 白溝
baqi zhidu 八旗制度
Beishang 北上
Bencao gangmu 本草綱目
bi 筆
Bian He 卞和
biding 必定
biji 筆記
Binzhou 賓州
Bowuzhi 博物志
Boyi 伯夷
- Cai Xiang 蔡襄
Cao E 曹娥
Cao Yongwen 曹用文
Chanbao lun 產寶論
Changshan 常山
Changshu 常熟
Changyang 長陽
Changzhou 常州
Chaoyang 朝陽
chaupur 捕牌
chejia 車駕
chen 辰 (7–9 a.m.)
Chen Liang 陳亮
Chen Wu 陳五
Chen Xuan 陳選
Chen Yi 陳鎰
Chen Yue 陳鉞
Chen Zongxun 陳宗訓
Chen Zuo 陳祚
- cheng 誠
Cheng Minzheng 程敏政
Chengdu 成都
Chenghua 成化
chi 甌 (cup)
chi 癡 (fool)
chi 尺 (foot)
Chisongzi 赤松子
Chizhou 池州
Chongming 崇明
Chu 楚
chuanqi 傳奇
Chunqiu 春秋
Chunxi 淳熙
chuoba'er 戳包兒
Chuogenglu 輟耕錄
Cixi 慈溪
Consort Xia 夏姬
cu kuangrou 竈礦肉
- Dadu 大都
Dagao 大誥
Dai Jingyuan 戴景元
Dai Yong 戴用
Dalongfu 大隆福
dan 石
Dangtu 當塗
Datong 大同
Daxinglong 大興隆
Daxue 大學
Daxue yanyi 大學衍義
Daxue yanyi bu 大學衍義補
di 帝
ding 錠
Dinghai 定海
Dongchang 東廠
Donghai 東海

- Dongyue 東嶽
 dou 斗
 Dou Mo 竇默
 Du Chang 杜長
 Du Mu 杜牧
 Duanwu 端午
 Duanyue 端越

 Esen 也先

 Fan Li 范蠡
 fawang 法王
 Fei Xuan 費瑄
 Feng Bao 馮寶
 Feng Dao 馮道
 Fengyang 鳳陽
 Fenning 分寧
 fu 符
 Fu Jian 苻堅
 Fujian 福建

 Gansu 甘肅
 Gao'an 高安
 Gaoliang 高涼
 gong 公
 Gong Sheng 龔勝
 Gongfu Wenbo 公文文伯
 gongguan 公館
 Gou Jian 勾踐
 Gu Qing 古清
 Gu'an 固安
 Guangdong 廣東
 Guangling 廣陵
 Guangxi 廣西
 Guangzhou 廣州
 Guanyin 觀音
 Guazhou 瓜州
 Gudui 鼓堆
 Guifang 鬼方
 Guiji 會稽
 Guo Deng 郭登
 Guo Guan 郭觀
 Guo Sheng 郭昇
 guobi 過壁

 Guochao diangu 國朝典故
 Guoshi 國師

 Haining 海寧
 Haiyan 海鹽
 Han 漢
 Han Gaozu 漢高祖
 Han Guangwudi 漢光武帝
 Han Jingdi 漢敬帝
 Han Pan 韓磐
 Han Qi 韓崎
 Han Wendi 漢文帝
 Han Wenliang 韓文亮
 Han Wudi 漢武帝
 Han Xuandi 漢宣帝
 Han Zhangdi 漢章帝
 Han Zhaodi 漢昭帝
 Hangzhou 杭州
 Hanxi 旱西
 Hanyin 漢陰
 Hao Tianting 郝天挺
 Haoli 蒿里
 He Yin 何寅
 He Zan 何瓚
 Hejian 河間
 Hongwu 洪武
 Hongwu yun 洪武韻
 Hongzhi 弘治
 hou 后
 hu 斛
 Hu Jun 胡濬
 Hu Weiyong 胡惟庸
 Huai 淮
 Huang Yu 黃瑜
 Huangchu 黃初
 Huangming shichen 皇明世臣
 Huangming zuxun 皇明祖訓
 Huangyan 黃巖
 Huashu 化書
 Huating 華亭
 Huizhou 徽州
 Hun 渾
 hun 魂
 Huzhou 湖州

- Ji 濟
 Ji An 汲黯
 Ji Ying 季鷹
 Jia Sidao 賈似道
 Jiagang Gate 夾岡門
 Jiajing 嘉靖
 Jiande 建德
 Jiandi 簡狄
 Jiang Hengfu 姜恆頹
 Jiang Mengzhen 蔣孟震
 Jiang Xilu 蔣希魯
 Jiang Zongyi 蔣宗誼
 Jiangnan 江南
 Jiangpu 江浦
 Jiangsu 江蘇
 Jiangxi 江西
 Jianning 建寧
 Jiantiao 健跳
 Jianwen 建文
 jiao 醮
 jiaonian 攪粘
 jiaotuan 窖團
 Jiaozhi 交趾
 Jiaxing 嘉興
 Jiayou 嘉佑
 Jiayuguan 嘉峪關
 Jin 晉 (dynasty name, 266–419)
 Jin 金 (dynasty name, 1115–1234)
 jin 斤 (measure word)
 Jingkou 京口
 Jingtai 景泰
 Jingxing 景星
 Jinling 金陵
 Jinshan 金山
 jinshi 進士
 Jinyiwei 錦衣衛
 Jiujiang 九江
 Jun 濬

 Kaibao 開寶
 Kaifeng 開封
 Kaihua 開化
 kefan 窠翻
 Kerang 克讓

 King Kimnara 緊那羅王
 Kong Yuan 孔淵
 Kou Zhun 寇準
 Kuaihuo Terrace 快活臺
 Kuang Ye 鄺埜
 kuangmo 礦末
 kuangrou 礦肉
 Kuncheng 崑城
 Kunshan 崑山
 Kunwu 昆吾

 Lake Tai 太湖
 Leqing 樂清
 li 里 (length measurement)
 li 禮 (ritual propriety)
 li 厲 (vengeful)
 li 釐 (weight measurement)
 Li Binzhi 李賓之
 Li Chun 黎淳
 Li Duan 李端
 Li Han 李翰
 Li Kan 李侃
 Li Shizhen 李時珍
 Li Xiaoguang 李孝光
 Li Zhao 李釗
 liang 兩
 Liang Fang 梁芳
 Liang Shanbo 梁山伯
 Liang Xiao 良霄
 Liangzhe 兩浙
 Lianhuachi 蓮花池
 Liao Zhuang 廖莊
 Liaodong 遼東
 Liaoning 遼寧
 Liji 禮記
 lijia 里甲
 Lin'an 臨安
 Lingbi 靈璧
 Liu Bingzhong 劉秉忠
 Liu Chen 劉晨
 Liu Ji 劉績 (188–219)
 Liu Ji 劉吉 (1427–1493)
 Liu Jin 劉瑾
 Liu Ping 劉平

Liu Shiyong 劉時雍
 Liu Xu 劉翊
 Liu Yin 劉因
 Liu Yijing 劉引靜
 Liu Yu 劉裕
 lixue 理學
 Longquan 龍泉
 Lord of Shen 申公
 lu 虜
 Lu Dingyi 陸鼎儀
 Lu Rong 陸容
 Lu Shen 陸伸
 Lu Wang 魯望
 Lu Yi 陸鈇
 Lu Zhan 陸展
 Lu Zhong 陸終
 Lu Zhonglian 魯仲連
 Lüliang 呂梁
 Luling 廬陵
 Lunyu 論語
 Luo Lun 羅倫

 Maozhou 茂州
 mawei qun 馬尾裙
 meisha 梅沙
 Meng Zhang 孟章
 Mengzi 孟子
 Ming 明
 Ming Taizu 明太祖
 mingmen 命門
 mo 脈
 Mount Baling 巴陵山
 Mount Dongting 洞庭山
 Mount Mao 茅山
 Mount Putuo 普陀山
 Mount Tai 泰山
 Mount Tiantai 天台山
 Mount Zhongnan 終南山
 mu 畝
 mubiao 墓表
 muyi 慕義
 muzhi 墓誌

 Nanchang 南昌
 Nanfeng 南豐

Nanhai 南海
 Nanjing 南京
 Nanzhili 南直隸
 nayang'er 掣殃兒
 Ningbo 寧波
 Ningxia 寧夏

Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修

pai 牌
 Penglai 蓬萊
 Pengxuan leiji 蓬軒類記
 Piling 毘陵
 po 魄
 posuo 婆娑
 Putian 莆田

Qi 契 (personal name)

Qi 齊 (place name)

qi 氣

Qian Liangchen 錢良臣

Qian Weiyan 錢惟演

Qibo 岐伯

Qin 秦

Qin Gui 秦檜

Qin Shihuang 秦世皇

Qing 清

qing 頃

Qingdao 清道

Qingfeng 青楓 (Green Maple)

Qingfeng 青峯 (Green Peak)

Qingfeng 清風嶺 (Pure Customs) Crest

Qingpu 清浦

Qingzhou 清州

qiongli 窮理

Qiu Jun 邱濬

Qu Yong 屈雍

Quanzhou 泉州

Quzhou 衢州

Ransheng 然勝

ren 仁

Renhe 仁和

Ruan Zhao 阮肇

Ruizhu ruigua tu 瑞竹瑞瓜圖

- Rumen shiqin* 儒門事親
 Runan 汝南
 Ruzhou 汝州

 Sanshan District 三山街
 Sanshan Huangdu 三山黃渡
 sha 蕙
 Shaanxi 陝西
 Shandong 山東
Shangshu 尚書
 Shangyu 上虞
 Shanhai 山海
 Shanxi 山西
 Shaoxing 紹興
 Shapentan 沙盆潭
 sheliu 射柳
 shen 申 (3-5 p.m.)
 Shen Zongzheng 沈宗正
 shendaobei 神道碑
 Sheng 嵯
 Shi Heng 石亨
Shijing 詩經
Shilu 實錄
 Shisheng 世陞
Shizhai xiansheng wenji 式齋先生文集
 Shizhou 石州
 Shouguang 壽光
 shuilun 水輪
 Shun 舜
 Shuqi 叔齊
Shuyuan zaji 菽園雜記
 Si River 泗河
 Si Zheng 司整
 Sichuan 四川
 Sidian 祀典
 Siku quanshu 四庫全書
 Sima Guang 司馬光
 Song 宋 (dynasty name)
 song 菘 (cabbage variety)
 Song Chang 宋昌
 Song Gaozong 宋高宗
 Song Huizong 宋徽宗
 Song Lian 宋濂
 Song Lizong 宋理宗
 Song Qinzong 宋欽宗

 Song Qiqiu 宋奇邱
 Song Taizu 宋太祖
 Song Xiaozong 宋孝宗
 Songjiang 松江
 Songting 松庭
 Southern Song 南宋
 Su Hui 蘇諫
 Su Shi 蘇軾
 Sui 隋
 Sui Yangdi 隋煬帝
 suibi 隨筆
 Sun En 孫恩
 Sun Yikui 孫一奎
 Suzhou 蘇州

 Taibo 泰伯
 Taicang 太倉
 Taiyiren 太宜人
 Taizhou 台州
 Taizong 太宗
 Tan Qiao (Jingsheng) 譚峭景昇
 Tang 唐
 Tang Jie 湯節
 Tang Taizong 唐太宗
Tangshi pinhui 唐詩品彙
Tang yun 唐韻
 Tao 陶
 Tian Heng 田橫
 Tianci 天賜
 Tianfei 天妃
 tianlingwan 天靈盃
 tianming 天命
 Tianshun 天順
 Tingxian 廷獻
 tongche 筒車
 Tongguan 潼關
 Tongji 通濟
 Tonglu 桐廬
 Tongzhou 通州
 Tu 嵎
 Tu Baoshi 屠寶石
 tudi shen 土地神
 Tumu 土木
 tuo 鼃
 Tusong 塗松

- Wan An 萬安
Wanbao shishan 萬寶詩山
 Wang Anshi 王安石
 Wang Ao 王鏊
 Wang Bo 王柏
 Wang Chen 王臣
 Wang Huai 王淮
 Wang Jing 王敬
 Wang Mang 王莽
 Wang Mian 王冕
 Wang Pan 王磐
 Wang Qi 王琦
 Wang Ting 王庭
 Wang Wen 王文
 Wang Yue 王越
 Wang Zhen 王振
 Wang Zhi 汪直
 Wei 魏
 Wei Ji 魏驥
 Wei Ying 韋瑛
 weisuo 衛所
 Wen 汶
 Wen Bingzhong 溫秉中
 Wen Zhengming 文徵明
 Wenjin 文璣
 Wenliang 文量
 wenshen 紋身
 Wenzhou 溫州
 Wu 吳 (place name)
 wu 戊 (11 a.m.–1 p.m.)
 Wu Kuan 吳寬
 Wu Zetian 武則天
 Wu Zhao 武曌
 Wubao 五保
 wujing 五經

 Xi Ning 喜寧
 xiamatiao 蝦蟇跳
Xiama zhuan 蝦蟇傳
 Xiang River 湘江
 Xiao 蕭
 xiao 孝
 xiaoshuo 小說
 Xie An 謝安
 Xie Guozhen 謝國楨

 Xie Jingxiu 謝敬修
 Xie Yingfang 謝應芳
 xingzhuang 行狀
 xinian 細粘
 Xinyang River 新洋江
 Xishi 西施
 Xiuji 脩己
 xiwen dizi 戲文弟子
 Xixing 西興
 Xu 徐
 Xu An 許安
 Xu Heng 許衡
 Xu Tai 徐泰
 Xu Weng 徐翁
 Xu Xun 許遜
 Xuande 宣德
 Xuanfu 宣府
 Xucun 許村
 xuehua 雪花
 Xuzhou 徐州

 Yan 燕
 Yan Yuxi 閻禹錫
 Yandang 雁蕩
Yanfen lingguai ji 烟粉靈怪記
 yang 陽
 Yang Dao 楊導
 Yang Hong 楊洪
 Yang Pu 楊溥
 Yang Rong 楊榮
 Yang Shiqi 楊士奇
 Yang Weizhen 楊維禎
 Yangbao 陽抱
 Yanling Jizi 延陵季子
 yantuo 鉛駝
 Yanzhou 嚴州
 Yao 堯
 Yao Shu 姚樞
 Yao Sui 姚燧
Yaomei shuo 妖魅說
Yayin huibian 雅音會編
 Ye Sheng 葉盛
 yi 義
Yijing 易經
 Yin 鄞

- yin 陰
 Yin Shouchu 印綬初
 yinci 淫祠
Yingkuai lüsuì 瀛奎律髓
Yingying zhuan 鶯鶯傳
 Yingzong 英宗
 Yongjia 永嘉
 Yongle 永樂
 Yongning 永寧
 Yu 虞 (alternative name for sage-king Yao)
 Yu 禹 (sage-king and putative founder
 of Xia dynasty)
 Yu Ji 虞集
 Yu Qian 于謙
 Yu Sumin 余肅敏
 Yuan 元 (dynasty)
 yuan 鼃 (great sea turtle)
 Yue 越
 Yuhang 餘杭
 Yunnan 雲南
 Yuqian 於潛
 Yuquan 玉泉
 Yuyao 餘姚

 zangzhi 葬誌
 Zaoyang 棗陽
 zashi 雜事 (miscellaneous affairs)
 zashi 雜史 (miscellaneous histories)
 zaxue 雜學
 Zeng Mengyuan 曾孟源
 Zha Yongchun 查用純
 zhang 丈
 Zhang Congzheng 張從正
 Zhang Daoling 張道陵
 Zhang Fu 張輔
 Zhang Hua 張華
 Zhang Hui 張翬
 Zhang Lun 章綸
 Zhang Shicheng 張士誠
 Zhang Tai 張泰
 Zhang Wenjin 張文謹
 Zhang Xun 張巡
 Zhang Yongliang 張用良
 Zhangde 彰德
 Zhao 趙
 Zhao Xiong 趙雄
 Zhe 浙
 Zhedong 浙東
 Zhejiang 浙江
 Zhen Dexiu 真德秀
 Zhending 真定
 Zheng He 鄭和
 Zheng Jie'an 鄭介庵
 Zheng Xuan 鄭玄
 Zhengtong 正統
 Zhenyi 真義
 Zhexi 浙西
 Zhezhong 浙中
 Zhihua 智化
 Zhong Tong 鍾同
Zhongwu jiwén 中吳紀聞
Zhongyong 中庸
 Zhongyong 仲雍
 Zhou Chen 周忱
 Zhou Chu 周處
 Zhou Fan 周藩
 Zhou Hongmou 周洪謨
 Zhou Jingxin 周敬心
 Zhou Jingxing 周景星
 Zhou Mi 周密
 Zhou Shizong 周世宗
 Zhou Ziyin 周子隱
 Zhu Gaosui 朱高燧
 Zhu Qizhen 朱祁鎮
 Zhu Xi 朱熹
 Zhu Yingtai 祝應臺
 Zhu Youdun 朱有燉
 Zhu Youtang 朱祐樞
 Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋
 Zhu Zemin 朱澤民
 Zhu Zhanshan 朱瞻塔
 zhuangdan 粧旦
 Zhuge Jing 諸葛景
 Zhuguo xiangfu 柱國相府
Zhuogu lun 酌古論
 zhupolong 豬婆龍
Zhuzi bian 諸子辨
 Zongbo 宗伯
 zongzi 粽子
 Zuozhuan 左傳

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

SXW	Lu Rong, <i>Shizhai xiansheng wenji</i>
WSQ	<i>Wenyuange Siku quanshu</i>
XSQ	<i>Xuxiu Siku quanshu</i>

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 1 Its relative tranquility moved one literary scholar to characterize the era as “a uniquely dull period in the history of Chinese civilization.” See Bryant, “Poetry,” 400.
- 2 This final function was undertaken by the Censorate, whose personnel often commanded immense prestige and reported directly to the throne.
- 3 The same pattern took place in the second century during the Eastern Han dynasty, with disastrous consequences.
- 4 Langlois, “Hung-wu,” 140.
- 5 In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Buddhism revived, thanks to renewed state patronage and scholar-officials dissatisfied with sterile Confucian orthodoxy.
- 6 In this case, “brushed” implies a sense of casualness, as if the brush and not the author did the writing. One label for this genre is *suibi* (following the brush).
- 7 Why the drop? First, China’s economy and publishing industry experienced prolonged decline during the Yuan-Ming transition (1350–1370) and the Ming’s first century, because of armed conflict, social dislocation, and state policies. Second, court gossip had long been a staple of *biji*, but the early Ming’s political turmoil made recording palace affairs a difficult and potentially dangerous enterprise. As Hok-lam Chan noted, “During the century [1398–1498], there were few attempts among private historians, partly because of the lingering imperial taboo and partly because of the inaccessibility or lack of verifiable sources, to write the history of Ming T’ai-tsu’s reign.” See Chan, “Ming T’ai-tsu’s Manipulation,” 42.
- 8 The two works are *Shudong riji* by Ye Sheng (1420–1474) and *Shuanghuai suichao* by Huang Yu (1425–1497).
- 9 Xie, *Ming-Qing biji congkan*, 5–7. In his magisterial survey of the genre, Chen Wenxin said that Lu’s work “stands out apart from the hollow intellectual climate of the Ming dynasty.” See Chen, *Zhongguo biji xiaoshuo shi*, 442.
- 10 Extensive uses of Lu’s work appear in Smith, “Impressions,” and Brook, *Troubled Empire*. Many excerpts are also cited in an authoritative collection of Ming socio-economic primary sources. See Xie, *Mingdai shehui jingji*.

- 11 See Zhang, *Ming shi*, 286.7342.
- 12 Basic biographies include Wu, “Lu gong mubeiming,” in Qian, *Wudu wencui xuji*, 44.49b–53a; Cheng, “Canzheng Lu gong zhuan,” in Cheng, *Huangdun wenji*, 50.25b–29b; and “Lu Rong,” in Guo Tinxun, *Benchao fensheng renwu kao*, 21.7a–8b.
- 13 Qian, *Wudu wencui xuji*, 44.49b–53a.
- 14 Cheng, *Huangdun wenji*, 50.25b–29b.
- 15 “Lu Rong,” in Guo Tinxun, *Benchao fensheng renwu kao*, 21.7a–8b.
- 16 “Shizhai gao xu,” in Wang Ao, *Wang Ao ji*, 210–11.
- 17 For example, Wu Kuan’s collected works total seventy-eight chapters, and those of Cheng Minzheng ninety-three chapters. Ye Sheng’s collected works are not extant, but forty chapters of his memorials survive.
- 18 The bibliography section of the Ming dynastic history lists the work with thirty-eight chapters, rather than the thirty-seven chapters extant today. See Zhang, *Ming shi*, 99.2469. A manuscript copy was made in 1726. Copies of this text and the 1501 edition are in the National Central Library in Taipei, and microfilm copies are in the Library of Congress and Princeton University Library.
- 19 Wang Ao hints at this possibility in his preface. Wang praises Lu’s written work but does not quote from it, or reminisce about their friendship. His preface groups Lu with the Kunshan literati, Zhang Tai (1468 *jinshi*) and Lu Yi (1463 *jinshi*), whom Lu associated with. Wang’s remarks begin with comments on these two other men before turning to Lu Rong. Lu Rong’s work, apparently, did not warrant Wang’s exclusive attention. “Shizhai gao xu,” in Wang Ao, *Wang Ao ji*, 210–11.
- 20 SXW 21.1a–11b. Lu at the time was gentlemen of the interior at the Ministry of War, and its 5b ranking placed him at the tenth rung of the eighteen-rung bureaucratic hierarchy. The dynasty’s own political history, *Veritable Records* (*Shilu*), has several references to Lu, and a summary of this memorial receives by far the most space. See *Ming Xiaozong jing huangdi shilu*, 20.470–74.
- 21 “Lienü zan yin,” SXW, 37.5b–6a. Lu notes that such illustrated collections were widespread. That he had the pictures painted for him suggests the paucity of printed works in the mid-fifteenth century. For more on this topic in later centuries, see Carlitz, “Social Uses.”
- 22 In fact, Xu eventually had five daughters, raising the possibility that this exchange with Lu took place even earlier. See Wu Kuan, “Huguang Xu jun muzhiming,” in Wu Kuan, *Jiacang ji*, 60.14b.
- 23 “Shu Qidong yeyu,” SXW, 32.10b–11a. The two works were *Qidong yeyu* and *Guixin zazhi*.
- 24 “Shu Shuidong riji hou,” SXW, 32.7b–8a.
- 25 Ye’s memorials survive in great abundance, as seen in the forty-chapter *Ye Wenzhuang gong zoushu*, but this collection appeared in 1631, long after Lu’s death. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century catalogs, his other prose and verse works amount to only one or two fascicles.
- 26 This characterization of the Ming appears in Dardess, *Ming China*.
- 27 For a general outline, see Wu Die, “Tan Shuyuan zaji.”
- 28 McDermott, *Village, Land, and Lineage*, 269.

CHAPTER ONE: SOCIAL LIFE

- 1 A “singing loft” can be understood as a fifteenth-century nightclub.
- 2 Penglai, in Chinese lore, is an island inhabited by immortal beings.
- 3 Spring breezes are a metaphor for blessings.
- 4 *Jiao* rites, linked with the Buddhist and Daoist religions, sought blessings from the gods and to expel harmful spirits.
- 5 Lau, *Mencius*, 57 (3A.3).
- 6 This entry, in both editions, begins with a few sentences concerning astrology that bears no relationship with the rest of the text, and so I have excised it.
- 7 Lu cites *The Book of Rites*. See Legge, *Li Chi*, 90. The original passage, specifying that penal laws governed commoners and ritual prescriptions regulated elites, highlighted the strict distinctions that ought to separate classes. Lu, as we see, interpreted the line very differently.
- 8 “Inner” and “outer” usually refer to different areas of the household, separated by gender. Lu, however, apparently refers here to different quarters separated by generations.
- 9 This version appears in a twelfth-century collection of anecdotes. See Shao, *Shaoshi wenjian lu*, 8.80–81.
- 10 These are two genres of funerary biographies. Records of conduct were composed first and often were the basis for entombed inscriptions, which were shorter and more prestigious. They might commemorate anyone, both officials and nonofficials, and women as well as men. One copy was engraved in stone and placed in the tomb, and others were on paper and circulated, sometimes very widely.
- 11 Sima Guang and Wang Anshi were illustrious scholar-officials and political rivals in the late eleventh century.
- 12 These lines refer to the famous Tang love tale, *Yingying zhuan* (The story of Yingying).
- 13 The Prince of Shu was Zhu Chun (1371–1423), the eleventh son of the Ming founder. He was known for his scholarly interests. Lu conflates two events, the reburial of Song’s remains, which took place in the Yongle reign, and the reconstruction of Song’s shrine, carried out in 1485 during the Chenghua reign.
- 14 Zhang Xun was a Tang dynasty (618–907) official who, although vastly outnumbered, heroically fought off rebel armies until he was surrounded and killed. Cults dedicated to his memory and virtue spread later throughout the empire.
- 15 Li Han, a late eighth-century official, wrote an account of Zhang Xun’s service for the Tang. The story of Boyou, also known as Liang Xiao, comes from *Zuozhuan*, a commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. *Zuozhuan* was China’s first important narrative history and part of the extended Confucian canon. The account refers to a vengeful ghost feared by the common people. See Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 1425.
- 16 The Yulin Army served as the imperial troops during the early Han dynasty. “Yulin” here means “feathered forest,” with the feathers suggesting their swiftness and the forest suggesting their great numbers. The second “Yulin,” pronounced the same way, means “being soaked in the rain” and explains why the temple was built without a roof.
- 17 The first “Sangu” means “three orphans” and the second one means “three maidens.”

- 18 Yao was the first Chinese mythical sage-king. His son was named Zhu, and his fief was called Danyuan. He was thus known as Danzhu.
- 19 The word for “pig,” or *zhu* 猪, has the same pronunciation as the name of Yao’s son, Zhu 朱. *Dan* 丹 likewise means “cinnabar,” a very reddish compound used often in China to make red dyes and paints.
- 20 A prayer wheel, with eight faces. Turning the wheel enables Buddhist devotees to earn karmic merit without reading the scriptures.
- 21 The wheel handles probably had human figurines.
- 22 Healthy social customs and strong families, Lu elsewhere noted, produced good genealogies, while disordered, false ones reflected and brought on degenerate social mores. See SXW 16.11a–12a.
- 23 That is, a victim of injustice.
- 24 I take “empty and open” to mean unbraided.
- 25 A genre of romantic Chinese opera, identified with south China.
- 26 Women bowed twice to men, in Chinese ritual practice.
- 27 Zhu Xi’s guide to ritual practice was the most influential Confucian ritual manual of late imperial times. Zhu worried that the prospect of such valuables inspired grave robbing. See Ebrey, *Chu Hsi’s Family Rituals*, 85.
- 28 Zhu Gaosui (1383–1431), third son of the Yongle emperor. The rams and tigers refer to carved stone sections of the tomb.
- 29 Such local groups were societies engaged for mutual defense and moral improvement. They sought to fill in the power vacuum left by the disintegration of the *lijia* system and to curb the ill effects of rural commercialization.
- 30 An upright if sometimes rash individual, Luo had a short, stormy career. Ming biographies characterize him very favorably, and shrines were built in his honor. Although a few accounts refer to the covenant, only one other one that I have seen confirms the murders reported above, which helps explain Lu’s surprise. Luo’s case represents how the misdeeds of notable men often went unmentioned and how the *biji* genre provided a forum to reveal such unpleasant matters.
- 31 Shouguang, a Shandong place-name, refers to Liu Xu (1426–1490). Jiaying is a Jiangsu place-name, and I do not know whom Lu refers to.
- 32 In the same text, Ouyang Xiu said that most of his literary composition had taken place on top of three things: horses, pillows, and toilets.
- 33 Lu cites a couple from a poem in *The Book of Songs*. See Legge, *She King*, 276.
- 34 Spirit road steles, placed on the path leading to the tomb, were stone inscriptions detailing the deceased’s life and generally were reserved for high officials. Grave declarations were stone inscriptions placed right at the grave. Burial records, a relatively rare term, refers to entombed inscriptions.

CHAPTER TWO: FAMILY AND GENDER

- 1 Although *The Biography* did not survive, the imperial recognition probably ensured that the affair would be remembered.
- 2 Women’s fidelity, always an important elite value, took on heightened significance

in Yuan and Ming China. For an introduction, see Carlitz, “Shrines.” As this story shows, however, commoner widows did remarry. Moreover, that the son from the first marriage insisted on managing the burial rites illustrates that, despite her remarriage, he still was devoted to his mother, or at least found it necessary to demonstrate his filial piety.

- 3 That is, she served him like a wife.
- 4 Titled wives refer to women honored officially by the court and called, for example, Lady of Suitability.
- 5 Wang suffered this disgrace in 1477 but later recovered and served with distinction on the northwest frontier.
- 6 Lu does not identify which god, but the presence of blood sacrifices means that the deity did not belong to the Buddhist or Daoist religions and probably was a local god.
- 7 “Wind and dust” is a term for the brothel quarters.
- 8 Zhu Yingtai concealed her sex and attended the school dressed as a young man.
- 9 According to the gazetteer, during the Sun En uprising, the Yin defender-in-chief and eventual founder of the Liu Song dynasty, Liu Yu (366–422), saw Liang in a vision aiding him in his struggle against the Sun En rebels (ca. 399). The rebels eventually fled, and the state built a shrine for Liang to honor his divine intervention. See *Ningbo fuzhi*, 11.537b.
- 10 For a thorough introduction and translation of different versions of this extremely famous love story, see Idema, *Butterfly Lovers*. In the 1950s and 1960s, the story became the subject of highly acclaimed movies made in China and Hong Kong.
- 11 The term best translates the word *lu*, an insult denoting uncivilized prisoners and used often by Han writers to refer to hostile foreigners.
- 12 Yang cited a story said to take place in 62 CE. While picking herbs on Mount Tiantai in Zhejiang, Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao became lost. They met two women immortals, married them, with peaches as part of the wedding feast, and spent “half a year” with them. When they returned home, seven generations of their descendants had passed. The two men were said to disappear eventually, in 383. I have not found the sources for the Han River or Mount Baling references, but Yang clearly casts aspersions on Wang’s virtue.
- 13 Ye, *Shuidong riji*, 14.141.
- 14 *Chaupur*, a south Asian game of chance, was played in China since the early third century. I have not been able to ascertain precisely the odds that the Xia family faced, but they must have been very long.
- 15 “Native officials” were non-Han, aboriginal leaders on the southwest frontier, co-opted by the Ming government in its long-term colonization of the region. Offices were hereditary, and native officials, barred from the examination system, had no Confucian education.
- 16 Seeking a historical precedent, Lu Rong turns to the official history of the Sui dynasty, quoting and summarizing a biography of another accomplished woman in the southwest. See Wei Zheng, *Sui shu*, 80.1800–1803.
- 17 According to Ming law, the presence of those male kin would have prevented her from becoming an official.

CHAPTER THREE: POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

- 1 The Duanwu festival, held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, was the most important summer festival in late imperial China. It commemorated the heroic suicide of the poet-statesman Qu Yuan, who drowned on this date in 278 BCE after the Chu kingdom's ruler heeded the slander of Qu's enemies and exiled him. The most popular festival activities are dragon boat racing and the making of *zongzi*, a dish made of glutinous rice and various fillings, wrapped in bamboo leaves.
- 2 This is a court competition inherited from the foreign Liao (907–1115) and Jin (1115–1234) dynasties and adopted by the Song (960–1279). Willow trees were set up in a field, and archers on galloping horses shot at them. Attending these performances granted viewers considerable prestige. For a study, see Robinson, *Martial Spectacles*, 186–204.
- 3 This term is not found elsewhere, and I assume Lu refers to a pond on palace grounds.
- 4 Noteworthy local officials, as seen here, on occasion became cult figures, receiving shrines, offerings, and prayers dedicated to them after they left office. At times, these demonstrations of devotion began while the individual was still living. For this phenomenon in Ming times, see Schneewind, *Shrines*.
- 5 This sum would have been about half again as much as the salary granted to the highest-ranking officials, which was 1,044 *dan*. See Hucker, "Ming Government," 51.
- 6 *Changes* refers to *The Book of Changes*, known also as the *Yijing*, one of the five Confucian classics. This excerpt comes from the second part of the "Appended Explanations" section. See Ruan, *Zhou yi*, 166.
- 7 The Three Dynasties of remote antiquity are Xia, Shang, and Zhou.
- 8 Zhou quotes the Confucian philosopher Mencius (f. late fourth century BCE). The full remark is "Goodness alone is insufficient for good government; the law unaided cannot make itself effective." See Lau, *Mencius*, 76 (4A.1).
- 9 Tang and Yu were alternative names for the earliest sage-kings, Yao and Shun.
- 10 In 1380 Grand Councilor Hu Weiyong (?–1380) was executed on charges of creating a faction and plotting to seize power. The subsequent purge of his associates, followers, and their families led to the deaths of at least fifteen thousand people.
- 11 In 1390 the state embarked on a new purge of the supposed Hu faction,
- 12 *Qi* is a key but nearly untranslatable Chinese concept. It can refer to vital energy, atmospheric conditions, breath, air, and the life force. See Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi*, 215. *Qi* is the basic material stuff of the cosmos, both tangible and intangible. *Qi* is always changing, whether seen in terms of the yin-and-yang balance or in the processes of degeneration and regeneration. The health of a society's *qi* depends in large part on the conduct of the ruler and state policies. The concept also plays a central role in Chinese medicine.
- 13 Lu draws from Lau, *Mencius*, 45 (2B.5).
- 14 This lengthy, courageous defense of Confucian values clearly won Lu's approval and illustrates the greater career and personal security enjoyed by late fifteenth-century officials in comparison with their late fourteenth-century counterparts. Zhou and his memorial appeared in many late Ming and Qing anthologies, and Lu's entry marks one of the earlier and even perhaps the earliest reference.

- 15 The South Garden, south of Beijing, was an enclosure where emperors took their leisure and hunted.
- 16 Zhang Shicheng was one of the Ming founder's main rivals in the civil wars before 1368.
- 17 This document, promulgated and revised several times by the Ming founder, dealt mostly with imperial princes.
- 18 In *Grand Pronouncements*, issued in the late 1380s, the Ming founder held forth on crime and punishment, and right and wrong, addressing officials and commoners. The work circulated very widely.
- 19 These four punishments accounted for four of the Five Punishments employed by the short-lived Qin dynasty and other preimperial regimes, which later eras viewed as representing a brutal, pre-Confucian age. Their use would suggest that Ming officials did not know this basic history and that the dynasty lacked the benevolence that certified its political legitimacy.
- 20 Lu uses the euphemism "northern courtyard" to refer to the emperor's earlier Mongol captivity.
- 21 The five military commissions were the dynasty's most important military officials.
- 22 During the early 1470s, Ming forces repeatedly defeated Mongol Oirat armies in the northern part of contemporary Shanxi province. Despite these victories and expansion of the Great Wall, the frontier remained insecure. See Dardess, *More Than the Great Wall*, 219–49.
- 23 The "imperial palanquin" is the royal carriage and sometimes functioned as a metaphor for the emperor himself.
- 24 The Chinese considered owls to be inauspicious omens.
- 25 The Duke of Ying was the title of Zhang Fu (1375/1378–1449), a decorated general who died in the Tumu disaster. Kuang Ye (1385–1449) had opposed Yingzong's personal participation in the northern campaign. He later accompanied the emperor and died in combat.
- 26 Esen was head of the Mongol Oirat confederation.
- 27 Xi Ning was among those captured with Yingzong. While in captivity, Xi urged the Mongols to continue their advance into China. Eventually, the Mongols returned Xi to the Ming state, which soon executed him.
- 28 After the Tumu debacle, Yu successfully organized Beijing's defense. His bluntness, though, offended political rivals. They fabricated charges of treason and had him tried and executed after Yingzong's restoration in 1457.
- 29 Shi later played a major role in the coup d'état that resulted in Yingzong's restoration and Yu Qian's execution. He briefly dominated capital politics, but his excesses led to his imprisonment and execution in 1460.
- 30 The altars of soil and grain, key parts of imperial ritual, were metaphors for the dynasty.
- 31 Samarkand, in contemporary Uzbekistan, was the capital of the Timurid Empire. Lions, as early as 1413, had occasionally been part of its tribute package to the Ming.
- 32 At the suburban temples, the emperor presented sacrifices to heaven, earth, and his ancestors.
- 33 *The Spring and Autumn Annals* chronicled political events from 722 to 481 BCE. It was said to have been composed by Confucius, which granted it canonical status. Lu refers to a passage from *Zuozhuan*, which reads, "The Heaven-appointed king sent Jiafu to us

- to seek chariots: this was not in accord with ritual propriety. The princes do not offer chariots and official regalia, and the Son of Heaven does not ask for goods." See Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 125.
- 34 *Chuogenglu* was a large mid-fourteenth-century collection of miscellaneous notes. One entry said, "Lions' bodies are short and small. They resemble very closely the macaques and dogs that people keep as pets." See Tao, *Chuogenglu*, 24.289. For more on the controversies concerning imported exotic animals, see Robinson, *Martial Spectacles*, 278–357.
- 35 Lu praised Zhou Chen at length in his eight-point 1488 memorial to the throne. See SXW 21.5a–b.
- 36 The assumption was that these lands would no longer be taxed.
- 37 A golden tally served as a certification badge, bestowed by emperors on princes, permitting their entrance and departure to the capital and palace. During the Ming, golden tallies in theory remained under lock and key with the Directorate of Credentials, a palace agency staffed by eunuchs. Only emperors and empress dowagers had the authority to order their dispensation. Yu and Wang were charged with seeking to put Prince Xiang on the throne, instead of the Yingzong emperor.
- 38 Prince Xiang was Zhu Zhanshan (1406–1478), brother of the Xuande emperor and eldest son of Empress Zhang. The events described here took place in 1435, twenty-two years before charges were brought against Yu and Wang.
- 39 The three Yangs were Yang Shiqi (1365–1444), Yang Rong (1371–1440), and Yang Pu (1372–1446), who played central roles in early fifteenth-century court politics and national administration.
- 40 That is, their posthumous reputations would not have been rectified.
- 41 These scholar-officials all served in the Yuan dynasty government.
- 42 Xu Heng was a noted neo-Confucian scholar.
- 43 The additional water would presumably slow the current.
- 44 For more on the failure of Ming copper coin and paper money to become standard currency, see von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune*, 70–97. *Hongwu Rhymes* established a standard pronunciation for Chinese characters.
- 45 A *li* is a small fraction of an ounce. Chinese cash had a square hole in the middle, and one string ideally should link a thousand coins. The coin also bore the reign name in which it was cast. Lu makes the same observation in his eight-point memorial in 1488. See SXW 21.9a.
- 46 An eighth-century predecessor to *Hongwu Rhymes*.
- 47 These remarks on the Ming founder's legislation suggest how later scholar-officials might fault the policies of those who had created the dynasty. They contrast markedly with the near-universal approval and veneration that Song literati expressed toward their tenth-century founders. See Hartman, "Song History Narratives."
- 48 Chen Liang was a Song-dynasty scholar-official. In fact, during the fourth century, the Former Qin occupied the Yellow River plain, the Central Kingdom's core. The Jin ruled territory south of Yangzi, a region partially civilized in Han ways but still peripheral in the orthodox elite geographical imagination. For more on Chen's views, see Tillman, "Proto-Nationalism."
- 49 Wu Zetian (r. 690–705), the only Chinese empress to rule the empire in her own right.

- 50 Unmasking conspiracies could earn one promotions and honors.
- 51 Lu played a major role in bringing Wei to justice, as mentioned in several biographies.
- 52 The Jurchen Jin dynasty invaded north China in 1127, which sent the Song government fleeing south and commenced a bloody war that ended in 1141 with the Chinese cultural heartland under Jurchen rule. The Grand Councilor Qin Gui, then and centuries later, was seen as the central villain for pursuing appeasement policies and persecuting patriotic figures who sought to recover the north.
- 53 Gou Jian, ruler of the Yue kingdom, endured decades of personal austerity as he single-mindedly planned to avenge his battlefield loss to the Wu kingdom and his years of captivity there. He eventually destroyed Wu. The two emperors refer to Song Huizong (r. 1101–1125) and Song Qinzong (r. 1126–1127), whom the Jurchen took away north as their prisoners.
- 54 Lin'an (lit. "Provisional Security") was Hangzhou's name during the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), connoting that the court's residence there was temporary and that the Song would soon return north.
- 55 Hangzhou, with its hills and landmark West Lake, is renowned for its natural beauty.
- 56 Gaozong's father, Emperor Huizong, and his half-brother, Emperor Qinzong, died in Jurchen captivity.

CHAPTER FOUR: DEITIES, SPIRITS, AND CLERGY

- 1 At the battle of Baigou (in Hebei) in 1400, armies supporting the rebellious Prince of Yan, the future Yongle emperor, defeated forces loyal to the Jianwen emperor (r. 1399–1402) in bloody combat.
- 2 This entry relates a case of spirit-writing, a sort of Chinese séance. After purification rites, people summoned the gods or spirits, and asked them questions. The god or spirit would take possession of a brush or stylus, aided by a human, and provide answers. Both clergy and laypeople conducted such sessions, and the practice continues today.
- 3 This character can refer to the first star or the first four stars of the Big Dipper constellation. Extended meanings include "the best," "the first," or "the leader." In this case it refers to the top-ranked candidate. The constellation had a central place in Chinese religion and was viewed variously as the source of life and the celestial guardian of the state.
- 4 The "ghost" 鬼 and "ladle" 斗 refer to the components of the character *kui* 魁. Brush (*bi*) and ingot (*ding*) are puns for *biding* or "to be sure to." In other words, the valedictorian is bound to succeed.
- 5 Chinese tombs usually were located in auspicious sites that would bring security and prosperity to the living and the dead. Geomancy, as this expertise was known, had long been part of Chinese culture. Officials viewed the prospective imperial grave location as especially favorable and did not want the spirits of commoners nearby, perhaps plagued with maleficent influences, to diminish or even pollute the blessings that the imperial spirits could be expected to enjoy.
- 6 In Nanjing, the Hongwu Gate was the southern gate of the imperial palace. The Chaoyang Gate was the city's eastern gate, the Tongji Gate faced south, and the Hanxi Gate faced west. In Beijing, the Zhengyang Gate (known today as Qianmen) and the Daming Gate were the southern gates of the Forbidden City. I have not found sources that

- explicitly discuss these prohibitions. In the Chinese worldview, the emperor faced south, the source of yang forces and their blessings. North was the seat of dark yin forces and baleful influences, and belonged to the dead. Conceivably, bringing the dead through passages linked to yang forces risked polluting these thoroughfares.
- 7 The Beishang Gate leads north out of the imperial palace in Beijing.
 - 8 A title given to prominent Tibetan clergy managing Buddhist affairs during the Mongol Yuan dynasty.
 - 9 The Register of Sacrifices (*Sidian*), which listed the deities that received state offerings, in effect defined official religion. Deities not in the register technically were illegitimate, should not receive official patronage, and faced possible state suppression. Growing urbanization late Tang and Song dynasties led to the emergence of cults to the “gods of city walls and moats,” usually called “city gods.” City gods acted as the unseen partners of local officials, who gave offerings to them on seasonal occasions and during emergencies in return for supernatural assistance.
 - 10 Daxinglong Temple, built on an extravagant scale, was completed in 1448, and the court ordered its reconstruction after a fire the next year. In the early sixteenth century, its grounds were converted into a hall for discussing military affairs, and it later became a site for archery practice and tournaments. Dalongfu Temple was finished in 1453 and received court support well into the eighteenth century.
 - 11 In other words, eunuchs ordered their construction. Eunuchs were among the most important patrons of Buddhist temples in Ming Beijing. See Naquin, *Temples*, 180–85.
 - 12 Marriage granted the deceased a share of the offerings given by the next of kin to the dead and helped lessen the danger that unfulfilled, hungry ghosts might trouble the living. As many ethnographies have shown, these practices continued well into the twentieth century.
 - 13 The term “marchmount” refers to one of the five sacred mountains, which inspired intense religious devotion in dynastic China. One was located in each of the four cardinal directions, as well as in the center of China proper. The eastern marchmount, which received the greatest reverence, is Mount Tai in Shandong.
 - 14 Haoli is located on the southern face of Mount Tai, and its underworld precincts govern the land of the dead. “Thearch” means “divine ruler” and is also part of the Chinese term for emperor.
 - 15 “Krakens,” a term given to legendary water monsters, also refers to crocodiles. The Chinese viewed them as a subspecies of dragons and attributed to them fearsome powers. Another term for these creatures is “flood dragon.”
 - 16 Zhou Chu was a Jin dynasty official, and Xu Xun was a fabled immortal.
 - 17 Reading *you* 由 as *tian* 田.
 - 18 Unlike in other dynasties, which relied on canal transportation, the Yuan state also shipped southern grain to its northern capital by ocean-going vessels. The daughter of the Lin family later became the divinized Mazu or Tianfei, worshiped especially by seafaring communities in south China and Southeast Asia to the present day.
 - 19 Zhang Daoling is the putative founder of the organized Daoist religion.
 - 20 Yin usually is associated with women and yang with men, although individuals necessarily possess both qualities.
 - 21 Yao and Shun were the first two sage-kings of high antiquity.

- 22 A bay is the area, often rectangular, between the four-column spaces supporting a building.
- 23 I have not been able to find the identity of this person.
- 24 Zhang Han (fl. early fourth century), who grew homesick while serving at the capital Luoyang, resigned his post, and returned home to Wu. Lu Guimeng (?–881) was a reclusive poet who lived near Suzhou.
- 25 Fan Li, fearing that Yue king Gou Jian might turn on him, fled north, changing his name and becoming a very successful merchant.
- 26 The Grand Historian refers to Sima Qian (c. 145–c. 85 BCE), the greatest historian of ancient China. In fact, Sima wrote about Fan's business success and praised his philanthropy. See Sima, *Records*, 338.
- 27 Zhang Liang was a key advisor to the Han dynasty founder, Han Gaozu (r. 206–195 BCE). After Gaozu's death, Zhang left his official post and in reclusion took up the pursuit of longevity. Master Redpine was a famous mythical immortal.
- 28 The Yue king, Gou Jian, gave Xishi, a noted beauty, to the Wu king. Her charms so distracted the Wu ruler that Yue eventually destroyed his unprepared kingdom. One legend proposes that Fan Li took Xishi away after Wu's destruction. Histories paint Consort Xia (fl. mid-sixth century BCE) as a great femme fatale, leaving in her wake several murdered husbands, rulers, and ministers. Lord Shen counseled his ruler to avoid her, but he himself eventually eloped with her and defected to a rival state.
- 29 The remark actually does not come from *The [Book of] Rites* but *Zuozhuan*. See Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 301.
- 30 The brothers Taibo and Zhongyong were sons of the Zhou king Tai in high antiquity. When the king designated another brother as heir apparent, Taibo and Zhongyong fled south, tattooed their bodies, and cut their hair so as to allay suspicion that they might wish to be Zhou rulers. They became the first and second rulers of the Wu kingdom. Yanling Jizi (fl. 559 BCE) refused to become the Wu ruler, despite his brother's wishes, and retired to farm.
- 31 Reading 孰 as 就.
- 32 *Ci*, sometimes translated as “song-lyrics,” was a Chinese poetry genre, characterized by informality and association with the entertainment quarters.
- 33 “Completely muddy” and “without a mark” refer, I believe, to Lu Rong's seeing that his name did not appear on the placard listing successful *jinsi* examination candidates in 1463.
- 34 Kimnara is a heavenly musician in the Buddhist pantheon. Its image resembles humans. However, its horns inspire doubt as to whether it is a god or human. It is also one of Guanyin's manifestations, which perhaps explains its presence in a government office. See Xingyun, *Foguang dacidian*, 5895c–96b.
- 35 A pejorative name for the Southern Tang dynasty (937–975).
- 36 “Perfected one” is another Daoist term for immortal.
- 37 The work, which circulated widely, offers a complex amalgamation of Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist practices and concepts.
- 38 After her father drowned, Cao E wailed for seventeen days at the riverside and then drowned herself. Officials erected a stele in her honor, and her cult endured for centuries.

- 39 The bodhisattva Guanyin ranks as the most acclaimed Buddhist deity in late imperial China. A small island seventy miles away from Ningbo, Mount Putuo is revered as a Buddhist sacred mountain and has attracted scores of pilgrims for centuries up to the present day. For a thorough study, see Yü, *Kuan-yin*.
- 40 Jia Sidao became a Southern Song grand counselor, and posterity faulted him for his mismanagement of the Song resistance against the Mongol enemy.
- 41 In the traditional view, souls had two parts, which included ten components. Three were cloud-souls and seven were white-souls. At death, they separated, with the former leaving the body to float elsewhere, while the latter returned to the earth. For a discussion of this concept's roots, see Needham and Lu, *Science*, 85–93.

CHAPTER FIVE: KNOWLEDGE, TECHNOLOGY,
AND THE NATURAL WORLD

- 1 Literally, “old swine woman dragon,” or a term for the Chinese alligator.
- 2 Another term for the Chinese alligator.
- 3 Lu Rong refers obliquely to the mass trials and executions of the Hongwu era, which derived partly from alleged conspiracies against the throne.
- 4 The ancient Five Phases theory characterized the world as a series of dynamic combinations of properties attributed to wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. Their relationships were seen to govern the processes of the human body and its health. See Unschuld, *Medicine*.
- 5 The book, by Zhang Congzhen (1156–1228), makes this claim. See Unschuld, *Medicine*, 321–22.
- 6 Lu might be citing *Prescriptions from the Birth Treasury* (Chanbao zhufang), an anonymous work dated to 1167.
- 7 These herbs were thought to be effective in relieving abdominal pain.
- 8 The Autumn Office handled calendrical matters and belonged to the state's Directorate of Astronomy.
- 9 It is unclear if Lu refers here to the larger kinds, known sometimes as Napa cabbage, or the smaller ones, called bok choy.
- 10 The founder of the mythical Xia dynasty in high antiquity.
- 11 Qi assisted Yü in governing the empire.
- 12 Kunwu is credited with inventing ceramic vessels.
- 13 Lu uses the neo-Confucian term *qiongli*, translated often as investigating (or realizing) things to the utmost and finding their rational, inherent patterns.
- 14 “South of Shao” refers to the second chapter in *The Book of Songs*.
- 15 Lu cites a passage from Mencius. See Lau, *Mencius*, 127 (6A.7).
- 16 Lu uses the term *shuilun*, a general term for wheels that employ hydraulic power to operate other machines. The device he describes here resembles a *tongche* (cylinder wheel).
- 17 Lu refers to a story in *Zhuangzi*, in which Confucius's student Zigong, traveling in Hanyin, met an old man descending into a well, fetching water, coming out, and then watering his field. Zigong suggested a well-sweep for an easier, more efficient method. The man rejected Zigong's idea, arguing that clever devices would lead to crafty minds

- and prevent one from grasping the Way. For an English translation, see Graham, *Chuang-tzu*, 186–87.
- 18 Salt, an essential part of the Chinese diet, was in name a state monopoly, and its revenues composed a key part of the general income. However, the government relied heavily on merchants for the distribution and sale of salt, selling them vouchers or licenses to legally do so. In practice, the operation was marred by shifting standards, remarkable red tape, smuggling, mismanagement, and corruption. The same voucher might entitle a merchant to possess widely varying amounts of salt, depending on the time and place. Large salt merchants were the wealthiest businessmen in the empire.
- 19 I follow here the version found in Huang Wei, *Pengxuan leiji*, 68.1521. *Bean Garden* reads 107,500 vouchers, which would mean that the state, improbably, exacted virtually no taxes from the enterprise.
- 20 Households registered by the government as salt producers.
- 21 The herb was used for abdominal pains and diarrhea.
- 22 Chinese materia medica prescribed human urine for many conditions, such as pulmonary ailments, abdominal discomfort, and sunstroke. See Li Shizhen, *Fowls*, 975–76.
- 23 This work, by the scholar-official Zhen Dexiu (1178–1235), commented on *Great Learning*, one of the Four Books, and demonstrated how application of its teachings would improve government.
- 24 In these two paragraphs, I have drawn on the partial translation of this entry by Peter J. Golas in the mining volume in *Science and Civilization in China*. See Golas, *Chemistry*, 344, 346.

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Lu Rong (1436–1494), a native of Suzhou Prefecture, spent his career in positions at the capital, the northern frontier, and south China. **Mark Halperin** is associate professor of East Asian languages and cultures at the University of California, Davis. He is author of *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960–1279*.

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