

**THE POETICS OF MISCELLANEOUSNESS:
THE LITERARY DESIGN OF LIU YIQING'S *QIANTANG YISHI* AND THE
HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SOUTHERN SONG**

by

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To Wei and Ava

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INTRODUCTION

The present study focuses on a ten-chapter (*juan* 卷) book titled *Qiantang yishi* 錢塘遺事 (*Anecdotes of Qiantang*), written/compiled by Liu Yiqing 劉一清, who is believed to have been a Southern Song (1127-1279) loyalist living in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.¹ In general, the book chronicles the political, military, and cultural reasons behind the fall of the Southern Song, but, as I shall show later in my study, there is much more that we can learn from it. The book did not enjoy wide circulation after it was completed and the recognition of its importance, both as a book about the history of the Song (960-1279) and as a literary work, is very limited. While materials from the book have been frequently used in studies on Chinese literature and history, the book as a whole has not received much scholarly attention. This can be seen from the fact that even until today there is no punctuated copy of the book published in Chinese.

The Genre

¹ See Liu Yiqing 劉一清 (fl. late 13th-early 14th centuries), *Qiantang yishi* 錢塘遺事 (*Anecdotes of Qiantang*; Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1985). This is the edition that I use for this study. It is a photo-reprint of the woodblock edition published in 1799 by Xishi saoye shanfang 席氏掃葉山坊, collated by Xi Shichen 席世臣 (ca. 1756–ca. 1815). For a brief discussion on the different edition of *Qiantang yishi*, please refer to Huang Yanhong 黃雁鴻, “*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao bianwu—Yi Xu Song biannian Zizhi tongjian, Qiantang yishi, Wudaishi quewen wei li.*” 《四庫全書總目》提要辨誤——以《續宋編年資治通鑒》、《錢塘遺事》、《五代史闕文》為例 (Errors in the Summary of the *General Catalogue of Complete Library of Four Branches of Literature—Using the Sequel to the Song Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government, Anecdotes of Qiantang, and Omissions in the History of the Five Dynasties as examples*), *Shumu jikan*, 2009.4: 73-83.

Qiantang yishi belongs to a type of Chinese literature called *biji* 筆記 (literally, brush notes), whose miscellaneous content, accommodative structure, and flexible form often challenge our very conception of literary genre itself. The word “*biji*” appears quite early in Chinese writing, but the actual use of it to denote a genre is possibly a recent phenomenon.² Historically, the texts that are now regarded as *biji* have been called by different names, such as *bitan* 筆談 (brush talks), *congtao* 叢談 (collected chats), *conghua* 叢話 (collected talks), *xinyu* 新語 (new talks), *suichao* 隨抄 (casual excerpts), *suibi* 隨筆 (casual writing), *suilu* 隨錄 (casual records), *zaji* 雜記 (miscellaneous notes), *zalu* 雜錄 (miscellaneous records), *suowen* 瑣聞 (trifles overheard), or *yishi* 遺事 (remnant events).³ The term *biji* has also been translated differently into English, such as “random jottings,” “note-form literature,” “occasional notes,” “desultory notes,” “miscellanies,” “literati miscellanies,” and “miscellaneous notes.” This diversity in translation, according to James Hargett, suggests a major difficulty that one may face in attempting to define and discuss the genre:

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to define *pi-chi* in precise terms because there are no hard-and-fast rules governing its style and content. This also explains why *pi-chi* [*biji*] does not fit into any single Chinese bibliographic category. Such works are usually assigned to either the *tsa-chia* [*zajia*] (miscellaneous schools) or the *hsiao-shuo* [*xiaoshuo*] (fiction) sections in the traditional bibliographies. Since there are no strict prosodic or genre rules governing *pi-chi*, the number of extant *pi-chi* collections in China could easily number in the thousands. The total would vary greatly depending on how one defines the genre.⁴

Hargett’s argument regarding the difficulty of defining *biji* can be explicated at three levels: (1) The extremely heterogeneous content and style of *biji* make it hard for us to describe and define the genre in clear and definite terms. (2) The texts that we now

² To my knowledge, the first use of the term to denote a genre called *biji* probably did not occur until the early 20th century. See my discussion in the latter part of this introduction.

³ Translations of these terms are based on Wilkinson’s translations. See Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), “*Biji*,” p. 611.

⁴ James M. Hargett, “Sketches,” included in Victor H. Mair ed. *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 560.

regard as *biji* are scattered across different categories in traditional Chinese bibliographies, which betrays incongruences among the assessments of these texts by their creators, traditional Chinese bibliographers, and literary critics. (3) The sheer number of the texts that could be classified under the category of *biji* also creates difficulties for us to have a clear and comprehensive view of the genre. One thing that needs to be pointed out here is that these reasons are in fact interconnected with each other and sometimes also mutually causative. It is, therefore, extremely difficult for us to separate them clearly. But for the convenience of discussion, I choose to put them into separate categories in the following discussion. I believe this separation will help us look into some more important issues behind these reasons, which may be overlooked if they are not treated separately.

(1) The heterogeneous content and style

Scholars have tried very hard to give order to the otherwise unruly content and style of *biji*. Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661-721), a Tang dynasty (618-907) historian and scholar, for instance, divided what he called *pianji xiaoshuo* 偏記小說 (literally, unofficial records and small talks) into ten types.⁵ Similarly, Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602), a Ming dynasty (1368-1644) scholar and literary critic, also classified the numerous *xiaoshuo* 小說 (literally, minor talks), many of which are now regarded as *biji*, into six subcategories.⁶ Modeling upon Liu's and Hu's classifications, Liu Yeqiu 劉葉秋, a modern scholar who writes a small but useful book on the historical development of *biji*,

⁵ See Liu Zhiji 劉知幾(661-721), *Shitong* 史通 (Generalities of Historiography, Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997), p.81. A discussion of this classification system can be found in Wang Yanhua 王燕華 and Yu Gang 俞綱, "Liu Zhiji *Shitong* de biji xiaoshuo gainian" 劉知幾《史通》的筆記小說觀念 (Liu Zhiji's Views on Literary Sketches as Reflected in the *Generalities of Historiography*), *Journal of Shanghai Normal University (Philosophy & Social Sciences Edition)*, 2008, 6: 100-107. Some of the works that Liu Zhiji included in the *pianji xiaoshuo* are not *biji* according to the standards that we are using now. This has a lot to do with the changes in the concepts of *biji* and *xiaoshuo*, which I will discuss in detail shortly.

⁶ See Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602). *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* 少室山房筆叢 (Brush Notes from Shaoshi Shanfang; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), p. 374. A detailed discussion on Hu Yinglin's classification system can be found in Laura Hua Wu, "From Xiaoshuo to Fiction: Hu Yinglin's Genre Study of Xiaoshuo," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55.2 (1995): 339-71.

divides the genre into three subcategories. Compared with studies done by his predecessors, Liu's classification of the *biji* better represents our current understanding of the genre, and is therefore worth a lengthy examination here. According to Liu Yeqiu, the numerous *biji* texts can be divided into three types based on the different foci of their content.⁷ The first type is what he calls *xiaoshuo gushi lei* 小說故事類 (fictional stories), and he lists books such as Gan Bao's 干寶 (d. 336) *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (In Search of the Supernatural), Liu Yiqing's 劉義慶 (403-444) *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A New Account of Tales of the World), Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123-1202) *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (Records of the Listener), and Pu Songling's 蒲松齡 (1640-1715) *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋志異 (Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio) as belonging to this type.⁸ The second type is what he calls *lishi suowen lei* 歷史瑣聞類 (historical tidbits), which includes such texts as *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital), attributed to Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca. 46 B.C.E.- 23 C.E.); *Sui Tang jiahua* 隋唐嘉話 (Anecdotes of the Sui and Tang Dynasties) by Liu Su 劉餗 (fl. 728); *Laoxue an biji* 老學庵筆記 (Jottings from the Study of An Old Learner) by Lu You 陸遊 (1125-1210); and *Chibei outan* 池北偶談 (Random Talks on the North Side of the Pond) by Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711).⁹ The third type is

⁷ Liu Yeqiu 劉葉秋, *Lidai biji gaishu* 歷代筆記概述 (A Brief Discussion on Biji across the Ages; Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2003), pp. 4-5. Liu's classification of *biji* resembles the three-fold classification that Y.W. Ma gives in his article, but is more refined. According to Ma, *biji* can be divided into three main categories: fictional, historical, and philological. See Y. W. Ma, "Pi-Chi," in William H. Nienhauser ed., *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, Vol. I, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 651. Fu Daiwie suggests classifying the various Song *biji* texts based on their own taxonomies, which, according to Fu, were greatly influenced by the two compiling traditions represented respectively by *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 and *Taiping guanji* 太平廣記 (Two encyclopedic collections compiled during the Song dynasty). One potential problem with this argument, however, lies in the fact that *Taiping yulan* was intended to be a collection of selections from the classics and does not contain many *biji* texts in it. See Fu, Daiwie. "The Flourishing of Biji or Pen-Notes Texts and Its Relations to History of Knowledge in Song China (960-1279)," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient (Special issue)* (2007): 103-28.

⁸ Gan Bao, *Soushen ji*, Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu* are both included in *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo dagan* 漢魏六朝筆記小說大觀 (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Han, Wei and Six Dynasties; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), pp. 269-436, 749-1000, respectively. For the other texts, see Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006) and Pu Songling, *Liaozhai zhiyi* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1980).

⁹ Liu Xin, *Xijing zaji* is Included in *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo dagan*, pp. 73-119, Liu Su, *Sui Tang jiahua* is Included in *Tang Wudai biji xiaoshuo dagan* 唐五代筆記小說大觀 (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Tang and Five Dynasties; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), pp.87-117, and Lu You, *Laoxue an biji* is Included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo dagan* 宋元筆記小說大觀 (A Great

what he calls *kaoju bianzheng lei* 考據辨證類 (exegesis, philology and textual studies), representative examples of which include Cui Bao's 崔豹 (fl. 3rd-4th centuries) *Gujin zhu* 古今注 (Exegeses of the Past and Present), Feng Yan's 封演 (fl. 8th-9th centuries) *Fengshi wenjian ji* 封氏聞見記 (Records of Things Heard and Seen by Feng Yan), Shen Kuo's 沈括 (1031-1095) *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (Brush Talks from Dream Brook), and Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 (1613-1682) *Rizhi lu* 日知錄 (Records of Daily Knowledge).¹⁰ Like all previous classifications, Liu Yeqiu's classification also has its limitations.¹¹ Many of these limitations, however, are not caused by Liu's own negligence, but rather by the extreme broadness of the genre and the complexity of the texts included in it. Liu himself also acknowledges this. Immediately after laying out his classification system, Liu points out that the three types discussed in his book are by no means capable of encompassing all the variety of the content covered by the genre, and many of the *biji* texts nominally classified as belonging to one of the three types in fact also contain elements belonging to the other two.¹² Because of this complexity, Liu suggests that one thing that predominantly characterizes the content of *biji* is its miscellaneousness (*za* 雜).¹³ This miscellaneousness is manifested not only through the heterogeneity of materials included in the *biji* texts, but also through the genre's very resistance or defiance to any classificatory attempt placed upon it.

Like what they do with *biji*'s content, scholars also strive to use specific terms to describe the formal features of the genre. Yau-Woon Ma, for instance, argues that two basic characteristics of *biji* are its brevity and casualness.¹⁴ Similarly, Liu Yeqiu also uses

Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Song and Yuan Dynasties; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), pp. 3445-3548. For the last work, see Wang Shizhen, *Chibei outan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006).

¹⁰ Cui Bao *Gujin zhu* 古今注 is included in *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 227-250. For the other works, see Feng Yan, *Fengshi wenjian ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), Shen Kuo, *Mengxi bitan* (Chendu: Bashu shushe, 1995), and Gu Yanwu, *Rizhi lu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006).

¹¹ For instance, Liu Yeqiu does not discuss much in his book about the various "notes on poets and poetry" (*shihua* 詩話, *cihua* 詞話), which are mostly written in the form of *biji*, possibly due to the concern that these works are now often treated as a distinct genre of literary criticism. This type of *biji*, if included, seems to be unable to fit in any of the three categories that Liu lists in his books.

¹² Liu Yeqiu. *Lidai biji gaishu*, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ Y. W. Ma "Pi-Chi," *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, I, p. 650.

the word *san* 散 (loose, desultory), which implies that *biji* entries can vary in length and differ in focus, to describe the genre's formal features.¹⁵ In the same vein, Hargett suggests that *biji* texts are often composed in an "informal" prose style, which means on the one hand that *biji* usually belong to a prosaic style of writing which is more clear and direct, and less allusive and erudite, and on the other that *biji* can be put together by anyone at any time for just about any purpose.¹⁶ All these descriptions on the formal features of *biji*, in spite of their informing content, are not without problems. For instance, Ma's argument on the brevity of *biji* can be challenged on the ground that many *biji* entries are in fact quite long, compared with other types of literary texts written in classical Chinese. In addition, it is also worth pointing out that though many *biji* texts in general assume a clear and direct prose style, this by no means indicates that other forms of writing do not exist in them. As a matter of fact, *biji* is a place where different genres of literature and/or types of writing converge, many of which are themselves full of varying prosodic patterns, allusive descriptions, and erudite language. Finally, the claim of *biji*'s casualness or "informality" is also misleading. It may leave us with an impression that the composition of *biji* is often done in a less meticulous or less refined fashion, while in reality it is often exactly the opposite. In most cases, the seeming casualness or informality of *biji* is but a facade deliberately put up and only surface-level deep. This facade is used by *biji* writers/compiler to "show off" their modesty and prudence, as well as to excuse themselves from any mistake or inaccuracy that may occur in their books. But more importantly, it is also used to call for a less conventional but more versatile way of reading, which fits better not only the complexity of the texts themselves but also to the special kind of literariness of the genre.

It is, therefore, both possible and impossible to describe the style and content of *biji*. While words like "miscellaneous," "casual," "informal," and "desultory" may give us a general idea of what a *biji* text looks like, the ambiguity innate in these words makes it hard for us to describe the genre in clear and definite terms. In other words, the terms

¹⁵ Liu Yeqiu. *Lidai biji gaishu*, p. 6.

¹⁶ Hargett, "Sketches," p. 561.

and concepts that we use to define the genre of *biji* are themselves indefinite and relative, and therefore constantly thwart our attempts to achieve a precise definition. Because of this, our description of the content and style of *biji* can be at best nebulous. While these kinds of nebulous descriptions may help us identify a *biji* text when we see it, it is far from being enough to delineate a clear-cut picture of what the genre truly is. Having said this, however, we must acknowledge that this very nebulosity was, in fact, historically important to the development of the genre. Because of it, *biji* was more capable of changing, diversifying, and multiplying itself within the generic boundary loosely set by our nebulous conception of the genre.

(2) The lack of recognition in traditional Chinese bibliography

In the well-known four-fold classification system, *sibu fenlei fa* 四部分類法,¹⁷ which divides traditional Chinese texts into the four branches of *jing* 經 (classics), *shi* 史 (histories), *zi* 子 (philosophy), *ji* 集 (literature and literary criticism), there is no place to easily accommodate the genre of *biji*. The numerous texts that we now consider *biji* are scattered mainly among two of the four branches—*shi* and *zi*—based on the nature of their content.¹⁸ While this may leave us with an impression that *biji* as a literary genre did not fully establish itself in the past, what it actually belies is just a conflict between the genre's *de facto* existence and its lack of official recognition by traditional Chinese literary critics and bibliographers. This kind of conflict is by no means uncommon in traditional Chinese literary history, but the duration of its existence pertaining to *biji* indeed seems too long to be deemed usual. As I shall discuss later in this chapter, the writing/compilation of *biji* have been a popular literary practice ever since the third

¹⁷ The system was invented by Xun Xu 荀勗 (?-289) to replace the seven-fold classification system invented by Liu Xin 劉歆. The current names and order of these four categories were not settled until Li Chong 李充 (fl. 323) rearranged and named the four categories as *jing*, *zi*, *shi*, *ji*. The four categories were not finalized until the compilation of the *History of the Sui Dynasty* 隋書 during the Tang dynasty (618-907).

¹⁸ To be more specific, most of the *biji* texts can be found in the *zashi* 雜史 (miscellaneous history) and *dili* 地理 (geography) subcategories of the *shi* branch, and *zajia* 雜家 (miscellaneous schools) and *xiaoshuo* 小說 (minor talks) subcategories of the *zi* branch.

century, but the official acknowledgment of the genre does not appear until very recent times.¹⁹ This delay in bibliographical recognition to a large extent indicates the marginalized status of the genre of *biji* in traditional Chinese literature and literary criticism. However, while this might prevent us from acquiring a better knowledge of the critical reception of the genre in the past, it also grants the genre a chance to expand and develop itself, enabling it to achieve a level of flexibility or versatility that would be otherwise unattainable had the genre become more recognized in Chinese literary history.

Because of *biji*'s lack of recognition in traditional Chinese bibliography, many of the texts that are now regarded as *biji* were previously classified under the category of *xiaoshuo* 小說, which is a subcategory listed under the *zi* branch in the four-fold classification system. This has led some scholars to treat the two genres—*biji* and *xiaoshuo*—as almost equivalent to each other. Hence, in some studies, we will see the misleading employment of the term *biji xiaoshuo* 筆記小說 to mean basically the same thing as *biji*.²⁰

In theory, however, *biji* and *xiaoshuo* are two entirely different categories. Readers familiar with traditional Chinese language and literature will know that the term *xiaoshuo* did not originally carry its modern connotation of “fiction,” but was rather used to denote a lesser genre of Chinese literature, which, according to Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), consisted mostly of “street talk” (*jietan* 街談) and “alley-way gossip” (*xiangyu* 巷語) collected by petty officials (*baiguan* 稗官).²¹ Because of *xiaoshuo*'s

¹⁹ To my knowledge, the first collection of *biji* texts did not appear until the early twentieth century, and the first study that focuses specifically on the historical development of the genre of *biji*, not *biji xiaoshuo*, did not appear until 1980's. See my later discussion on the *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* 筆記小說大觀 originally published by Jinbu shuju 進步書局, and on Liu Yeqiu's book *Lidai biji gaishu*.

²⁰ The phrase “*biji xiaoshuo*” first appears in Shi Shengzu's 史繩祖 (1192-1274) *Xuezhai zhan bi* 學齋占畢 (Citations in the Study Room). In that book, the two components of the phrase, “*xiaoshuo*” and “*biji*,” are used as equivalent to each other. See Shi Shengzu (1192-1274), *Xuezhai zhanbi* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1939), p. 31. Even in the *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* published by Jinbu shuju, the two terms are not clearly differentiated from each other.

²¹ Ban Gu's comments on *xiaoshuo* occur in the “Treatise on Literature” (*Yiwen zhi*, 藝文志) included in his *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han Dynasty). For discussion, please refer to Lu Xun 魯迅, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* 中國小說史略 (A Brief History of Chinese Fiction; Hong Kong: Jindai tushu gongsi, 1965), pp. 2-3,

lesser status, works that are classified under this category were usually believed to be less canonical or important. They were by and large marginalized texts that were deemed unfit to be placed in other more renowned or more clearly-defined literary categories. It is as Alister David Inglis has rightly pointed out: The genre of *xiaoshuo* is in fact a “residual category,” which was “broad enough to be a category under which works could be classified when there seemed nowhere else to put them.”²² This residual status has to some extent “deprived” *xiaoshuo* of any distinct or definite generic characteristics, changing it into a more or less all-encompassing genre into which works are classified “not because of what they were, but because of what they were not.”²³ What this residual status implies is that *xiaoshuo*, as a traditional bibliographical category, has a notable relational nature, in the sense that what eventually determines a text’s *xiaoshuo* status is not so much its own literary features, but rather the assessment of its importance in relation to other texts. In order to perform this assessment, the content of the *xiaoshuo* text must be carefully examined, reviewed and evaluated, against the huge body of literatures which are believed to be more important or canonical.

In contrast to this understanding of *xiaoshuo*, which emphasize the relational importance of the genre’s content, scholars define *biji* largely based on its distinct formal features. Every since the term “*biji*” first appeared during the Six Dynasties,²⁴ it was used to designate a form of writing that was more prosaic, straightforward, succinct, and seemingly casual and lacking of deliberate literary embellishment. In Liu Xie’s 劉勰 (ca. 465-520) *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*), for instance, the word *bi* 筆 was used to mean a style of writing that stands in sharp contrast with *wen* 文, which was more rhymed, emotional, convoluted, and full of

and Gu Ming Dong, *Chinese Theories of Fiction: A Non-Western Narrative System* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 21-25.

²² Alister D. Inglis, *Hong Mai’s Record of the Listener and Its Song Dynasty Context* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 108.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²⁴ According to Miao Zhuang 苗壯, the word “*biji*” is first used in the biography of Qiu Juyuan 丘巨源 (fl. 484) in *Nanqi shu* 南齊書 (History of the Southern Qi). See Miao Zhuang, *Biji xiaoshuo shi* 筆記小說史 (History of the Biji Fiction; Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1998), p. 4.

parallelism and flowery description.²⁵ These formal features of *biji* as a style of writing later become the essential criteria for us to assess and determine a work's *biji* status. Although they should by no means be equalized with the formal features of *biji* as a genre of literature, they play a significant role in helping us identify a *biji* text when we see one.²⁶ Admittedly or not, the things that profoundly affect or even determine our preliminary judgment of a text's *biji* status are its formal features, not so much the relational importance of its content. In this aspect, the understanding of *biji* is fundamentally different from that of *xiaoshuo*. While the residual status of *xiaoshuo* means that it largely defines itself in relational and flexible terms, the genre of *biji* seems to impose more definite requirements on the form of the texts included in it. Because of this fundamental difference, the overlaps between *xiaoshuo* and *biji* should by no means be viewed as proof for the equivalence of the two genres. Many texts whose content is deemed less important or canonical are not written in the form of *biji*. In the same vein, a *biji* text may also be considered too important or canonical to be classified under the category of *xiaoshuo*.

In addition to causing confusion between the two distinct genres, the use of the term *biji xiaoshuo* also runs the risk of undermining *biji*'s independence as a literary genre. As I mentioned before, the meaning of the word *xiaoshuo* has undergone a fundamental change in modern times. Now, whenever the word is used, it is used to mean not "minor talk" as in its traditional sense, but rather "fiction," which points to what is now a more renowned and established genre of literature. This fundamental change in meaning has led some scholars to regard *biji* as an attribute of types of *xiaoshuo*, and to interpret the term *biji xiaoshuo* as meaning "fiction written in the form

²⁵ See Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465-520), *Wenxin diaolong zhushi* 文心雕龍注釋 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons with Annotations), Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫 anno., (Taipei: Liren shuju, 1985), p. 801. For discussions on the differences between *wen* and *bi*, see Cai Zongqi, "Wen and the Construction of a Critical System in *Wenxin diaolong*." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 22, (Dec. 2000): 23, and Tao Litian 陶禮天, "Liuchao wen bi lun yu wenxueguan" 六朝"文筆論"與文學觀 (Discussions on *Wen* and *Bi* and the Literary Conception during the Six Dynasties), *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究, 2005.5: 85-92.

²⁶ Some scholars suggest that we should differentiate *biji* as a style of writing and *biji* as a genre of literature. See Tao Min 陶敏 and Liu Zaihua 劉再華, "'Biji xiaoshuo' yu Biji yanjiu" "筆記小說"與筆記研究 (*Biji xiaoshuo* and the Study of *biji*). *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產, 2003. 02: 107-44.

of notebooks.”²⁷ A direct result of this anachronistic interpretation is that many *biji* texts are selected and analyzed through the lenses of the development of Chinese fiction, with their own special literariness and evolving trajectory as *biji* being generally neglected.

However, while theoretically it is possible and necessary to separate *biji* from other literary genres, especially from *xiaoshuo*, in reality such a goal can never be fully accomplished. *Biji*, due to its miscellaneous content and flexible form, is doomed to intersect and interweave with other genres of literature. Because of this, it is always difficult to bibliographically fix a *biji* text into a single category; generically, it is also hard to prevent *biji* texts from being read, assessed and analyzed as other types of literature. This to some extent testifies to the idea that “genres as more like ‘fuzzy sets’ than containers,”²⁸ in the sense that texts that are commonly assigned to one literary genre always contain elements from other genres and are therefore possible to infiltrate, through classification and/or literary analysis, other generic systems. This mutual permeability among different genres becomes especially prominent in a literary text as special and malleable as *biji*.

(3) The abundance of *biji* texts.

Logically speaking, it is the lack of a clear generic definition that has caused the number of works included in the genre of *biji* to become enormous. But in actuality, the two often turn a vicious circle and become mutually causative. That is to say, the less clearly and definitely we define the genre, the more works we tend to include in it; and the more works that we include into the genre, the more accommodative the genre tends to become and the less possible that we can come up with a clear and definite definition of it. According to a rough estimation done by the editors of *Lidai biji*

²⁷ In Miao Zhuan, *Biji xiaoshuo shi* and Wu Liqun 吳禮權, *Zhongguo biji Xiaoshuo shi* 中國筆記小說史 (History of Chinese Biji Fiction), the term is often interpreted in this way. See Wu Liqun, *Zhongguo Biji Xiaoshuo shi* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1993).

²⁸ Robert F. Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 23.

xiaoshuo daguan 歷代筆記小說大觀 (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* across the Ages), the total of extant *biji* texts exceed 3000.²⁹ Although this does not sound like a big number for a literary genre that has developed for such a long time, considering the rich and heterogeneous content possessed by these texts, we will understand how daunting a task it is for a literary scholar to even casually go over them and come up with a relatively comprehensive view of the genre. Of course, one may not need to read all the texts in a genre to come up with a definition of it. But the miscellaneous nature of *biji* prevents us from rushing into any quick conclusion about it solely on the basis of examining a few so-called “representative” texts. In other words, we may always find our “definition” of the genre in some way or other inadequate in face of a new *biji* text that may be brought to our attention. In almost every *biji* text there is something that will affect or even challenge our very basic assumption regarding the genre. This is what makes the abundance of the texts classified as *biji* an especially notable difficulty for our conception of the genre, for if it is already so hard for us to discern the unifying features in a small group of texts, how much harder it would be if there are thousands of texts like them still waiting there for our literary scrutiny?

The three difficulties discussed above make it necessary that our approach in defining the genre of *biji* can never be a traditional one. Our definition cannot be strictly prescriptive, as *biji*'s heterogeneous content and flexible form defy any prescriptive rules imposed on it. Our definition cannot be too bibliographically oriented, as the miscellaneous nature of the genre often renders it possible to relate it to other types of literature. It is possible for our definition to be descriptive, but the inadequacy of this description must be acknowledged from the very start, for the sheer number of *biji* texts not only creates difficulty for us to gain a comprehensive view of them but also poses serious challenges to our basic assumptions about the genre. In short, in trying to define the genre of *biji*, we have to be extremely careful so that we will not make our definition too confining, unbending and narrow to choke our understanding of the genre. But at the same time, our definition cannot be entirely unrestricted and flexible, for that

²⁹ See Shanghai guji bianjibu 上海古籍編輯部 ed. *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan*, p. 2.

will equally cause a deadly explosion of the genre. The best approach that we may use then is to find the middle ground, that is, to consider our definition of *biji* not as a set of transcendental and unchangeable rules or conventions that constitute and determine the writing and reading of the genre, but rather as an enabling condition of cultural exchange of ideas and values that help the genre continue to grow and expand, without losing its essential identity. With this in mind, we can then proceed to consider one of the most distinct characteristics of *biji*, namely, its miscellaneousness. I use this term “miscellaneousness” here to summarize all the accommodativeness, plasticity, and indeterminacy that the genre has demonstrated in its form and content, e.g. the heterogeneity of its materials, the flexibility of its structure, the variability of its length, and the diversity of its style. This “miscellaneousness,” in my view, is where the genre of *biji* is rooted. It is what essentially defines the genre; it is also what from time to time frees the genre from the confinement of its definition.

The History

The genre of *biji* has entertained a long history of development. Liu Yeqiu traces the origin of the first and second types of *biji*, according to his classification, back to the pre-Qin period (before the 3rd century B.C.E.) and that of the third type to the Han period (3rd century B.C.E.—3rd century C.E.).³⁰ The actual florescence of the genre, however, did not occur until the Tang and Song periods (7th-13th century).³¹

During the pre-Qin period, three types of literature are believed to have exerted significant influence on the birth of the genre of *biji*.³² They are, respectively, mythological tales, historical writing, and essays written by pre-Qin intellectuals (*zhuzi sanwen* 諸子散文). Representatives of the first type of literature, such as *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classics of the Mountains and Seas) and *Mu tianzhi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (A

³⁰ See Liu Yeqiu. *Lidai biji gaishu*, pp. 7-11. Similar arguments can also be found in Wu Liqun, *Zhongguo biji xiaoshuo shi*, pp. 4-12, and Miao Zhuang, *Biji xiaoshuo shi*, pp. 12-15. My following argument on the historical development of *biji* is largely based on the research in these three works.

³¹ See also Hargett, "Sketches," p. 560.

³² Miao Zhuang, *Biji xiaoshuo shi*, pp. 12-13.

Biography of Mu, the Son of Heaven), have provided both thematic and stylistic models for later *biji* texts of similar nature.³³ The sketchy but lively descriptions that we may find in early historical writings like *Guoyu* 國語 (Discourses of the States) and *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (Strategies of the Warring States) also constitute another important heritage that later *biji* writers have inherited from their ancestors.³⁴ Moreover, the marvelous tales and fables abundant in the essays written by pre-Qin intellectuals, especially in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, are believed to have significantly influenced the composition of the *zhiguai* 志怪 (Records of Anomalies) type of *biji* works.³⁵ Similarly, the succinct but vivid depiction of people's words and action, which we may find in books like *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects of Confucius), are often viewed as the predecessors for the *biji* texts or entries that focus on similar subjects.³⁶ In short, though many of the works discussed here are not considered as *biji* now, they contain important elements that profoundly influence the birth and later growth of the genre. For this reason, scholars choose to view the pre-Qin period as a time when the genre of *biji* was in embryo, where seeds for its future development were planted.³⁷

The approximately four hundred years of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.—220 C.E.) witnessed the inception of the genre of *biji*. Works that clearly bear some of the most essential features of the genre, such as the brevity of the entries, the apparent looseness of the structure, and the miscellaneous content, started to appear. The focuses of these *biji* texts are quite diversified. There are works that concentrate mostly

³³ See *Shanghai jing*, Fang Tao 方韜 Trans. and Anno., (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), and Wang Yiliang 王貽樑 and Chen Jianmin 陳建敏, ed. *Mu tianzi zhuan huijiao jishi* 穆天子傳匯校集釋 (A Biography of Mu, the Son of Heaven, with Collation and Annotation; Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue, 1994).

³⁴ Wu Liqun, *Zhongguo biji xiaoshuo shi*, pp. 5-6. See Liu Xiang 劉向 (?77-?6 B.C.E.), ed., *Zhanguo Ce* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), and Xu Yuanhao 徐元誥 comp., *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解 (Discourses of the States with Collected Exegesis; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002).

³⁵ See Chen Qiyu 陳奇猷 anno., *Hanfeizi jishi* 韓非子集釋 (Hanfeizi with Collected Annotations, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), Qian, Mu 錢穆 anno., *Zhuangzi zuanjian* 莊子纂箋 (Zhuangzi with Collected Annotations; Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2010). A recent translation of Zhuangzi in English is Brook Ziporyn trans., *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009). An introductory discussion of the *zhiguai* type of literature can be found in Hu Ying, "Records of Anomalies," included in Mair, ed. *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, pp. 542-55.

³⁶ See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 anno., *Lunyun* 論語 (Analects of Confucius; Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2000).

³⁷ Wu Liqun, *Zhongguo biji xiaoshuo shi*, p. 8.

on the unusual and supernatural things and events, such as Dong Fangshuo's 東方朔 (154-93 B.C.E.) *Shenyi jing* 神異經 (The Book of Divine Miracles), which clearly models *Shanhaijing* both in style and in content.³⁸ There are also books that collect historical stories and anecdotes about the Han dynasty, such as *Xijing zaji*. Among the second type of *biji* works, there are quite a few that focus on the life and mysterious adventures of Emperor Wu of the Han (156-87 B.C.E., r. 141-87 B.C.E.), such as the *Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳 (The Inner Biography of Emperor Wu of the Han), *Hanwu gushi* 漢武故事 (Anecdotes of Emperor Wu of the Han), and *Hanwu di bieguo dongmingji* 漢武帝別國洞冥記 (A Record of Emperor Wu of the Han's Penetration into the Secrets of Outlying Realms).³⁹ The fact that all these books choose a real historical person as their protagonist, however, does not guarantee the truthfulness of their accounts. In most cases, these works combined history with legend, truth with myths, and therefore should be regarded as being more fictional than real.

The third to the sixth centuries were a time when the genre of *biji* began to reach its maturity. Historically, this period corresponds to the Six Dynasties (220-589), a time of national disorder and strife in Chinese history. The chaos of the time, however, is believed to have created an invaluable opportunity for the burgeoning development of Chinese literature, especially the *zhiguai* type of *biji*. Famous writers like Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300), Gan Bao, and Tao Qian 陶潛 (365-427) all left behind influential *biji* works.⁴⁰ Even royal family members or emperors, such as Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-220), Emperor Wen of the Wei, and Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444), King of Linchuan, joined or

³⁸ Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154-93 B.C.E.), *Shen yi jing* is included in *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 45-61. While scholars argue about the actual authorship of the text, there is evidence (e.g. the mentioning of the book by other Han scholars or writers) that indicates it might be written during the Han dynasty.

³⁹ *Han Wudi neizhuan*, *Hanwu gushi*, and *Hanwu di bieguo dongmingji* are all included in *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 137-162, 163-179, and 119-136 respectively. Some of these texts, however, are believed to be forged by people living in the Six Dynasties (232-589) period.

⁴⁰ Zhang Hua, *Bowu zhi* 博物志 (Records of the Vast Objects), Gan Bao, *Soushen ji*, Tao Qian, *Soushen houji* 搜神後記 (A Sequel to In Search of the Supernatural) are included in *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp.179-226, 269-435, and 436-487 respectively.

was believed to have joined the list of *biji* writers/compilers.⁴¹ At some level this testifies to the popularity of the genre at the time. More importantly, the period witnessed the maturity of two important types of *biji* works: One is the *zhiguai*志怪type (records of the anomalies), which was represented by Gan Bao's *Soushen ji*; the other is the *zhiren*志人type (records of famous personalities), which is represented by Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo xinyu*. The two works are believed to have set up the models for numerous later *biji* texts that focus on similar subjects. In addition, works such as Cui Bao's 崔豹 (fl. 3rd-4th centuries) *Gujin zhu*, which contains encyclopedic explanations on clothes, music, animals, plants, etc., also become widely influential and were emulated by later *biji* writers who prioritized philological study and exegesis of the classics in their works. In short, in spite of the disunity and turbulence that characterized the time, the third to sixth centuries were a key period in the historical development of *biji*. With the appearance of a large number of *biji* texts and writers of lasting fame and influence, this period laid down a solid foundation for the flourishing of the genre in the next few hundred years.

The genre of *biji* entered its first golden age of development in period from the seventh to the thirteenth century, which roughly covers the Tang (618-907) and the Song dynasties (960-1279). In spite of a short interruption in between, this period was generally believed to be the zenith point in Chinese history, for China not only achieved great unity during this time, but also made significant improvements in almost every aspect of life. Huge accomplishments had been made in different fields of Chinese literature, and *biji* was no exception. A large number of *biji* works emerged, and more and more people began to write in the genre. The various types of *biji* works that had been established since the Han dynasty also received further cultivation and development. For the *zhiguai* type of *biji*, there were works like Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi*, which remains popular and influential even until today. There were also works that modeled upon Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo xinyu*, such as Liu Su's 劉餗 (fl. 728) *Sui Tang Jiahua*

⁴¹ See Cao Pi attr., *Lieyi zhuan deng wuzhong* 列異傳等五種 (History of Arrayed Marvels and Other Five Other Works; Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1988), and Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu*. Some scholars attribute the first book to Zhang Hua.

隋唐嘉話 (Anecdotes of the Sui and Tang), Liu Su's 劉肅 (fl. 820) *Datang xinyu* 大唐新語 (A New Account of the Great Tang).⁴² Among all the types of *biji* works, the historical *biji* became especially prominent during this period, particularly in the Song dynasty. Famous works like Li Zhao's 李肇 (fl. 813) *Tang guoshi bu* 唐國史補 (Amendments to the History of the Tang), Sima Guang's 司馬光 (1019-1086) *Sushui jiweng* 涑水記聞 (Records at the Su River), Wang Mingqing's 王明清 (1127-?) *Huizhu lu* 揮麈錄 (Records of Flicking the Fly Whisk), and Ye Shaoweng's 葉紹翁 (fl. Late 12th-early 13th century) *Sichao wenjian lu* 四朝聞見錄 (Things Heard and Seen during Four Reigns), represented but a small portion of a huge body of *biji* texts popular at the time that focused on the historical events and/or personalities of the past and the present.⁴³ Many of these *biji* writers were historians themselves, and the materials that they collected in their *biji* were of high historical or historiographical value. Some of the materials became important sources for the writing and compilation of official histories. In addition to the thriving growth of historical *biji*, another thing that we may notice about this period is that the content of the *biji* texts became even more miscellaneous. Books like Duan Chengshi's 段成式 (803-863) *Youyang zacu* 酉陽雜俎 (Miscellany of Youyang), Feng Yan's 馮衍 *Fengshi wenjian ji*, Luo Dajing's 羅大經 (1196–1242) *Helin yulu* 鶴林玉露 (Jade Dew in the Crane Forest), Lu You's 呂有 *Laoxue an biji*, and Hong Mai's 洪邁 *Rongzhai suibi* 容齋隨筆 (Miscellaneous Notes by Rongzhai), cover a wide range of topics from historical anecdotes and records of anomalies to philological studies and literary criticism.⁴⁴ Almost everything that the genre can accommodate can be found in these books. Last but not least, it is perhaps also worth pointing out here that the first book that used the term *biji* as its title also appeared during this period. It was a three-chapter book titled

⁴² Liu Su, *Datang xinyu* is included in *Tang Wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 203-338.

⁴³ See Li Zhao, *Tang guoshi bu* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1978). Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu lu*, Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu* are included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 3549-3850 and 4857-5008.

⁴⁴ Duan Chengshi, *Youyang zacu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981). Luo Dajing, *Helin yulu* is included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 5149-5384. See also Hong Mai (1123-1202), *Rongzhai suibi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007).

Song Jingwengong biji 宋景文公筆記 (*Brush Notes of Song Jingwen gong*), possibly compiled after the death of Song Qi 宋祁 (998-1061), to whom the book is attributed.⁴⁵

In contrast to its rapid and fruitful growth during the Tang and Song, the genre of *biji* developed much more slowly in following few centuries. The approximately one hundred years from the late thirteenth century to the middle fourteenth century, covering the historical period of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), did not witness much production of *biji* texts. Many of the *biji* works produced at this time, such as Liu Qi's 劉祁 (1203-1259) *Guiqian zhi* 歸潛志 (Records of Retirement), Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang yishi*, Zhou Mi's 周密 (1232-1308) *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事 (Former Things of Wulin), were written/compiled by Song and Jin (1115-1234) loyalists.⁴⁶ Because of their loyalist intent, these *biji* texts demonstrate strong interest in the history and/or culture of the previous dynasties, and are generally quite nostalgic in nature. In addition to the loyalist *biji*, another type of work, which aimed to provide a selected collection of previous *biji* texts, also started to become popular. The most representative example of this type of work is the 100-volume *Shuo Fu* 說郛 (The Outskirts of Discourses), compiled by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1321-1407) near the end of his life.⁴⁷ In spite of its highly selective nature (i.e., most of the *biji* texts included in this collection are incomplete), the appearance of this quasi-collection of *biji* texts was good for the promotion and preservation of examples of the genre that might otherwise have been completely lost. After the Yuan dynasty, the remaining three hundred years that corresponded to the time span of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) witnessed an increase in the production of *biji* texts. However, in spite of their increased number, few texts produced during this period have received the same kind of critical acclamation as their Tang and Song predecessors. Among the *biji* texts produced in the Ming, the historical *biji* were probably the most abundant, despite the fact that many of them had been

⁴⁵ Song Qi, *Song Jingwengong biji* is included in *Quan Song Biji*, Ed. Zhu Yi'an and Fu Xuanzong (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2003), pp. 43-73.

⁴⁶ Liu Qi, *Guiqian zhi* is included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 5903-6046. See also Zhou Mi, *Wulin jiushi* (Hangzhou: Xihu shushe, 1981).

⁴⁷ Tao Zongyi, *Shuo fu* (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1986).

burned or destroyed in the eighteenth century when the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature, henceforth referred to as SKQS) was compiled.⁴⁸ Works like Shen Defu's 沈德符(1578-1642) *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Private Gleanings during the Wanli Reign Period), and Lu Rong's 陸容(1436-1494) *Shuyuan zaji* 菽園雜記 (Miscellaneous Notes from the Bean Field) provide important information and materials that are useful for our knowledge of Ming history.⁴⁹ Other texts such as Zhang Dai's 張岱 (1597-1684) *Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶 (Dream Recollection from the Cottage of Tao) and *Xihu mengxun* 西湖夢尋 (In Search of Dreams on West Lake), which focus on Ming local history and customs, are not only well-known for their rich content but also for their elegant style of writing.⁵⁰

The genre of *biji* had its second golden period of development from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, during the Qing dynasty (1644-1912). Two of the most well-known and extensively studied *biji* texts, both focusing on records of anomalies, appeared during this period: The first one is Pu Songling's *Liaozhai zhiyi*, and the second one Ji Yun's 紀昀 (1274-1805) *Yuewei caotang biji* 閱微草堂筆記 (The Thatched Study of Close Scrutiny).⁵¹ In spite of their similar focus, however, the two texts are generally regarded as representing two opposite poles in the development of the *zhiguai* type of *biji*. While Pu Songling is believed to have purposely blended traditional *biji* style of writing with literary techniques used in Tang *chuanqi* 傳奇tales and vernacular fiction to make his stories more vivid and appealing to common readers, Ji Yun is said to have stuck firmly to the models set up by early *zhiguai* texts produced during the Six Dynasties and valued simplicity, "authenticity," and didacticism as the

⁴⁸ According to Liu Yeqiu, a lot of Ming unofficial histories, most of which were written in the form of *biji*, were ordered to be destroyed when the SKQS was compiled. See Liu Yeqiu, *Lidai biji gaishu*, p. 170.

⁴⁹ Shen Defu, *Wanli yehuo bian* and Lu Rong, *Shuyuan zaji* are both included in *Mingdai biji xiaoshuo caguan* 明代筆記小說大觀 (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Ming Dynasty; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005), pp. 1865-2886, 361-530.

⁵⁰ See Zhang Dai, *Xihu meng xun* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1984), *Tao'an mengyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008).

⁵¹ See Ji Yun, *Yuewei caotang biji* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe 2010).

ultimate ideals for his writing.⁵² Other than these two widely influential books, *biji* texts that focus on textual study, philological investigation and critical exegesis also thrived during this period. The flourishing of this type of *biji* is believed to have been related to the scholastic trend of the time promoted by people like Gu Yanwu and Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), who called for scholars to spend more time on the studies of the classics. The severe censorship during the early years of the Qing dynasty, especially during the reigns of Emperor Kangxi (1654-1722, r. 1661-1722), Yongzheng (1678-1735, r. 1722-1735), and Qianlong (1771-1799, r. 1735-1796), might have also forced *biji* writers to consciously choose to stay away from troubles and select a subject of writing that was less contemporary and sensitive. Because of these reasons, a great number of *biji* texts that were more philologically and/or academically oriented, such as Gu Yanwu's *Rizhi lu* and Qian Daxin's 錢大昕 (1278-1804) *Shijia zhai yangxin lu* 十駕齋養新錄 (Records of Cultivating the New from the Studio of An Inept Mind), started to appear.⁵³ Many of these texts surpassed their predecessors both in the scope of their content and the rigor of their research.

Scholarly Collections, Reference Works and Studies on Biji

Among the different genres of traditional Chinese literature, *biji* is by no means a neglected field of study. Collections of *biji* texts or *biji* entries started to appear very early. The number of academic studies on well-known *biji* works or on the development of the genre has also steadily increased since the beginning of the twentieth century. These studies on *biji*, in general, can be classified into four types:

(1) Collections of *biji* texts or entries

⁵² It needs to be pointed out here that Ji Yun's emphasis on "authenticity" does not necessarily mean that all the things that he records in his book must be real or actually happened in history. A record is deemed authentic if it is presented to the reader as it is originally told, not made up or tampered with by the recorder's own literary creation. In other words, what Ji Jun objected was the kind of literary processing of the materials that he thought Pu Songling did. For a detailed discussion on the difference between Pu Songling and Ji Yun's work, please refer to Miao Zhuang, *Biji xiaoshuo shi*, pp. 348-350, 359-377.

⁵³ See Qian Daxin, *Shijia zhai yangxin lu* (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000).

The earliest collections of *biji* entries can be found in the various Chinese encyclopedias called *leishu* 類書. The 500-volume *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Records of the Taiping Era) compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) and others during the Song dynasty, for instance, contains numerous stories, anecdotes and records taken from previous *biji* works.⁵⁴ The anthology itself, however, was not intended to be a collection of *biji* texts. The large number of *biji* entries selected into this anthology had been reshuffled and placed into different categories based on their types, in order to make them easier to be found. To my knowledge, the first quasi-collection of *biji* texts is possibly Tao Zongyi's *Shuo Fu*. This book contains a large collection of *biji* texts produced from the second century B.C.E. to the fourteenth century. The entries in these *biji* texts generally remain untouched by the compiler and are grouped under their original titles. In this aspect, the book is fundamentally different from the various *leishu* discussed before. But the *biji* texts included in the book are usually incomplete and are placed side by side with texts that are not considered as *biji* from a modern point of view. It is clear that the compiler's true intention was to provide an encompassing, albeit selective, compilation of previous discourses 說 rather than a simple collection of *biji*.

The first series of books that focused primarily on providing a collection of *biji* texts in their complete and original form is perhaps the *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* 筆記小說大觀 (A Great Compendium of Biji xiaoshuo), published by Jinbu shuju 進步書局 in the 1930's.⁵⁵ The collection contains a total of 220 *biji*, which were selected from the numerous *biji* texts written/compiled from the Han to the Qing dynasty. In spite of some notable editorial and textual flaws, the collection provided an important model for later editors and publishers who continued to work on similar projects. Starting from the 1950s, the genre of *biji* began to catch more attention from academia as well as from publishers. The well-known *biji* collection *Lidai shiliao biji congan* 歷代史料筆記

⁵⁴ Li Fang, *Taiping guangji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006).

⁵⁵ This series of books were reprinted in 1983. See Jinbu shuju, comp., *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* (Yangzhou: Jiangsu guangling guji keyinshe, 1983).

叢刊 (A Series of Historical Biji across the Ages), published by Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, was initiated during this period.⁵⁶ About 100 *biji* texts have been selected for inclusion in this collection and more are still being added, covering the historical periods from the Tang and Song up to the twentieth century. Most of the *biji* texts selected in this series are published in the form of individual books. The high standards that the collection set for itself, in term of choice of edition, textual collation, and punctuation, has made it an indispensable source for academic studies on the genre of *biji*. A more recent collection of *biji* texts can be found in the *Lidai biji xiaoshuo daguan* 歷代筆記小說大觀 (A Great Compendium of Biji xiaoshuo across the Ages), published by Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社 since 1999.⁵⁷ Divided into nineteen volumes, the collection contains roughly 200 *biji* texts selected from the pre-Qin period to the Qing dynasty. The *biji* texts included in this collection are not limited to historical *biji* as in the *Lidai shiliao biji congkan* and are much better edited and collated than those included in the *Biji xiaoshuo daguan*. In addition to these collections, there are also *biji* collections that focus on specific historical periods. Representative examples include the recently published *Quansong biji* 全宋筆記 (A Complete Collection of *Biji* in the Song Dynasty), which contains about 500 *biji* works all written/compiled during the Song dynasty, and the *Quan Tang Wudai biji* 全唐五代筆記 (A Complete Collection of *Biji* in the Tang and Five Dynasties), which is currently under preparation.⁵⁸

(2) Indexes

During the 1950's and 1960's, Japanese scholar Saeki Tomi 佐伯富 compiled two indexes of Chinese *biji* works, titled respectively *Chūgoku zuihitsu sakuin* 中國隨筆索引

⁵⁶ Zhonghua shuju, ed. *Lidai Shiliao Biji Congkan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959-2006).

⁵⁷ The collection contains five parts: *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan* (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Han, Wei and Six Dynasties), *Tang Wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan* (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Tang and Five Dynasties), *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan* (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Song and Yuan Dynasties), *Mingdai biji xiaoshuo daguan* (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Ming Dynasty), and *Qingdai biji xiaoshuo daguan* (A Great Compendium of *biji xiaoshuo* in the Qing Dynasty).

⁵⁸ See Zhu Yi'an 朱易安 ed., *Quan Song Biji* (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2006-2009).

(Index to Chinese Miscellaneous Writings, 1954) and *Chūgoku zuihitsu zatcho sakuin* 中國隨筆雜著索引 (Index to Chinese Miscellaneous Writings and essays, 1960).⁵⁹ In spite of the tremendous effort that Saeki spent in compiling the two indexes, the actual usefulness of them is in fact limited. Their indexical nature makes them unable to tell us much about the actual content, structure, and organization of the indexed *biji* works, and the import of their individual entries. Moreover, the coverage of these two indexes is less comprehensive than their titles suggest, with a combined number of the total indexed *biji* texts amounting to only a little more than two hundred.

(3) Studies on the historical development of *biji*.

Compared with Saeki's indexes, the several books that have been published in Chinese on the historical development of *biji* perhaps offer us more information on the genre. Many of these books assume a chronological structure and discuss the historical evolution of *biji* from the Pre-Qin period to the Qing dynasty, but there are also works that focus on specific historical periods, such as Zhang Hui's 張暉 *Songdai biji yanjiu* 宋代筆記研究 (A Study of Song *Biji*), Zhou Xunchu's 周勛初 *Tangdai biji xiaoshuo xulu* 唐代筆記小說敘錄 (Outline of Tang *Biji* Fiction) and *Tangren biji xiaoshuo kaosuo* 唐人筆記小說考索 (Investigations of Tang *Biji* Fiction) and Xie Guozhen's 謝國楨(1901-1982) *Ming Qing biji tancong* 明清筆記談叢 (Collected Discourses on Ming and Qing *Biji*).⁶⁰ A majority of these historical studies on *biji* do not clearly separate *biji* from *xiaoshuo*, as can be seen from the title of Wu Liquan's book *Zhongguo biji xiaoshuo shi* and that of Miao Zhuang's book *Biji xiaoshuo shi*. While both authors are aware of the difference between the traditional connotation of *xiaoshuo* and its modern sense, in their books they sometimes confuse the two and sometimes tend to use the term more in its

⁵⁹ See Saeki Tomi, ed., *Chūgoku Zuihitsu Sakuin* (Kyoto: Kyōto daigaku Tōyōshi kenkyūka, 1954) and *Idem.*, *Chūgoku Zuihitsu Zatcho Sakuin* (Kyoto: Kyōto daigaku Tōyōshi kenkyūka, 1960).

⁶⁰ See Zhang Hui, *Songdai biji yanjiu* (Wuhan: Huazhong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1993), Zhou Xunchu, *Tangdai biji xiaoshuo xulu* (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008) and *Tangren biji xiaoshuo kaosuo* (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1996), Xie Guozhen, *Ming Qing biji tancong* (Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004).

modern sense than in its traditional one. This has made their books at some level appear as if they are not studies on the genre of *biji* but rather a subgenre of Chinese fiction. Unlike Wu Liqun and Miao Zhuang, Liu Yeqiu singles out *biji* as an independent genre for literary analysis. His monograph *Lidai biji gaishu* is a succinct but very useful examination of the historical development of the genre. Dividing his analysis into different historical periods, Liu provides many insightful observations on the characteristics of the genre of *biji* as well as the specialness of individual texts. His tripartite classification of the numerous *biji* texts across the ages, discussed before at the beginning of this introduction, provides us with a useful tool to look beneath the apparent miscellaneity of these texts and to uncover their hidden commonalities. In terms of structure and format, Liu's book is similar to other works on the historical development of *biji*, in the sense that he also organizes his analyses in chronological order, provides short introductions to the *biji* texts selected in his book, and uses particular examples to illustrate their specialness. While this structure and format is useful for us to gain a general knowledge of the historical development of the genre, its use for our deeper understanding of the specific content, design, and literary value of the *biji* texts discussed in the book is limited, because the very miscellaneous nature of *biji* often defies such an over-general form of introduction. It is just as Y.W. Ma has rightly pointed out, "The nature of *pi-chi* collections does not normally render them as sources for quick reference. There is no surer way to fully utilize *pi-chi* collections, including those with individual indexes, than to read through them entry by entry, book by book."⁶¹

(4) Literary, historical and religious studies using *biji*

Literary studies on the genre of *biji* focus primarily on the *zhiguai* type (record of anomalies). Famous works like Gan Bao's *Soushen ji*, Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi*, Pu Songling's *Liaozhao zhiyi*, and Ji Yun's *Yuewei caotang biji* have received special attention from

⁶¹ Y. W. Ma "Pi-Chi," p. 651.

both Chinese and Western scholars. Chinese studies on these books are too numerous to be listed here. Even studies published in English are abundant. For instance, Robert Ford Campany, in his monograph *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*, offers a groundbreaking study of the *zhiguai* type of literature from its beginnings through the end of the Six Dynasties. One of the major contributions of Campany's book is his argument against the hitherto established literary hypothesis, which views the early *zhiguai* accounts produced during the Six Dynasties as "the birth of fiction" in China.⁶² Instead of viewing these anomaly accounts as fiction, Campany argues that they were rather perceived as records of real events compiled for serious purposes at the time of their production. Campany's argument on the historicity of the *zhiguai* accounts has paved the way for many later researches that deal with similar subjects. Leo Tak-hung Chan, for example, also takes the issue of reliability seriously and explores it from the perspective of authorial belief.⁶³ In his *The Discourse on Foxes and Ghosts: Ji Yun and Eighteenth-Century Literati Storytelling*, which focuses on Ji Yun's well-received book *Yuewei caotang biji*, Chan argues that Ji Yun not only believed in the supernatural, but also used his collection of supernatural tales to present a rational argument in favor of this belief. According to Chan, this rational argument is presented in *Yuewei caotang biji* in a literary form that mixes oral-storytelling and literary writing, and carries with it a moral undertone and didactic purport that distinguishes the work from many other *zhiguai* texts of the time. Alister Inglis also endorses Campany's argument. In his recently published book *Hong Mai's Record of the Listener and Its Song Dynasty Context* which examines the theme, genre, authorial intent, and textual reception of Hong Mai's critically acclaimed *biji* text *Yijian zhi*, Inglis devotes a specific chapter to the discussion of the reliability of the strange accounts included in Hong Mai's book. According to Inglis, epistemologically Hong Mai's book is still firmly grounded in the Six Dynasties

⁶² This argument was proposed by Lu Xun in his *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* and promoted by Western scholars such as Kenneth J. DeWoskin. See his "The Six Dynasties *Chih-kuai* and the Birth of Fiction," in Andrew H. Plaks, ed., *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 21-52.

⁶³ Tak-hung Leo Chan, *The Discourse on Foxes and Ghosts: Ji Yun and Eighteenth-Century Literati Storytelling* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

zhiguai tradition, which values reliability and factuality much more than the fictionality or literariness of the strange accounts.

Other than exploring the issue of historicity of the *zhiguai* accounts, scholars also use *zhiguai* tales to look into Chinese culture and society in the past. For example, Judith Zeitlin, in her monograph *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*, not only offers an inspiring study of Pu Songling's *Liaozhai zhiyi* in its rich cultural and intertextual context, but also uses her literary examination of three prominent themes in the book—obsession, gender dislocation, and dream—to probe into the literati culture of the late Ming and early Qing.⁶⁴ In contrast to Zeitlin's focus on Chinese culture, Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang's study on the same book is more historically oriented. In their *Redefining History: Ghosts, Spirits, and Human Society in P'u Sung-ling's World, 1640-1715*, the Changs first provide a biographical analysis of Pu Songling's life and a literary examination of his *Liaozhai zhiyi*, and then proceed from them to explain the social meaning and historical significance that have been revealed to us through Pu's life and his text.⁶⁵ Unlike Zeitlin and the Changs, Rania Huntington does not choose a specific *biji* text but rather a specific species as the focal point of her study of *zhiguai*. In her book *Alien Kinds: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative*, Huntington concentrates primarily on the literary image of foxes as represented in various *biji* texts, and carefully examines what they are and what kind of role they have played, and to some extent continue to play, in Chinese culture and society.⁶⁶

It is worth pointing out here that the reason why the *biji* texts discussed above have received extensive scholarly attention is not so much because they are *biji* but rather because they belong to the *zhiguai* type of literature. In other words, it is the strangeness of their tales, as well as the religious belief and marginal phenomena that

⁶⁴ Judith T. Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁵ Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang, *Redefining History: Ghosts, Spirits, and Human Society in P'u Sung-ling's World, 1640-1715* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

⁶⁶ Rania Huntington, *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

these tales represent, that has attracted scholars the most, not so much their unique literary features as *biji*. Because of this reason, many academic studies on the *zhiguai* type of *biji* seem to be more interested in the strange content of these works, while neglecting, comparatively speaking, other literary aspects such as the meaning of the heterogeneity of the entries, the implication of the special organization of the book, and the constant interplay among the different parts of the text.⁶⁷ In short, these studies can be said to offer us more insight and reflection on the nature and cultural significance of *zhiguai* than the special literariness of the genre of *biji*. While this is certainly not a fault of the book writers, as many of them probably do not intend to write a book on *biji* in the first place, it lets us see a possible way to further explore these already extensively studied texts if we want to continue to contribute to the rich scholarship on them.

The numerous *biji* texts also provide important sources for studies on Chinese religion and history. Valerie Hansen, for instance, in her book *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*, utilizes major *biji* texts such as Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi* to look into the development of Chinese popular religion in the Southern Song dynasty and convincingly argues that the social and economic changes taking place at the time were also accompanied by a series of notable changes in the religious realm.⁶⁸ Similarly, Kang Xiaofei, in her recent book *The Cult of the Fox: Power, Gender, and Popular Religion in Late Imperial and Modern China*,⁶⁹ uses a wealth of *biji* texts to explore the manifold meanings of the fox cult in Chinese society, and provides a vivid description of the various practices and activities associated with the worship and exorcism of fox spirits in Chinese popular religion during the late imperial and modern periods.

In the field of history, *biji* are traditionally believed to provide important supplementary information for the study of Chinese history. Historians, almost without

⁶⁷ This focus on the content of the works also influences the study on other *biji* texts that contain stories/anecdotes but do not belong to the *zhiguai* type, such as Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo xinyu*.

⁶⁸ Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁶⁹ Kang Xiaofei, *The Cult of the Fox: Power, Gender, and Popular Religion in Late Imperial and Modern China*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

exception, utilize the rich materials that they gather from *biji* works to complement their research based on other sources. But in using these *biji* works, historians usually hold a very cautious view towards them. While they recognize the enormous body of stories and materials contained in *biji* as an invaluable source of information for historical studies, they often treat these stories and materials as raw data, which need to be carefully assessed, sifted, and processed before they can be used to construct a reliable account of history. This conservative view to some extent limits people's assessment of the historical value possessed by the *biji* texts. Due to its influence, historians' uses of *biji* texts are generally confined to the informational level, and the presentation of these *biji* texts in historical studies is highly selective and fragmentary. That is to say, while historians are eager to draw individual entries, stories, and material from *biji* to supplement to their studies on Chinese history, they usually pay less attention to the special literary features and historical and cultural significance possessed by these *biji* texts as complete and unified entities.

This conservative view regarding the historical value of *biji*, however, has been undergoing some fundamental changes recently. More and more historians have started to realize that *biji* provide not only complementary materials to the official histories, but also alternative perspectives, angles, and visions, that we can use to reassess the historical reality of the past. In an article examining Zhang Lei's 張乘 (1054--1114) *Mingdao zazhi* 明道雜誌 (A Miscellany on Knowing the Way)⁷⁰ and its relation with Song intellectual history, Peter Bol raises an important question regarding the historical value of *biji*, namely, can we attach any historical significance and meaning to the fact that Zhang Lei and other literati chose to express themselves in the form of *biji*?⁷¹ In answering this question, Bol argues that the relatively unrestrained form of *biji* has allowed literati to write more easily on topics that would otherwise require rigorous thought and organization. The writing/compilation of *biji* thus became an effective way for the Song literati to speak up, a way that enabled them to remain agile and active in

⁷⁰ See Zhang Lei, *Mingdao Zazhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1958).

⁷¹ Peter Bol, "A Literary Miscellany and Sung Intellectual History: The Case of Chang Lei's *Ming-tao tsa-chih*," in *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 25 (1995), pp. 121-151.

the ongoing political, ethical, and intellectual discussions and debates of the time. In a recent article on a *biji* text titled *Nanjin jiwen* 南燼紀聞 (Records of Flame Ashes of the South), attributed to Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140-1207),⁷² which describes the last few years of Song Emperors Huizong (1082-1135, r. 1100-1126) and Qinzong (1100-1161, r. 1126-1127), Stephen West offers an insightful reflection on how a generally unreliable account of history can nonetheless provide us with valuable insights about the historical truth of the time.⁷³ According to West, the untruthful nature of this *biji* text does not prevent it from giving us a glimpse into the mixed feelings that people at the time held toward the last two emperors of the Northern Song (960-1127), who, especially in the case of Emperor Huizong, were deemed responsible for the fall of the dynasty. This mixed feeling is just as true as history itself, despite the fact that it has been presented in a book mostly made up of fictional stories. Christian de Pee approaches the issue of the cultural function of *biji* in historical studies from a different angle. In his recent article examining the writing of the Song Empire through *biji*,⁷⁴ he convincingly argues that the existence of historical *biji* vis-à-vis standard historiography creates an intricate cultural landscape of center and periphery. He points out that the relationship between the two is far more complex and dynamic than we originally think, and the traffic between the center and the peripheral is never one-way. The *biji*, with its “entries on gossip, miracles, humor, violence, local products, and oral culture,” “stands in an implied contrast with a stabilizing center of imperial power, legitimate genres of written composition, and enduring civilization,” and therefore serves as an implicit political, literary, and cultural criticism of the center.⁷⁵ But at the same time, the very marginality of the genre also presupposes and confirms the existence and legitimacy of the center,

⁷² Xin Qiji, attr., *Nan Jin Ji Wen Lu*, in *Xuehai leibian* (Shanghai Han fen lou, 1920).

⁷³ Stephen H. West, “Crossing Over: Huizong in the Afterglow, or the Deaths of a Troubling Emperor,” in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics*, eds. Patricia Ebrey and Maggie Bickford (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), pp. 565-608.

⁷⁴ See Christian de Pee, “Circumscriptions of the Center: The Writing of the Empire in Song Notebooks (*biji*),” unpublished paper. A briefer version of this argument can also be found in the introduction to his book, *Writing of Weddings in Middle-Period China: Text and Ritual Practice in the Eighth through Fourteenth Centuries*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), pp. 5-6.

⁷⁵ Christian de Pee, “Circumscriptions of the Center: The Writing of the Empire in Song Notebooks (*biji*).”

and the fact that *biji* writers/compiler would collect and organize the heterogeneous materials into an orderly fashion implies their implicit acknowledgement of and conspiracy with the center. De Pee's article reminds us that the knowledge that we gain about the past from *biji* is, like the knowledge that we may gain from other discourses on history, never entirely spontaneous, unmediated, and free from politics. To fully appreciate the historical and cultural function of *biji*, we need to examine not only what message the *biji* texts tell us, but also how the message is told and how it interacts with the messages that we may receive from other sources of history.

Historical studies on *biji* usually pay more attention to the *biji* texts' pertinence to history than their particularity as a genre of literature. In some cases, a text's unique literary features, such as the diversity of its content, the organization of its entries, and the nature of its language, may be singled out and analyzed. But the purpose of doing so is usually to prove that the text has indeed provided an alternative account of history that fundamentally differs from official histories. In any case, it is clear that the various historical *biji* works are treated primarily as historical texts and secondarily, if at all, as literary ones. The special literary qualities of these texts, unless they are relevant to the study of Chinese history, usually remain unremarked.

My Approach

My intention in this study is to apply literary analysis to a *biji* text that is predominantly historical in nature. By doing this, I hope to bridge the two analytical models that have been so far established in the fields of literary criticism and historical study regarding the genre of *biji*. I chose a text that is less well-known because I hope to reveal that even in an understudied text like this, there are distinct literary qualities and features that merit our serious attention and propel us to think more about the specialness of *biji*. These literary qualities and features, in my view, can be summarized by the word "miscellaneousness." It is my intention to show in this study that beneath the miscellaneous surface of *Qiantang yishi*, there is in fact a historical narrative that

has been carefully woven by the writer/compiler into the fabric of the text. The text's apparent miscellaneousness by no means entails anarchy, but is rather the very structure and order of the book. What has been hidden underneath this miscellaneousness is a special kind of poetics designed and utilized by the writer/compiler to articulate his literary conception, historical vision, and loyalist concerns of the past. Here I use the word "poetics" in its broadest sense, meaning the rules, techniques or art that we may find within a certain type of literary discourse. By studying this poetics in *Qiantang yishi*, what I wish to uncover is the explicit or implicit form, regularity, and principles that have guided its composition. But in looking for these form, regularity, and principles, what I find out is that they are often presented in a way that defies our very imposition of form, regularity, and principles onto the text. This is why I place the word "miscellaneousness" after the word "poetics." Through combining the two terms in my title, I hope to highlight both the difficulty and the paradox in my study, by reminding myself that what I am doing is attempting to figure out the rules and patterns in a literary text/genre that is characterized exactly by its lack of, at least in appearance, rules and patterns.

The present dissertation comprises four chapters. Drawing from various studies on the Southern Song, Chapter One is designed to perform an extended reading around the text of *Qiantang yishi*. The purpose of this extended reading is to probe into the historical, cultural, and literary contexts, in which and through which the making and reading of the text of *Qiantang yishi* became possible. To look into these contexts, this chapter starts with a brief examination of the inward and "downward" turn that scholars believe to have taken place during the Southern Song. It then proceeds to investigate the political structure, foreign relationship, economic development, and urban culture that characterized Southern Song life. The last two sections of this chapter are devoted to a brief analysis of the loyalist tradition and the literary heritage of *biji*, which have also significantly influenced the writing/compilation of *Qiantang yishi*. It is worth pointing out here that in discussing Southern Song history and culture related to *Qiantang yishi*, I choose to keep in play some views, arguments, and beliefs that are

not entirely accurate or may be even seriously biased. This is because I believe that they have played an equally indispensable role, as the actual historical facts, in the making and reading of the text.

Chapter Two provides a panoramic analysis of the most distinct formal feature of the text of *Qiantang yishi*. Inspired by Linda Chance's salient study on Yoshida Kenkō's 吉田兼好 (1283?–1350?) *Tsurezuregusa* 徒然草 (Essays in Idleness),⁷⁶ I argue that the text of *Qiantang yishi* can also be said to be a special type of literature distinguished by its formless form, or formed formlessness. This formless form, or formed formlessness, on the one hand urges us to look for a hidden structure or a coherent message that has been buried underneath the text's apparent heterogeneity and disjointedness; on the other hand prevents us from getting a firm hold of this structure or message once we think we have grasped it. In the first half of the chapter, I use examples from different layers of the text of *Qiantang yishi* to demonstrate that what this formless form, or formed formlessness, exemplifies is in fact a revealing tension between the text's persistent attempt to reach a definite meaning and its inability or unwillingness to settle on a determined reading. This examination is followed, in the second half of the chapter, by an extended reflection on two other important matters related to the text of *Qiantang yishi*—the issue of authorship and the text's specialness as a historical narrative, which I believe have played significant roles in our understanding of the text's literary and historical values.

Chapter Three is the longest chapter of my dissertation, in which I provide a detailed thematic study of the entire book of *Qiantang yishi*. Drawing insights from Roland Barthes' seminal discussion on the "writerly text" and the "readerly text," I argue that the text of *Qiantang yishi* has attributes of both "texts" but cannot be identified with either of them. The text of *Qiantang yishi*, in my view, is rather an uncertainty. This uncertain status has made the text in many ways resemble a symphony composed out of discordance, in the sense that our attempt of reading the text as a harmonious whole is constantly interrupted by the presence of various discordant details. However,

⁷⁶ See Linda H. Chance, *Formless in Form: Kenkō, Tsurezuregusa, and the Rhetoric of Japanese Fragmentary Prose* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

rather than impairing our reading, these discordant details instead offer us new perspectives to look into the text, enabling us to appreciate the specialness of the text through the very uncertainty of its signification, the dialectics of its textual voices, the ruptures in its coherence, and the contrast in its similarity. In order to fully understand this specialness of the text, I divide this chapter into four sections. The first section, focusing on the first chapter of *Qiantang yishi*, examine how the constant interplay between the two discourses—the discourse of *fengshui* (geomancy) and that of *shanshui* (landscape) —has made the meaning of the chapter stay in a revealing state of indeterminacy. In the second section, which examines Chapter Two to Chapter Six, I demonstrate that how an unpromising picture of Southern Song politics, featuring the “political trio” of the dwindling voice of the emperors, the aggrandizing voice of powerful ministers at court, and the marginalized voice of local military generals, has been revealed to us both thematically through the content of the book and formally through the selection and arrangement of relevant entries. The third section, concentrating on Chapter Four to Chapter Seven, continues the discussion on Southern Song politics initiated in the second section, but the spotlight is now turned mostly on one person, Jia Sidao 賈似道 (1213-1275), who remains one of the most controversial figures in Southern Song history. I argue in this section that the entries in this part of *Qiantang yishi* have collectively constitute a “mosaic portrait” of Jia, wherein his grand image is made visible only through the collage of numerous smaller images of him which do not always conform to each other or to the grand picture. The last section of this chapter is devoted to a contrastive study of the seventh to the ninth chapters of *Qiantang yishi*. This contrastive study allows me to see two different pictures of the demise of the Southern Song dynasty—one that has been disoriented by wartime chaos caused by the Mongolian invasion and the other regulated by the routinized northward peace-seeking trip taken by the Southern Song government after its defeat.

I conclude my dissertation with a chapter that concentrates especially on the poems included in *Qiantang yishi*. The reason for this is that I believe that these poems have served as special “poetic eyes” through which we can not only look into but also

look beyond the text. In search for these “poetic eyes,” I focus mainly on four entries included in *Qiantang yishi*, all of which contain poems. I argue that these poems have played different roles in the text. While the two poems in the first two entries demonstrate for us that the hidden meanings of the text can be revealed by the insertion of poems in the original plain narrative, the three poetic couplets discussed in the third entry provide us with a good example of how poetry can serve as a unique way for us to probe into the political reality of the past. Last but not least, poems in *Qiantang yishi* also reveal implicit structures in the text. An example of this can be found in my analysis of the three song lyrics written by Xin Qiji, which, in my view, have provided important clues for us to anticipate and understand the content and structure in the remaining part of the text.

CHAPTER I

THE ENABLING CONDITIONS OF THE TEXT

We know almost nothing about Liu Yiqing's life and his book except for the following introductory remark provided in the General Catalog of SKQS,

The *Anecdotes of Qiantang* in ten chapters was written/compiled by Liu Yiqing in the Yuan dynasty. Yiqing was a native of Lin'an, whose birth and death dates remained unknown. Though the book was named after Qiantang, what it actually records is the entire history of the Southern Song.

錢塘遺事，十卷，元劉一清撰。一清，臨安人，始末無可考。其書雖以錢塘為名，而實紀南宋一代之事。⁷⁷

In spite of the shortness of this introductory remark, there may be more that we can read from it. A close reading of it will lead us to infer at least three things: First, the book of *Qiantang yishi* is said to have been written about the Southern Song. This makes a brief examination of the Southern Song history a necessity for our initial analysis of it. Second, we are told that the book chooses Hangzhou,⁷⁸ the capital of the Southern Song, as its focal point. This naturally brings our attention to studies on urban development in the Southern Song, as well as those on the urban life, social norms, and customs related to its capital city. Third, we can surmise that the book was written/compiled in the Yuan dynasty, after the fall of Southern Song. This in turn

⁷⁷ See Ji Yun 紀昀 (1274-1805) ed., *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu (dianzi Ban)* 文淵閣四庫全書(電子版) (Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature: Digitized Version, 1999, CD-rom). This introductory remark is also included in Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang yishi*. See Liu Yiqing, *Qiantang yishi*, p.3.

⁷⁸ Hangzhou has been called different names in Chinese history. The most well-known ones are Yuhang 余杭, Qiantang 錢唐, Qiantang 錢塘, Wulin 武林, Lin'an 臨安.

makes such research issues as Song-Yuan relation and Song loyalist culture relevant to our study. Therefore, in spite of its brevity, this introductory remark in fact reveals many important clues for us to look in, as well as to look beyond, the text of *Qiantang yishi*. The study of these clues propels us to perform an extended reading of not only the text itself but also the historical and literary contexts in which it was situated. This extended reading will in turn benefit our close reading of the text, providing us with important perspectives, angles, and methods that are vital to our understanding of the text.

The major portion of this chapter is devoted to this extended reading. Starting with a brief analysis of the inward and “downward” turning that scholars believe to have taken place in the Southern Song, this chapter proceeds to examine various aspects of Southern Song life including its political structure, foreign relations, economic development, and urban culture. While this examination is intended to provide a general introduction to Southern Song history, it is not meant to be read only as a “historical background” for the present study. Instead, I would like it to be treated as a series of enabling conditions, in which and through which the making and reading of the text of *Qiantang yishi* become possible. It is due to this concern that my portrayal of Southern Song history in this chapter is deliberately designed not to be entirely “historical,” in the sense that I purposefully pay attention to both historical facts and people’s views, arguments, and beliefs about Southern Song history that are not entirely accurate or might even be downright biased. I choose to keep these views, arguments, and beliefs in focus because I believe that their function in the making and reading of *Qiantang yishi* is just as indispensable as those actual facts.

This chapter ends with a short examination of the loyalist tradition and the literary heritage that may have also play significant roles in the writing/compilation of *Qiantang yishi*. I single them out here because their focus may exceed the historical scope discussed above. Their relation to the text is so close that sometimes it is hard to separate them from the text clearly. In other words, they have become not only the

backdrop of the text but also the very fabric of it. They are what grant meaning to the text and also what make the making and reading of the text meaningful.

The Inward and “Downward” Turning

While examining the Southern Song government during its early years, Frederick W. Mote makes the following observation on the contrast between Emperor Taizu (927-976, r. 960-976), the founder of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), and Emperor Gaozong (1107-1187, r. 1127-1162), the first emperor of the Southern Song:

The Northern Song founder possessed great self-confidence and expansive vision, and his court was marked by his scholar-officials' intense commitment and hopeful spirit. The Southern Song court in the reign of the Gaozong was dominated by recriminations against those who had managed the Northern Song's last decades, by rejections of policies and modes of governing, and above all by feelings of both peril and political uncertainty, which set the tone for a quite different dynastic era, one of forced territorial contraction and diminished spiritual resources.⁷⁹

This contrast, according to Mote, is not limited to the reigns of the two emperors. The different characters, personal experience, and ruling styles of Emperor Taizu and Emperor Gaozong not only affected their management of their own courts, but also exerted profound impact on the outlooks of the Northern and Southern Song governments and societies in general. Accompanying this contrast, argues Mote, is a “shift in the tone of Song civilization.”⁸⁰ The political milieu, social order, cultural values, commercial development, and people's lifestyles all underwent fundamental changes. These changes are often amplified, by historians as well as by general readers of Chinese history, to show the huge difference, rather than the continuity, between these two periods of the Song dynasty.

⁷⁹ F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.298.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*.

Mote's argument about the contrast between Emperor Taizu and Emperor Gaozong, as well as between the Northern and Southern Song dynasties, is notably influenced by James T.C. Liu's argument on the "inward-turning" of Chinese civilization, which he believes took place during the 11th to 12th centuries. In his book examining the intellectual-political changes in the early twelfth century, Liu makes the following statement on the difference between the Northern Song's outward cultural innovation and the Southern Song's inward cultural refinement,

The eleventh century was a time when culture among the elite expanded. It pioneered in new directions and blazed promising trails. With optimism it emphasized prospects. In contrast, the twelfth century saw elite culture paying more attention to consolidating and extending its values throughout society. Turning more retrospective and introspective than before, it became tempered by a circumspect and sometimes pessimistic tone. In short, while the Northern Song characteristically reached outward, the Southern Song essentially looked inward.⁸¹

This inward turning was caused by both internal and external reasons. Externally, it had a lot to do with the fact that the northern half of Song Empire was taken away from the control of the Southern Song government by its foreign rivals. Internally, it was related to a fundamental shift of focus among Southern Song Confucian scholars, who gradually directed their attention away from large reforms on the national scale to small ones at the local level. In the following passage, Patricia Ebrey echoes what Liu has observed in the intellectual and cultural life of the Southern Song:

The inability of the otherwise impressive Song government to achieve the sort of military dominance the Han and Tang had attained at their heights was profoundly disturbing to Song writers, thinkers, and officials. Those who felt acutely the threat posed by northern neighbours were less open to borrowing foreign styles and more sensitive to issues of Chinese cultural identity....In the Southern Song Confucian scholars gave more and more attention to what people could do themselves at the local level. These scholars were frustrated with the failure of the government to

⁸¹ See James T.C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p.10.

regain the north and aware of the drawbacks of the large-scale reform programmes of the Northern Song. Thus they proposed ways to build a more ideal society by starting from the bottom, reforming families and local communities, establishing academies, and spreading their message through publishing.⁸²

Whether there was indeed an inward turning of Chinese civilization, and if there was, whether it indeed took place in the early twelfth century remains a topic of scholarly debate. But to raise this topic itself is telling as to how the Northern Song and Southern Song have been viewed differently by historians and people interested in Chinese history. Closely related to this argument on “China turning inward” is another argument on “China turning downward” held especially by many traditional Chinese historians and general readers of Chinese history. In spite of its problematic nature, the latter can at some level be viewed as a precursor of the former, for before the astounding economic, technological and commercial developments in the Southern Song had been noticed by modern scholars,⁸³ the “inward turning” that China reportedly experienced during the early twelfth century had often been regarded as a sign of weakness, a telling example of how China had become more cautious and conservative while proceeding on the road of decline.

Unlike the argument on “China turning inward” which started to gain currency among scholars only in recent years, the problematic argument on “China turning downward” has entertained a much longer history. Ever since the late twelfth century, while the Southern Song was still in its heyday, scholar-officials had begun to make strong arguments about the fact that China had become weaker than before. The following statement made by Ye Shi 葉適 (1150-1223), a hawkish neo-Confucian scholar who was better known by his style-name Shuixin, is a good example of this,

Of all the countries founded since the ancient time, there is none that is weaker than our own. By the end of Emperor Zhenzong’s reign and the

⁸² Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 150, 153.

⁸³ I shall briefly discuss this in the fourth section of this chapter.

beginning of Emperor Renzong's, the Khitans had been adhering to the peace treaty for thirty-eight years, and Zhao Deming [of the Western Xia] also for thirty years.⁸⁴ All the civil and military officials [of our dynasty] immersed themselves in the comfort, happiness and peace of the time that none saw the weakness of our country. When Yuanhao [of the Western Xia] started to betray us, people like Zhang Dexiang, astonished and furious at Yuanhao's base conduct, swore to wipe him out.⁸⁵ They vowed to never pardon him, but when they attacked him, they were defeated every time. People in the west of Tongguan all lost their will to fight. The Khitans took the chance and stationed their armies at our borders, asking for the old territory belonging to Emperor Shizong of Zhou.⁸⁶ This crisis was not solved until Fu Bi went to negotiate with them.⁸⁷ *From that time on, the situation started to turn severely against us, and people around the world now knew that we were weak.*

天下之弱勢，歷數古人之為國，無甚於本朝者。真宗之末、仁宗之初，契丹守和約者，三十八年；趙德明亦三十年。文恬武嬉，舞蹈太平，不見其為弱也。及元昊始叛，章得象之徒，毅然憤其小醜，欲翦滅之。立論必於不赦，既而屢出屢敗。潼關以西，人無固志。而契丹遂擁兵境上，以邀索周世宗故地，使富弼重為解之，然後乃已。於是形勢大屈，而天下皆悟其為弱，證矣。⁸⁸

Ye Shi clearly exaggerated certain facts in his argument to make it stronger. The Song dynasty was by no means the weakest among the dynasties founded since antiquity.

⁸⁴ Here the peace treaty probably refers to the one signed by the Northern Song and the Liao (907-1125) in 1004 at Chanzhou, which ended the 25 years of war between them from 979 to 1004. Emperor Zhenzong (968-1022, r. 997-1022) died in 1022 and Emperor Renzong ascended the throne in the same year. So it is unclear how the 38 years were calculated. Zhao Deming 趙德明 (981-1031, a.k.a. Li Deming) was the father of Li Yuanhao 李元昊 (1003-1048), founder of the Western Xia dynasty (1038-1227). Under his rule, the Western Xia remained a vassal kingdom to the Northern Song for about 30 years. Detailed discussion of these can be found in F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 114-16, 179-82.

⁸⁵ Yuanhao (a.k.a. Li Yuanhao or Zhao Yuanhao, Emperor Jingzong of Western Xia) declared independence of the Western Xia dynasty in 1038 and launched a campaign against the Song. Zhang Dexiang 章得象 (948-1048) was the Grand Councilor of the time. The Western Xia won several victories in its campaign against the Song, but they proved to be very costly. In 1044, the Western Xia and the Song signed a peace treaty, with the Western Xia acknowledging Song's sovereignty in exchange for an annual tribute paid by the Song. See F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 179-185.

⁸⁶ In 1041, while the Song was warring with the Western Xia, the Khitans stationed their armies at the Song-Liao borders, demanding the ten prefectures at Guannan, which had been taken by Emperor Shizong of the Latter Zhou (921-959) from the Liao in 959. See F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 68-71.

⁸⁷ Fu Bi 富弼 (1004-1083), a famous diplomat of the Northern Song, was known for his brave negotiation with the Liao in 1242, in which he turned down the Liao's request for the ten prefectures at Guannan but promised more annual tribute to them.

⁸⁸ Ye Shi, *Shuixin Ji* 水心集 (Collections of Shuixin), included in *Sibu beiyao, juan 5* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1927-1936). Emphases are mine.

Nonetheless, according to Ye Shi, the Song Empire's weakness started to be noticed by people, especially by its aggressive and ever-growing neighbors, since the reign of Emperor Renzong (1010-1063, r. 1022-1063). In spite of the fact that Emperor Renzong and his successor, Emperor Shenzong (1048-1085, r. 1067-1085), had tried different means, of which the most well-known was perhaps the controversial reforms led by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1070-1086) from 1069 to 1086, to curb or reverse this weakening process, they could not really change the declining fate of the dynasty. In 1127, the Northern Song officially met its end, with its northern territory taken over by the Jurchens and its two last emperors abducted and taken away to the north. The remaining Song forces fled to the south and founded the Southern Song government. Although the Southern Song indeed revived the Song Empire in terms of its impressive economical and political development, militarily it could not and would not fight to win back its lost territory to the Jurchens in the north. Instead of directly confronting its aggressive steppe neighbors, the Southern Song government eventually chose a much more conservative strategy of buying peace with a huge amount of annual tributes paid to its neighboring states. Though this conservative strategy won the Southern Song about 150 years of peace, it made it look militarily incompetent. Because of this seeming incompetence, the Southern Song was often deemed even weaker than its predecessor. This weakness was sometimes attributed to the Southern Song emperors' lack of willpower to fight, as well as to their entrenched distrust in military generals and their unwillingness to grant real power to them. It is like what Wang Fuzi 王夫之 (1619-1692) rightly pointed out in his *Song lun* 宋論 (Discussions on the Song Dynasty):

The person who was the head of the plan wanted nothing but the weakness of the country; the persons who followed him felt a secret relief that the shattering [of the country] did not cause trouble to their lives. The country was in peril and the invaders were growing strong. But those incompetent officials still argued about war or peace, and accused each other within their holes. No one stepped out to stop the reinforcement troops from being defeated and scattered, or to learn from the defeats so as to seek help from the outside. Originally the Song was not alone. What had caused its loneliness was its own tradition of

suspicion.⁸⁹ Noble as the emperors were, they [demeaned themselves to] vie for control over provinces and prefectures. Prosperous as the dynasty used to be, it eventually became weakened and abandoned. Perilous as the country was, it never actively sought aid from others. When everything started to turn for the better, Qin Gui again confused Emperor Gaozong with all the mistakes.⁹⁰ A peace treaty was renegotiated, following Bi Shi'an's precedent.⁹¹ Yue Fei was killed and Han Shizhong dismissed,⁹² and no one could succeed them. Military generals were henceforth tied up by civil officials, just like what Zhao Pu had wished for.⁹³ Afterward, the entire Central Plain was presented to the Mongols as if it was a free gift.

首其謀者，唯恐天下之不弱；繼其後者，私幸靡散之無憂。國已蹙，寇已深，而屍位之臣，爭戰爭和，(戚)[穴]中相訟。無一人焉，懲諸路勤王之潰散，改覆轍以樹援於外。宋本不孤，而孤之者，猜疑之家法也。以天子而爭州郡之權，以全盛而成貧寡之勢，以垂危而不求輔車之援。稍自樹立，而秦檜又以是惑高宗矣。和議再成，依然一畢士安之策也。岳飛誅死，韓世忠罷，繼起無人，閫帥聽短長於文吏，依然一趙普之心也。於是舉中原以授蒙古，猶掇之矣。⁹⁴

Wang Fuzhi's argument has exerted profound influence on later historians and scholars in their assessment of the Song dynasty. Even until modern days, this questionable view that the Song dynasty was comparatively weaker than many of its predecessors still remains prevalent. In *Guoshi dagang* 國史大綱 (An Outline of Chinese History), for

⁸⁹ According to a legendary anecdote, in 961 Zhao Kuangyin (927-976, r. 960-976) commanded all his senior military generals to attend a banquet in his palace, during which Zhao managed to relieve them of their commands over the armies. This event, known as "dissolving the militarists' power with a cup of wine," is often used as a telling example to show Zhao's distrust of military generals. This distrust later became a tradition followed by many of the Song emperors. See Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730-1797), *Xu Zizhi Tongjian* 續資治通鑑 (A Sequel to the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957), pp. 35-36.

⁹⁰ Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090-1155) was a Grand Councilor of the Song dynasty who has often been regarded as a traitor and a treacherous minister in the Song due to his persecution of the anti-Jurchen General Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103-1142) and the bad advice that he gave to Emperor Gaozong (1107-1187, r. 1127-1162).

⁹¹ Bi Shi'an 畢士安 (938-1005) was a Grand Councilor of the Northern Song. He was responsible for advising Emperor Zhenzong to sign the peace treaty with the Khitans in Chanzhou in 1004.

⁹² Like Yue Fei, Han Shizhong 韓世忠 (1089-1151) was another hawkish anti-Jurchen general living in late Northern Song and early Southern Song. He was famous for his bravery in fighting with the Jurchens. He retired from military service in 1141, a year before Yue Fei's execution.

⁹³ Zhao Pu 趙普 (922-992) was a Grand Councilor of the Northern Song, who was believed to be the wire-puller of the famous event called "dissolving the militarists' power with a cup of wine."

⁹⁴ See Wang Fuzhi, *Song lun* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), pp. 171-172.

instance, Qian Mu 錢穆 argues that unlike many previous dynasties that unified China, the unification that the Song had brought to China bore an indelible mark of weakness and scarcity,

After decades of indescribable separation and decadence, a unified central government was established again in China. This central government, however, presented itself in Chinese history with distinct features. Unlike Qin, Han, Sui, and Tang whose unifications had brought prosperity and strength to China, this unification came with an inextricable fate of weakness and scarcity.

在不堪言狀的分裂與墮落之後，中國又重新建立起一個統一的中央政府來。這一個中央，卻以它特殊的姿態出現於歷史。與秦、漢、隋、唐的統一相隨並來的，是中國之富強，而這一個統一卻始終擺脫不掉貧弱的命運。⁹⁵

It is worth reiterating here that many of these arguments on the weakness of the Song dynasty are historically inaccurate or even anachronistic. Most of them have been purposefully exaggerated by the arguers to suit their own activist or nationalist agenda. Nevertheless, these arguments let us see how entrenched the idea is regarding the weakness of the Song Empire. As stated before, the reason why this idea has become so entrenched is that it has had a long-lasting history that dates back to as early as the Southern Song. This also helps explain why we find a similar portrayal of the Southern Song as a weakened dynasty in Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang yishi*, which was written after the Southern Song was conquered and replaced by the Mongolian Yuan. As we shall see in my analysis in the next several chapters, this conception of the Southern Song's weakness was in fact become the backdrop against which Liu Yiqing's writing/compilation was done. Although he did not make any direct comment on it, the general image of the Southern Song that we will get from reading his book is one of continuous decline and deterioration: In Liu's view, the Southern Song, due to the segment of its northern territory to the Jurchens, was already a weakened dynasty

⁹⁵ See Qian Mu, *Guoshi dagang* (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1991), p. 523. A more detailed discussion on the weakness of the Song dynasty can be found in pages 523 to 631.

when it was founded. This weakness was further worsened by the lack of ambitious and capable emperors and officials who would devote themselves to the recovery of the lost territory and the revival of the empire. Moreover, the Southern Song also implemented a series of laws and policies aiming to enlarge the power of civil ministers at court while curbing that in the hand of military generals. This had resulted in the burdensome expansion of the Song's bureaucracy as well as a serious weakening of its military strength. In tandem with these trends was the beauty and affluence of the south, which had made the Southern Song emperors and officials indulge too much in their daily comfort and pleasure and forget their proper duty. Liu Yiqing seemed to have believed that the Southern Song was deteriorating from the very start. In spite of its apparent peace and prosperity, the government's internal weakness and decadence was what led the empire further down on its road of decline. This weakness and decadence ate away the dynasty from inside. When the inner life of the dynasty was drained, its external collapse, that is, its final defeat and conquest by the Mongols, was but a matter of time.

War and Peace

One thing that led historians to believe that China was turning inward or "downward" during the Southern Song was the Song government's conservative stance towards wars and its general incompetence in dealing with the military incursion of its aggressive foreign neighbors.

The Southern Song started off on a quite humble or even humiliating ground. By 1125, the seven years of war launched together by the Jurchen Jin (1115-1234) and the Northern Song crushed the empire of Khitan Liao (907-1125), which existed between them. One year after the success, however, the Jurchens turned against their weak ally and brought Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng), the capital of the Northern Song, under siege. In order to end the war, the young emperor Qinzong (1100-1161, r. 1126-1127) of the Northern Song sent his younger brother Zhao Gou (1107-1187), who later became the first emperor of the Southern Song, to the Jurchen camp to initiate peace talks. The

Jurchens took the chance and held Zhao Gou hostage, asking for a large amount of ransom. Having been granted what they requested, the Jurchens released Zhao Gou and withdrew their army. But in less than a year, the Jurchens came back again and besieged the city of Bianjing for a second time. This time they were even more unforgiving. In addition to weeks of looting, killing, arson, and rapes, the Jurchens also abducted the last two Northern Song emperors, Huizong (1082-1135, r. 1100-1126) and Qinzong, carrying them to the north, along with 3000 members of the Northern Song court. This incident has been known in Chinese history as the humiliating Jingkang Incident. A direct result of the Jingkang Incident was the Song government's loss of its base in north China. In order to survive, the Song government fled to the south and founded the Southern Song. Zhao Gou, who was the fifth son of Emperor Huizong, was selected to be the first emperor, and posthumously was given the title Gaozong. Noble as he was, however, Zhao Gou, especially during the first decade after the Southern Song was founded, did not lead an easy life. After the fall of the Northern Song in 1127, for more than ten years the Jurchens and the Southern Song fought for supremacy over the Yangtze valley. Under heavy military pressure from the Jurchen field armies, Emperor Gaozong and his new-founded government had to flee from one place to another, driven further and further into the south. On February 23, 1129, Emperor Gaozong was almost seized by the Jurchens and only escaped capture by the narrowest of margins. In the next few days, he continued to be chased by the Jurchen army, and did not achieve momentary peace until he reached Hangzhou, where he reassembled the core of his central government. But even after that, Emperor Gaozong was unable to settle down. A few days later after he reached Hangzhou, a group of courtiers and opponents initiated a coup against him. During the coup, the opponents forced him to abdicate his throne in favor of his three-year old son. Although this coup was suppressed by military generals who came to rescue him in April, 1129, it must have left a horrifying experience in his memory. But even this was not the end of his misery. After the unsuccessful coup, the Jurchen army continued to press south and Emperor Gaozong and his court were forced to leave Hangzhou and move further eastward in

Zhejiang, closer to the coast. It was said that he and his court were ready to flee out to sea, had the Jurchen military force continued to press forward. On January 26, 1130, the Jurchens captured Hangzhou and continued east to pursue the emperor. Having heard about this news, Emperor Gaozong and his court immediately boarded the ships and sailed off to evade pursuit. They went as far as to Wenzhou in southern Zhejiang. Unable to catch the emperor, the Jurchens started to withdraw from April on, but it was not until The sixth month that Emperor Gaozong's fleet dared to come back ashore. Even after that, Emperor Gaozong did not return to Hangzhou. Instead, he stayed in Shaoxing for three years, waiting for Hangzhou to be rebuilt and also to make sure that he could flee to the sea again if the Jurchen army came back.⁹⁶

This difficult and humiliating inception of the Southern Song had caused its court to split into two opposing groups: On the one side, there were the hawkish officials and military generals who constantly urged Emperor Gaozong to continue to resist or even prepare a massive attack against the Jurchens, to retaliate as well as to recover what the Song government had lost; on the other, there were the peace-seeking civil ministers who tried every means to convince the emperor of the potential danger in avenging the Jurchens and pressed him to negotiate a peace treaty to end the Song-Jurchen war as soon as possible. Thus an antithesis between war and peace started to formulate. This antithesis would continue to develop as time went on, and would eventually become a dominating theme in Southern Song politics.

This antithesis between war and peace is first and foremost manifested in the conflict between General Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103-1142) and Grand Councilor Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090-1155), two equally well-known figures in Chinese history. In the various accounts about the enmity between the two, real or fictional, General Yue Fei is usually the one who receives the most sympathy, due to his persistent resistance against the Jurchen invading force, his gallantry displayed on the battlefield, and his undying loyalty to his country. Like every national hero, his image has been incessantly idealized or mythicized, to the point that he almost becomes a flawless person who excelled in

⁹⁶ For discussions of Emperor Gaozong's experience in his early years, please refer to F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 289-298.

almost every aspect of his life.⁹⁷ In contrast to Yue Fei's idealized image, Qin Gui has usually been portrayed as a cowardly and treacherous politician who should be perpetually condemned for his "spineless" peace-seeking policy toward the Jurchens, as well as for his groundless accusation and persecution of Yue Fei. His evilness, like the nobleness of Yue Fei, has also been disproportionately amplified, so much so that his name has almost become a synonym for treason and treachery in Chinese history.

One thing that we may learn from this contrastive portrayal of Yue Fei and Qin Gui is that the issue of war and peace has often been made to transcend its original political scope and raised to the level of morality: Hawkish military generals like Yue Fei, who advocated war and resistance, are regarded by historians and general readers of Chinese history as not only politically right but also morally righteous. On the contrary, people who argued for peace, like Qin Gui, are often indiscriminately labeled as gutless or selfish courtiers, who cared more about their personal interest than that of their country. The adding of this moral undertone has transformed the issue of war and peace from a matter of politics to moral judgment. Its influence on the study of Southern Song history is enormous. Many historical works on the Southern Song, including Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang yishi*, have explicitly or implicitly classified the Song officials into two opposing camps, the "war camp" 主戰派 and the "peace camp" 主和派. In most cases, the classification itself stands for a moral assessment of the persons involved in it, with those classified into the "war camp" generally praised for their bravery and loyalty, whereas those in the "peace camp" distained for their lack of courage and sense of duty.

What is perhaps worth pointing out here is that throughout the conflict between Yue Fei and Qin Gui, or that between the war and peace parties, Emperor Gaozong's stance as the "ultimate arbitrator" remained quite ambiguous. Although there were signs indicating that he might be more in favor of the peace policy, he was never caught openly criticizing advocates in the war party and their actions. This ambiguous stance

⁹⁷ F.W. Mote provides a much detailed discussion about the various myths concerning Yue Fei's life. See F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 299-303.

has sometimes been interpreted by historians as a cautious political strategy purposefully planned by this clever emperor. In doing so, Emperor Gaozong is said to be able to hit at least three birds with one stone: (1) He could, like his ancestor Emperor Taizu in the Northern Song, timely eliminate the threat posed by the military generals, had they become too powerful or too disobedient to his orders.⁹⁸ (2) He could stop the prolonged war between the Southern Song and the Jurchen Jin, which, if continued, would deplete the limited resources of the Southern Song, and, if won, would most likely result in his forfeiting his own throne.⁹⁹ (3) He could remain apparently uninvolved in this conflict between the war and the peace parties and let his surrogate, Qin Gui, take all the moral blame that might be incurred by it. What should be noted here is that among these three effects, the last one is often believed to have exerted the most negative impact on Southern Song politics: Scholars have argued that by pushing Qin Gui to the front and letting him act as his spokesman, Emperor Gaozong had set a bad model for his successors, many of who also chose to entrust their imperial power to the hands of domineering “spokesmen.” This has led historians to believe that the history of the Southern Song after its first sixty years was filled with deficient leadership by morally and mentally weak emperors and disgraceful manipulation of the imperial power by domineering civil ministers. F.W. Mote, for instance, argues that the remaining ninety years of the Southern Song dynasty form a sharp contrast with its beginning sixty years, because of this notable power shift from the hands of the emperors to those of the powerful Grand Councilors:

The first sixty years, covering the reigns of Gaozong and Xiaozong, started uncertainly in the crisis of the Song state’s collapse under the Jurchens’ assault. After slow beginnings, however, those six decades became a period of strong imperial leadership over an orderly and disciplined bureaucratic establishment...Strong imperial leadership began to break

⁹⁸ Mote’s book also contains a very informative discussion on how Emperor Taizu managed to release the power the military generals shortly after he ascended to throne. See F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 92-104.

⁹⁹ Since the Jurchen abducted Emperor Gaozong’s father and brother to the north, if the war against the Jurchen succeeded and the two emperors returned to the south, Emperor Gaozong might have to return the throne to his brother, Emperor Qinzong.

down when Xiaozong became emotionally impaired in the last two years of his reign. The pattern of strong rulership was not recovered thereafter. The reigns of the next three emperors covered a period of seventy-five years: Guangzong (r. 1189-1194), his son Ningzong (r. 1195-1224), and Ningzong's adopted nephew Lizong (r. 1224-1264). Each was, in turn, mentally or morally deficient; Lizong was one of the infamous lechers of Chinese imperial history. From 1189 onward the central government was usually in the hands of strong but often less than upright Grand Councilors. Serious flaws appeared. After Lizong's death in 1264 there would be only one reign, that of Duzong (1264-1274), before the final phase of the Mongol invasions was under way.¹⁰⁰

The “strong but often less than upright Grand Councilors” mentioned in this passage refer respectively to Han Tuo Zhou 韓侂胄 (1152-1207), Shi Miyuan 史彌遠 (1164-1233), and Jia Sidao 賈似道 (1213-1275). Like Qin Gui, they all remained extremely influential in the Southern Song court for many years. Han Tuo Zhou, for instance, arrogated the position of Grand Councilor to himself for nearly fourteen years, Shi Miyuan for twenty-six years, and Jia Sidao for sixteen years. But unlike Qin Gui, they were no longer only surrogates of the emperors. The power they had in hand had become so dominant that even the emperors, or emperors-to-be, were forced to listen to them; otherwise their status as the “most powerful” person in the country would be seriously undermined. Interestingly, however, none of these powerful Grand Councilors, including Qin Gui, were thought highly of by their contemporaries or by later historians. Three of these four councilors are labeled “nefarious ministers” in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, which testifies to their “less than upright” personality. Shi Miyuan, who is still generally disliked, is the only exception, possibly due to the assassination that he planned against his notorious predecessor, Han Tuo Zhou.

The conflict between war and peace, especially the final triumph of the peace party, also fundamentally changed the power structure in the Southern Song government. After the peace treaty with the Jurchens was signed in 1141, “peace-loving” civil ministers in the Southern Song court started to gain more and more power in the making and implementation of government policies. Local military generals, on

¹⁰⁰ F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, p. 310.

the other hand, had been slowly pushed out of the picture. This is not to say that military generals were deemed unimportant to the Southern Song, but their importance only became relevant and visible when actual wars took place. For the rest of the time, their voices remained mostly unheard, or, even if heard, unattended. The “happy acclamation” of peace had become so loud that any admonishment of potential dangers that the country might face was buried under its reverberation. As Jacques Gernet rightly points out in *Daily Life in China*,

The prestige of military officials was almost entirely eclipsed by that of government officials. The low place held by the army in Chinese society of the thirteenth century is no doubt to be explained both by a climate of opinion which dates back to a remote past, and to historical circumstances which accentuated, in the Sung period, the anti-militarism that was traditional among scholars....In spite of the frequent wars that occurred during the Sung dynasty, and in spite of the occupation of Szechwan by the Mongols in the middle of the thirteenth century and the incursions of these barbarians as far as the towns of the middle Yangtze, military affairs always remained peripheral to the main preoccupations of the scholar-officials....Until the final debacle of the years of 1275-1279, the military officials, always regarded as of inferior status, were kept strictly subordinated to the civil powers. Even if they did form a part of the imperial administration, they nevertheless remained, as a group, on the fringe of the upper classes.¹⁰¹

This marginalization of military affairs and officials became even worse with the continuous presence of weak-willed emperors and domineering Grand Councilors in Southern Song history. Few Southern Song emperors possessed the necessary determination, ambition, or capability to initiate or persist in the execution of military campaigns to recover the lost land in the north. Many of them were either too weak or too hesitant to shoulder the burden of war and military expansion. In addition, three of the four domineering Grand Councilors mentioned above were strong proponents of the peace policy, even if that meant the humiliating acceptance of unequal treaties. They were never hesitant in restricting the power possessed by local military

¹⁰¹ Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China: On the Eve of the Mongol Invasion 1250-1276*, H.M. Wright Trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp.70-73.

commanders. The only exception was Han Tuo Zhou, who launched an ill-prepared military campaign against the Jurchen in 1205 which ended up in failure in 1208. But even this ill-fated campaign should not be viewed as a sign of the war party regaining control over the court. It has been argued that Han Tuo Zhou mainly intended to use this military campaign to gain the emperor's favor, to increase his own fame, and to strike at his political opponents, and that he was never a sincere proponent of the war policy.¹⁰² In any case, it is clear that as the Southern Song government and society became more stabilized, the war policy also became less popular. As a result, the power possessed by regional military generals became more restricted and their voice less heard. Their marginalized status in the Southern Song power structure would remain so until the second half of the thirteenth century, when the invasion of the Mongols brought the issue of war and peace back again onto the table. But by that time it was too late. The Southern Song had both lost its will to fight and the power to defend itself, and would be eventually crushed by the mighty force of the Mongolian army.

The issue of war and peace remained a dominating theme throughout Southern Song history and exerted huge influence on Southern Song politics in almost every aspect. Its extreme importance can also be seen from the fact that it profoundly shapes how Southern Song history has been understood, interpreted, and evaluated. At some level, the issue of war and peace has become a powerful discourse that one cannot easily bypass in discussing the Southern Song. Liu Yiqing, when he compiled/wrote his book, was certainly not free from its influence. As I will show in the next several chapters of my dissertation, not only was Liu's selection and organization of materials in his book strongly affected by this discourse, but his interpretation of certain historical events, his judgment of many historical figures, and even his assessment of the entire Southern Song history were profoundly influenced by this prominent theme of war and peace.

The Invasion of the "Barbarians"

¹⁰² F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, p. 313.

Closely related to the issue of war and peace were the military harassments and invasions that the Song Empire suffered from its “barbarous” foreign neighbors. Although harassments at the borders never ceased to be a problem for Chinese governments in different historical periods, they started to cause more serious troubles from the Song dynasty on, in the sense that not only China’s borders were slowly but steadily encroached upon, but at times parts or even the entirety of China proper was conquered by foreign invaders. In describing China’s late imperial period from 960 to 1850, Charles Hucker argues that the dominant historic theme of this millennium is “China’s vain struggle to defend itself,”¹⁰³ first against the northern nomads and then against modern Western imperialists. Hucker’s observation may be challenged on the ground that some of these foreign invaders, such as the Mongols and Manchus who conquered and occupied China proper for centuries, had founded Chinese-style dynasties—the Yuan (1271-1368) and Qing (1644-1912)—and proclaimed themselves to be the rightful continuance of the heritage of the Han (206 B.C.E.- 220 C.E.) and Tang (618-907). Nonetheless they were deemed invading foreigners in their own times and the legitimacy of their ruling China was never completely acknowledged by the ethnic Chinese. It is, therefore, right to say that China went through an age of constant self-defense and resistance against alien invasion and conquest during the later imperial period. It is also correct to pinpoint the starting point of this era to the Song, which had probably suffered from the negative impacts of foreign attacks more than any other dynasty in Chinese history, with the exception of the Qing after the Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860).

Over the course of more than four hundred years from the beginning of the tenth century to the middle of the fourteenth century, more and more parts of China proper were conquered by tribal peoples from Inner Asia. The first dynasty of conquest was the Liao dynasty (907-1125), founded by the proto-Mongol Khitan people. The dynasty owed its nationhood to its capable chieftain, YelüAbaoji 耶律阿保機 (872-926),

¹⁰³ Charles O. Hucker, *China to 1850: A Short History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), p. 102.

who seized the opportunity of the fall of the Tang dynasty and united some eight to ten Khitan tribes into a federation to take control of northeast China proper. On The third month 25, 947, the Liao emperor Taizong (902-947), the second son of Abaoji, donned an imperial robe, ascended the throne, and proclaimed himself to be the emperor. Early in the following month, he issued an announcement, in which he officially adopted the name of Liao for his dynasty. After the Liao was founded, it did not only extort material benefits but also occupied a strip of land along the northern edge of China proper, known as the Sixteen Prefectures (which were actually nineteen prefectures). This strip of land, stretching from present-day Beijing westward to Datong, was wrung by the Liao Emperor Taizong from his adopted “son,” Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭(892-942), puppet emperor of the Later Jin (936-947), a dynasty that owed its existence to the Liao. In spite of their limited number, the Sixteen Prefectures actually covered a strategic area of extreme military importance, whose totality was in fact equal to the entire north China defense line. For this reason, the Northern Song government, after it had consolidated its control in China, had launched several wars against the Liao in order to retrieve these prefectures, but none of them succeeded.¹⁰⁴ Afterward, the Sixteen Prefectures became the focus of contention between the Northern Song and Liao for nearly three decades, until the signing of the Shanyuan Treaty in 1005. The residents in these sixteen prefectures were primarily ethnic Chinese. It is said during its peak time, the Liao dynasty had about 750,000 Khitan people ruling over two or three million Chinese.¹⁰⁵ In spite of the large Chinese population, however, the Liao rulers and the Khitan people persistently resisted Sinification and retained their tribal way of living more than any other foreign peoples who invaded China. They had founded in their state a unique dualistic system, with a northern government ruling the Khitan by tribal customs and a southern government ruling the Chinese through institutions of civil bureaucracy inherited from the Tang dynasty. The Chinese under the Liao rule were often treated as an inferior caste. Inter-marriage was strongly discouraged or even forbidden. In terms of cultural developments, the Liao remained primarily shamanistic,

¹⁰⁴ See F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 62-71.

¹⁰⁵ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, p. 166.

and was never really interested in the achievement made by the Chinese in the field of intellectual life, literature and culture. Because of this, they were by and large remembered by the Chinese as “barbarians” to the end.¹⁰⁶

In spite of the enmity between the Northern Song and the Liao, however, it was not the Chinese that eventually destroyed the Khitan Liao but rather another tribal confederation that rose in the north, the proto-Manchu Jurchens. In the early twelfth century, a capable leader named Wanyan Aguda 完顏阿骨打 (1068-1123) organized several Jurchen tribes into a confederation and proclaimed it to be the Jin dynasty (1115-1234). Within the next thirteen years after the founding of the Jin dynasty, the Jurchens met with unparalleled success in its campaigns of military expansion. They first allied with the Northern Song and crushed the Liao in 1125, absorbing most of its territory. Then less than a few months later, the Jurchens turned against its weaker ally and launched a massive attack against the Northern Song. The war lasted about two years and ended in the utter defeat of the Northern Song. With the fall of the Northern Song, one-third of its territory now fell into the hands of the Jurchens.¹⁰⁷ The remaining Song forces fled to the south and founded the Southern Song. As discussed in the previous section, the first decade of the Southern Song was filled with perils and uncertainty caused by the Jurchens’ continuous attacks that aimed to extinguish the Song and its resistance forces. The war between the two did not officially end until 1141, when the Treaty of Shaoxing was signed. According to the treaty, the Southern Song ceded all the land north of the Huai River to the Jurchens and paid a tribute of 250,000 taels of silver and 250,000 bolts of silk to them every year. After the treaty was concluded, the Jurchens attempted to break it twice, once in 1161 when Prince Hailing (1122-1161) launched an unsuccessful military campaign that reached as far as the Yangtze River, and the other in 1216-1220 when Emperor Xuanzong of Jin (r. 1213-1223)

¹⁰⁶ See Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 280. Discussions of the image of the Liao among the Song Chinese can be found in Tao Jing-shen, “Barbarians or Northerners: Northern Song Images of the Khitans,” in Morris Rossabi ed. *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 66-86. For a much detailed description of the Liao dynasty and its history, please refer to F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp.31-92.

¹⁰⁷ F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp.194-210.

launched another unsuccessful campaign that was defeated by the Southern Song again at the same place by the Yangtze River. Both campaigns resulted in renegotiations of the 1141 Treaty in favor of the Southern Song.¹⁰⁸ On the other side, Han Tuozhou, an infamous Grand Councilor of the Southern Song, led the Song government to declare war on the Jin in 1205 in order to regain some lost territory in the north. This ill-planned and ill-prepared military expedition lasted less than two years, with the Song suffering huge losses in the battlefield. In the end, Han himself had to be assassinated in order to bring the Jurchens back to the negotiation table.

These intermittent wars between the Southern Song and the Jin, however, did not prevent the Jurchens from learning from the Chinese. Of the three tribal peoples who had conquered parts or the entirety of China proper, the Jurchens were probably regarded by the Chinese as the least “barbarous.” The Jurchens had moved its capital further and further south, from central Manchuria to Beijing in 1153 and then to Kaifeng in 1161. During this southward migration, the Jurchens also steadily adopted more Chinese political institutions and employed more Chinese officials. In addition, many Jurchen noblemen also became serious students of Chinese literature and culture, and a lot of classical Chinese works were translated into Jurchen script.¹⁰⁹ All these things helped the Jurchens adapt more rapidly to Chinese customs, language and rituals, and became more and more immersed in Chinese society and culture.¹¹⁰ This overall trend among the Jurchens, however, was not approved and supported by everyone. For instance, after Jin Emperor Xizong (1119-1150, r. 1135-1149), who was a big fan of Chinese classics and poetry, and Prince Hailing (a.k.a. Wanyan Liang 完顏亮, 1122-1161), who was also a great admirer of Chinese civilization,¹¹¹ were murdered by a group of relatives and Jurchen nobles, the succeeding emperor Shizong (1123-1189, r. 1161-1189) tried very hard to revive the Jurchen heritage. He promoted the use of Jurchen as the

¹⁰⁸ F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp.298.

¹⁰⁹ See Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*, p. 281.

¹¹⁰ For a detailed discussion on the Sinification in Jurchen society, please see F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 222-236, 265-283.

¹¹¹ See Denis C. Twitchett and Herbert Franke ed. *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368* Vol. 6. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 239.

written language, ordered the Jurchens to study at Jurchen schools and take civil service examinations conducted in Jurchen. He even issued terrible threats against those who adopted Chinese customs. Under his rule, the Jurchens initiated a series of “nativist reactions” against the Sinification trend prevalent within the Jurchen society during the previous years.¹¹² Though the impact of these “nativist reactions” was limited, they nonetheless let us catch a glimpse of the latent tension between the Jurchens and the Chinese in Jurchen society.¹¹³

The gradual encroachment upon China proper by nomadic peoples from Inner Asia approached its final stage when the Mongols rose to power in the late twelfth century. Thanks to Temuchin 鐵木真 (ca. 1162-1227, r.1206-1227), a brilliant but utterly ruthless tribal leader who later assumed the title of Genghis Khan 成吉思汗 (Universal leader) in 1203, the Mongols had not only founded a country, but also expanded it into one of the largest empires in the world at the time.¹¹⁴ The mature Mongol Empire included four khanates, which were political unities ruled by the Khans: The Grand Khanate which incorporated Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, China, and the Western Xia (1068-1227) and Da Li (937-1095, 1096-1253); the Chagatai Khanate in Central Asia, the Kipchak Khanate in southern Russia (known as the Golden Horde); and the Ilkhanate in the Near East. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Mongol Empire had stretched to cover most Eurasia, ranging from Korea in the east to Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the west.¹¹⁵ In spite of his great military accomplishment, however, Genghis Khan did not bring China proper under his rule while he was alive. It was not until his grandson, Khubilai 忽必烈 (1215-1294, r. 1260-1293), rose to power that the conquest of the entirety of China proper started to be seriously considered by the Mongols. This conquest took the Mongols about fifteen years to complete: In 1264, Khubilai moved the capital from Karakorum in Mongolia to Beijing, known as Dadu at the time. In 1271, he adopted a Chinese name for his dynasty, Yuan, and established a

¹¹² F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, p. 236.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 236-243.

¹¹⁴ Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*, p. 283.

¹¹⁵ Denis C. Twitchett and Herbert Franke ed. *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368* Vol. 6, pp. 321-413.

Chinese style government, proclaiming it to be the rightful successor of the Han and Tang.¹¹⁶ In 1268, Khubilai's armies besieged Xiangyang, a city on the Han River in Hubei, which was believed to be the key to control the Yangtze valley. The siege lasted five years before the city was breached and captured by the Mongols. In 1275, the Mongols crossed the Yangtze River, and breached another military stronghold called Changzhou. The battle at Changzhou was extremely cruel and brutal, and the entire population in the city was slaughtered by the Mongols after the city was sacked. In 1276, in order to spare the people in the capital city of a similar fate, Empress Dowager Xie surrendered Hangzhou to the Mongols without a fight. A few months later, the Southern Song emperor, empresses, and government officials were ordered to embark on a peace-seeking (surrendering) trip to Dadu. Three years later, in 1279, the Mongols wiped out the last group of loyalists near the coast of Guangdong. The last prince of the Southern Song was also drowned in the battle, and his death marked the official end of the Southern Song dynasty.¹¹⁷

Like the Khitans, the Mongols also resisted Sinification. In spite of their willingness to incorporate other ethnic groups into their armies and government, the Mongol rulers purposefully avoided many Chinese social and political practices.¹¹⁸ They tried every means to maintain their ethnic identity: They would use only the Mongol language to conduct their business. They married only Mongolian women and strongly discouraged intermarriage with the Chinese. Some of the Mongol princes would even refuse to live in the palaces constructed at Beijing, but preferred to stay in their tents erected in the palace grounds.¹¹⁹ Moreover, they also passed and maintained strict rules in order to protect their privileges as conquerors and prohibit the Chinese from rising to power again. For instance, the Mongols classified all their subjects into rigid hereditary occupational and ethnic categories, in which the Chinese were placed at the bottom of the scale. The most well-known system of classification was the four-class ethnic categorization: At the top of this categorization were the Mongols, who were the

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 414-457.

¹¹⁷ F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp.460-465.

¹¹⁸ Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*, pp. 286-287.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*.

most privileged. Next to them were the Mongols' non-Chinese allies, including Uighurs, Turks, Tibetans, Tanguts, Persians, and Central Asians, called collectively by the name of *semu* 色目 (colored eyes or assorted categories). On the third level were the former subjects of the Jin dynasty called *hanren* 漢人 (Han Chinese), which included Chinese living in north China and other sinified Khitans and Jurchens. At the bottom were the *nanren* 南人 (southerners), who were the former subjects of the Southern Song dynasty.¹²⁰ In addition to these strict systems of classification, there were also other rules in the Yuan dynasty that prohibited the Chinese from bearing or making arms, learning the Mongolian language, and assembling in groups except for authorized religious and educational purposes. The Chinese and the Mongols were often treated differently by laws. A Chinese would be subject to severe punishment if he/she fought back when attacked by a Mongol, whereas a Mongol who murdered a Chinese would only need to pay a fine.¹²¹ This straightforward discrimination must have caused huge resentment among the ethnic Chinese against their Mongolian rulers, which partially explains the thriving of Song loyalist literature during the early years of the Yuan dynasty. As time went by, however, both resentment and loyalty would slowly fade away. As the Mongols realized that their control over China proper could not be done without support from the Chinese and the Chinese gradually came to an awareness that Mongolian dominance was not to be an ephemeral event, the tension between the two started to alleviate, at least in appearance. The Mongols began to hire more and more Chinese to work for them, and the Chinese also became more and more ready and willing to accept the posts given to them by their foreign rulers.¹²²

The continuous shrinking of the Chinese borders, the devastating wars between China and its aggressive neighbors, the encroachment upon China proper by the “barbarous” peoples, and the foreign conquerors’ suspicious attitude toward Chinese culture and civilization—these are the things that set the tone for Liu Yiqing’s

¹²⁰ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, p. 175.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹²² A detailed discussion on China under Mongol rule can be found in F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 474-513.

writing/compilation of *Qiantang yishi*. They not only constitute the main subjects of Liu's book, but also function as one of the most important factors that sustained his writing. One thing that we may notice in reading Liu Yiqing's book is his persistent desire to uncover the reasons behind the decline of the Southern Song dynasty. This desire itself arises from his even more painful awareness of the Song Empire's impotence in repelling its invading enemies and its inability to restore the glory of its powerful predecessors such as the Han and Tang. In spite of its apparent wealth and prosperity, the Song Empire, especially the Southern Song, was often considered and sometimes deliberately portrayed as a militarily and diplomatically "lesser empire."¹²³ Although its lesser status was caused less by its own fault than by its contrast with its enemies which were growing unprecedentedly strong, scholars and historians still tend to view the Song dynasty as a period when China started to possess less confidence, and less power as well, to continue to claim its imperial and military supremacy over its neighboring states. China was no longer the center of the world, but had become merely a state among equals, or even worse, a conquered land by those whom the Chinese used to view as "barbarians." This loss of centrality and imperial supremacy began to be felt more and more acutely by the Chinese themselves: If at the beginning of the Northern Song, this feeling of loss could still be more or less compensated by a carefully constructed state rhetoric that continued to stress the legitimacy and superiority of China's dominance,¹²⁴ then at the end of the Southern Song when the last emperor of the dynasty was driven by the Mongols into the sea and drowned there, not even this rhetoric could save the Chinese from feeling poignantly the decline of their civilization. When Liu Yiqing wrote/compiled *Qiantang yishi* at a time when all Chinese were subject to alien rule, he must have also been tormented by this feeling of loss that had haunted the mind of Chinese historians and scholars for centuries: The painful regret for China's defeat, the resentment against the foreign invaders, the anger towards the impotent Southern Song government, and the nostalgic sympathy for the

¹²³ I borrow this term from the title of Wang Gongwu's article "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with Its Neighbors," in his *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, pp. 47-65.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*.

declining Chinese culture--all these things that constituted Liu Yiqing's feeling of loss must have become the propelling reasons that drove him to collect and document people's memories of the past. The purpose for doing this was to search as well as to remember, for while Liu Yiqing was looking for the reasons that led China to become vulnerable to foreign invasion, he also helped to preserve a part of Chinese history by preventing it from falling into oblivion. Liu was both writing about and writing against his feeling of loss. Because of this, this feeling of loss has become not only the backdrop of his book, but also the very fabric, meaning, and purpose of it.

The Affluence of the South

In spite of the loss of north China to the Jurchens and the heavy financial burden to maintain a strong defense line north of the Yangtze River, the economy continued to develop in south China, now mostly under the Southern Song's control. The revolution in farming that was initiated during the eighth century continued into the Southern Song, and agricultural production steadily increased, whether measured per acre or per capita. Farmers learned to prepare their soil more effectively, and new strains of seed were also introduced, which could resist drought better, provide heavier yields, and ripen more rapidly. In addition, advanced hydraulic techniques were used to construct more sophisticated and proficient irrigation networks.¹²⁵ According to Mark Elvin, by the thirteenth century China had probably had the most sophisticated agriculture in the world, with India being the only conceivable rival. This sophisticated agriculture, argues Elvin, had provided a solid foundation upon which "a remarkable superstructure of commercial activity and urbanization was to be built."¹²⁶

The industrial development also maintained the same momentum as in the previous dynasties. Traditional industries such as silk and ceramics continued to be

¹²⁵ See Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), pp. 113-130, and Li Jiannong 李劍農, *Zhongguo gudai jingji shigao* 中國古代經濟史稿 (Economic History of Ancient China), Vol. 3 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2005).pp.12-41.

¹²⁶ Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, p. 129.

refined and gradually reached their highest levels of technical perfection.¹²⁷ Paper-making and printing also flourished due to the increasing demand for books, documents, and paper money.¹²⁸ Heavy industries, such as iron and steel production, whose technological development and quantitative expansion had undergone revolutionary changes during the Northern Song,¹²⁹ continued to thrive in the Southern Song. The production and use of gunpowder also witnessed a significant increase during the 12th to 13th centuries because of the intermittent wars between the Southern Song and its neighboring countries.¹³⁰

Commerce, both domestic and foreign, thrived at an even more rapid speed. Commercial taxes had become a substantial portion of government income, accounting for one-fourth to one-third of the government's total revenues.¹³¹ Different types of trade, from state-controlled to private enterprise, competed with each other vehemently, contributing to the flourishing economic activity of the time. As trade increased, the demand for money also grew. The production of cash coins increased enormously year by year, resulting in a significant shortage of copper used to produce the coins. But even this increased production of cash coins could not meet the market's need for money. In the 1120s the Song issued the world's first government backed paper money, and it was through the use of this paper money that the government chiefly solved its currency problem.¹³² As trade become more intensified, merchants also became more specialized and organized. Different commercial organizations like

¹²⁷ Li Jiannong, *Zhongguo gudai jingji shigao*, pp. 43-76.

¹²⁸ See Thomas F. Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward*, rev. by L. Carrington Goodrich (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), pp. 82-119, and Joseph Needham and Tsien Tsuen-hsuei, *Science and Civilization in China, Vol. 5: Paper and Printing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 159-172.

¹²⁹ See Robert M. Hartwell, "A Revolution in the Chinese Iron and Coal Industries During the Northern Sung, 960-1126 AD," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 21.2 (Feb. 1962): 153-162, and Donald Wagner, "The Administration of the Iron Industry in Eleventh-Century China," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 44.2 (2001): 175-197, and F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp. 362-64.

¹³⁰ See Joseph Needham, Ho Ping-Yu, Lu Gwei-djen and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilization in China, Vol.5: Military Technology: The Gunpowder Epic*, in *Science and Civilization in China*, pp.171-210.

¹³¹ See F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, p. 363, and Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*, pp. 348-353.

¹³² See Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, p. 142; Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China: On the Eve of the Mongol Invasion 1250-1276*, pp.78-81, Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*, pp. 354-55.

lodges for merchants, inns-cum-stores, and establishments for stockpiling and storage, started to emerge and develop. Brokers, commission agents and wholesalers, and tax-contractors also became more and more numerous.¹³³ In addition to the booming domestic commerce, foreign trade, especially maritime trade, also became more important than it had ever been. According to Jacques Gernet, Chinese ships of that time sailed as far as to Japan, the Hindu kingdom of Champa on the coast of Annam, Malaya, the coasts of South India and of Bengal, and the coast of Africa, carrying hundreds of people and tons of goods.¹³⁴ Financially, this expansion of maritime trade significantly increased the Southern Song government's income. Militarily, the frequent oceanic voyages also contributed to the construction of huge ships and consequent creation of a powerful navy force.

Accompanying these booming agricultural, industrial, and commercial developments in the Southern Song was the accelerated process of urbanization, especially in the lower Yangtze valley. The function of cities in this area changed significantly: In addition to their traditional political, military, religious, and administrative functions, cities started to serve more and more as economic and market centers for the hinterland. The rural-urban tie now became more economic than political. A hierarchy of urban centers that mediated local, interregional, and interurban trade also began to develop, due to the increasing specialization of economy and the consequent breakdown of the local self-sufficiency that characterized China's rural society in pre-Tang times.¹³⁵ Huge populous metropolises started to emerge. Take Hangzhou for example. The city had a population of 2,000,000 within its walls and another 2,000,000 in its immediate environs,¹³⁶ making it the largest and most populous city in the world at the time.¹³⁷ Oderic of Pordenone (ca. 1286-1331), an Italian

¹³³ See Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies, 1970 [1968]), pp. 165-213.

¹³⁴ See Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China: On the Eve of the Mongol Invasion 1250-1276*, p.83.

¹³⁵ See Shiba Yoshinobu, "Urbanization and the Development of Markets in the Lower Yangtze Valley," in John Winthrop Haeger ed. *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1975), pp. 13-48.

¹³⁶ See Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*, pp. 331-33.

¹³⁷ See Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China: On the Eve of the Mongol Invasion 1250-1276*, p. 25.

missionary who traveled to China a few decades later than Marco Polo (c. 1254-1324) in the early 14th century, left the following comments on the city:

The city is greater than any in the world, and is quite 100 miles round; nor is there any span of ground that is not well inhabited, and often there will be a house with ten or twelve families. This city has also great suburbs containing more people than the city itself contains. It has twelve principal gates; and at each of these gates at about eight miles are cities larger than Venice or Padua might be, so that one will go about one of those suburbs for six or eight days and yet will seem to have travelled but a little way.¹³⁸

This accelerated process of urbanization also helped speed up the cultural development and the accumulation of wealth in Chinese society, especially in the south. According to Mote, China had become “the richest, most orderly, most culturally and technologically advanced portion of the world throughout the more than three centuries of the Song, but particularly in the two-thirds of the Chinese lands that became the Southern Song after 1127.”¹³⁹

Traditional Chinese scholars believed that this great affluence of the south induced an extravagant and hedonic life-style characterized by people’s insatiate seeking for pleasure and comfort. City-dwellers in Hangzhou, it was said, had developed a feverous passion for all kinds of amusements, and grasped every opportunity to maximize their enjoyment in their rich and colorful life. They would go to gardens outside the ramparts for pleasant outings or sightseeing; they would sail boats on the beautiful West Lake to entertain themselves with abundant wine, delicious food, and sweet singing girls; they would gather at tea-houses and restaurants to chat, listen to stories, or learn the playing of different kinds of musical instruments; they would go to places designed especially for entertainment purposes, like the “pleasure grounds,” to watch acrobats, magic, dance, drama and other forms of performances; if all these outdoor activities could still not quench their thirst for pleasure, they would stay at

¹³⁸ Quoted by A.C. Moule in his *Quinsai, with Other Notes on Marco Polo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p25.

¹³⁹ See F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, p. 324.

home holding large banquets, where they and their guests could again entertain themselves with wine, food, singing girls, and a variety of in-door games. Of course, this picture of the pleasure-driven lifestyle may not be said to represent all aspects of Southern Song life. What is missing is especially the important fact of the inequities that existed in the society and the impoverishment suffered by the commoners and poor country people. But this picture to a large extent represents how the Southern Song life has been visualized and remembered by later generations. The image depicted in this picture may not be entirely accurate, but it is stubbornly impressive. Even today, the Southern Song is still portrayed by many historians as an age of extravagance, or worse, luxurious decadence. In this portrayal, the glory of wealth and pleasure has been incessantly amplified, and their dazzling rays of light outshine everything else, even the reality of the time.

Adding up to this depiction of the extravagant and pleasure-driven lifestyle in Hangzhou is the breath-taking beauty of the city, which is believed to have such captivating power as to make people forget everything else. West Lake, which lies to the west of Hangzhou, and the graceful curving hills that surround it, make the city one of the most beautiful places in China. According to a famous saying quoted by Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126-1193) in *Wujun zhi* 吳郡志 (Records of the Wu Prefecture), “*tianshang tiantang, dishang Su Hang* 天上天堂，地上蘇杭” (Above there is heaven, below there is Suzhou and Hangzhou),¹⁴⁰ the beauty of Hangzhou is even comparable to that of heaven. Not surprisingly, this ravishing beauty of the city was energetically exploited by people living in it. Take West Lake for example: There were hundreds of boats of all shapes and sizes sailing on it throughout the year, carrying thousands of people who came to enjoy the beauty of the lake, the delicacy of food and wine, the entertainment of various games, and the pleasant company of sweet and tender singing girls. The following passage, quoted from Gernet’s *Daily Life in China*, best captures this rapturous scene,

¹⁴⁰ Fan Chengda, *Wujun Zhi*, included in *Congshu jicheng chubian* (Changsha: Shangyu yinshuguan, 1939), *juan* 50.

Some small boats carrying singing-girls, or arranged in such a fashion that the passengers could play various games on them (darts, ball games, etc.), would approach people on the lake-shore without having been summoned. The pleasure boats were never out of work, and on feast days...it was as well to book passages in advance. On such occasions there was nothing to be had under 200 or 300 cash. The passengers who wanted to dine on board did not have to bring anything with them on these pleasure boats: the boatmen undertook to supply everything—dishes, wine and food. Rich families had their own boats for pleasure trips, and there were high officials who had 'lotus-gathering' boats. These little boats, which only held one or two passengers, were ornamented in the most elegant way and carried deep blue sails. But as well as all these, a swarm of little boats carrying various cargoes crossed the lake from north to south. Vegetables, fruit, chickens, shellfish, flowers, wines, soups, sweetmeats—there was hardly any kind of merchandise that could not be procured from these boats.¹⁴¹

The beauty of Hangzhou, however, is not always deemed a good thing by traditional critics. The captivating landscape in the city is often regarded as detrimental to the development of the Southern Song state and society. Emperors and government officials of the Southern Song were criticized by traditional Chinese historians for indulging so much in the beauty of Hangzhou that they forget their responsibilities and duties as leaders and ministers of the country. This voice of criticism became stronger and stronger as time went by, until it turned into a stereotyped discourse that would be invoked almost every time people talked about Southern Song history. In this discourse, the enticing beauty of Hangzhou was often believed to be the source of all evils, in the sense that it began to be associated with all kinds of mistakes and misconduct related to the Southern Song, from the government's failure to recover its lost territory in the north to the dynasty's eventual collapse under the Mongolian invasion. The attractiveness of the city's beautiful landscape was sometimes compared to Xi Shi 西施 (ca. 506 B.C.E.-?), the famous femme fatale in ancient China, whose beauty and charm had the power to ruin an entire country. Sometimes, this criticism of Hangzhou's

¹⁴¹ Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China: On the Eve of the Mongol Invasion 1250-1276*, p. 53.

beauty was also combined with an even more acute accusation of the affluent, extravagant, and hedonic life style assumed by the city dwellers. Contrary to what we may have expected, the affluence of the Southern Song was viewed by critics, of whom Liu Yiqing was a good example, not as a sign of prosperity, but rather as one of decadence. According to these critics, the material richness of south China had weakened the Southern Song government's will to fight, as well as its determination to regain what used to belong to it. More importantly, it also gave the people living in the south a false impression of peace and prosperity, making them focus only on their short-sighted pursuit of pleasure and forget all the potential dangers lying out there. Following this logic, critics of the Southern Song eventually attribute the decline and fall of the dynasty, somewhat paradoxically, to its material affluence. In the eyes of these critics, the tremendous agricultural, industrial, and commercial developments during the 12th and 13th centuries, which deeply impress us today, did not create a strong country as it was supposed to. On the contrary, they had made the Southern Song government become even more timid and soft, fearing to lose whatever limited peace and prosperity that it had acquired. People living in the Southern Song started to become more content with what they had, and less willing to fight for what had or could be lost. This loss of will-power, according to critics, was what determined the Southern Song's decline. The affluence, pleasure, and beauty of the south were what slowly ate away the strength and vitality of the dynasty from within its government and society.

The Loyalist Tradition

In addition to what we have discussed before, the loyalist tradition, which has entertained a long history in China, is another important factor that affects the writing/compilation of *Qiantang yishi*. In Chinese, the word for "loyalist" is *yimin* 遺民. To my knowledge, the earliest appearance of the word can be found in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Commentary of Zuo), attributed to Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (ca. 502-ca. 422 B.C.E.),

which covers the historical period from 722 B.C.E. to 468 B.C.E..¹⁴² The word appears four times in the book, and in one of the occasions, it is used to refer to the descendants of Yao 堯, one of the five legendary kings who lived more than 4000 years ago.¹⁴³

The word *yimin* is a culturally loaded term that possesses multiple connotations: In a broad sense, it is used to refer to those people who survive the fall of an old dynasty and manage to live on in a new one.¹⁴⁴ These people can be royal family members, government officials, or commoners, but one thing they have in common is that they have all gone through the disturbances that characterized the transition from one dynasty to another. When used in this way, the word *yimin* can be literally translated into English as “the people who have been left over.”

In contrast to the first connotation, the second connotation of *yimin* has much more limited reference, designating specifically those who refuse to serve the new dynasty and remain mentally or physically devoted to the old dynasty. This connotation is probably the closest to the meaning of the English word “loyalist.” Two famous examples of this type of *yimin* were Boyi 伯夷 (fl. 11th-10th centuries B.C.E.) and Shuqi 叔齊 (fl. 11th-10th centuries B.C.E.). Both were Shang dynasty (1600-1046 B.C.E.) loyalists, who were said to have refused to eat any millet grown in the new dynasty after the Shang was overthrown and replaced by the Zhou (1045-256 B.C.E.). Having only grasses and herbs for food, Bo Yi and Shu Qi eventually starved to death on Shouyang Mountain 首陽山, a secluded and desolated place where they resided. After their death, they were remembered by later loyalists as virtuous role models, because of their refusal to give up their loyalty to the Shang in exchange for a comfortable life.¹⁴⁵ Unlike the first connotation which defines *yimin* as a group of people who just lived through the turbulence of dynastic change, what defines one’s *yimin* status in this second meaning is

¹⁴² See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 anno. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Commentary of Zuo Annotated; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 266, 1163, 1164, 1628.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.1163.

¹⁴⁴ The *yimin* that appear in *Zuozhuan* usually belongs to this type.

¹⁴⁵ The biography of Bo Yi can be found in Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記. See Wang Liqi, ed., *Shiji Zhuyi* 史記注譯 (Records of the Grand Historian, Annotated and Translated into Modern Chinese; Xi’an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1988), pp. 1605-1611.

the political stance that one voluntarily chooses. That is to say, to qualify as a *yimin*, one not only need to live through a dynastic transition, but also has to firmly demonstrate one's loyalty to the old dynasty through a series of actions and/or statements. In short, in this connotation, it is one's conscious choice, not one's passive living condition, that determines one's status as a *yimin*.

Another usage occurs when the word *yi* 遺 is replaced with its homophone *yi* 逸 (lit. to escape, retiring, relaxed).¹⁴⁶ This gives rise to a third layer of connotation possessed by the word *yimin*, which is used to refer to those people who abandon society and live a self-contained and reclusive life by themselves. Logically, this layer of connotation may seem unrelated to the previous two, but upon close examination, we will discern the hidden connections among them. Historically, it is very common for those *yimin* who have been left over by the old dynasty, especially those who refuse to cope with the new one, to choose to live a life as a recluse. The reason why they do so is because, in theory, having refused anything associated with the new emperor, new government, and new dynasty, they would naturally find it impossible or inappropriate to continue to live in the "new" society as well. But in real life, some of these *yimin* are often forced to choose a reclusive life for more compelling reasons. For instance, in many circumstances, emperors of the new dynasty may ask famous *yimin* from the previous dynasty to serve in the new government. If the persons choose to accept the positions, their loyalty to the old dynasty would be severely undermined, but if they choose not to, they could lose their lives. In an effort not to serve the new government but also not to endanger their own lives, some of the *yimin* chose to cut off their connections with society at large. In addition, living as a recluse is usually regarded in traditional China as a powerful symbol for one's impeccable merit and virtuous personality. It is believed that only the most capable and moral person can endure the austerity of reclusive life, for this life constantly requires the person to refrain from

¹⁴⁶ For instance, in the *Analects of Confucius*, Bo Yi and Shu Qi are referred to as *yimin* 逸民, whereas in Du Du 杜篤 (?-78 B.C.E.)'s "Rhapsody of the Shouyang Mountain," (*Shouyangshan fu* 首陽山賦) they were referred to as *yimin* 遺民. See Yang Bojun anno. *Lunyun* (Analects of Confucius, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2000), p. 179. Du Du's rhapsody can be found in Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641) ed., *Yiwen Leiju* 藝文類聚 Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), pp. 138-139.

being seduced and contaminated by the comfort and pleasure of the mundane world. This belief must have also been cherished by some of the *yimin* who voluntarily chose to live a life detached from society. More importantly, in choosing to live a life as virtuous recluses, the *yimin* also manage to elevate their loyalty to a higher level, transforming it from a political choice into a moral one. In other words, they managed to crystallize or perpetuate their loyalty into a lifestyle. Because of this, their loyalty also starts to acquire some universal value, namely, it is no longer some provincial and strong-headed fidelity that stubbornly attaches one to a vanished age, but become a principle of living that is meaningful and respectable for anyone who is striving to be a morally good person.

Although theoretically it is possible for us to break down the meaning of the word *yimin* into several layers of connotations, in real life, to determine whether a person can be called a *yimin* is remains a much complicated issue. This is especially the case if we take into consideration that the Chinese concept of *yimin* and the English concept of “loyalist” do not perfectly overlap. The English term “loyalist,” for instance, can be used to translate both the Chinese word *zhongyi* 忠義 (loyal and righteous persons) and *yimin* 遺民 (surviving subjects, people who are left over). Within the specific context of dynastic change, the former often refers to those people who maintain their loyalty to the end, dying as martyrs during or shortly after the old dynasty is replaced by the new one. Some of these persons are not considered *yimin* as they are not surviving subjects, though they indeed qualify to be called “loyalists,” in the sense that they remained loyal till the end. Others who survive the old dynasty but die shortly after have indefinite identities. In some cases they are regarded as *yimin* because they are survivors who remained loyal to the old dynasty, but it may also be contended that they do not live long enough into the new dynasty to be considered as leftovers. Even if we leave the English translation aside and consider only the Chinese concept of *yimin*, problems still remain. One problem arises from the internal conflicts among the multiple connotations possessed by the concept. For instance, if the surviving subject starts to work for the new government, can he/she be regarded as a *yimin*? On the

other hand, if a person barely or never lived in the old dynasty but still feels attached to it, can he/she be called a *yimin*? One way to solve these problems is to choose one connotation of the word as the most decisive criterion for determining a person's *yimin* status. This is what scholars and historians usually do. In an effort to clearly identify their subjects in examining *yimin* culture, scholars and historians tend to employ the second connotation as the defining criterion and focus primarily on those who publicly demonstrate their refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the new dynasty. But even this solution has its limits. For example, it has long been under debate whether a person who involuntarily serves the new dynasty but nonetheless displays strong sympathy and mental adherence toward the old dynasty should be considered a *yimin*. The key issue here, in my understanding, is the existence of the "grey zone," where a theoretically clear-cut definition cannot account for all the complexity of real life. To be aware of this "grey zone" is especially important for our discussion on Southern Song loyalism, for here the matter of loyalism is further complicated by other sensitive issues such as foreign rules, ethnic conflicts, and cultural identity.

Thanks to the studies done by traditional Chinese scholars, many of whom were also loyalists themselves, and modern Chinese and Western researchers, we now have much detailed and systematic knowledge of the lives and deeds of the Southern Song loyalists.¹⁴⁷ Reading through these studies, one thing that we will notice is that the Southern Song loyalists were by no means a unified and homogeneous group. Contrary to our common expectation that views loyalists as martyr-like persons with absolute values, unyielding fidelity, and impeccable conducts, the Southern Song loyalists were in

¹⁴⁷ Books written/compiled by traditional Chinese scholars on Southern Song loyalists include Cheng Minzheng 程敏政 (1446-1499), *Song yimin lu* 宋遺民錄 (Records of Song Loyalists; Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1968). Wan Sitong 萬斯同 (1638-1702), *Song ji zhongyi lu* 宋季忠義錄 (Records of Loyalists near the End of the Song Dynasty; Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1988). Modern works include Niu Hairong 牛海榮, *Yuan chu Song Jin yimin ciren yanjiu* 元初宋金遺民詞人研究 (A Study of the Song and Jin Loyalist Ci Poets in the Early Yuan Dynasty; Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007); Fang Yong 方勇, *Nansong yimin shiren qunti yanjiu* 南宋遺民詩人群體研究 (A Study of Southern Song Loyalist Poet Groups; Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2000). Studies in English include Richard L. Davis, *Wind against the Mountain: The Crisis of Politics and Culture in Thirteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1996) and Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalism in Thirteenth-Century China* (Bellingham, Wash.: Western Washington, 1991).

fact a loosely connected group of individuals who defined their loyalism rather diversely according to their specific circumstances and personal experiences. In her informative study on the topic of loyalism in thirteenth-century China, Jennifer Jay classified the ninety or so Southern Song loyalists that she examines in her book into three types: The first type is what she calls the “*zhongyi* 忠義 martyrs who died for the Song cause.”¹⁴⁸ This group of loyalists includes those, such as Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283) and Li Tingzhi 李庭芝 (1219-1276), who vehemently fought against the Mongols to the end and died or committed suicide either during or shortly after the Song’s collapse. In later portrayals, this group of loyalists was usually idealized as flawless heroes who sacrificed their lives for a noble and patriotic cause. The second type of loyalists refers to loyalists such as Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖 (1241-1318) and Liu Chenweng 劉辰翁 (1213-1297), “who survived and largely maintained their loyalty by not serving the new government.”¹⁴⁹ It is said that after the fall of the Southern Song, these loyalists voluntarily chose to withdraw from society and live a reclusive life in the mountains. Though they did not die for the Southern Song like the first type of loyalists, they demonstrated their undying loyalty and unyielding personality through the way they lived, and were remembered as heroic and virtuous people just as the first group of loyalists. The third type of loyalists is what Jay calls the “marginal loyalists” or “a subgroup of the *yimin*,” since their “loyalty was doubted by contemporaries or later critics because at some time they reemerged into public office” in the Yuan dynasty.¹⁵⁰ Two good examples of this type of loyalist would be Wang Yisun 王沂孫 (?-ca.1291) and Wang Yuanliang 汪元量 (ca. 1241-1317), who both worked for the Yuan government at certain points of their lives. In spite of their similar experience, however, the two were often treated differently by later critics: While Wang Yisun was often criticized for failing to maintain his loyalty to the end, Wang Yuanliang was generally recognized and praised as a respectable loyalist to the Southern Song dynasty.

¹⁴⁸ Jennifer Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalism in Thirteenth-Century China*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*.

It is perhaps worth pointing out here that even this much detailed classification cannot account for the complexity of the loyalist situation during the Song-Yuan transition. Among the second type of loyalists, for instance, there were people, such as Zheng Sixiao, who adamantly refused to have anything to do with the new dynasty or people who worked for it; there were also people, such as Zhou Mi 周密 (1232-1298), who never served the Yuan dynasty but nonetheless maintained good relationships with many marginal loyalists such as Wang Yisun and even some of the so-called collaborators such as Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322).¹⁵¹ Similarly, for the loyalists who are classified into the third group, their degree of loyalty to the Southern Song also varied based on their different personalities and experiences: There were people, such as Wang Yuanliang who were forced to take up office in the Yuan and resigned immediately after they had a chance. There were also people who voluntarily served the Yuan and worked up to a very high level in the central court, like Liu Yin 劉因 (1249-1293), but nevertheless retained a nostalgic sympathy towards the Southern Song. In the middle, there were also loyalists, such as Qiu Yuan 仇遠 (1247-1326) who worked for the Yuan as low-rank government clerks or school instructors only because they wanted to find ways to overcome poverty and sustain their families. All in all, we should keep in mind that Southern Song loyalism should never be restricted to a single set of values and conduct absolutely against dynastic change and foreign rule. Rather, it embraces a wide range of mentalities and conduct from complete intransigence to conditional compromise to reluctant accommodation. As Jennifer Jay rightly observes in her examination of the transformation of Song loyalism, the firmness and intensity of the loyalists' loyalty gradually waned as time went by:

In the years immediately after the Song demise, loyalists engaged in active military resistance, participated in the recovery of the imperial relics, ignored Yuan reign titles, rejected friendships with Yuan officials and Song defectors, withdrew from political life and refused to serve the Yuan government. However, the intensity and duration of such loyalist behavior gradually eroded and became transformed over time....With

¹⁵¹ Jennifer Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalism in Thirteenth-Century China*, pp. 195-242.

few exceptions, most loyalists socialized with Yuan officials and wrote commemorative essays for personal and financial obligations. They certainly regarded some as close friends; not a few fully approved of their children serving the Yuan....By gradually rationalizing Mongol rule, it was much more acceptable in the eyes of the loyalists themselves and society to take up service in 1300 than in 1280....By 1300, few Song loyalists still adhered to absolute loyalty. Indeed, loyalist activities had largely lost direct relevance and what remained was nostalgic reminiscing about loyalist conduct in the aftermath of the Mongol conquest.¹⁵²

This complexity of Southern Song loyalism, not surprisingly, also finds its expression in Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang yishi*. A telling example of this would be Liu's mixed use of language and historical documents in his book. As shall be discussed in more detail in my next chapter, scholars have noticed that Liu utilized materials from a variety of sources and employed terms that were used both by Song and Yuan people. While this may not sound too unusual, as Liu Yiqing was compiling/writing a miscellaneous *biji* text, what seems to be most interesting is that he never attempted to play down the apparent inconsistency among these materials and terminologies. This notable "negligence," as criticized by scholars like the editors of SKQS, has made the text of *Qiantang yishi* in many places look as if it was just ineptly plagiarized from other sources. In addition, it also resulted in a "mixed and anachronistic use of language" that historians and literary critics have long been finding fault with.¹⁵³ My argument in the next chapter will show that some of these seeming deficiencies may in fact be purposefully designed or retained as such by Liu Yiqing, so that they will make his text look less editorially manipulated. But for now what we need to note is Liu's general tolerance regarding the heterogeneity of his materials. Liu seldom attempted to unify the textual voices in his book, by editing or suppressing conflicting voices so as to make them more conform to his identity as a Song loyalist. In many places, he simply allowed his views to be presented from both the perspective of the Song and that of the Yuan, and never tried too hard to subdue one for the sake of the other. It is this accommodative spirit that makes us suspect that Liu Yiqing's firmness as a Southern Song loyalist might have

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 245-46.

¹⁵³ For a detailed discussion, please refer to Chapter Two of my dissertation.

already been worn down by the passage of time. Apparently, he lacked some of the uncompromising spirit that characterized the loyalty of the first and second groups of loyalists. But at the same time, he also demonstrated notable nostalgic feeling toward the Song society, his deep concern about Southern Song history, and his sincere regret for the decline of the dynasty.

People may want to pause here and ask: As we do not know much about Liu Yiqing's life and the loyalty he displays in his book is by no means absolute, how can we be certain that he was a Southern Song loyalist? This question is certainly legitimate, and unfortunately there is no ready answer for it. Nevertheless, there are still notable features in Liu's book that tend to lead us to view him as a Song loyalist rather than otherwise. In his study on Southern Song loyalist poets, Fang Yong 方勇 brings up an interesting concept which he terms as *yimin yishi* 遺民意識 (loyalist consciousness).¹⁵⁴ Though he does not explain in detail what constitutes this "loyalist consciousness," the concept itself provides us with a good starting point to delve into the problem of loyalism: One thing that we may notice in reading through the huge body of literature concerning Southern Song loyalism is that many of the Song loyalists have shared at least one thing in common, that is, they all more or less harbored the feeling that they did not belong to the age they were living in. In order to cope with this feeling of temporal displacement, some of the Song loyalists chose an absolute path and forsook their lives for what they were loyal to; some of them stayed alive but continued to refuse to give themselves over to the new state of things, trying to shut off everything associated with the new regime from their personal lives; some of them lived on in a more accommodative way, due to personal or family reasons, but nonetheless held strong feelings in their heart towards the old regime.

Almost all surviving Song loyalists had developed a nostalgic interest in the history of the old dynasty. They started to write poems, song lyrics, and/or *biji* to commemorate the customs, events, places and people in the past. Most of these literary accounts were more openly nostalgia than loyalist. Indeed, as the Song loyalists

¹⁵⁴ Fang Yong, *Nansong yimin shiren qunti yanjiu*, p. 8.

became more accustomed to the life in the new dynasty, the old dynasty that they used to feel so strongly attached to also started to fade out of their lives. But the feeling of temporal displacement remained and gradually replaced their undying loyalty to become the core of their “loyalist consciousness.” It is this feeling of temporal displacement that enables Song loyalism to have some elements of universal appeal, changing it into an enduring subject of study. It is also this feeling of temporal displacement that represents an indelible imprint of loyalism in Liu Yiqing’s writing, enabling it to be felt and sympathized with by readers living in a different time and space.

The *Biji* Heritage

In addition to the historical condition of the time and the loyalist tradition, various genres of literature prevalent during the Song and Yuan periods, including poetry, historical writing, legendary stories, and fictional works, also influence the writing/compilation of *Qiantang yishi*. Of all these literary genres, the one that exerts the most profound influence is probably the genre of *biji*, to which the text of *Qiantang yishi* can be classified. As briefly discussed in the introduction of my dissertation, the genre of *biji* witnessed a boom starting from the beginning of the Song dynasty. Not only did various types of *biji* texts start to appear, but many of them also gained long-lasting fame ever since and remains influential even until today. Of these *biji* texts, the following three types are especially relevant to our study of the text of *Qiantang yishi*:

(1) *Biji* texts that focus on urban life, social activities, and customs in the Song.

Because of the rapid commercial development and the emergence of big cities during the Song, *biji* that focused specifically on urban life, especially that in the capital cities, started to become more and more popular. Representatives of this type of work include Meng Yuanlao’s 孟元老 (fl. 1126-1147) *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄 (The

Dream of Hua in the Eastern Capital); *Ducheng jisheng* 都城紀勝 (A Record of the Splendors of the Capital City) attributed to Guanpu Naideweng 灌圃耐得翁 (pseudonym, date unknown); *Xihu laoren fansheng lu* 西湖老人繁盛錄 (Records of the Grandeur by Old Man of West Lake) attributed to Xihu laoren 西湖老人 (pseudonym, date unknown); Wu Zimu's 吳自牧 (fl. Late 13th century) *Mengliang lu* 夢梁錄 (Dreams of Glory), and Zhou Mi's 周密 (1232-1298) *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事 (Former Things of Wulin).¹⁵⁵ These five works were all written or compiled by people living during or after the Southern Song. The first one is about the Northern Song capital Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng), and the rest are all about Lin'an (present-day Hangzhou), the capital of the Southern Song. The five works are similar in terms of their style and content, and sometimes even copy from each other. In spite of their varied length, they all contained descriptions about aspects of urban life and social customs in the capital cities. Things like the structure, layout, and buildings in the capital cities, famous tourist sites and scenic spots, people's activities during the festivals, food and items sold at the market places, acrobats, storytelling and theatrical performance in the entertainment quarters, different departments in the government, and specific procedures in the performing of sacrifices or conducting civil service examination can all be found in these books. They are basically hodgepodes that strive to tell you almost everything about the life in the two capital cities of the Song. Reading them together may sometimes dazzles us because of the kaleidoscopic nature of their content. Most of these works are more descriptive than analytical, in the sense that they provide you with a picture of urban life in the Song capitals that are extremely vivid, detailed, and seemingly free from the interference of the authors' subjective assessment. But we must not forget that the writing/compilation of these books itself is of a subjective intention. The *Dongjing menghua lu*, for instance, was written/compiled to commemorate the prosperity of Kaifeng after it was taken over by the Jurchens. The book is clearly nostalgic towards

¹⁵⁵ See Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu jianzhu* (The Dream of Hua in the Eastern Capital, Annotated; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006). Guanpu Naideweng, *Ducheng jisheng*, Xihu laoren, *Xihu laoren fansheng lu*, in *Dongjing menghua lu (wai sizhong)* 東京夢華錄外四種 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962). Wu Zimu, *mengliang lu* (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 2004). Zhou Mi *Wulin Jiushi* (Hangzhou: Xihu shushe, 1981). Some of these works are sometimes regarded as local gazetteers rather than *biji*.

the past. The same nostalgia can also be found in Wu Zimu's *Mengliang lu* and Zhou Mi's *Wulin jiushi*, which were all written/compiled near, or after, the fall of the Southern Song dynasty. These are books of remembrance, and in this sense, every seemingly objective description in them is in fact soaked with the author's sentimental reflections on the past.

The writing/compilation of *Qiantang yishi*, especially the first chapter that focuses on Hangzhou and the last chapter that describes the procedure of the civil service examinations in the Southern Song, is clearly modeled upon some of these *biji* works. Many entries in the first chapter of *Qiantang yishi* that describes the famous scenic spots in Hangzhou remind us of similar entries in Zhou Mi's *Wulin jiushi* and Wu Zimu's *Mengliang lu*.¹⁵⁶ But unlike the entries in Zhou's and Wu's books, which are more of a descriptive and reminiscent nature, the entries in the first chapter of *Qiantang yishi*, as I will show in the third chapter of this dissertation, often use descriptions of Hangzhou as a way to usher in Liu Yiqing's own veiled sociopolitical criticism of Southern Song government and society. This sociopolitical criticism is what distinguishes Liu Yiqing's book from many other *biji* works that concentrate on city life in the Song. The city of Hangzhou is but a starting point for Liu Yiqing to introduce his views and reflections on Southern Song history. It is just as the editors of the SKQS had commented, "Though the book was named after Qiantang, what it actually records is the entire history of the Southern Song."¹⁵⁷

(2) *Biji* texts that focus on government officials, court politics and dynastic histories.

Because many Song *biji* writers/compilers also worked in the government, they developed a strong interest in recording the words and deeds of government officials,

¹⁵⁶ These two books were probably in circulation before *Qiantang yishi* was written/compiled. *Mengliang lu* was said to be completed near the end of the Southern Song, and *Wulin jiushi* during the early years of the Yuan, around 1290s. Given the extremely limited information that we have about Liu Yiqing, we cannot say for certain that Liu's *Qiantang yishi* was influenced by these two books, even though some features in Liu's book indicate that it might be written/compiled in a later age. But the connections among these *biji* texts are quite obvious.

¹⁵⁷ Liu Yiqing, *Qiantang yishi*, p.3.

stories in court politics, and events in dynastic histories. *Biji* texts that are devoted to these topics are numerous. Their contents differ according to the time when they were written: Roughly speaking, during the first fifty years after the founding of the Northern Song in the early 10th century, *biji* works that belong to this type, like Zheng Wenbao's (953-1013) 鄭文寶 *Nantang jinshi* 南唐近事 (Recent Events of the Southern Tang) and Qian Yi's 錢易 (fl. Early 10th century) *Nanbu xinshu* 南部新書 (A New History of the South),¹⁵⁸ concentrated largely on documenting political and historical events taking place during the Tang and the Five Dynasties (907-960). Since the beginning of the 11th century, *biji* writers/compiler, such as Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修(1007-1072) who wrote/compiled *Guitian lu* 歸田錄 (A Record after Retirement) and Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) who wrote/compiled *Sushui jiwén* 涑水記聞 (Records at the Su River),¹⁵⁹ tended to direct their focus more to contemporary politics and history. After the fall of the Northern Song in the early 12th century, scholars who fled to the south with the surviving Southern Song government started to write/compile reminiscent *biji* works that contained records about the Northern Song, a good example of which would be Wang Mingqing's 王明清 (1127-?) *Huizhu lu* 揮麈錄 (Records of Flicking the Fly Whisk).¹⁶⁰ This nostalgic retrospection was followed, since the late 12th century, by another shift of focus onto contemporary politics and history of the Southern Song, with the appearance of such well-known *biji* works as Ye Shaoweng's *Sichao wenjian lu*.¹⁶¹ These *biji* works on Southern Song politics and history provided both materials and models for later *biji* texts written/compiled by Song loyalists after the fall of the dynasty, of which Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang yishi* and Li Dongyou's 李東有 (late 13th to early 14th centuries) *Guhang zaji* 古杭雜記 (Miscellaneous Records of Old Hangzhou) are two good examples.

¹⁵⁸ See Zheng Wenbao, *Nantang jinshi* and Qian Yi (fl. Early 10th century), *Nanbu xinshu*, in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp.263-285, 285-393.

¹⁵⁹ See Ouyang Xiu, *Guitian lu* and Sima Guang (1019-1086), *Sushui jiwén*, included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp.597-631,773-953.

¹⁶⁰ See Wang Mingqing (1127-?), *Huizhu lu* (Records of Swaying the Fly Whisk), included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 3549-3851.

¹⁶¹ Ye Shaoweng (fl. Late 12th century), *Sichao wenjian lu* (Things Seen and Heard during the Four Reigns), included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp.4857-5009.

Apart from their different content, the structure and reliability of these historical and political *biji* texts also vary based on the writers/compilers' literary taste and preference, their specific purpose of writing/compilation, and the nature of the materials that they collected in their books. Some of these *biji* texts that were written by well-known historians and focused almost exclusively on court politics and important state affairs, like Sima Guang's *Sushui jiwen*, are very well organized and contain highly reliable information. More typically, however, what we will find in these *biji* are loosely connected and categorized records, which mix descriptions of real history with questionable hearsay, rumors, and stories.

In general, the text of *Qiantang yishi* can be classified to this type of *biji*. Its historical and political focus is obvious: Out of the ten chapters contained in the book, eight are devoted to discussions on Southern Song government officials, and court politics. Many of these discussions are presented to us in the form of short entries, each with a short title that summarizes what is described in it. In spite of their brevity, however, these entries give us a chronological outline of Southern Song history, covering almost all important aspects that we should know about the dynasty. Many of these discussions of Southern Song history and politics appear to be taken from reliable sources and are solemn in tone and realistic in description. But exaggerated or unrealistic stories do appear from time to time, adding an anecdotal and sometimes mysterious tone to the text's otherwise serious and plain narrative. In short, though the text of *Qiantang yishi* can be classified as a historical and political *biji*, its values are not limited to its focus on Southern Song history and politics. As I will discuss in detail in the following chapters of this dissertation, the text is versatile, and its beauty can only be fully appreciated if we treat it in a similarly versatile fashion.

(3) *Biji* that are of a more miscellaneous nature.

It is often difficult to separate the *biji* works in this category from the historical and political *biji*, as many of them also contain records about government officials, court

politics, and dynastic history. But unlike the historical and political *biji*, the contents of these *biji* texts are much broader and more miscellaneous, covering almost everything that the genre can accommodate. In these *biji* texts, for instance, we will be able to read a wide range of materials, including serious accounts of historical events, unverifiable anecdotes of famous personalities, marvelous stories of strange things, meticulous studies on the Chinese classics, and informative discussions on poetry, painting and other forms of art. The collection of these materials often lacks a specific or at least a clear focus. The intention behind their composition is also not easily discernible. Persons who wrote/compiled these *biji* usually openly acknowledge the randomness and miscellaneousness of their works, claiming them to be nothing more than a casual assemblage of events, words, and stories that they accidentally came across. For example, in the preface to his widely acclaimed *biji* work *Helin yulu*, Luo Dajing wrote the following statement explaining the origin and purpose of his book,

While I was living a retiring life and doing nothing, I used to chat with guests all day long under the Crane Forest.¹⁶² When we came across something that caused a happy union of our minds, or sorrowfully stimulated our feelings, I would ask my boy servant to write it down. As time passed, these records gradually accumulated and became this collection, and I called it *Jade Dew in the Crane Forest*. This alluded to Du Shaoling's¹⁶³ poetic line 'Leisurely talks grew as thick as the jade dew.' "

余閒居無營，日與客清談鶴林之下，或欣然會心，或慨然興懷，輒令童子筆之。久而成編，因曰《鶴林玉露》，蓋“清談玉露蓄”，杜少陵之句云爾。¹⁶⁴

Similar statements can also be found in the prefaces of Zhou Hui's 周輝 (1126-1198) *Qingbo zazhi* 清波雜誌 (Notes from the Gate of Clear Waves), Yue Ke's 岳柯 (1183-ca. 1242) *Ting shi* 程史 (History on the Nightstand), and Zhou Mi's 齊東野語

¹⁶² In traditional China, the Crane Forest is often used to refer to the forest near a Buddhist temple. Sometimes the term is used as a substitute for "Buddhist Temple."

¹⁶³ The style name of Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), one of the greatest Tang poets.

¹⁶⁴ See Luo Dajing (1196-1242), *Helin yulu* (Jade Dew in the Crane Forest), included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp.5149-5385. The preface can be found on p. 5149.

(Talks of the Rustic from the Eastern Qi),¹⁶⁵ which are all representatives of this type of *biji* works. Of course, many of these statements are rather meant to be read as self-effacing gestures by the writers/compiler to show their modesty and prudence. Nonetheless, they let us see the writers/compiler's willingness to project their *biji* works as texts written/compiled with less intention and effort, which make them more suitable for leisurely and flexible reading. However, this does not mean that we, as readers, can treat these texts frivolously as collections of unworthy subjects. The writers/compiler's claims to casualness by no means provide excuses for insincere or careless reading. On the contrary, it invites us to read these texts more attentively, albeit in a less orthodox way. In many ways, the claim to casualness is used by the *biji* writers/compiler to free their texts as well as to free their readers' minds. It is only when we become as accommodating and versatile as the texts themselves that we will be able to fully appreciate the vivid description, witty comments, and thoughtful perceptions in them that are often too idiosyncratic or too extraordinary to be understood in a conventional way.

The text of *Qiantang yishi* resembles these *biji* texts first and foremost in its miscellaneousness: In addition to historical accounts on Southern Song politics, government affairs, and foreign relations, the text of *Qiantang yishi* also offers us literary discussions on poems or song lyrics, anecdotal stories about famous people, and mysterious talk about prophecies and omens. Moreover, it appears that Liu Yiqing from time to time copied materials directly from some of the aforementioned *biji* works, such as the *Helin yulu* and *Qidong yeyu*. But of all the heritage that *Qiantang yishi* has inherited from these *biji* texts, the seemingly casual appearance is probably one that merits our closest attention. One thing that we may notice in reading *Qiantang yishi* is that the text is often made to look as if its structure has not been carefully planned and its materials not purposefully selected. It is as if the text is nothing more than a loose assemblage of what Liu Yiqing had seen, read, or heard of about the Southern Song. However, as we read more into the book, we will find that it is exactly within this

¹⁶⁵ See Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, Yue Ke, *Ting shi* and Zhou Mi, *Qitong yeyu*, in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 5009-5149, 4325-4469, and 5425-5690.

seeming lack of plan and purpose that we will be able to discern the special literary design of the text. Because of this apparent lack of plan and purpose, the text artfully leaves Liu Yiqing's true thoughts and opinions about the Southern Song in the background. But at the same time, it also powerfully indoctrinates the reader with these hidden reflections and values, precisely because they are presented to us as unintended and unplanned. The casual appearance of *Qiantang yishi*, therefore, was used by Liu Yiqing to reach his readers in a less noticeable but more effective way. The apparent miscellaneousness of the text was employed to make readers lower their guard in reading, and became more susceptible to the particular historical vision that Liu Yiqing was trying to present in his book.

CHAPTER II

FORMLESS FORM

The title of this chapter refers to Linda H. Chance's book, *Formless in Form*, which focuses on Yoshida Kenkō's (1283?-1350?) widely acclaimed book *Tsurezuregusa* (*Essay in Idleness*), a fourteenth-century Japanese text whose heterogeneous content, fragmentary format, and prosaic style resemble those of *Qiantang yishi*.¹⁶⁶ In the introduction to her book, Chance briefly discusses the history of the reading of the text. According to her, readers in seventeenth-century Japan tended to read the book in search of its thematic unity. This reading method enabled them to conveniently erase any inconsistencies or contradictions in the text in the name of the text's overall meaning or purpose. The popularity of this type of reading, however, significantly diminished when the view of *Tsurezuregusa* as *zuihitsu*, a Japanese literary genre whose origin and development was closely related to Chinese *biji*,¹⁶⁷ started to get more scholarly attention. A new way of assessing the fragmentary surface of the text began to emerge, and people started to read, as well as to appreciate, the text of *Tsurezuregusa* as one that had been purposefully composed without a planned form, consistency in style, or unity in theme. This new tolerance resulted in a new method of reading that was opposite but also paradoxically similar to its predecessor. That is, instead of striving to explain away all the inconsistencies and contradictions in the text while searching for the text's thematic unity, readers under the influence of this new reading method tended to simply acknowledge them and treat them as evidence for the text's lack of forethought in composition.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ See Linda H. Chance, *Formless in Form: Kenkō, Tsurezuregusa, and the Rhetoric of Japanese Fragmentary Prose*.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-77.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

Unsatisfied with both reading methods, Chance proposes in her book a new way of reading that treats the text of *Tsurezuregusa* as if it is a formless text that nevertheless retains its form. The achievement of this formless form, argued Chance, is by no means a natural result of random writing, but is rather a conscious accomplishment that has been carefully planned by its author and then actively fulfilled by its readers. The following passage best captures Chance's argument:

The formless text is not the text without form, for such is ultimately inconceivable insofar as language is the medium of its being. The formless text has reality and that substance is structured, but the contingency of that structure is exposed to view. These moves commend interpretation to the hands of readers who must more than ever assume the burden of untangling the disparities. Furthermore, this is not an unconscious accomplishment of the writer, who provides for the confusion within an aesthetic scheme of imbalance and discontinuity. In order to transmit the message of formlessness, the author must allow the reader to participate in its creation. Without the writer, there would be no such content, no such form, but without an audience, the content could not be enacted effectively.¹⁶⁹

Although Chance's argument about the formless in form is targeted mainly at a medieval Japanese text, I find it relevant to my analysis of this 13th- 14th-century Chinese literary miscellany, *Qiantang yishi*. This is not only due to the closeness of the two texts in terms of their literary style and time of composition, but also because of some of the internal features shared by the two texts that make them exceptional pieces of literature even in their own kind. In many ways, the text of *Qiantang yishi* can be said to be a special literary text distinguished by its formless form, or formed formlessness: While we are able to discover a hidden structure or a somewhat coherent message that has been carefully planted into the text's apparent heterogeneity and disjointedness, the moment when we try to hold on to this structure or message as if it is the essence or meaning of the text, it starts to dissipate and fade again into the nebula of uncertainty that characterize the text's fragmentary surface. What this formless form, or formed formlessness exemplifies, in my view, is an informing tension within the text. Within

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

this tension, we can see the text's persistent struggle to reach a definite meaning. Also within it, we can see the text's inability to induce or unwillingness to settle on a determined reading.

In this chapter, I divide my examination of the formless form in the text of *Qiantang yishi* into six interrelated sections. The first section starts with a reflection on the mixed review given to the text by the editors of SKQS. According to this review, the historical value of *Qianyang yishi* should be assessed with caution. On the one hand, the limitation of the text as a compilation of historical records should be noted due to the existence of many editorial flaws in the book; on the other, one must acknowledge that the text demonstrates exceptional insight in categorizing and analyzing certain political and military reasons that led to the fall of the Southern Song dynasty. While this mixed review lets us catch a glimpse of how the text was received and appraised in history, it also invites us to look into one of the text's most special features, namely, its formless form.

In the next three sections, I devote my analysis primarily to an investigation on how this formless form has been implemented at three different levels of the text. Starting from a close reading of a group of four entries, then to an expanded analysis of a complete chapter, and finally to a comprehensive examination of the entire book, these three sections provide a progressive narrative on how the text of *Qiantang yishi* has been artfully constructed so that the tension between its apparent miscellaneousness and its implicit structure can be maintained and balanced throughout the book. It is my intention to argue that this tension in the text is fundamental to the pleasure that reading it can induce. In reading a text like this, we will never be able to experience the "smoothness" that we may experience when we read a standard history or historical novel; at the same time, we will not feel totally lost as if we have to fumble through a pile of unsorted materials and stories. The text is like a seemingly amorphous entity that is about to take shape. Its formless form, or formed formlessness, forces us to face, acknowledge and learn to appreciate its very "suspended" state.

In the remaining two sections of the chapter, I extend my reflection on the formless form in the text to two other aspects that I believe are of crucial importance for our understanding of the text's literary and historical value. One is the issue of authorship and the other is the specialness of the text as historical narrative. In the first of the two sections, I argue that Liu Yiqing is laid-back in relation to the text he produces but does not completely disappear from it. His half-presence in the text creates the same kind of revealing indeterminacy as does the formless form. While this indeterminacy urges us to search and uncover new interpretations of the text, it also places certain constraints on our reading to prevent our search from turning into an aimless or purposeless free-roaming. In the second section, I argue that the text of *Qiantang yishi* represents an indispensable stage of intermediacy that exists between a primordial or pre-thematic awareness of history and a type of historical knowledge that has been written up in a more definite or ordered fashion. This is the stage where our knowledge and judgment of history is taking shape but still remains malleable: History, in this stage, is not simply a pile of structureless impressions generated from some unclassified facts, data, and stories; nor has it been turned into a coherent narrative or a determined body of knowledge ready to be easily consumed and memorized.

A Mixed Review

In the preface included at the beginning of the received edition of *Qiantang yishi*, the editors of the SKQS wrote the following comment on the book,

This book...in general was compiled with materials selected from Song literati miscellanies, and therefore it overlaps with books such as *Helin yulu*, *Qidong yeyu*, and *Guhang zaji*. Though sometimes the entries differ in length, most of the time they are copied verbatim from the original. For instance, entries like "Ten Miles of Lotus Flowers" in Chapter One, "Song Lyrics by Xin You'an," "Han Pingyuan," and "'Big' Turns into 'Dog'" in Chapter Two were all taken from *Helin yulu*. Not only was the name of the original book not mentioned, but phrases like "I said," "I heard," and "I also wrote," which were used by Luo Dajing to refer to himself, were

also left unedited. Because of this, comments on events that took place seventy to eighty years ago appeared in the book as if they were made on events witnessed with [Liu Yiqing's] own eyes. This was even worse than "leaving the name of Ge Gong unchanged."¹⁷⁰ Moreover, the book used words like the "northern army", "Northern Emperor Xianzong," and addressed Emperor Xian as "Imperial Heir," Empress Xie as "Great Empress Dowager," which seem to belong to the speech of the Song. But it also called the Yuan dynasty the "Great Yuan," the Yuan soldiers the "great soldiers" or "the national soldier of the Great Yuan," and Yuan Emperor Shizong "Emperor," which completely accord with languages used by the Yuan people. This was because the book selected materials from old texts and mixed them into one whole. Therefore the words in it could not be consistent, and there are mistakes [Liu Yiqing] failed to make proper corrections. In spite of this, in its analysis of important state policies near the end of the Song and its examination of the promotion and demotion of capable and treacherous officials, the book has much not to be found in official histories. This was because at the time of dynastic change, [Liu Yiqing] personally witnessed the decline [of the Southern Song], and therefore [his description] is more complete than what was transmitted second hand.

其書.....大抵雜采宋人說部而成，故頗與《鶴林玉露》、《齊東野語》、《古杭雜記》諸書互相出入。雖時有詳畧同異，亦往往錄其原文。如一卷十里荷花一條，二卷辛幼安詞一條，韓平原一條，大字成犬一條，皆采自《鶴林玉露》，既不著其書名，其中所載“余謂”、“愚聞”及“余亦作一篇”云云，皆因羅大經之自稱，不加刊削。遂使相隔七八十年，語如目睹，殊類於“不去葛龔”。又書中稱北兵，稱北朝憲宗皇帝，稱帝顯[without 頁]曰嗣君，稱謝后曰太皇太后，似屬宋人之詞。而復稱元曰大元，稱元兵曰大兵，曰大元國兵，稱元世宗曰皇帝，乃全作元人之語。蓋雜采舊文合為一帙。故內外之詞不能畫一，亦皆失於改正。然于宋末軍國大政以及賢奸進退條分縷析，多有正史所不及者。蓋革代之際，目擊僨敗，較傳聞者為悉。¹⁷¹

In spite of its brevity, this comment in fact tells us much about how the text of *Qiantang yishi* was received and viewed by the editors of the SKQS. The major portion of the comment leaves us with the impression that the editors of the SKQS did not think

¹⁷⁰ This anecdote will be explained below.

¹⁷¹ See Liu Yiqing (fl. late 13th-early 14th centuries). *Qiantang yishi*, pp. 3-4. The preface included in this edition is slightly different from the one included in the SKQS (1999, Digitized edition), with the latter containing the names of the editors and collators of the book.

highly of the editorial work done by Liu Yiqing. Such dissatisfaction can be seen from their criticism of Liu's somewhat "plagiaristic" attempt in borrowing materials from other literati miscellanies, such as *Helin yulu*, *Qidong yeyu* and *Guhang zaji*. According to this criticism, not only did Liu Yiqing fail to mention the titles of these books, but he was also too negligent to change such words as "I heard" or "I said," which clearly indicate a different authorial voice from his own. The editors of the SKQS used the idiom "bu qu Ge Gong" 不去葛龔 (not deleting the name Ge Gong) to illustrate the seriousness of Liu's "plagiarism." Alluding to a joke included in Handan Chun's 邯鄲淳 (ca. 132-221) *Xiao lin* 笑林 (Collection of Jokes), the idiom in fact summarizes an amusing story that happened to a person living in the Han dynasty. According to the story, the person wanted to become a government clerk but he was inept at writing memorials. In order to apply for the job, he asked his friend to write a memorial for him. But his friend could not do that either, so he instructed him to plagiarize a memorial written by Ge Gong, who was a famous memorial writer of the time. Following his friend's ill advice, the poor guy duplicated one of Ge Gong's memorials, without even bothering to change Ge's name in the end. Not surprisingly, his application for the job was rejected immediately after he presented the plagiarized memorial to the local governor, but the story became wide spread, from which people drew the following lesson, "Though the memorial was well written, the name of Ge Gong should have been deleted."¹⁷² By bringing up this joke, what the editors of the SKQS intended to show was the fact that Liu Yiqing had done something even worse in his book. Because of his failure to change phrases like "I heard" or "I said", Liu Yiqing severely confused his readers about the historical time in his book, in the sense that he made the comments given by other people about events taking place decades ago appear as if they were made by himself. This temporal confusion was further worsened by Liu's mixed use of language in addressing the Yuan army, the emperors and royal members of the Southern Song, and those of the Yuan. As a result of these mistakes and this confusion,

¹⁷² The story can also be found, in a slightly different version, in Ge Gong's (date unknown) biography included in Chapter Eighty of FanYe's 范曄 (398-445) *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of the Latter Han Dynasty; Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1932), in a footnote.

Liu's book turned out to look more like a hodgepodge of materials, which were taken from a variety of sources and put hastily together by an inept editor.

This criticism of Liu Yiqing's editorial negligence,¹⁷³ however, is immediately offset by a compliment on his competence in analyzing important state policies near the end of the Southern Song. According to the editors of the SKQS, even official histories were not as complete as Liu Yiqing's book on these aspects. The editors then proceed to attribute Liu's competence displayed in his material to the immediacy of his knowledge. Having lived through the dynastic transition between the Song and Yuan, Liu was said to have personally experienced the historical turbulence taking place during the transition, and therefore able to acquire better information on the political and military situation of the time than what he could have learned from hearsay. However, this explanation is at best speculative, given the extremely limited information that we have about Liu Yiqing's life. Perhaps it is more productive if we simply treat this historical perceptiveness as another prominent feature of Liu's text, which will equally affect our assessment and understanding of the text just as the editorial negligence discussed above.

There is, however, a fundamental incongruence between the editorial negligence and the historical perceptiveness displayed in some of Liu Yiqing's analyses. If the text is indeed a product of sloppy editorship marked by uncovered traces of plagiarism, how can it also display the level of perceptiveness that clearly indicates a thoughtful mind and a well-conceived plan behind its composition? Even if such perceptiveness can indeed be attributed, as claimed by the editors of the SKQS, to the fact that Liu Yiqing had more direct knowledge of the history of the time in which he lived, there is no reason why he could not or should not apply the same kind of attentiveness to his editing of material that he did not acquire first-hand. After all,

¹⁷³ Up until the Qing dynasty, Chinese scholars hadn't really developed the habit of giving the sources of ideas, comments or words they cited. While this negligence indeed causes troubles for our reading and correct understanding of a text, it was not an unbearable problem for the readers of that time. However, it must be noted that some traditional Chinese writers did indicate sources of information of quotes in their books, or, alternatively, they would change the wording in their quoted texts so that they would not mislead readers about the authorship of these texts.

changing a few words to make the text read more coherently or consistently should not have been so difficult a task for Liu, who had managed to compile the entire book and demonstrated such remarkable sensitivity and perception in dealing with certain materials. That he chose not to do so was perhaps indicative of something else, something that he purposely wanted us to notice in the very inconsistency in his handling of different materials in his book. But to speculate on Liu's authorial intention would risk leading us into another pitfall that we cannot easily get out of, again due to the extremely limited information that we have about his life. It is therefore more reasonable, and more productive as well, if we refrain from prying into Liu's mind, at least for now, but focus more on what the text offers to us, through its peculiar combination of editorial negligence and analytical perceptiveness.

Formless Form I

The following entry, placed in Chapter Two of *Qiantang yishi*, provides a good example of the editorial negligence criticized by the editors of the SKQS,

Han Pingyuan¹⁷⁴ [Chapter 2, Entry 6]

When Emperor Ningzong ascended the throne, what Han Pingyuan wanted was but some warrant of power. Liu Bi,¹⁷⁵ Administrator of Memorial Reception, once casually mentioned to Zhao Zhongding, "Tuozhou cannot be said to have no credit in this thing [the enthronement of Emperor Ningzong]. You should assign some office to him." Zhongding did not answer. From that time on, [Han Tuozhou] started to harbor wicked thoughts in his mind, until eventually he managed to drive all righteous officials out of the court. My friend Zhao Congdao wrote a poem on this:

¹⁷⁴ Han Pingyuan 韓平原 is Han Tuozhou's 韓侂胄 (1152-1207) style name.

¹⁷⁵ According to Han Tuozhou's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Liu Bi (fl. Late 12th century) in fact sided with Han Tuozhou, due to his dissatisfaction about the fact that he was pushed aside by Zhao Ruyu in discussions about the succession of the throne. See Tuo Tuo 脫脫 (1314-1355) comp., *Song Shi* 宋史 (History of the Song Dynasty; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), Chapter 474.

So many things happened in the Qingyuan Reign around the
Grand Councilor.

That one could be overwhelmed with sorrow in just talking about
them.

If only [the Grand Councilor] attended to Liu Bi's words,
And assigned some office to Han Pingyuan.

I personally also wrote a poem:

Why would [the Grand Councilor] grudge a seal in the Office of
Ceremony,

To sit by and watch all the righteous persons disperse like mist in
the air.

Truly that Qianyuan Reign could not become another Qingli Reign,
Was determined half by fate and half by our own fault.

韓平原

宋甯宗既受禪，韓平原所望不過節鉞，知合劉弼嘗從容告趙忠定曰：“此事侂胄不為無功，亦須分些官職與他。”忠定不答。由是漸有邪謀，迄逐眾君子。余友趙從道有詩云：“慶元宰相事紛紛，說著令人暗斷魂。好聽當時劉弼語；分些官職與平原。”余亦作一篇：“齋壇一鉞底須慳，坐見諸賢散似煙。不使慶元為慶歷，也由人事也由天。”

This entry, which recounts an incident that happened at the beginning of Han Tuozhou's 韓侂胄 (1152-1207) political career, was copied almost verbatim from Luo Dajing's *Helin yulu*.¹⁷⁶ The gist of the story is to criticize Zhao Ruyu 趙汝愚 (1140-1196), the Grand Councilor of the time who later became Han Tuozhou's strongest political opponent, for being partially responsible for Han's rise to political eminence and his later expulsion of righteous scholar-officials from the court. According to the story, had Zhao Ruyu followed Liu Bi's advice and rewarded Han Tuozhou with some official position for his contribution in enthroning Emperor Ningzong (1168-1224, r. 1194-1224), Han would have never thought of acquiring more political power, and his later persecution of righteous scholar-officials, including Zhao Ruyu himself, would never have happened.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Luo Dajing, *Helin Yulu*, in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, Vol. 5, p. 5380.

¹⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion about Han's contribution in enthroning Emperor Ningzong and his enmity against Confucian scholar-officials and conflicts with Zhao Ruyu, please refer to Han Tuozhou's biography

This story is followed by two short poems, both commenting on the adverse consequences of Zhao Ruyu's failure to follow Liu Bi's advice. In the statements made right before the two poems, Luo Dajing made it clear that the two poems were written respectively by himself and his friend, using the two phrases "my friend" and "I also wrote." What seems to be ironic here, however, is that when Liu Yiqing copied these two poems into his own book, he never bothered to change the exact wording in these statements, and therefore left us with an impression that the two poems were rather written by himself and his friend. This editorial negligence is a salient example of what the editors of the SKQS were finding fault with. It not only misinforms the reader of the true authorship of the two poems, but also confused the temporality in the text by making the poetic comments that were made decades ago appear as if they were made right at the time when Liu Yiqing was compiling the book.

If we look into Liu Yiqing's book, we will find many other flaws like this one. But to label Liu Yiqing's as a sloppy compiler on the basis of these flaws would be too hasty. A question that needs to be asked before we make any judgment is: Do these flaws significantly undermine the literary quality and historical value of the text? Or, more specifically, should these unconcealed marks of "plagiarism" be treated as evidence of Liu Yiqing's lack of originality in compiling/writing his book?

This question cannot be answered until we conduct a close examination of how this entry on Han Tuozhou has been used differently in the two texts mentioned above. In Luo Dajing's *Helin yulu*, the entry "Han Pingyuan" is placed in the middle of the sixth chapter in Volume Three. The entry is preceded by one describing the close friendship between Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127-1206) and You Mao 尤袤 (1127-1194). After it is an entry commenting on Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) criticism of Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE-18) for his political involvement with Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BC- 6), the alleged usurper of the throne in the Han dynasty. The connections among the three entries are at best tenuous. An informed reader will probably know that Yang Wanli ceased to work for

included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 474. F.W. Mote's *Imperial China, 900-1800* also contains a brief discussion on this, see pp. 312-15.

the Southern Song government after Han Tuozhou rose to power, and he also enraged Han once for refusing to write an essay for Han in exchange for a position in local government.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, a reader familiar with Southern Song history may also be aware of the enmity between Zhu Xi and Han Tuozhou, for Zhu was among the first group of Confucian scholars who were vilified and driven out of court by Han after he controlled state power.¹⁷⁹ But these subtle connections are by no means spelled out in the three entries. Judging from the content of the entries, one can hardly find any direct reason, other than their tenuously related themes, why they have been placed next to each other rather than otherwise.

By contrast, in *Qiantang yishi*, the three entries that are placed before or after “Han Pingyuan” all have direct connections with either the story or the commentary poems recorded in the entry. Titled “The Imperial Tutor in the Qingyuan Reign,” the one that precedes the entry “Han Pingyuan” describes the development of the enmity between Zhu Xi and Han Tuozhou. In addition, this entry also discusses how Han Tuozhou managed to manipulate the emperor to dismiss Zhu Xi from office without the awareness of Zhao Ruyu, who recommended Zhu to become the Imperial Tutor in the first place.¹⁸⁰ This small incident not only foreshadows Han Tuozhou’s later persecution and expulsion of righteous Confucian scholars, which is briefly mentioned in the entry “Han Pingyuan,” but also reveals the developing conflicts between Han Tuozhou and Zhao Ruyu, which will become the central theme in the entry that follows “Han Pingyuan.”

The entry that follows “Han Pingyuan,” titled after Zhao Ruyu’s style name Zhao Zizhi 趙子直, contains a brief account of how Zhao Ruyu was driven out of court and persecuted to death by Han Tuozhou. The entry starts with a description that succinctly tells how Zhao Ruyu was dismissed from office, and how he died in exile in a remote place after Han Tuozhou obtained state power. This brief description is followed by a

¹⁷⁸ This anecdote can be found in Yang Wanli’s biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 433.

¹⁷⁹ A brief discussion on the enmity between Zhu Xi and Han Tuozhou can also be found in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 429.

¹⁸⁰ A translation and detailed discussion of this entry can be found in the next chapter of this dissertation.

short poem written anonymously on the Gate of Heavenly Worship (*Chaotian men*, 朝天門).¹⁸¹ Comparing Zhao Ruyu to the Duke of Zhou (周公 ca. 1100 BCE) and Qu Yuan 屈原 (340-278 BCE), this poem laments Zhao's demotion and death, and condemns Han Tuozhou for his manipulation of imperial power and persecution of righteous officials. It not only echoes but also contrasts with the two poems included in "Han Pingyuan." While all three poems concentrate on the political conflicts between Zhao Ruyu and Han Tuzuo, the anonymous poem shows great sympathy for Zhao's tragic end and fury against Han's wicked conspiracy, whereas the other two poems in "Han Pinyuan" express more regret based on a hindsight concerning the entire event than judgment of the two persons involved in it.

The dismissal of Zhao Ruyu from the central government marked the zenith of Han Tuozhou's acquisition of power, but it also adds fuel to the flame of hatred that had been slowly building up against him. As we shall find out in the entry that follows "Zhao Zizhi," this flame of hatred will burn down all of Han's political glory in the end. Titled "A Guest of Han Pingyuan," this entry recounts a dramatic encounter between Han Tuozhou, who had already risen to political prominence by that time, and one of his former guest retainers, on whom Han relied during the early years of his political career.¹⁸² Upon meeting the guest, Han insisted on asking him to advise him on his current management of state affairs. The guest sighed and told Han that he was in great danger. Stunned by this answer, Han begged the guest for an explanation, whereupon the guest explained that Han's tyrannical control over the state had caused tremendous hatred against him from various levels of the government and the state. The guest advised Han Tuozhou to escape from this perilous situation as soon as possible. But before Han had the chance to follow the guest's advice, plots were made against him,

¹⁸¹ The entry was possibly adapted from an entry included in Ye Shaoweng's 葉紹翁 (fl. Late 12th-early 13th century) *Sichao wenjian lu*. According to that entry, the poem was written by Aotao Sun 敖陶孫 (1154-1227), a famous Southern Song scholar, poet and critic.

¹⁸² A translation and detailed discussion of this entry can be found in the next chapter.

and he was assassinated and replaced by other persons who had long aspired to his position.¹⁸³

It should not be difficult for us to see that by putting these four entries next to each other, what Liu Yiqing was trying to create was a more or less continuous narrative on Han Tuozhou's political life. The narrative starts from the middle, in "The Imperial Tutor in the Qingyuan Reign," when the conflicts between Han Tuozhou and Zhao Ruyu, along with the Confucian scholar-officials supported by Zhao, started to develop. It then goes backward, in "Han Pingyuan," to recount a story that happened during the early years of Han Tuozhou's political career, which reportedly led to his grudge against Zhao and his later expulsion of capable Confucian scholar-officials. In the entry "Zhao Zizhi," the story of the Han's rise to power reaches its climax when Zhao Ruyu was dismissed from office and persecuted to death by Han Tuozhou. As implied in the entry, Zhao's death enabled Han to gain even more control over state power. In the process of acquiring this power, however, Han Tuozhou also planted the seeds for his own downfall. As can be seen from the entry "A Guest of Han Pingyuan," Han Tuozhou's political eminence had drawn fiery hatred against himself from almost everywhere in the country. These flames became more furious as time went by, and would eventually devour both Han's political glory and his life.

It is perhaps worth pointing out here that at least three of these four entries discussed above are borrowed by Liu Yiqing from other texts. The first, second and fourth entries are all taken from Luo Dajing's *Helin yulu*, with little or no changes made at all. Though it is difficult to identify the source of the third entry, it may be adapted from an entry included in Ye Shaoweng's *Sichao wenjian lu*. In terms of their content, therefore, these four entries offer us almost nothing new. But what seems to be innovative here is how they have been rearranged by Liu Yiqing to create a more or less continuous narrative on Han Tuozhou's rise and fall in his political career. The continuity of this narrative becomes especially salient if we consider that the first, second and fourth entries are all placed distantly from each other in their original text,

¹⁸³ For a detailed discussion about the assassination of Han Tuozhou, please refer to his biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, chapter 474.

with the first entry placed in the third chapter of Volume One in *Helin yulu*, the second in the sixth chapter of Volume Three, and the fourth in the second chapter of Volume Two. The vast distances separating the three entries in the original text clearly indicate that they were not intended to be read in connection with each other. But when they are transplanted into Liu Yiqing *Qiantang yishi*, they have been reshuffled to form a by and large continuous narrative, which tells us much more about how Han Tuo-zuo managed to rise to political prominence, how he gradually consolidated his control over the Southern Song government, and how his persistent pursuit for political power caused both his rise and his death.

In many ways, the special literary/historical value of the text of *Qiantang yishi* lies in this skillful rearrangement of materials that have been used elsewhere before. Liu Yiqing may be criticized for his unedited borrowing of materials from other texts, but he is certainly talented in knowing how to turn these unedited materials into something new, something that the original writer might not even have thought of. His lack of attentiveness in correcting the details may be viewed as proof of his lack of skills in editing, but it is also possible that he intentionally left these details unattended because he wanted them to look “unattended.” In other words, it is possible that Liu Yiqing wanted his reader to have the impression that the materials chosen by him had not been tampered much by the hands of a skillful editor, that what he did in his book was simply recording and reporting history as it was originally told.

Of course, this does not mean that Liu Yiqing was trying to let history speak for itself. As a matter of fact, all the evidence in the book seems to point to the exact opposite, that is, rather than letting history speak for itself, what Liu Yiqing was trying to do in his book was to let history speak through other persons’ mouths. But does this mean Liu’s book is nothing more than a simple collection of unsorted gossip and hearsay? Certainly not. The examples discussed above have shown that while Liu Yiqing might be less attentive in changing the details in the entries that he borrowed from other texts, he was quite careful and innovative in redeploing the borrowed entries into a new sequence, so as to create a new perspective for us to look at them from. This new

perspective enables us to discern the hidden connections among these entries that otherwise remain unrevealed. In revealing the hidden connections among the entries, however, Liu Yiqing was also very careful to not turn these entries into a completely unified story. Each entry remains independent. No matter how hard we try to read them into a continuous and coherent narrative, as we have been doing above, eventually we will still need to admit that they are a group of disjointed entities. The continuity and coherence among them is but a construct on the part of the reader, a construct that is never meant to, perhaps is also never able to, completely take over the independence and individuality intrinsic in each entry.

This perpetual dialectics between the independence of the entries and the discernible continuities among them creates an interesting tension within the text. On the one hand, the text reveals itself to be casual or even rough, with the existence of the numerous editorial flaws discussed above; on the other, the text constantly invites us to see traces of skillful design at a structural level, traces which clearly indicate a well-conceived authorial plan behind its composition. As a result, we are left with the feeling that we are reading a well-structured literary text that is somehow made to look half-baked. In reading a text like this, we will never be able to experience the “smoothness” that we may experience when we read a standard history or historical novel, but at the same time, we probably will not feel as frustrated as we would if we are forced to fumble through a pile of unsorted materials and stories. The text is a seemingly amorphous entity that is about to take shape. From a distance, we can discern a perceptible form, but the moment we look close to catch the details of the form, it starts to dissipate. Consequently, we are left with no other choice than to savor this very suspense in our reading, the feeling that we are both close to getting hold of something and continually frustrated at how that “something” eludes us.

Formless Form II

This feeling of suspense is something that we may experience not only in reading particular entries, but also in reading specific chapters or even the entire book. Take Chapter Four for example. The chapter contains a total of fifteen entries, each of which tells about a story or an event taking place during the middle period of Southern Song history. The first entry describes a massive attack against the Southern Song launched by Möngke Khan (1209-1259, r. 1251-1259) in 1259. The second entry discusses the impact of this attack on the Southern Song government, focusing mainly on the suggestions made by government officials on moving the capital. The third entry tells an unverifiable story about Jia Sidao 賈似道 (1213-1275) persuading the Mongols to withdraw by promising them a large amount of annual tribute in return.¹⁸⁴ The fourth entry is also about Jia Sidao, but the focus has been changed to his controversial Financial Audit policy. According to the entry, this Financial Audit dealt mainly with military expenses and was initiated by Jia Sidao because of his jealousy of local military commanders. The next three entries focus primarily on the changes of Grand Councilors in the Southern Song government. The first of the three entries (Entry 5) describes the dismissal and banishment of Ding Daquan 丁大全 (1191-1263), who was held responsible for deliberately holding back information about the Mongolian attack from the emperor. The second entry (Entry 6) contains a brief account of the life and personality of Wu Qian 吳潛 (1196-1262), Ding's replacement, as well as how he was impeached by Jia Sidao and demoted to a remote area where he was poisoned to death under Jia's instruction. The third entry (Entry 7) describes how Jia Sidao, after he became the Grand Councilor, used a series of harsh measures to prevent powerful eunuchs and imperial relatives from interfering with government affairs. The similar focus of these three entries indeed gives us a sense of continuity when we read them together. But this sense of continuity will be immediately dissipated with the introduction of the eighth entry, which discusses Li Tan's 李壇 (?-1262) defection from the Mongols to the Southern Song. What is worth pointing out here is that this

¹⁸⁴ Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-tao(1213-1275): A 'Bad Last Minister'?" in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett ed, *Confucian Personalities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 217-34, contains a detailed discussion on why this anecdote is not trustworthy. The article is included

defection had a special meaning for the Southern Song because Li Tan's father, Li Quan 李全 (? -1231), was a Southern Song general who defected to the Mongols. The eighth entry is followed by an entry (Entry 9) that describes how Jia Sidao set up strict rules regarding the procedure of taking provincial and palace examinations. These rules caused huge complaints among the examinees, because reportedly Jia Sidao himself was allowed to take the palace examination only because of his relationship with Imperial Consort Jia.¹⁸⁵ Entry 10 consists only of one short poem, which admonishes Jia Sidao to hold up the "sky" because everyone was watching him with cold stares. The next two entries focus mainly on two military commanders. The first one (Entry 11) is Xiang Shibi 向士璧 (?-1261), who was impeached under Jia Sidao's instruction and demoted and persecuted to death; the second one (Entry 12) is Liu Zheng 劉整 (1212-1275), who defected to the Mongols in 1261 and later played a pivotal role in leading the Mongols to destroy the Southern Song Empire. While we may be able to discern some sort of connection between these two entries because of their common focus, the last three entries in the chapter become disjointed again, at least in appearance. The thirteenth entry recounts another unverifiable story about how Jia Sidao detained the Mongolian emissary who came to collect the annual tribute promised by him in 1259, and how this detainment enraged the Mongols and caused them to launch a second attack against the Southern Song. The fourteenth entry consists of a satirical *ci* poem written by Chen Cangyi 陳藏一 (dates unknown), criticizing Jia Sidao for his manipulation of imperial power and his vilification of righteous officials. The last entry of the chapter contains a telling story about the three proposals presented by Wang Lixin 汪立信 (?-1275) to Jia Sidao on how to prepare the Southern Song to defend itself against the Mongols. In the last of the three proposals, Wang suggested that Jia Sidao surrendered to the Mongols directly if he were unable to carry out the first two proposals. Unsurprisingly, Jia was enraged by this last proposal and had Wang removed

¹⁸⁵ According to Jia Sidao's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, the Imperial Consort Jia was Jia Sidao's sister, and Jia Sidao acquired the opportunity to take the palace examination because his sister was the emperor's favorite consort. See *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 474.

from office. Ironically, when the war between the Mongols and the Southern Song eventually broke out, this last proposal became the option that Jia Sidao had to resort to.

As we can see from the brief discussion above, the fifteen entries contained in Chapter Four of *Qiantang yishi* have, in appearance, at best tenuous connections with each other. Each entry is a perfectly self-contained entity and there is no apparent narrative thread that strings them up into a cohesive story. But this apparent lack of narrative thread does not mean that we cannot or should not read the entries as a meaningful unity. As a matter of fact, once we look beyond the specific content of each entry, we may be able to discern a hidden structure that has been artfully woven into the fabric of this chapter.

In order to understand this implicit structure, let us go over the fifteen entries again from the very beginning. Viewed from a certain distance, we will be able to see that the first of the fifteen entries, which describes the Mongolian attack in 1259, in fact plays a pivotal role in the chapter. Like a stone thrown into still water, the disastrous event had a series of impacts on the Southern Song Empire in at least three aspects. Politically, it fundamentally changed the structure of the Southern Song government, starting with the demotion of Ding Daquan and ending with Jia Sidao's rise to power. Militarily, it exposed the weakness of the Southern Song Empire in terms of its national defense, thereby making the correct use and deployment of military officials a matter of tremendous importance for the empire's survival. Diplomatically, it forced the Southern Song, in an attempt to make the Mongols agree to retreat, to accept a series of unequal treaties (including the alleged annual tribute), wherein the seed for future warfare between the two empires was been planted. As we shall see in the following analysis, this tripartite impact caused by the Mongolian attack in 1259 functions as one basic structure for the selection and organization of most of the fifteen entries included in the Chapter Four. This basic structure is further complemented by subtle interconnections between the entries, which are detectable only upon scrutiny. Together they change the entire chapter into a carefully designed narrative that tells us much more about Liu

Yiqing's vision of the political, military and diplomatic situation of the Southern Song after 1259.

Politically, the Mongolian attack in 1259 caused a huge shock among the Southern Song court officials, who, struck by this frightening news, vied to persuade the emperor to move the capital (Entry 2). Though this radical suggestion was never accepted by the emperor, the consequent political changes taking place in the Southern Song government were no less ground-shaking. Among these changes, the most influential one was Jia Sidao's rise to power. This change, as described consecutively in Entries 5, 6 and 7, took place in three steps. The first step was the dismissal of Ding Daquan, the ill-fated Grand Councilor who was removed from office due to his deliberate concealment of the news of the Mongolian attack (Entry 5). Although Ding Daquan's dismissal was not directly related to Jia Sidao, it gave Jia the opportunity to step further into the inner circle of the Southern Song government. The second step took place when Wu Qian, who replaced Ding Daquan as Grand Councilor, was impeached and driven out of the central government (Entry 6). Unlike the case with Ding Daquan, Wu Qian's demotion was directly related to Jia Sidao, because the latter, having held a grudge against Wu for a long time, was the person who really pulled the string behind his impeachment and demotion. After Wu Qian was demoted, Jia Sidao secretly instructed the local governor to have Wu poisoned to death. The elimination of Wu Qian enabled Jia Sidao to use harsh measures to further consolidate his control over the government (Entry 7), whereupon he put forth a series of regulations and policies that would affect the politics, economy, diplomacy and military defense of the Southern Song in a profound way.

Militarily, the Mongolian attack in 1259 exposed significant weakness in the national defense of the Southern Song. Supposedly, strengthening the military power of the empire should be the first task that Jia Sidao should take after he rose to power. But based on the information provided in the chapter, not only did Jia Sidao fail to give due attention to expanding and consolidating the military power of the Southern Song, he also launched a series of financial and political policies that were deemed detrimental to

the empire's military enhancement.¹⁸⁶ The Financial Audit that Jia initiated after he became the Grand Councilor is a good example (Entry 4). The audit was targeted mainly at local military commanders. In spite of the fact that it might increase income to the national treasury, it significantly weakened the power possessed by these military commanders. Because of this audit, many military commanders were either put into prison or persecuted to death. Among them was Xiang Shibi, who was vilified under Jia Sidao's instruction and died in grievance in prison (Entry 11). Xiang Shibi's death caused a series of chain reactions, one of which was Liu Zheng's defection to Mongols (Entry 12). Also a victim of the financial audit, Liu Zheng felt quite insecure about his political and personal safety in the Southern Song. Xiang Shibi's death, as well as the death of Wu Qian (Entry 6), aggravated Liu's concerns, and eventually he decided to defect and surrendered the entire city of Luzhou to the Mongols. Liu Zheng's defection forms an interesting contrast to the case of Li Tan, who was a renegade Mongolian general defecting back to the Southern Song in 1262 (Entry 8). A reader familiar with that part of Southern Song history will know that Li Tan's defection in fact provided a perfect chance for the Southern Song to strike back against the Mongols, because the defection took place exactly at the crucial moment when Kublai Khan (1260-1294) launched a civil war against his brother Ariq Böke (d. 1266) for the throne.¹⁸⁷ But this opportunity was not timely seized by the Southern Song, which was then under Jia Sidao's control. Unable to get support from the Southern Song government, Li Tan's insurgence was quickly put down by the Mongols. This again testifies to Jia Sidao's inability or unwillingness to enhance the military strength of the Southern Song. In contrast to his refusal to grant power to local military commanders, Jia Sidao implemented a series of laws and policies to expand his own control over the Southern Song government. These include the harsh measures taken by him to prevent powerful eunuchs and imperial

¹⁸⁶ That Jia Sidao chose not to enhance the military power of the Southern Song was not without reasons. For a detailed analysis, please refer to Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-tao(1213-1275): A 'Bad Last Minister'?" This article tries to provide another side of the story that is different from what traditional historians or history readers would like to believe.

¹⁸⁷ A more detailed discussion of this civil war can be found in F.W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*, pp, 444-73.

relatives from interfering with state affairs (Entry 7), and the even stricter regulations regarding the procedures for taking civil service examinations (Entry 9). The implementation of these laws and policies lets us see more clearly Jia Sidao's nature as a politician, one who was extremely thirsty for power and would try every means to consolidate his dominance over the court.

Diplomatically, the Mongolian attack in 1259 also forced the Southern Song to accept a series of unequal treaties in exchange for peace. According to the entries in the chapter, the acceptance of these treaties had a lot to do with Jia Sidao as well. First of all, it was Jia Sidao who is said to have secretly negotiated with the Mongols and promised them a large amount of annual tribute in order to persuade them to retreat (Entry 3). After the Mongols withdrew their army, it was also Jia Sidao who took all the credit for that, without mentioning to the emperor his secret negotiation. Later, when the Mongolian emissary came to collect the tribute, Jia Sidao had him detained in the city of Zhenzhou for months, fearing that the emperor might know what truly happened in 1259 (Entry 13). Reportedly, it was this detainment that enraged the Mongols and caused them to launch a second attack against the Southern Song which eventually devastated the empire.

Not surprisingly, Jia Sidao's political, military and diplomatic policies brought down a lot of criticism against him. The two poetic entries included in the chapter, Entry 10 and Entry 14, provide us with good examples of how people of the time thought of Jia Sidao as a politician as well as a person. What is worth pointing out here is that there also seems to be a progression in the criticism in these two poetic entries. While the poem in Entry 10 still carries a relatively mild tone of admonishment, because it only warns Jia Sidao to hold up the "sky" firmly as people are watching him with cold stares, the poem in Entry 14 is much more critical and satirical, comparing Jia Sidao to the snow in the winter, which gives people a false impression of peace and prosperity by covering up all filthy things beneath its apparent whiteness. This progression in the criticism, interestingly, also echoes the changing image of Jia Sidao described in the entries that precede the two poetic entries. While Entry 8 and 9 still portray Jia Sidao as

a flawed but nonetheless diligent government official (his purging of eunuchs and imperial relatives from the court and his order to tighten the rules of civil service examination are both justifiable political measures), Jia's persecution of Xiang Shibi and Liu Zheng and his detainment of the Mongolian emissary, as described in Entries 11, 12 and 13, certainly give us the right to question his correctness as a politician and his rectitude as a person.

The chapter ends with an entry describing the three proposals suggested by Wang Lixin to Jia Sidao on how to enhance the military strength of the Southern Song and how to save the empire from decline. Jia Sidao failed to carry out the first two proposals, which were both serious suggestions on how to strengthen national defense and how to postpone the Mongolian invasion by bribing their emissaries. As a result, when the war eventually broke out between the Mongols and the Southern Song, the only option Jia had was the last proposal, that is, to surrender to the Mongols without resistance.¹⁸⁸ Viewed from the structural level of the entire chapter, this last entry plays a role that is just as significant as the first one, for it brings closure to the series of historical events discussed before it. If we take the rest of the book into consideration, then we will see that this last entry also serves as a harbinger for what is going to be discussed next in the book. In the following chapters, we will see how Jia Sidao failed to fulfill his duty as the Grand Councilor in saving the Southern Song from decline and fall. As a result of his failure, when the final war broke out, the weakened empire of the Southern Song would soon be defeated by the mighty troops of the Mongols and devastated by the raging flame of wars.

It should be clear to us now that the fifteen entries in Chapter Four of *Qiantang yishi* are by no means casually selected and randomly placed in the chapter, as we would assume upon first looking at them. Underlying the chapter's apparent disjointedness, there is an implicit structure that serves to bring all the entries in the chapter into a continuous and meaningful unity. The chapter starts with a framing entry that briefly describes the Mongolian attack in 1259. This attack caused a threefold

¹⁸⁸ As we shall find out later in *Qiantang yishi*, Jia Sidao's army was easily routed by the Mongols during their encounter. See my discussion in the next chapter of this dissertation.

impact on the Southern Song government and society, changing the political, military and diplomatic outlook of the empire in a profound way. As we look into the entries in the chapter, we will find that most of them are selected and organized on the basis of this threefold impact, to the extent that the chapter can be said to have a tripartite structure. This tripartite structure provides us with the most basic frame of reference, through which we can reorganize and make sense of the disjointed surface of the text. However, this tripartite structure is not the only organizing principle that is functioning in Chapter Four. In addition to it, the entries in the chapter are also interrelated with each other through a series of implicit connections discernible only upon scrutiny. Central to these interconnections is Jia Sidao's rise to power. As we can see from the analysis above, almost all the events described in this chapter lead to or resulted from Jia Sidao's gradual ascendance to political prominence. Because of this, Jia's rise to power can be regarded as the focal point of the chapter, which represents a centripetal force that draws all the rest of the entries towards it to form a cohesive whole. The chapter ends with an entry that discusses the three proposals made by Wang Lixin. The three proposals cover the most important military, diplomatic and political strategies that Jia Sidao could have but failed to take in strengthening and defending the Southern Song. Echoing the tripartite structure of the chapter, these three proposals serve as a perfect closure to the historical events hitherto discussed. At the same time, they also function as a harbinger for what is going to be described in the remaining part of the book.

This tripartite structure of Chapter Four, however, is not achieved at the expense of the independence of the individual entries. The entries in the chapter are still by and large self-contained entities. Though they have been selected and arranged in accordance with the overall structural design of the chapter, they have not been totally assimilated by it. At a certain point, the structural design of the chapter may leave us with the impression that the chapter is about to tell us a coherent story, but the actual coherence of the story is never really consummated. Rather than a completed story, what we have here is instead a story that is *about to take shape*. There is a good chance

that the story can be made into a coherent narrative, just as there is an equally good chance that it may simply fall apart. The value of this story, as we have discussed, rests not so much in the story itself or in the details that it contains, but rather in its very uncertainty, that is, in the very suspense that it has created for our reading. In reading this story, we are tempted to look for the hidden continuity that has been buried underneath its disjointed surface, but our attempts at doing so are constantly thwarted by the apparent self-sufficiency that characterizes the individual components (the entries) of the story. As a result, our reading has been led into a somewhat vicious cycle: On the one hand, we are urged to piece together the individual entries into a consistent unity so as to make sense of the big picture; on the other, we are continuously reminded or even encouraged to tear the story apart so that we will not be totally blinded by the big picture that we have read into the story. This vicious cycle is a dubious gift that the text has presented to us, for it conceals as much as reveals the treasure in the text. In this cycle lies the frustration of interpreting the text; in it also lies the very pleasure of reading it.

Formless Form III

As can be seen from the analysis above, our reading of *Qianying yishi* can be led to two opposite extremes. While we are tempted to read the entries in the text as interrelated to each other, forming a continuous or even coherent narrative, we are also given the opportunity to read the text simply as what it appears to be, that is, as a collection of disjointed entries that have no direct connections with each other. What is at stake here, however, is not so much the difference between these two types of reading, but rather the uneasiness that we may experience when we have to make choice between the two. This uneasiness makes us feel that although the text offers us two options of reading, what it really wants us to do is not to choose either but rather both of them. In other words, in reading a text like this, we are invited to approach it simultaneously from two seemingly incompatible angles. Because the text reveals itself

both through its implicit structure and through the disturbances that persistently challenge our very assumption of this structure, we are impelled to learn to appreciate the subtlety of it both through its coherence and its disparity.

In the next chapter of this dissertation, I shall focus my study mainly on the different structures that we may read into the text, with which we will be able to discern a series of meaningful patterns beneath the text's disjointed surface. But for now, let us focus on the disturbances, and see how the textual ruptures that they create could be just as equally revealing as the patterns, structures, and continuity that we may find in the text.

One way to look at these disturbances and textual ruptures that they create is to examine the special form of temporality in the text. From the chart included in the appendix (See Appendix I), we can see that the organization of the entries in *Qiantang yishi* generally follows the same time sequence as the history of the Southern Song history. The first nine chapters start with events taking place during the reign of Emperor Gaozong, the first Southern Song emperor, and ends with the peace-seeking journey taken by the Southern Song government in 1276, three years before the official end of the dynasty. The events recorded in these chapters generally follows the temporal sequence of their historical occurrence, thereby making the text by and large look like a miniature chronicle of the Southern Song history.

This overall chronological structure, however, is constantly interrupted by the occurrence of different types of temporal disturbances in the text. For instance, as we can see from the chart in Appendix I, the chronological order in Chapter One of *Qiantang yishi* is often disturbed or sometimes even inverted by the presence of some entries that do not conform to that sequence. One way to explain this disorder in time is to resort to the fact that the events recorded in this chapter are also organized on the basis of their geographical location connected by persons, in addition to their temporal sequence. Though time remains an important factor, it is the logic of space that determines the eventual placement of the entries in this chapter. This emphasis on spatial logic can be seen from the fact that most entries in this chapter are named after

famous scenic spots in Hangzhou, the capital of the Southern Song. In contrast to the rest of the book (with the exception of the last chapter which I will discuss later) which by and large present us a diachronic view of Southern Song history, the image that we may gain from this chapter is also a synchronic one, one that focuses primarily on the cultural geography of Hangzhou and its indispensable position in Southern Song history. In terms of its role in the entire book, Chapter One helps set up a geographical locus that serves as the spatial center of the text. As I shall discuss in more detail in the next chapter of this dissertation, this spatial center is presented to us through a revealing dialectic between two discourses, the discourse of *fengshui* 風水 (geomancy) and that of *shanshui* 山水 (landscape). This dialectic introduces into the text two contrastive but also complementary views of Southern Song history. The interplay of these two views will constantly present itself in the rest of the chapters and eventually become a persistent theme in the entire book.

Another unusual chapter that does not completely fall into the overall chronological framework of the book is Chapter Three. Again as we can see from the chart in the Appendix, though concerns for temporal order are indeed discernible, entries in this chapter are not always selected and organized in accordance with their actual sequence in time. The reason for this is that this chapter, like Chapter One, also has another principle of organization that supersedes its chronological framework. A careful reader may have already noticed from the entry titles that this chapter is more about historical figures than historical events in the Southern Song. This concentration on Southern Song personalities adds a special biographical dimension to the temporal prospect of the chapter. Moreover, an informed reader may also be able to see that most historical figures discussed in this chapter are local military commanders, many of whom are applauded for their bravery on the battlefield and their rectitude as a person. This forms a sharp contrast with the remaining chapters, which focus largely on civil ministers in the Southern Song court and which usually assume a tone of description that is more critical than complimentary. As I shall argue in the next chapter of this dissertation, this concentration on local military commanders enables Chapter Three of

Qiantang yishi to stand out from the rest of the book like a solitary military fortress, a fortress that is revered and neglected at the same time. Placed against the general unfavorable depiction of Southern Song history in the book, this chapter let us see a light of hope that firmly holds its ground in spite of its gloomy background. But this light of hope is so dim and isolated that we have every right to wonder if it can really revive the fated declining of the dynasty.

Of all the chapters, the one that defies the book's chronological order the most is probably Chapter Ten. Unlike entries in the previous chapters, which all bear some sort of temporal mark, entries in this chapter are by and large atemporal. Focusing exclusively on the minute details and prolonged procedure of the civil service examinations in the Southern Song, this chapter is devoid of any specific reference to time, place or person. To some readers, this atemporal nature may not look so unusual, as the chapter is most likely to be read as an appendix to the book. But to thus separate the chapter from the main body of the book would make us ignore some important connections between the two. This is especially the case if we consider that Chapter Ten is placed right after the two chapters that describe the ruthless Song-Mongol wars and its sorrowful aftermath (for the Song). In contrast to those two chapters, Chapter Ten offers us a relatively peaceful view of Southern Song history through its slow and meticulous description of the details of the Song examination system. Reading it makes us temporally forget the pain and sorrow that we may feel in the reading of the previous two chapters. It is as if we are led into a haven or oasis in the book. In addition, descriptions of the examination procedure also function as a textual reminiscence of the lost glory of the Song dynasty, for the Southern Song was indeed well-known for its expansion and improvement of the civil service examination system.¹⁸⁹ Interestingly, however, no specific time is attached to this textual reminiscence. The atemporal and appendant nature of Chapter Ten makes it appear less a part of Southern Song history

¹⁸⁹ For a detailed discussion of the Song civil service examination, see John Chaffee. *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Song China: A Social History of Examinations* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995). Benjamin Elman's book, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) also contains a discussion of the Tang and Song civil service examination systems, though they are used mainly to compare with the examination systems in late imperial China.

described prior to it. It is as if the text wants us to have the impression that this extremely refined examination system is divorced from the history to which it truly belongs. It is a part of the Southern Song history that somehow appears to be not a part, in the sense that it has been purposefully detached, differentiated, and displaced from the main course of history, just like an appendix to the main body of a book. It shall not be difficult for us to discern a sense of irony in this purposeful severance of Chapter Ten, which describes the civil service examination that was one of the greatest achievements in the Southern Song, from the main body of the book, which covers almost all other aspects of Southern Song history. Perhaps it is just like what the editors of the SKQS said in their bibliographical abstract, “This was to criticize the scholar-officials [of the Southern Song], for despite the fact that the Song government had fostered and supported them as such, what they could do in the end was nothing but to seek peace [from the Mongols].”¹⁹⁰

I hope by now it is clear that although the text of *Qiantang yishi* in general provides us with a chronological account of Southern Song history, this chronology is constantly interrupted by entries and chapters that do not always conform to or sometimes even defy this temporal order. Most of these disturbances, however, are placed into the text for a specific purpose. Though they confound the temporal sequence in the text, they do not completely overthrow it. The chronological framework remains the backbone of the text, the very basic form that the text is taking or about to take.

Even if we stress the fundamentality of this chronological form, however, we may still have to admit that its presence in the text is by no means always regular. An example of this can be discerned in the uneven flow of time in the text. The editors of the SKQS already noticed this:

Though the book was named after Qiantang, what it actually recorded was the entire history of the Southern Song. The book is very brief about the four reigns of Emperor Gaozong, Xiaozong, Guangzong, and Ningzong,

¹⁹⁰ See Liu Yiqing, *Qiantang yishi*, pp. 4-5.

but is extremely detailed about what happened after Emperor Lizong and Duzong.

其書雖以錢塘為名，而實紀南宋一代之事，高、孝、光、寧四朝所載頗畧，理、度以後叙錄最詳。¹⁹¹

This comment to a large extent tells the truth. As we can see from the chart in Appendix I, although the four reigns from Emperor Gaozong to Emperor Ningzong lasted about one hundred years, taking up almost two-thirds of Southern Song history, the text only devotes a little more than one chapter to a discussion of them (Chapter Two, in addition to a few other entries scattered in Chapter One and Three). By contrast, the fifty years from Emperor Lizong to Emperor Duzong and the two years during the reign of Emperor Gongdi (1271-1323, r. 1274-1276) receive much more detailed discussion in the text, each taking up at least three chapters (Chapters Four to Six and Chapters Seven to Nine). This unevenness in the discussion of different reign periods in the Southern Song makes the time flow in the text uneven as well. The narrative time in *Qiantang yishi* is by no means a simple replica of the actual time in history. It is much more complex, with some parts of history being “fast-forwarded” and others being narrated in an extremely slow fashion. As we can see from the chart in Appendix I, the closer the text moves towards the end, the slower the narrative becomes. In discussing the four reigns from Emperor Gaozong to Emperor Ningzong, the narrative leaps forward in decades from one entry to another. When it comes to the reigns of Emperor Lizong and Duzong, the narrative slows down and advances year by year. Next to it, the reign of Emperor Gongdi, which lasted only two years, is narrated at an even slower speed from month to month. Finally in Chapter Nine, which describes the northward journey of surrender taken by the Southern Song government in 1276, the narrative drawls forward at turtle speed from one day to another.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ See Liu Yiqing, *Qiantang yishi*, p. 3.

¹⁹² The chapter is in fact a court diary by Yan Guangda 嚴光大 (fl. 1276) recording the northward journey of surrender by the Southern Song government. This explains why the narrative in it proceeds from one day to another.

This gradual deceleration of the narrative in *Qiantang yishi* is certainly not done without a purpose. Through the slowing down of the narrative, the narrated time in the text is twisted to present us a unique picture of Southern Song history. In this picture, the time when the Southern Song was supposed to be in its heyday is drastically shortened. The relatively peaceful and prosperous period from the reign of Emperor Gaozong to that of Emperor Ningzong is presented textually as if it were only a flash in the pan. Even in its shortened textual presentation, the period is not introduced to us through its prosperity and peace, but rather through such disturbing things as political struggle or conspiracy at court or military incompetence. By contrast, the time when the Southern Song started to decline is purposefully extended textually. The slowing down of the narrative in this part of the text allows us to be able to have a close look at the political, economic, and military reasons that led to the decline of the dynasty. The last two years of the Southern Song also receive an elongated depiction in the text. Considering that these two years were the time when history was filled with the anguish of war, violence of resistance, and the humiliation of surrender, we cannot help but feel the unbearable torment that people were suffering at the time. This torment is amplified by the slow-paced narrative in this part of the text. As a result, we are made to acutely feel the pain, the violence, and the turbulence of the time, as if we were witnessing the demise of the Southern Song dynasty with our own eyes, as if we were also a part of that history.

The Issue of Authorship

The text of *Qiantang yishi* has been artfully constructed so that its unity is not achieved at the expense of the independence of its individual entries. At first glance, the text appears to be nothing more than a simple collection of short historical materials that at best have tenuous connections with each other. Upon closer look, however, the text reveals itself to possess a structural design, which has been implemented into the text at different levels from its selection of entries, organization of chapters, to its

construction of the entire book. This structural design, though constantly urging us to look for the unity and coherence in the text, does not completely deprive us of the freedom to read the individual entries in the text as self-contained entities. We are given the choice to roam freely between two types of reading, directing our attention simultaneously to the unified aesthetics of the text and the particular value of its components. In many ways, the text resembles a seemingly unfinished artwork, with the final touch that is supposed to complete its cohesion and unity perpetually and purposefully delayed. The lack of this final touch, however, rather than making the text in any way inferior, instead creates an intriguing reading experience for us, propelling us to acknowledge and appreciate the very suspense that the text has left in our contemplation of its form, purpose, and nature.

In addition to the different layers of suspense that we may find inside the text, another layer of the suspense that we may feel about text as a whole is related to its authorship. This question can in turn be examined at two different levels, given that author and writer are now held to be two interrelated but distinct concepts in literary analysis--an argument suggested by Foucault and further explored by Alexander Nehamas.¹⁹³ To be more specific, while a writer can be understood as the actual historical person, who exists outside the text and factually writes it, an author is the formal cause of the text, in the sense that his/her existence produces as much as is produced by the text.

On the level of writer, we can ask whether Liu Yiqing can indeed be considered as the writer of *Qiantang yishi* or simply a compiler of it. At first glance, the answer to this question seems quite obvious, as the text of *Qiantang yishi* contains quite a few entries that are notably taken from other texts, though without mention of their original

¹⁹³ A differentiation of these two concepts was hinted at in Michel Foucault's article "What Is an Author?" See Sean Burke ed., *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern--A Reader* (Ed. Burke, Sean. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 233-247. This distinction receives a much more detailed discussion in Alexander Nehamas, "What an Author Is" in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 83. 11 (Nov. 1986): 685-691. In addition to these two articles, Molly Nesbit, "What Was an Author?" and Donald Pease, "Author," in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern--A Reader*, pp. 247-263, 263-277, also contain interesting discussions on the issue of authorship. My argument in this section is in many ways inspired by their insightful observations.

sources. From a point of view that emphasizes originality in writing, Liu Yiqing cannot be called a writer due to his unacknowledged appropriation of materials from other texts. But apart from these clearly borrowed materials, there are still a considerable amount of entries in the text (their numbers actually far exceeds those of the borrowed entries), whose original sources cannot be clearly identified. Though we are unable to verify that Liu Yiqing actually wrote these entries, neither can we completely rule out this possibility. Furthermore, as I have argued above, even for the entries that are clearly borrowed from other sources, we cannot say that Liu Yiqing did not put any writerly effort in reusing them. Liu may not be called the first writer of these entries, but by creatively combining them with other entries and placing them into a new context, he indeed provided us a chance to look at these entries in a new light. An improper analogy for this would be if a person inserts into his/her novel some stories that he/she hears or reads from elsewhere. This will certainly not disqualify his/her status as the writer, as the major portion of the novel is still written by him/her and the use of the borrowed stories is purposefully designed to meet his/her writing agenda. Another improper analogy would be if a chief compiler of a book who creatively rearranges or even edits some of the articles in his/her book contributed by other writers, and in this way he/she creates a new angle for the readers to appreciate these articles as a meaningful unity. In the former analogy, the person who incorporates alien material into his own maintains his/her status as the writer even if he uses materials from other sources. In the latter analogy, the person is often called a compiler, in spite of the creative effort that he/she put into the organization and editing of the individual articles. The line between writer and compiler in these two cases is clearly drawn. But this is certainly not the case with Liu Yiqing and his text. The reason why I call these two analogies improper is because neither of them fully exemplifies the subtle relationship between Liu Yiqing and the text he produces. If we have to assign a role to Liu Yiqing in relation to his text, he should rather be viewed as someone who is in between a writer and a compiler. He compiles what he writes and writes through his compilation, occupying a very gray zone where writing and compiling blur into each other.

This indistinct role assumed by Liu Yiqing as the writer/compiler of *Qiantang yishi* is by no means unique in the history of traditional Chinese literature. In traditional Chinese fiction, for instance, the line between writer and compile/editor is also not always clear. Editors and compilers of a fictional work not only had the freedom but were also expected to revise the texts that they edited or compiled. Though usually they would carefully maintain their role as editors/compilers, the line was from time to time crossed voluntarily or involuntarily. Sometimes, because the editors/compilers had done such extensive revisions to the original works, to the point that they almost rewrote them, they began to be remembered, especially by common readers, as “writers” of these texts.¹⁹⁴ In any case, it is clear that writing and editing/compiling are not always two mutually exclusive practices in traditional Chinese literature. Writing can be done in and through the process of editing and compilation, just as editing and compiling are allowed to interfere with and sometimes even naturally extend into writing.

The boundary between writing and compiling becomes even more blurred in the genre of *biji*. The genre’s miscellaneous nature enables a *biji* text to include in it almost everything, from stories or accounts of real historical events, to hearsay or gossip, to reading notes or quotations from books, to exegeses of the classics or literary criticism. Given this diversified nature of *biji*’s content, it is really hard to decide where compilation ends and writing begins, or vice versa. Furthermore, in order to decide whether a person writes or compiles a *biji* text, we also need to look at the text simultaneously at two levels, namely, the level of the individual entries and the level of the text as a whole. Sometimes, the person may write every individual entry, but the text in general lacks a unity to make it a cohesive piece of writing instead of a loose compilation of separate entries. Sometimes, as in the case of *Qiantang yishi*, the person may borrow materials from other sources, but artfully rearrange them so that the

¹⁹⁴ Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, a Chinese vernacular story writer and poet living the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), was a good example of this. For a detailed discussion on his role as the writer/compiler of the stories he collected in his well-known works such as *Sanyan*, please refer to Yang Shuhui, *Appropriation and Representation: Feng Menglong and the Chinese Vernacular Story* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1998).

borrowed materials start to acquire a new structure and meaning in the new context. In any event, it is clear that we need to be careful in examining the role played by the person who produces a *biji* text.

In short, the distinction between writing and compiling becomes quite unclear, or at least quite malleable, in a *biji* text like *Qiantang yishi*. In many ways, the text can be said to exemplify a direction of development between writing and compiling. This transitional status partially accounts for the formless form, or formed formlessness, that the text assumes. Depending on the perspective that we use to look at or look into the text, we may see the text as a collection of apparently disjointed entities that is about to take shape, or as a staggering unity which looks as if it is going to collapse at any moment. This indefinite status of the text, however, is by no means a defect. In the text's potential to become either formed or formless lies its special literariness. In our constant effort of preventing the text from becoming either formed or formless lies the pleasure of reading.

If we now move on from the level of writer to that of author, we will find that things become even more complicated. It is already a common understanding now that the historical writer can by no means be equated with the author. Though the historical writer remains an indispensable factor in determining the identity of the author, it is only one of the many enabling conditions that make the existence of the author possible. In addition to the historical writer, two other conditions, namely, the unity of the text and the readers' imagination, are also very important for our understanding of the concept of author.

Viewed from the perspective of the text itself, an author can be said to be a postulated entity, whose existence by and large determines the text's existence as a unity. As a concept, this postulated author is both smaller and bigger than the historical writer. He/she is smaller because it is in many ways like an avatar assumed by the historical writer at the time of writing, though the author is certainly more powerful than the narrator, which is the author's textual persona, as he/she possesses more

comprehensive views and control over the text. He/she is bigger than the historical writer because he/she is the postulated “person” who is held responsible for all the possibilities that the text can generate. The author is also the formal cause of the text, and because of this, he/she can in many ways transcend the historical and personal limit of the historical writer.¹⁹⁵ But this does not mean that the author can be whatever the readers imagine it to be. The author, as a concept, still exists prior to reading, and therefore is still the one which enables rather than is enabled by reading. Although its existence cannot be separated from reading, it is not as infinite as the readers’ imagination. With regard to reading and the text, the author is still as much an enabling as a limiting concept. It is a product of constant negotiation among the three most important factors that engenders and determines its existence, that is, the reality of the historical writer, the nature of the text, and the imagination of the readers.

These different layers of connotation possessed by the concept of author provide us with a useful angle to probe into the issue of the authorship of *Qiantang yishi*. The question is: Can Liu Yiqing be regarded as the author of the text, in spite of his indefinite role as the historical writer? As we have discussed above, although Liu Yiqing might not be responsible for writing all the entries in his text, his writerly endeavor in putting all these entries into a meaningful unity should by no means be neglected. In many ways, Liu was like those creative writers of traditional Chinese fiction, who transformed texts originally not belonging to them into their own through rewriting. Like those writers, Liu Yiqing left an indelible signature of his own into the text he produced. In light of this, it may be not so problematic if we choose to view Liu Yiqing as the author of *Qiantang yishi*, given that an author can also be understood as the formal cause of a text. Moreover, if we also take into consideration that historically Liu might have actually written a large portion of *Qiantang yishi* by himself, then his role as the author may appear even more justifiable.

If we can reach an agreement that Liu Yiqing can be regarded as the author of *Qiantang yishi*, then we can proceed to ask what kind of author he was in relation to the

¹⁹⁵ See Foucault’s “What Is An Author?” in Sean Burke ed., *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern--A Reader*, pp. 238-240.

text he produced. This question can again be examined on three different levels, corresponding to the three most important factors that determine the existence of the author.

On the level pertaining to the reality of the historical writer, we can say that the identification of Liu Yiqing as the author of *Qiantang yishi* can provide us with an informing but also indefinite prospect about how the text can be read and interpreted. Thanks to Foucault's seminal argument, we now have a much more complex understanding of the author's significance as the cultural and historical source for the text. We understand that an author is not merely the historical person who produces the text, but also a "cultural function" that characterizes "the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society."¹⁹⁶ This implies that in examining the role played by the author in relation to the text, we should take into consideration not only the author's personal specifics, but also the "cultural code" which the author embodies or exemplifies. We should examine the historical context in which the text is produced, the social milieu which directly or indirectly affects the author's conception of what he/she writes, as well as the cultural discourse which has been mobilized by the author's very practice of writing. The purpose of doing so is not so much to delineate the background for our analysis. Rather, we should view these things as the most essential elements, through which the text acquires its meaning. In other words, the meaning of the text is generated and determined not only by the words inside it, but also by the "cultural code" through and by which the text becomes functional. It is the search for this "cultural code" that makes our investigation into the historical specifics of the author a meaningful act. In light of this, we can say that the identification of Liu Yiqing as the author of *Qiantang yishi* indeed provides us a useful angle to look into the "cultural code" which the text embodies. We know that Liu Yiqing is believed to have lived in the Yuan dynasty and to have been a loyalist to the Southern Song. Although these two details are small, they significantly shape our conception of the text of *Qiantang yishi* and determine our initiatives in interpreting it. Because of these two

¹⁹⁶ Foucault, "What Is An Author?" p. 235.

details, we can now situate our reading of the text, as I have done in the first chapter, within the turbulent dynastic transition taking place in the late 13th century, as well as within the loyalist tradition long existent in China. To register our reading to these historical and cultural traditions will undoubtedly enrich our understanding of the text. But at the same time, we need to admit that our looking for the “cultural code” of *Qiantang yishi* also stops at this point, for other than the fact that Liu Yiqing might be a Southern Song loyalist living in the Yuan dynasty, we know almost nothing else about his life. This lack of knowledge makes all the linkages that we have established so far between the text and its cultural code appear less stable than we want them to be. Adding up to this instability are various ruptures and inconsistencies in the text, as we have discussed above, that constantly remind us to be cautious about any historical and cultural interpretation that we may want to read into the text. As a result, we have no choice but to accept the very indeterminacy of our reading, knowing that there is always a possibility that the text could be read and interpreted otherwise.

The same kind of indeterminacy also characterizes our interpretation of the text shaped by the other two things that determine the existence of the author, namely, the unity of the text and the imagination of the readers. As I have mentioned, one of the most distinct characteristics of the genre of *biji* is its miscellaneousness. Because of this miscellaneousness, the author of a *biji* text usually exerts less tight control, at least in appearance, over the unity of the text. Though there may be an underlying structure in the text, the discovery of it often requires a much more meticulous examination of the text than a common reader can afford, and even if this structure is exposed, it will not fundamentally change the reader’s impression of the text’s apparent disjointedness. As a *biji* text, *Qiantang yishi* is no exception of this. The hidden structure that we may uncover beneath the text’s disjointed surface, as well as the unity this structure may have helped to create inside the text, is constantly interrupted and challenged by those things that do not always conform to it. The existence of these interruptions may break the smoothness and coherence that we may want to find, but they also provide us with a new angle to look at the text that is no less informative and meaningful. This dual

existence of the implicit structure and the meaningful interruptions makes Liu Yiqing's role as the author of *Qiantang yishi* appear rather democratic. Liu certainly did not let the text speak for itself, but at the same time, he did not exert a paramount control over what the text says and how it says it either. As an author, he gives his readers more freedom to devise, experiment, or even improvise new interpretive approaches in their reading, albeit not totally without guidance. This freedom in turn enriches his readers' imagination of his role as the author. Because of Liu Yiqing's discernible but not determinative control over his text, the text of *Qiantang yishi* appears, as I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, more "writerly" than "readerly." The readers are given more opportunity to play with the information provided in the text and come up with diversified interpretations of it within the boundaries leniently imposed by the text itself. This situation at some level exemplifies what Barthes claimed, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author,"¹⁹⁷ except that in this case, the author's death is incomplete and is reified more or less at the author's own will. As an author, Liu Yiqing is quite laid-back in relation to the text he produces, but he also does not completely disappear from it. His half-presence in the text may disappoint some readers who look up to him as the one who should bring the text into a unified narrative, but on the other hand, it may also delight others who view author more as a pilot than the ultimate arbitrator of the text's meaning. In short, Liu Yiqing's role as the author, viewed from the perspectives of the text's unity and the readers' imagination, creates the same kind of revealing indeterminacy that we have discussed before. While this indeterminacy urges us to constantly search for and uncover new interpretations in the text, it also exerts necessary controls on our search, preventing it from turning into a completely free roaming that is devoid of any specific aim and purpose.

A Special Narrative on History

¹⁹⁷ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern--A Reader*, p.130.

In addition to the issue of authorship, another matter held in suspense that we may encounter in reading *Qiantang yishi* is the text's unique status as a historical narrative.

The relationship between historical *biji* and history has long been a hot topic of discussion among historians and literary critics.¹⁹⁸ The most common view held by historians is that historical *biji* provide useful but dubious accounts of history that can be used to complement narratives offered in official histories.¹⁹⁹ Because of this, historians usually adopt a cautious stance toward the value possessed by historical *biji*: On the one hand, they recognize historical *biji* as invaluable sources of information for studies on history, for they contain an enormous body of stories and materials that cannot be found in official histories; on the other, they often treat these stories and materials as raw data, which need to be carefully assessed, sifted, and processed before they can be used to construct a reliable and/or readable account of history. This cautious stance in turn determines the research trend related to the studies on historical *biji*. As texts about history, they are deemed less reliable than official histories due to the mixed nature of their content; as works of literature, they are also regarded as less readable than official histories and historical novels, because of the “rawness” of their writing and their general lack of narrative continuity. As a result, most historical *biji* are used only in selections or fragments. While historians are eager to use individual stories, materials and information from historical *biji* to complement their research on Chinese history or literature, they usually pay less attention to the specific literary value, historical significance, and cultural function possessed by these texts as unified entities. A consequence of this is that we are made to know more about the individual entries in a historical *biji* than the coherence of the text itself. The historical *biji* thus become a group of nebulous origins of information that lacks flesh and bones to make their existence substantial and meaningful.

¹⁹⁸ For a discussion on historical *biji*, please refer to Chapter One of this dissertation.

¹⁹⁹ This view has been held by the majority of scholars. See, for example, Paul Jakov Smith, “Impressions of the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition: The Evidence from Biji Memoirs” in Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds, *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), pp. 71-111, and Liu Yeqiu, *Lidai biji gaishu*.

Not all historians and literary critics, however, confine their understanding of historical *biji* to this cautious view. Recently more scholars start to realize that what historical *biji* provide are not only complementary materials to official histories, but also alternative visions of history. In a recent article on a forged *biji* text attributed to Xin Qiji, Stephen West offers a perceptive reflection on how a generally untrustworthy account of history can nonetheless provide us with valuable insights of the historical conditions of the time.²⁰⁰ One of the major arguments that West ventures in this article is that in spite of the untruthful nature of this *biji* text, it nonetheless offers us an invaluable opportunity to glimpse the mixed feeling that people of the time held toward the humiliating Jingkang Incident 靖康事變 (1126) and the unfortunate fate of Emperor Huizong, who was deemed responsible for this Incident and the consequent fall of the Northern Song dynasty. In the light of this, though the book itself may be a forgery and the materials in it untrustworthy, it nonetheless provides us with a useful angle to probe into an aspect of the historical reality of the time. In the same spirit, Christian de Pee also invites us to contemplate the circumscribing nature of historical *biji* as a genre in relation to standard historiography.²⁰¹ He argues that the existence of historical *biji* vis-à-vis standard historiography creates an intricate cultural landscape of center and periphery. While the marginal status of historical *biji* presupposes and depends on the existence of a historical and historiographical center, the genre's very marginality also stands in sharp contrast with this stabilizing center of political power, social normality, and literary convention. This contrast gives us the opportunity to examine the historical and historiographical center from not only an alternative perspective, but also a critical one. This critical perspective in turn enables us to view historical *biji* texts as forming a unifying discourse, which constantly calls for our attention to the hidden historical, political, and cultural meaning underneath the genre's apparent miscellaneousness.

²⁰⁰ See Stephen H. West, "Crossing Over: Huizong in the Afterglow, or the Deaths of a Troubling Emperor," see my discussion of this article in the Introduction.

²⁰¹ See Christian de Pee, "Circumscriptions of the Center: The Writing of the Empire in Song Notebooks (*biji*)," unpublished paper.

In spite of their different arguments on the relationship between historical *biji* and history, one thing that scholars hold in common is that historical *biji* play an indispensable role in studies of Chinese history and historiography. The key issue here is how to assess the value of the genre: Is the role of historical *biji* simply complementary, as they provide plenty of side stories and materials that can be used in our study of official Chinese history and historiography? Or does the genre's seemingly peripheral nature in fact provide us with an invaluable opportunity to gain alternative views on Chinese history, views that are no less informative and meaningful than their "standard" version? My own assessment of the genre leans more towards the latter. It is my intention to argue that the vision of history that we may gain from reading historical *biji* is more alternative than complementary. This "alternativeness" comes not only from the heterogeneous content of the *biji* texts, which encourages us to view history from diversified or even competing perspectives, but also from the special way of how history is written through the genre, that is, how history is turned into a special type of narrative that invites us to ponder upon the very gulf between history and its narration.

In order to understand the specialness of the historical narrative provided in *biji*, we need to start by examining briefly the arguments made on the problematic relationship between historical narrative and historical reality. In a brilliant synopsis included in the Introduction to his book, David Carr offers an insightful investigation into this intriguing matter.²⁰² According to Carr, the connection between narrative and history has remained a lively subject of discussion in the field of history ever since the mid-1960s. At first, when historians and philosophers of history debated on this topic, they would usually not resort to literary studies on the nature of narrative, which have entertained an equally long history of development and have received significant breakthrough since the 1960's. It was not until the appearance of Hayden White's

²⁰² David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 1-17. Gabrielle M. Spiegel's book, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) contains a discussion on the "linguistic turn" in the study of history, which is closely related to our current discussion. See Spiegel's book Part One, pp. 3- 57.

Metahistory in 1973 that these two lines of studies started to merge.²⁰³ Influenced by works done by the structuralists and literary critics such as Northrop Frye,²⁰⁴ White applies literary analysis of narrative to his study on the writings of classical historians and philosophers of history in the nineteenth century. He emphasizes the role played by narrative in these historians' works and argues that narrative is an essential method used by historians to classify and organize our experience of the past, to instill meaningful orders and structures into it, and to represent history in a way that is intelligible to us. White's argument on the narrative nature of historical works is echoed by other historians and philosophers such as Paul Ricoeur. In his influential work *Time and Narrative*,²⁰⁵ Ricoeur takes a similar stance as White on the significance of narrative in history writing, but he pushes his argument one step further by suggesting that even in those historical works that appear to be or are self-proclaimed as non-narrative, such as the social histories done by the French *Annales* school, there is still a narrative thread that has been consciously and subconsciously planted into them as a hidden structure or form. Not surprisingly, this "narrativist" approach to history has not been accepted by all historians and philosophers of history. Scholars like Maurice Mandelbaum and Leon Goldstein²⁰⁶ vehemently criticized White's approach on the basis that it misses the essence of history. According to Mandelbaum and Goldstein, what defines the discipline of history is not only its final literary representation, namely, the historical text, but also the hard work of discovery, explanation, and evaluation of source materials that lies behind the text. Narrative is merely a way in which all the previous hard work has been finally "written-up" for public consumption, but it is far from being the only determining factor, with which the discipline of history can be defined. Carr himself is also inspired by this "backward" search for the essence of history as a discipline, but in looking backward, the conclusion that he eventually reaches is one that is rather in favor

²⁰³ Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

²⁰⁴ Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

²⁰⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*. K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer Trans. Vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

²⁰⁶ See Maurice Mandelbaum, "A Note on History as Narrative," *History and Theory* 6 (1967): 416-417, and Leon Goldstein, *Historical Knowing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), especially the introduction.

of the “narrativist” approach to history. Basically what Carr suggests is to look for an origin of the discipline of history that lies even further beyond the historians’ creative writing and their preparatory work done before that. The real origin of the discipline, argues Carr, is the “historical experience” that stays behind and precedes both the writing and the preparation. According to Carr, one of the most distinct characteristics of this historical experience is its narrative feature. Proceeding from this assumption, Carr reaches a conclusion that is both in line with and running against the narrativists’ claims. Like the narrativists, Carr acknowledges the indispensability of narrative in our understanding and our verbal reproduction of the historical past. But unlike the narrativists who believe that the “narrative form in history, as in fiction, is an artifice, the product of individual imagination,”²⁰⁷ which has been imposed from outside onto the otherwise disorderly and structureless historical experience and/or reality, Carr proposes a continuity between narrative and everyday experience/action, arguing that narrative in historical and fictional works actually “arises out of and is prefigured in certain features of life, action, and communication,” that historical and fictional narratives are “not distortions of, denials of, or escapes from reality, but extensions and configurations of its primary features.”²⁰⁸ In short, while Carr agrees with the narrativists on the significant role played by narrative in our knowledge of history, he disagrees with them in viewing narrative as extrinsic to historical reality or to our experience of it. For Carr, narrative features are intrinsic in our everyday experience and life, and fictional and historical works do not impose a narrative order/structure from outside onto our past and our experience of it, but merely extend, with artistic maneuvers of course, what is already there.

Carr’s brief synopsis is enlightening for our understanding of *Qiantang yishi* in at least two ways. It encourages us to think about the specialness of the text as a historical narrative; at the same time, it also invites us to contemplate the dialectics between the text as a written product and the historical experience behind its composition.

²⁰⁷ Louis O. Mink, “Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument,” in *The Writing of History*, ed. R.H. Canary and H. Kozicki (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 145.

²⁰⁸ David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, p. 16.

When we consider the text of *Qiantang yishi* as providing a special kind of narrative on history, we will find that this narrative is neither conveniently written up, as we would expect to find in a standard history or historical novel, nor is it presented in a completely desultory and purposeless fashion, as if it is nothing more than a simple compilation of historical facts and stories. The text certainly has its goals, purposes, principles of selection and organization, and particular vision of history, but none of these goals, purposes, principles, or vision seems to be able to fully grant us an easy and smooth path into the text. We know that the text is leading us to somewhere, but in leading us to that destination, the text also constantly draws our attention to other numerous variables, bifurcated paths, conflictive or even contradictory entrances that challenge our wishful search for a linear, stable and unified reading. In reading the text, our experience is somehow like wandering through a maze: We know that what we are facing is not simply a pile of stones that are aimlessly placed together. And there are clues and signs everywhere that point to us the way in and out of the maze. But in most cases, these clues and signs are as ambiguous as they are revealing. While fulfilling their role as guides to lead us through the textual maze, they also reveal to us various alternative ways and methods, through and with which the text can be entered or exited. As a result, we are often “distracted,” albeit pleasantly, by these clues and signs, and left to savor the very detainment that they have led us to in this textual maze. The pleasure of our reading starts to be associated less with the feeling of accomplishment that we may feel upon finishing reading the text and finding out its meaning, but more with the chances that we are given to truly immerse ourselves into the text and explore the multiple ways through which it can be read and experienced. In a nutshell, as a special historical narrative, the text of *Qiantang yishi* can in fact be placed in the middle of the spectrum between a simple compilation of historical facts/stories and an artfully written-up history ready to be consumed by its readers. This special narrative status changes the text itself into a variable, indeterminate form that constantly waits to take shape with the collaboration of its creator’s intention, its consumers’ interpretation, and its own autonomy as a text.

This indeterminate narrative in turn leads us to think about the special relationship between what has been inscribed into the text and the historical experience that propels and sustains this inscription. In his book, Carr briefly discusses what he calls a non-thematic or pre-thematic awareness of the past, which he believes functions as the background for our present experience or our experience of the present.²⁰⁹ Carr argues that this non-thematic or pre-thematic awareness of the past is shared both by historians and non-historians, and it is the very foundation for our knowledge of history. Not only so, according to Carr, the influence and existence of this awareness is also so entrenched and persistent that it cannot be replaced by or completely purged from even the most rigorous and sophisticated study on history. Carr does not go into detail in describing what this non-thematic or pre-thematic awareness of the past is exactly like. But this should not prevent us from applying his interesting observation to our current discussion on the text of *Qiantang yishi*. Of course this is not to say that the text of *Qiantang yishi* is an example of this non-thematic or pre-thematic awareness of the past, for in spite of its apparent miscellaneousness, the text is still a carefully designed and structured literary work that is anything but non-thematic or pre-thematic. But at the same time, it is perhaps not totally misleading if we associate (not identify) the historical experience that propels and sustains the composition of the text with this non-thematic or pre-thematic awareness that Carr discusses in his book. Compared with the text, this historical experience is more formless, and the very composition of the text grants structure and meaning to it. But the charm of the text of *Qiantang yishi* lies in that while it indeed provides structure and meaning to the nebulous historical experience prior to it, it does not make this structure and meaning the only fixed structure and meaning, through which the pre-textual experience of history is allowed to take shape. On the contrary, the text in many ways resembles the fluid historical experience that precedes it, as can be seen from the text's accommodation of and

²⁰⁹ David Carr, p. 3. Carr's discussion on the non-thematic or pre-thematic awareness of the past is actually inspired by Edmund Husserl's discussion on the everyday pre-scientific experience, which Husserl believed to be the foundation of our real scientific knowledge in the natural science. See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, David Carr trans. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp. 103-89.

openness to heterogeneous elements, flexible reading, and malleable meanings. The text is struggling to take form just as the pre-textual historical experience, but in doing so, it paradoxically grants form to the even more formless experience of history prior to it. Here again we see how the text of *Qiantang yishi* is placed in the middle of a spectrum, between a primordial and pre-thematic awareness of history and a type of historical knowledge that has been written up in a much more definite and ordered fashion. However, it would be wrong for us to thus view the text simply as a link between these two types of historical awareness/knowledge, that is, as a textual refinement of the pre-thematic experience of history or an unfinished historical text that waits to be written-up. The text rather represents an indispensable stage of intermediacy in our historical perception and conception, in which our knowledge and judgment of history is taking shape but still remains malleable. This stage of intermediacy has its own right and value of existence. History, in this stage, is not simply a pile of structureless impressions generated from some unclassified facts, data or stories; nor has it been turned into a coherent narrative or a determined set of knowledge waiting to be consumed and memorized. History is still in its formless form, or formed formlessness, in the sense that we can foresee that it is going to take shape, but we do not know for certain what shape it is going to take, and how it is going to take it.

CHAPTER III

A SYMPHONY OF DISCORDANCE

In his seminal study on Balzac's *Sarrasine*, Roland Barthes makes an interesting distinction between two types of texts: readerly text (*texte lisible*) and writerly text (*texte scriptible*).²¹⁰ Readerly texts, according to Barthes, are what make the reader the consumer, rather than the producer, of the texts. They are products, not production, in the sense that they locate the reader not as a site of production of meaning, but only as a passive receiver of a fixed and pre-determined reading. In reading the readerly text, the reader is "plunged into a kind of idleness." "Instead of functioning himself, instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the pleasure of writing," the reader "is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text."²¹¹ Writerly texts, by contrast, put readers in a position of control, enabling and encouraging them to take an active role in the construction of meaning. In Barthes' own language, the writerly text "is *ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages."²¹² On the basis of this distinction, Barthes proceeds to posit an image of an "ideal text" or a "triumphant plural":

In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest. a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can authoritatively declared to be the

²¹⁰ Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1974), pp. 3-6.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p.5.

main one; the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach*, they are indeterminable (meaning here is never subject to a principle of determination, unless by throwing dice); the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language.²¹³

It probably never occurs to Barthes that the distinction he makes could one day prove to be useful for the reading of a 13-14th century Chinese literati miscellany. To be honest, such a possibility did not strike me either when I first came across Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang yishi*. But the more I read the text, the more I felt the urge and necessity to read it in light of Barthes's theoretical framework. Measuring *Qiantang yishi* against the different types of texts that Barthes distinguishes in his book, we can say for certain that it is not a readerly text. The heterogeneity of its content and the disjointed surface persistently throttle the reader's attempt to come up with a consistent and coherent reading. But it is not writerly either, as the text, no matter how miscellaneous and fragmentary it appears to be, is still a purposed product, one that constantly presses us to look for a hidden structure, a sustainable meaning, and/or a unifying narrative. We can say the text possesses some of the attributes of the "ideal text," in the sense that the meanings in the text are plural and the text can be gained access to from different entrances. But the resemblance between the two is at best tenuous. Unlike the "ideal text," the text of *Qiantang yishi* is still "a structure of signifieds," albeit the structure is often vague and uncertain, not "a galaxy of signifiers." The text still has a specific goal regarding how it wants to be read by the reader, but in reaching toward this goal, it often surprises the reader, through its very miscellaneous nature, with the complexity of its signification and the different possibilities of how it can be read.

In short, it seems that the text of *Qiantang yishi* has attributes of all the three types of texts that Barthes discusses in his book, but at the same time, it cannot be identified with any of them. The text is rather an uncertainty, and reading it, from time to time, leave us in a state of indeterminacy. This state of indeterminacy, however, does not mean that the text is obscure. On both the macroscopic and microscopic level,

²¹³ *Ibid.*

the meaning of the text is far from being obscure. The meaning is, rather, unstable and undecided. The text is both open and resistant to interpretation. It is open because it offers the reader more freedom than usual, through its very miscellaneousness, to devise, experiment, or even improvise new interpretative approaches; but as soon as we become content with the usefulness of one of our interpretations, the text will immediately expose its limitation or inadequacy through a series of counter examples. This has made the text to some extent like a symphony composed out of discordances. While we are certainly allowed to follow our reading habit to read the text as if it is a harmonious whole, we are constantly reminded of the existence of the various discordant details, conflicting voices, or competing discourses. But rather than being detrimental to our reading, the existence of these disturbances instead offers us new perspectives to look at the text, through which we will be able to appreciate the specialness of the text not only through its totality, its overall meaning, and its recognizable structure, but also through the uncertainty of its signification, the dialectics of its textual voices, the ruptures in its coherence, and the contrast in its similarity.

Inspired by Barthes' argument, I examine the text of *Qiantang yishi* from four different perspectives in this chapter of my dissertation. While each of these perspectives stands for a point of entrance through which we can gain access to the text, they by no means exhaust all the possibilities of how the text can be approached. Furthermore, the limitations of these perspectives should be acknowledged from the very outset, for even though the miscellaneousness of the text allows us to experiment with different types of readings, its complexity also prohibits us from claiming any one of them to be constantly effective or valid. In short, these perspectives represent but my modest attempt to approach, analyze and understand the text, and hopefully with these attempts, I will be able to let us see the specialness of the text not only through the richness of its information, but also through the specialness of its textuality.

The first section of this chapter focuses on Chapter One of *Qiantang yishi*. In this section, I examine how the dialectics between the two discourses employed in the chapter—the discourse of *fengshui* 風水 (geomancy) and that of *shanshui* 山水

(landscape) —has made the meaning of the chapter stay in a state of indeterminacy. I argue that this state of indeterminacy exemplifies not only an oscillation within the text, but also a tension between the two historical visions —one deterministic and the other sociopolitical—held by Liu Yiqing regarding the history of the Southern Song. In the second section, which examines Chapter Two to Chapter Six in *Qiantang yishi*, I argue that how an unpromising picture of the Southern Song politics has been presented to us both thematically through the content of the text and formally through the selection and arrangement of relevant entries in these chapters. In this unpromising picture, we will be able to see the constant interaction between three different voices, namely, the dwindling voice of the emperors, the rising voice of powerful civil ministers at court, and the marginalized but persistent voice of local military commanders. Together these three voices form a “political trio” that tells us much about the historical situation of the Southern Song as envisioned by Liu Yiqing. The third section, concentrating on Chapter Four to Chapter Seven in *Qiantang yishi*, continues the narrative on politics initiated in the second section, but the spotlight is now specifically on the political career of one person, Jia Sidao 賈似道 (1213-1275), who remains one of the most controversial figures in Southern Song history. In this section, I take a comparative approach by pairing the literary presentation of Jia Sidao in *Qiantang yishi* with his official biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*. This comparative approach allows me to discover interesting similarities as well as contrasts between these two types of narratives. On the basis of these similarities and contrasts, I argue that the entries in *Qiantang yishi* collectively form a “biography-in-the-making” of Jia Sidao. This “biography-in-the-making” provides us with a “mosaic portrait” of Jia’s personal and political life, whereby the grand image of him is made visible only through the collage of numerous smaller images which do not always conform to each other. The last section of this chapter is devoted to a contrastive study of the seventh to the ninth chapters of *Qiantang yishi*. Dividing the three chapters into two groups, I examine the contrasts both between these two parts of the text and within each one of them. This examination lets me see the dynamics among the entries at not only the inter-chapter

but also the intra-chapter level. I argue that the spatiotemporal contrast at the inter-chapter level reveals to us two different pictures regarding the demise of the Southern Song—one disoriented by wartime chaos and the other regulated by the routinized northward peace-seeking journey taken by the Song government after its defeat. These two contrastive pictures are further complicated by the presence of smaller contrasts within each one of them, contrasts that constantly speak to, but do not always conform to, the “grand narrative” in the big pictures.

From *Fengshui* to *Shanshui*

A Prophecy on Tianmu Mountain [Chapter 1, Entry 1]

The mountains in the city of Lin'an all originated from Tianmu Mountain.
As the prophecy said,

“Tianmu Mountain hangs two long breasts;
Like flying dragon and dancing phoenix they descend to
Qiantang.²¹⁴
Like a dot in the seagate, the ‘southeastern mountain’ is small;²¹⁵
In five hundred years, an emperor will appear. ”

After the Qian family founded their kingdom here and pledged allegiance to the Song as hereditary kings, they did not want this prophecy to be known. So they changed the last three words of the poem to “non-relative king” to make do with it. The prophecy therefore was not fulfilled until Emperor Gaozong settled the capital in the city. Seen from below, the Wu Mountain projects into the sky like a robust stallion. During the Shaoxing reign period [1131-1162],²¹⁶ people who were good at perceiving *qi* regarded this mountain as possessing a sign of

²¹⁴ The dragon and phoenix refer to two mountains on the southeast of West Lake, the Jade Emperor Mountain (玉皇山, dragon) and the Phoenix Mountain (鳳凰山, phoenix).

²¹⁵ There are mountains standing on both sides of the Qiantang River. Looked from distance, they are like a gate that opens to the Hangzhou Bay. The word *xun* 巽 stands for the southeast direction in the Eight Diagrams, and therefore the words *xunshan* 巽山 can be translated as the “southeaster mountain.” It actually refers to the tall waves in the Hangzhou Bay or the Qiantang River. There are different versions of this line, one of which is “海門一點巽峰起” (Like a dot in the seagate, the “southeastern mountain” arises) which seems to make more sense.

²¹⁶ A reign period of Emperor Gaozong.

prosperity. When Qin Gui monopolized state power, he liked the place very much and asked the emperor to bestow it on him to build his family mansion on. On the east side of the mountain, he built his family temple, and the west side was the old foundation for the Getian Pavilion. After Qin Gui died, Qin Xi was still unwilling to give up the place.²¹⁷ He pleaded with the emperor to appoint his younger brother Xuan, who was Assistant Prefect of Changzhou at the time, as Master of Splendid Happiness in order to continue to stay in the family temple.²¹⁸ Later Xuan was impeached and removed from office, and the tablets in the family temple were all moved to Jiankang. The place was then emptied. When Emperor Gaozong became tired of managing state affairs, he ordered to have a place built in the place and named it the “Palace of Virtue and Longevity.” Later the name was changed to “Unfailing Merit,” “Benignity and Blessing,” and “Longevity and Benignity,” all together four times. When it came to the *jiaxu* year [1274] of the Xianchun reign period [1265-1274], Tianmu Mountain collapsed and the imperial aura that lasted a hundred years also ended with it.

天目山讖

臨安都城，其山肇自天目。讖曰：“天目山垂兩乳長，龍飛鳳舞到錢塘。海門一點巽山小，五百年間出帝王。”錢氏有國，世臣事中朝，不欲其說之著，更其末云“異姓王”，以遷就之。高宗駐蹕，其說始驗。

仰視吳山，如卓馬立顧。紹興間，望氣者以為有郁蔥之符。秦檜專國，心利之，請以為賜第。其東偏即檜家廟。西則格天閣之故基。檜死，燹尤戀戀。請以弟常州倅烜為光祿丞，留隸家廟。言者罷烜，並遷廟主于建康，遂空其室焉。高宗倦勤，即其地築宮曰“德壽”，又更名曰“重華”、曰“慈福”、曰“壽慈”，凡四易名。至於咸淳甲戌，天目山崩，則百年王氣亦終於此矣。

This prophetic entry about the mountains in Hangzhou, the capital city of the Southern Song, begins the text of *Qiantang yishi*.²¹⁹ The Tianmu Mountain mentioned at the beginning of the entry originally got its name from the two legendary lakes

²¹⁷ Qin Xi 秦熿 (fl. 1142) was Qin Gui's adopted son.

²¹⁸ According to Yue Ke's *Tingshi*, Xuan was Qin Xi's nephew. See Yue Ke, *Tingshi*, in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, p 4341.

²¹⁹ The entry is mostly likely adapted an entry in Yue Ke's *Ting shi*.

located on top of the mountain's eastern and western peaks.²²⁰ According to the *Yuanhe junxian zhi* 元和郡縣志 (Gazetteer of Prefectures and Counties in the Yuanhe Period), the water in the two lakes never dries up even during summer or winter. Flowing all year round on the summit of the twin peaks, the two lakes are like two giant eyes staring into the blue of the sky, from which the mountain got its name "heavenly eyes."²²¹ According to another popular legend, Tianmu Mountain was so named because the crown prince Zhaoming 昭明太子 (501-531) in the Liang dynasty (502-557) had washed his eyes in the lakes.²²² Because of excessive use of his eyes in translating and punctuating the *Diamond Sutra*, the crown prince Zhaoming once suffered a serious temporary blindness. Having heard about the magical power of the two lakes, he climbed up Tianmu Mountain and rinsed his eyes in them. After doing so, his blindness was cured and his sight regained. Whatever the origin of the mountain's name is, it is clear that the persons who made the legends wanted us to believe in the mountain's somewhat mysterious connection with heaven or heavenly powers. This connection partially explains why in history the mountain had often been associated with the presence of a so-called "imperial aura" (*wangqi* 王氣).

Even an uninformed reader will notice that the gist of this entry is about the *fengshui* of Tianmu Mountain. *Fengshui*, as a system of knowledge and belief, a cultural practice dealing with the environment and human life, and a series of principles and aesthetics utilized in architecture and other social activities, has existed in Chinese society for thousands of years, and its practice remains popular even until today.²²³

²²⁰ A good introduction to Tianmu Mountain can be found in Ma Shiyong 馬時雍 ed., *Hangzhou de shan (xuji)* 杭州的山(續集) (Mountains in Hangzhou: Part II) (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubenshe, 2003), pp. 173-216.

²²¹ Li Jifu 李吉甫 (758-814), *Yuanhe jun xian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), Chapter 25.

²²² See Ma Shiyong ed, *Hangzhou de shan (xuji)*, pp 204-216.

²²³ The word *fengshui* is translated differently into English, such as "geomancy," "siting," or "wind and water." It has also been called different names in Chinese, such as *kanyu* 堪輿, *dili* 地理, *xiangdi* 相地, *qingwu* 青烏, *qingnang* 青囊. In spite of the variety of its names, *fengshui* has been commonly believed as referring to a system of theories and practices focused primarily on selecting auspicious locations for tombs, houses, and other structures, in order to harmonize the dwellings of the living and the dead within the immediate physical environment as well as the larger cosmic scheme. A most recent English publication about *fengshui* is Ole Bruun's *An Introduction to Feng Shui* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For additional research about *fengshui* published in English, one can also refer to Stephan

Most scholars believe that *fengshui* practices and theories underwent fundamental developments from the 5th century B.C.E. to the 3rd century C.E.²²⁴ A major contribution of this period was the establishment of the philosophical and cosmological foundation for *fengshui* practice.²²⁵ Theories about the relationship between human beings and nature, such as the *yin-yang* 陰陽 and the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行) theory, *qi* 氣 theory, and especially the theory about the correspondence between human beings and heaven (*tianren heyi* 天人合一), began to flourish during this period. Together they formed a series of theoretical discourses and frameworks, which would continue to be used by later *fengshui* practitioners to explain and justify their activities. From the 3rd century on, *fengshui* practices and theories became more and more mature and sophisticated. Books devoted to this subject, such as *The Book of Burial* (*Zangshu* 葬書) attributed to Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324) and the *Classic of Dwelling* (*Zhaijing* 宅經), started to appear. Different schools of *fengshui* theories, especially the Northern and Southern schools popular since the Song dynasty (960-1279), began to emerge. New technologies, such as the compass (*luopan* 羅盤), and new models of explanation was also invented and utilized.²²⁶ Along with these developments was the saturation of the *fengshui* culture into the daily life of the common people and the political realm of the imperial government. Not only did *fengshui* become a popular practice used by the commoners in choosing tombs for the dead or building houses for the living, it was also widely

Feuchtwang, *An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002), Richard J. Smith, *Fortune-Tellers and Philosophers: Divination in Traditional Chinese Society* (Boulder, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991), especially chapter 4. There are also numerous studies in Chinese on *fengshui*. A brief introductory one is Liu Xiaoming 劉曉明, *Fengshui yu Zhongguo shehui* 風水與中國社會 (Fengshui and Chinese Society; Nanchang: Jiangxi gaoxiao chubanshe, 1995). Another useful book is the one edited by Wang Qiheng 王其亨, *Fengshui lilun yanjiu* 風水理論研究 (Studies of Fengshui Theories; Tianjin: Tianjin daxue chubanshe, 1992).

²²⁴ See Liu Xiaoming, *Fengshui yu zhongguo shehui*, pp. 6-13 and 105-33. Wang Fukun 王復昆, "Fengshui lilun de chuantong zhexue kuangjia" 風水理論的傳統哲學框架 (The Traditional Philosophical Foundation of Fengshui Theories)" in Wang Qiheng ed., *Fengshui lilun yanjiu*, pp.89-107. Also Stephan Feuchtwang, *An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy*, pp. 17-35.

²²⁵ Feuchtwang, pp. 17-35.

²²⁶ See Liu Xiaoming, *Fengshui yu zhongguo shehui*, pp. 19-26, Stephan Feuchtwang, *An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy*, pp. 25-33, and Shi Zhen, "Cong bianzheng fangwei dao zhinanzhen: Gudai kanyu jia de weida lishi gongxian" 從辨正方位到指南針: 古代堪輿的偉大歷史貢獻 (From Orientation to Invention of Compass: The Great Contribution of Ancient Chinese Geomancy) in Wang Qiheng ed., *Fengshui lilun yanjiu*, pp. 214-35.

employed by emperors and court officials in various political activities such as selecting and designing the capital city, choosing a proper burial site for the deceased emperor, and making important political or military decisions.²²⁷

The entry discussed above provides a good example of how *fengshui* culture permeated the political realm through legendary accounts and prophecies.²²⁸ According to the opening prophetic poem (attributed to Guo Pu, the alleged founder of *fengshui* theories and practices²²⁹), Tianmu Mountain is a place where an auspicious “imperial aura” resides. In *fengshui* theory, a site like this is called *longxue* 龍穴 or “dragon lair.” Although finding the “dragon lair” is of primary importance in *fengshui* practice, the presence of the “dragon lair” alone is not enough to determine the *fengshui* status of a site. In order for a place to be regarded as really auspicious, it has to have the necessary mountains and rivers that are able to “preserve the wind” (*cangfeng* 藏風) and “retain the water” (*deshui* 得水).²³⁰ In Hangzhou, this is fulfilled by the presence of West Lake and the two mountains (the Jade Emperor Mountain and the Phoenix Mountain), both originated from the Tianmu Mountain, located on both sides of the lake. As described in the prophetic poem, the two mountains, resembling a woman’s breasts that nurse life, stretch into the city of Hangzhou like a pair of a flying dragon and a dancing phoenix. According to the folklore, the two mountains were originally indeed a dragon and a phoenix residing on the east and west coasts of the Milky Way (天河). In order to protect a precious pearl that fell onto the earth and became the West Lake, they descended from heaven and transformed into the two mountains that stood faithfully

²²⁷ See Liu Xiaoming, *Fengshui yu zhongguo shehui*, pp. 149-230. See Also Feng Jiankui 王建達, “Qingdai lingqin de xuanzhi yu fengshui” 清代陵寢的選址與風水 (*Fengshui* and Site Selection of Imperial Tombs in the Qing Dynasty) in Wang Qiheng ed., *Fengshui lilun yanjiu*, pp.138-43.

²²⁸ There may also be historiographical reason why Liu Yiqing chose to put this entry at the beginning of his book. It is very common for Chinese history to contain discussions about the relationship between cosmological changes and earthly affairs. A quick look at the table of contents of the twenty-four official histories of Chinese dynasties will reveal that many of them put the “Records of the Celestial Patterns” (*Tianwen zhi* 天文志) immediately after the “Basic Annals of the Emperors” (*Benji* 本紀), which usually constitute the beginning chapter(s) of these official histories. In the “Records of the Celestial Patterns,” what the historians discuss is the connection or correspondence between celestial movements and earthly events. Although these discussions may not be exactly the same as the *fengshui* discussions included in *Qiantang yishi*, they belong to the same type of discourse.

²²⁹ Liu Xiaoming, *Fengshui yu zhongguo shehui*, p. 4 and 8.

²³⁰ Liu Xiaoming, *Fengshui yu zhongguo shehui*, pp. 13-18 and 30-105.

beside the lake.²³¹ Possibly due to heavenly nature of this legendary account, the poet ventures a prediction in the last line of the poem that an emperor will appear in Hangzhou within five hundred years. Interestingly, because the name of the poet is not mentioned in the entry, this prediction conveniently loses its historicity, and is turned into an open-ended prophecy that can basically occur at any time in history.

Because of this openness, the fulfillment of the prophecy is also subject to different explanations. It can be said to be realized as early as in the 10th century, which was less than six hundred years after Guo Pu's (the supposed author of the poem) death, when Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852-932, r.907-932) founded the Wuyue Kingdom (907-978)²³² in the capital city of Hangzhou. However, later members in the *Qian* family found it politic not to speak of this. After Qian Chu 錢俶 (929-988, r. 947-978), the last king of the Wuyue Kingdom, pledged allegiance to the Northern Song in 978, he ordered the last three words of the poem changed from *chu diwang* 出帝王 (an emperor will appear) to *yixing wang* 異姓王 (king of different surname) to show his subordination to the Song emperor. In doing so, Qian Chu in fact denied the correctness of the prophecy and postponed its fulfillment to as late as the 12th century, when Emperor Gaozong founded the Southern Song and settled the capital again in the city of Hangzhou.

The rest of this entry turns its focus to Wu Mountain, the southeast end of Tianmu Mountain range that stretches into the metropolis of Hangzhou. Located on the south side of West Lake, Wu Mountain had long been regarded by geomancers as a place of auspice and prosperity. But what appears to be ironic here is that throughout Southern Song history, the geomantic auspice of the place was by and large wasted, in

²³¹ According to the folklore, the dragon and the phoenix were playing together when they discovered a precious stone which they later polished into a shining pearl with their claws and beak. The pearl was so adorable that the Empress of Heaven decided to steal it. Later at her birthday party, the Empress of Heaven showed off the pearl to her guests. The dragon and the phoenix were at the party too. When they saw the pearl, they decided to get it back. In struggling to recapture the pearl, the dragon and the phoenix accidentally knocked over the golden plate where the pearl was placed. The pearl fell from heaven down to the earth and changed into the West Lake. Unwilling to leave the pearl, the dragon and the phoenix also descended from heaven and became the two mountains which faithfully protected the lake ever since that time. See Hong Shangzi 洪尚之 ed, *Xihu chuanshuo* 西湖傳說 (Legends of West Lake; Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2006), pp. 1-7.

²³² About Qian Liu and his relation to West Lake, please see Wang Jianhua 王建華, *Qian Liu yu Xihu* 錢鏐與西湖 (Qian Liu and West Lake; Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2005).

the sense that it was either not fully exploited or improperly exploited by the wrong person. As can be seen from the entry, Wu Mountain was first bestowed to Qin Gui--one of the most notorious Grand Councilors in the Song and a man who was believed to be a traitor of the Han race due to his persecution of Yue Fei--to build his family temple and pavilion, and then used by the Emperor Gaozong and other Song emperors to build a palace for recreation and retirement. The text does not directly comment on this misuse or underuse of this auspicious site. But what comes immediately after this discussion of Wu Mountain is a regretful statement lamenting on the fall of the Southern Song, "When it came to the *jiaxu* year of the Xianchun reign period, Tianmu Mountain collapsed and the imperial aura that lasted a hundred years also ended with it." Reading this regretful statement along with the foregoing discussion, we cannot help but wonder about the possible connections between the two. Is it possible that how Wu Mountain was utilized in the Southern Song had something to do with the collapse of Tianmu Mountain and the consequent disappearance of the imperial aura?

In general, this entry leaves us the first impression that the fate of the Southern Song was predetermined by its geographic location. This sense of determinism will be further enhanced by the following three entries, which extend the *fengshui* discussion in this first entry to other related discussions such as physiognomy and dream interpretation.

The second entry in Chapter One, titled "Emperor Gaozong has a Zhe Face," recounts an interesting story about Emperor Gaozong's birth. According to the story, three days after Emperor Gaozong was born, his father, Emperor Huizong, went to pay him a visit. Upon seeing the newborn, Emperor Huizong looked back at his mother, who was a native of the Zhejiang area, and said happily, "This baby has a Zhe face."²³³ Because Zhejiang was also the place where the city of Hangzhou is located, the entry is ended with a somewhat teasing comment, "Later [Emperor Gaozong] settled the capital in Hangzhou. How could this be a coincidence?" The third entry contains another

²³³ This means that Emperor Gaozong was born with a face that resembles those of the natives in the Zhejiang area. The reason why Emperor Huizong said so was to please Gaozong's mother, who was a native of the Zhejiang area.

fengshui story regarding the selection of the capital in the Southern Song. According to the story, before Emperor Gaozong chose Hangzhou, he had thought of choosing Jiankang (present-day Nanjing) as the capital. But he dropped this idea after consulting a geomancer, who suggested that he chose Hangzhou because the “imperial aura” in Jiankang had been exhausted due to the city’s lack of water. The fourth entry continues the discussion initiated in the second entry about unusual signs at Emperor Gaozong’s birth. The entry contains two dream records recounted respectively by Emperor Xiaozong (1127-1194, r.1162-1189) and Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202). According to Emperor Xiaozong’s record, Emperor Huizong had had a dream before Emperor Gaozong’s birth, in which Qian Chu, the last king of the Wuyue Kingdom, appeared with an imperial garment, saying that he would send his third son to reclaim his old territory. Hong Mai’s record tells about a similar dream that Emperor Gaozong’s mother had after Emperor Gaozong’s birth, in which Qian Liu, the first king of the Wuyue Kingdom, revealed himself as a god dressed in golden armor. In spite of the difference between the two dreams, the meaning of them is pretty clear, namely, that Emperor Gaozong was a reincarnation of a member of the Qian family. If we recall that the capital of the Wu Yue Kingdom was also located in Hangzhou, then the message of these two dreams cannot be more obvious. Moreover, an informed reader will be able to discern the hidden sarcasm in this message. With the selection of Hangzhou as the capital, Emperor Gaozong was in fact giving up any hope to recover the Song’s old territory in the north that was taken over by the Jurchens. After signing the Peace Treaty of Shaoxing (*Shaoxing heyi* 紹興和議) in 1141, the Southern Song officially declared itself a vassal to the Jurchen Jin, just as what Qian Chu in the Wuyue Kingdom did to the Northern Song about 180 years ago. History here seems to repeat itself, and the site where this repetition happened is the auspicious and yet also ill-fated city of Hangzhou.

Although these three entries have different focuses, one thing that they have in common is the idea that there were some predetermined reasons behind the selection of Hangzhou as the capital of the Southern Song. They are similar in the sense that they can all be classified as belonging to the same type of discourse, one that tries to

correlate “categories of the human world, such as the human body, behavior, morality, the sociopolitical order and historical changes, with categories of the cosmos, including time, space, the heavenly bodies, seasonal movement, and natural phenomena.”²³⁴

This correlative discourse is again an important component of a more powerful and comprehensive discourse on cosmology that has existed in Chinese culture ever since the beginning of its history. As Wang Aihe rightly pointed out in her study, one of the most distinctive features of this cosmological discourse is that it is never simply and purely “cosmological.” According to Wang,

Cosmology was always intrinsic to and productive of power, formulating power relations and simultaneously being constructed through power contestation. As an essential component of power, the conception of the cosmic order was mapped out in power struggles, military conquest, political domination, social hierarchies, and violence. As a political discourse, cosmology was the field on which contests over imperial sovereignty, between centralization and pluralism, and between physical force and moral authority were played out.²³⁵

As an important component of this cosmological discourse, the correlative discourse that we may find in *Qiantang yishi* must also be understood in light of power relations and contestation. The seemingly anecdotal discussions on *fengshui*, physiognomy, and dreams in the book are in fact all sites where different or even opposing views on politics, among other things, clash and negotiate with each other. This clash of views also carries with it a by and large fatalistic undertone: If, as described in the entries, the choice of the Southern Song capital was already determined by the time Emperor Gaozong was born and the fate of the Southern Song dynasty already decided at the moment when the capital was selected, then what human beings could do was indeed very little, except for letting history run its predestined course. It is true that this deterministic argument may be used merely as a pretext to criticize the corruption in Southern Song government and society, but the sense of fatalism imbedded in this

²³⁴ Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.2.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

argument can by no means be alleviated by the introduction of this sociopolitical critique. On the contrary, it adds to the sociopolitical critique a touch of pessimism, forcing us to question the very validity and usefulness of the critique itself. It makes us think: To what extent could the fate of the Southern Song be changed had all the sociopolitical problems been heeded and solved in time? Could history run a different course? Also, what was cause and what effect? Was the collapse of the Southern Song caused by the corruption taking place in its society and government? Or was the appearance of these sociopolitical problems exactly because history was set to run its predestined course?

This deterministic discourse initiated in the first four entries about the selection of the Southern Song capital is interrupted by the presence of the fifth entry. Titled “Ten Miles of Lotus Flowers” and copied almost verbatim from Luo Dajing’s *Helin yulu*,²³⁶ this entry is a passage composed primarily of three *shi* 詩 and *ci* 詞 (song lyric) poems written in response to each other.

Ten Miles of Lotus Flowers [Chapter 1, Entry 5]

When Sun He governed Qiantang, Liu Qiqing wrote a song lyric to the tune “Viewing the Tide” to present to him.²³⁷ The lyric reads,

A famous site in the southeast,
The capital of the three Wu,
Qiantang has flourished ever since of old.
Misty willow trees and painted bridges,
Like windscreen and green curtains,
Cover thousands of houses of varied sizes.
Cloud and trees curling around the dams,

²³⁶ See Luo Dajing, *Helin yulu*, in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, Vol. 5, pp.5315-5316.

²³⁷ Liu Qiqing was Liu Yong’s style name. According to Wu Xionghe, here Sun He (961-1004) should be Sun Mian 孫沔 (996-1066), who served as the Governor of Hangzhou at the time. See Wu Xionghe 吳熊和, “Liu Yong and Sun Mian de jiaoyou ji Liu Yong shengzu nian xinzheng” 柳永與孫沔的交遊及柳永生卒年新證 (The Friendship between Liu Yong and Sun Mian and New Proof on the Years of Liu Yong’s Life and Death) *Wu Xionghe Cixue Lunji* 吳熊和詞學論集 (Essays on Song Lyrics by Wu Xionghe; Hangzhou: Hangzhou daxue chubanshe 1999), pp. 196-207.

Furious waves rolling up into frosty snow
This is a natural moat, whose size knows no bound.
Precious jade and pearls spread out in the market,
Gorgeous silk and damask filling the houses,
All compete for extravagance.

Twin lakes and piled up hills make a scene of transparent
beauty.²³⁸
Among them are three autumns of cherry blossoms,²³⁹
Ten miles of lotus flowers.
Melodies from a Tibetan flute play with the clear sky,
Songs of the water chestnut float through the night.
Laughing and flirting are the fishermen and lotus girls.
Thousand of horse-riders hold straight the Governor's banners.
Intoxicated, he listens to the bamboo flute and drum,
Writes poems in praise of the rosy clouds.
On another day I shall paint this scene into a picture,
Taking it back to the Phoenix City to flaunt its beauty."

The song lyric became wide spread. When the Jin Prince Liang heard about it, he admired the beauty of the "three autumns of cherry blossoms and ten miles of lotus flowers" so much that he decided to whip his horse and cross the Yangtze River. A recent poet named Xie Chuhou wrote a poem on this,

"Who chanted the songs of Hangzhou?
Ten miles of lotus flowers and three autumns of cherry blossoms.
Who knows that the merciless flowers and plants,²⁴⁰
Could trigger thousand miles of sorrow across the Yangtze River?"

In my view, although this song lyric did bring sorrow across the Yangtze River, the delicate beauty of the mountains and rivers, which enticed the scholar officials to indulge in the pleasure of singing and dancing and forget the Central Plains, was what should be truly blamed. Hence I wrote another poem in response to Xie's,

²³⁸ The twin lakes refer to the inner and outer lake of West Lake separated by the Bai Causeway. The piling hills refer to the Lingyin Mountain, Nanping Mountain and other mountains that surround the West Lake.

²³⁹ The word "sanqiu 三秋" can be understood differently. It can mean "nine months," as "yiqiu" means three months in Chinese. It is also used to designate the autumn in general, as the three months of autumn consist of the 7th (*mengqiu* 孟秋), 8th (*zhongqiu* 仲秋), and 9th (*jiqiu* 季秋) months. It can also refer to the third month of the autumn season (September).

²⁴⁰ The words "wuqing 無情" has two meanings in Chinese, merciless and emotionless. Both meanings work well in the interpretation of this line.

“□□ the song was a sword with a sharp edge,
Niuzhu is still filled with the melancholy of autumn.
Abominable were the lotus flowers that detained the emperor's
carriage,
Making him forget the sorrow of the misty willows in the palace of
Bianjing.”

[The last line is written so] because after the Jingkang Incident, someone wrote an anonymous poem on the palace wall of the old capital, which read,

“Gently the misty willow trees caressed the palace wall.
There was no one in the palace just protracted spring days.”

十里荷花

孫何帥錢塘，柳耆卿作《望海潮》詞贈之云：“東南形勝，三吳都會，錢塘自古繁華。煙柳畫橋，風簾翠幙，參差十萬人家。雲樹遶堤沙，怒濤卷霜雪，天塹無涯。市列珠璣，戶盈羅綺，競豪奢。重湖迭巘清佳，有三秋桂子，十里荷花。羌管弄晴，菱歌泛夜，嬉嬉釣叟蓮娃。千騎擁高牙，乘醉聽簫鼓，吟賞煙霞。異日圖將好景，歸去鳳城誇。”此詞流播，金主亮聞歌，欣然有慕于三秋桂子十里荷花，遂起投鞭渡江之志。近時謝處厚詩云：“誰把杭州曲子謳，荷花十里桂三秋。那知卉木無情物，牽動長江萬里愁。”余謂此詞雖牽動長江之愁，然湖山之清麗，使士大夫流連于歌舞嬉游之樂，遂忘中原，是則深可恨耳。因和其詩云：“□□快劍是清謳，牛渚依然一片秋，卻恨荷花留玉輦，竟忘煙柳汴宮愁。”蓋靖康之亂，有題詩于舊京宮牆云：“依依煙柳拂宮牆，宮殿無人春晝長。”

In contrast to the first four entries, this entry does not concern the choice of the site for the Southern Song capital, nor does it talk about the signs and omens that foreshadowed the fate of the dynasty. Though the discussion is still related to Hangzhou, the focus has been changed from the *fengshui*, physiognomic signs, and prophetic dreams to the beautiful *shanshui* or landscape in the city. This transition appears fairly stark, especially when we consider that the sixth and seventh entries that follow it continue the discussion on the choice of Hangzhou as the capital. To be more specific, the sixth entry is a short passage describing how the idea of selecting Hangzhou

as the capital arose in Emperor Gaozong's mind when he came across a county in the vicinity named *renhe* 仁和 (benignity and peace). Because the name of the county was identical to that of the gate through which Emperor Taizu (927-976, r.960-976) had led his army to enter Bianliang, the Northern Song capital, after the Military Mutiny at Chenqiao (*chenqiao bingbian* 陳橋兵變, 960), Emperor Gaozong thought it was a good sign for the renaissance of the Song Empire.²⁴¹ The seventh entry describes that when General Yue Fei relieved the siege at Bianliang, Emperor Gaozong was unwilling to return to the city to show his determination to recapture the lost territory in the north. Consequently, he was forced by the invading Jurchens to flee around in the south until he settled in Hangzhou, which he eventually chose as the capital for the Southern Song.

The thematic continuity between the sixth and seventh entries with the beginning four entries makes us wonder why Liu Yiqing would place the fifth entry in between. To answer this question, we need to look at the overall design of the chapter more closely. One thing that we may notice in Chapter One of *Qiantang yishi* is that after the fifth entry, discussion of *fengshui* and other prognostic signs or dreams starts to decrease. The only exception is the twenty-second entry, which recounts a story of how Emperor Xiaozong consulted a fortuneteller before the Jurchens were about to invade the south. Even in the sixth and seventh entries that continue the discussion on the choice of the Southern Song capital, there is a subtle change of focus from things that fatefully determined this selection to things that realistically caused or compelled the decision. At some level, we can say that the deterministic veil represented by talk of geomancy, physiognomy and dreams has been lifted off from the chapter's narrative on history. What is now brought to our attention, as we will see later, is instead the "geography" of history, that is, a type of history that has left its traces, lessons, and meaning in the landscape as well as the cultural significance that this landscape represents.

²⁴¹ In 960 AD, when the Liao was about to embark on a large-scale invasion of the Later Zhou (951-960), Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 (927-976, r. 960-976), the Prime Minister of the Later Zhou, led the army to the Chenqiao Station and launched the Military Mutiny there. Zhao Kuangyin was crowned and became the first emperor, later to be known as Emperor Taizu, of the Northern Song.

This “geography” of history introduces another type of discourse into the explanation regarding the fall of the Southern Song. In contrast, but also in complement, to the previous four entries which interpret the fate of the dynasty through its *fengshui* and other prognostic signs, the fifth entry attributes the various turbulences in Southern Song history to the *shanshui* or the geographical beauty of the capital city. As mentioned before, the fifth entry is composed primarily of three *shi* and *ci* poems written in response to each other. As we read through these poems, we will find that what makes them special is not so much their poetic beauty, but rather a unique type of poetic argument that they collectively put forward. The first poem in the entry is a well-known song lyric written by Liu Yong (ca. 980-1053), who was a Northern Song *ci* poet famous for his composition of *manzi* 慢詞 (Long Song Lyrics) and his popularity with courtesans. Presented to Sun He (961-1004) who was governing Hangzhou at the time,²⁴² the content of this *ci* poem is nothing more than an exaggerated description of the prosperity and beauty of the city. Reading it alone, no one would suspect it to have anything to do with wars and military invasions. However, according to the narrative that follows, it was exactly this attractive song lyric that brought misery to the people living in the south. Allegedly, this *ci* poem was seen by Prince Hailing (a.k.a. Wanyan Liang, 完顏亮, 1122-1161) of the Jin dynasty, who always coveted for the material prosperity and richness of the Southern Song. Seeing this poem supposedly inflamed his desire, and caused him to decide to invade the south.²⁴³ Seeing how one idle poem could cause huge a political disaster, Xie Chuhou 謝處厚 (fl. early 13th century) wrote another poem commenting on it. In his poem, Xie blamed Liu Yong for depicting

²⁴² See Note 28. According to a later version of the story, Liu Yong, due to his humble status, had a hard time seeing Sun He. It was not until he talked to a female singer who was going to perform in Sun He’s Mid-autumn banquet that he was able to present this song lyric to Sun to remind him of their friendship. After Sun He heard the female singer singing the song, he invited Liu Yong to meet him in his house. See Chen Yaowen 陳耀文 (1573-1619), *Huacao zui bian* 花草粹編 (Collection of Flowers and Grasses) in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu (dianziban)*.

²⁴³ According to a later version of the entry, Wanyan Liang also wrote a poem before he decided to invade the Southern Song. Wanyan Liang’s poem can be found in Tian Rucheng’s 田汝成 (1503-1557) *Xihu youlan zhiyu* 西湖遊覽志餘 (Supplementary Records on Touring the West Lake) and Chen Yaowen’s 陳耀文 *Tianzhong ji* 天中記 (Records of Tianzhong). Digital copies of both books can be found in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu (dianziban)*.

Hangzhou so beautifully that it brought wars to the south. According to Xie, the grass and flowers in the south were merciless (or emotionless) things, but Liu's depiction of them was able to cause thousands of miles of sorrow to people living along the Yangtze River. Xie Chuhou's poetic comment on Liu Yong's song lyric was then refuted by Luo Dajing, also in the form of a poem. Luo pointed out in his poem that although Wanyan Liang was attracted by Liu Yong's song lyric to invade the Southern Song, he was also killed during the battle.²⁴⁴ Because of this, Luo argued, poetically, that Liu Yong's song lyric could rather be called a sharp-edge sword, for it brought misfortune to both the invaded and the invader. Luo further suggested that Liu's song lyric should not be scapegoated as the cause for the Jurchen invasion. What should be truly blamed were rather the Southern Song emperors and officials, who indulged too much in the beautiful landscape in Hangzhou and forgot their duty to recover the territory lost to the Jurchens in the north.

What seems to be most interesting here about these three *shi* and *ci* poems is how they have been turned into a series of engaging poetic arguments with each other and how these arguments have in turn been shaped by Luo Dajing into a straightforward sociopolitical criticism (compared with the veiled criticism in the *fengshui* discourse) directed towards the Southern Song government and society in general. At the core of this criticism is the captivating beauty of the landscape or *shanshui* in Hangzhou. While this beauty remains a favorable subject for artistic works and literary description,²⁴⁵ the luxurious and intoxicated style of life associated with it has been long regarded as an important reason leading to the sociopolitical decadence in the Southern Song. It is perhaps worth pointing out here that using landscape as a pretext for sociopolitical criticism is by no means unique to *Qiantang yishi*. The association of landscape beauty with dynastic decline is a long-existent literary trope that we can find in many historical tales, especially those related to the Jiangnan area where Hangzhou is located.

²⁴⁴ See Luo Dajing, *Helin yulu*, p. 5316. Luo also mentioned that Wanyan Liang was killed during this battle, but this detail was omitted in Liu Yiqing's adaptation.

²⁴⁵ Hui-shu Lee, in her beautifully illustrated book *Exquisite Moment: West Lake & Southern Song Art* (New York: Chinese Institute Gallery, 2001), provides a thoughtful introduction to the physical and cultural landscapes in Hangzhou, and their relationships with the Southern Song artworks. See pp. 19-59.

Sometimes the alluring power of landscape is also compared to the seductive attraction of the female body, thus adding to its geographical beauty a sexual appeal that is even more irresistible. In the light of this, we can say that the discussion of the beautiful landscape or *shanshui* in Hangzhou is in fact comparable to those on *fengshui*, dreams and prognostic signs, in the sense that they also allude to a type of long-lasting discourse that is used to explain the sociopolitical success or failure of a dynasty. By changing the textual focus from talk of geomancy (and other prognostic signs) in Hangzhou to Hangzhou's beautiful geography (and the lifestyle that it induces), Liu Yiqing managed to switch the discourses employed in his narrative from that of *fengshui* to that of *shanshui*. Both discourses were used by Liu to account for the decline of the Southern Song, but compared with the *fengshui* discourse, the *shanshui* discourse is more politically centered and culturally oriented.

The remaining entries in Chapter One of *Qiantang yishi* continue the discussion of landscape or *shanshui* initiated in the fifth entry, but extend the implicit criticism to other famous historical sites in Hangzhou. The following three entries that will be discussed below are selected randomly from the rest of the chapter. Reading their titles alone may leave us with the impression that they are taken from a tourist brochure. But once we look into them, we will discover that they are by no means light-hearted descriptions but are rather serious reflections and agonizing critiques of the sociopolitical decadence in Southern Song society and culture.

Xianqing Temple [Chapter 1, Entry 8]

In Lin'an, the Temple of Soul Retreat, the Temple of Purity and Mercy, and the upper, middle, and lower Tianzhu Temples are all temples of merit built for the ancestors. In the *gengxu* year [1250] of the Chunyou reign period [1241-1252], [the emperor] ordered built a temple of benevolence for Imperial Consort Yan at Jiulisong. The temple was very close to the Temple of Soul Retreat and was named "Prominent Auspiciousness." Because its scale of construction exceeded that of the other temples, the temple was called by its contemporaries as "Rival to Temple of Soul Retreat." After the temple was built, a huge drum was

erected in the lecture hall. Someone sneaked into the hall and wrote on the drum,

The Temples of Soul Retreat, Purity and Mercy, and the three
Tianzhu,
Are nothing compared to Consort Yan's two lips.

After this incident the temple was guarded tightly, and people who had no business there were not allowed to enter.

顯慶寺

臨安靈隱、淨慈、上中下三天竺寺，皆宋朝祖宗功德寺也。淳佑庚戌，為貴妃閻氏建功德寺於九里松。近靈隱寺前，名顯慶寺。土木之工過於諸寺，時人名之曰“賽靈隱”。寺成建大鼓於法堂，忽有人掩入不備，大書鼓上云：“淨慈靈隱三天竺，不似閻妃兩片皮。”由此界限甚嚴，無故者不得復入矣。

The Su Causeway and the Zhao Causeway [Chapter 1, Entry 16]

When Su Dongpo governed Hangzhou, he built a causeway from the Big Buddha Head to the front of the Temple of Purity and Mercy. The causeway was not built for the purpose of sightseeing. It held back deep water and turned it into a lake. It also opened up thousands of miles of low damp ground which could be turned into fertile fields. During the Chunyu reign period [1241-1252], Zhao Yuchou, the Capital Governor, built another causeway, which was nothing more than a passageway that led past the Temple of Soul Retreat.

蘇堤趙堤

東坡守杭日，築堤自大佛頭，直至淨慈寺前，非為游觀計也。遏水之深者為湖，而沮洳之地畝以萬計，皆可為田。淳佑間，趙與籌尹京橫築一堤，祇是通路過靈隱而已。

Dragon Soaring Palace [Chapter 1, Entry 20]

In the *jiachen* year [1244] of the Chunyou reign period [1241-1252], Emperor Lizong ordered built the Dragon Soaring Palace behind the Middle Entertainment Quarter. Two-thirds of the residential dwellings were torn down for the construction of the palace, which was used to

enshrine the Gansheng God.²⁴⁶ The palace housed such places as the Gate of Bright Banner, the Hall of Midday Sun, and the Pavilion of Peace and Happiness. It stored valuable books and literatures, all of which bore the calligraphy of the emperors. Every year during the sacrificial season, the emperor would ride from the Imperial Street, across the front of the Middle Entertainment Quarter, and directly down to the Palace of Ancestors. On his way back, he would enter [the city] through Batou and stop by the Dragon Soaring Palace. When returning, he would exit from the Lane of Peace and proceed to the Imperial Street. In the winter of the *kuichou* year [1253] of the Baoyou reign period [1253-1258], the Middle Entertainment Quarter was burnt by a huge fire, after which the emperor could take a broad path leading directly from the middle of the Imperial Street [to his palace]. On the right side of the Middle Entertainment Quarter there was the Wulin Garden. On its left there was the Watching Tower belonging to Prince Zhong. Someone wrote a poem on the wall of an inn, which read,

Though the Dragon Soaring Palace brightened the imperial capital,
The circuitous route [to there] forced the imperial carriage to
detour.

As if the will of heaven also knows the mind of the bright ruler,
It purposefully instructed a destructive flame to open up a broad
path for him.

龍翔宮

淳佑甲辰，理宗建龍翔宮於中瓦後，徹居民屋宇三之二，奉祀感生帝君。如昭符之門，正陽之殿，和樂之閣，琅函寶藏，皆系御書。每孟享，車駕由御街過中瓦前，直下景靈宮；駕回，則自灞頭橫入，過龍翔；歸，則自太平坊出，至御街。寶佑癸醜臘月，中瓦回祿，因此自御街當中，取大路直入。而中瓦之右，以為武林園，其左以為皇子忠王看望樓。旅邸有題曰：“龍翔宮闕壯皇都，鸞路縈回枉德車。天意也知明主意，故教劫火辟通衢。”

The first entry comments on the Xianqing Temple (The Temple of Prominent Auspiciousness), a temple of benevolence that was built for Emperor Lizong's (1205-1264, r. 1224-1264) favorite consort Yan (fl. early 13th century). The temple was called "Sai Lingyin" (Rival to Temple of Soul Retreat) because its size exceeded even that of the

²⁴⁶ One of the five gods (Blue, Red, Yellow, White and Black), whose semen was believed to be responsible for the birth of the ancestor of the Song emperors.

Lingyin Temple, one of the biggest temples of benevolence built for the ancestors of Song emperors. Implicit in this comparison is in fact a criticism of Emperor Lizong's licentious private life. The fact that he was willing to so lavishly build a temple for his favorite consort tells us much about how he put his pursuit of sensual pleasure over propriety. This layer of criticism, however, remains unarticulated until we read the doggerel written on the drum. Punning on the two sides of the drum, the word "*liang pian pi* 兩片皮 (literally, two slices of skin)" refers to Consort Yan's upper and lower lips. According to the doggerel verse, the seductive power of these "two slices of skin" had driven the sense of propriety out of Emperor Lizong's mind, making him willing to place his favor for his lover over his respect for his ancestors.

The second entry (the sixteenth in Chapter One) contains a short comparison of the two causeways built by Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) and Zhao Yuchou 趙與籌 (fl. early 13th century) in Hangzhou. According to the entry, Su Shi's causeway, built during the heyday of the Northern Song, was never intended to be a tourist site, but was constructed for to be long-term wellbeing of the local residents in Hangzhou. In contrast, Zhao Yuchou's causeway, built near the end of the Southern Song, was much less functional and could hardly benefit the city in any other way than a passage to the Temple of Soul Retreat. Unlike the first entry, here the comparison is not followed by any poetic comment. But the contrast itself is sufficient for us to tell the writer's dissatisfaction with Zhao Yuzhou, who, compared with Su Shi, apparently lacked the necessary foresight and capability to be a good local governor.

The third entry (the twentieth in Chapter One) focuses on the Dragon Soaring Palace, built by Emperor Lizong, another famous historical site in Hangzhou. According to the entry, Emperor Lizong tore down two-thirds of the residential houses behind the Middle Entertainment Quarter (*zhongwa* 中瓦) to build the palace. After the palace was built, every year when the emperor performed sacrificial rites at the ancestral temple, he would stop by at the Palace on his way back to the Imperial Street. The route taken by the emperor in this process was circuitous due to the existence of the Middle Entertainment Quarter. In 1253, a huge fire burnt down the Middle Entertainment

Quarter, after which a straight route was open to the emperor to travel directly from the Imperial Street to the palaces, thus saving the emperor the trouble of making a detour. In addition, the burning down of the Middle Entertainment Quarter also provided a better view of the Wulin Garden, located on the right side of the Quarter, for Prince Zhong (who was Emperor Lizong's favorite son), whose Watch Tower was located on the left side. Up until this point, the text provides us with mostly plain descriptions of historical facts. It is not until we read the poem placed at the end of the entry that we start to realize the author's true intention in writing this entry. Written anonymously on the wall of an inn, the last two lines of the poem provide a bitter note of sarcasm to the entry, "As if the will of heaven also knows the mind of the bright ruler, it purposefully instructed a destructive flame to open up a broad path for him."

Common to all these three entries is the artful combination of plain records of historical facts with incisive cultural criticism of the Southern Song government and society. This combination distinguishes most of the remaining entries in Chapter One of *Qiantang yishi* from the first four entries that focus on *fengshui* and other prognostic signs related to Hangzhou. Unlike the first four entries, which tend to explain the fate of the Southern Song in a deterministic fashion, the new discourse formed by these entries on the *shanshui* and other famous sites in Hangzhou provides us with a historical view of the dynasty that is more openly politically and culturally oriented. What this new discourse has brought to our attention are the political corruption and moral degradation that gradually accumulated in the Southern Song government and society. This corruption and moral degradation were, or were believed to be, the real causes that determined, not predetermined, the deterioration of the dynasty. Reading them side by side with the discussion on *fengshui* and other prognostic signs propels us again to ponder upon the relationship between the two: Was there indeed a predestined fate for the Southern Song? Or was this predestined fate nothing more than a slow accumulation of sociopolitical mistakes and corruption that were, by nature, correctable and changeable?

I hope by now it is clear that the meaning of the first chapter in *Qiantang yishi* is marked by a constant dialectic between two contrasting discourses. One is a discourse on *fengshui* and prognostic signs that by and large provides us with a deterministic vision of Southern Song history; the other is a discourse on *shanshui* and other famous sites in Hangzhou that, with its critical sensitivity, adds a sociopolitical dimension to our understanding of the dynasty. Pivotal to the transition and interplay between these two discourses is the fifth entry, whose presence divides as well as connects the subject matter and discursive types of the preceding and following entries.

The relationship between the two discourses is as contrastive as it is complementary. The contrast between the two discourses can be seen from the fact that the answers they provide with regard to the history of the Southern Song are not always congruent with each other. While the determinism imbedded in the *fengshui* discourse tries to persuade us to view history as predetermined and to accept the reality as it is, the critical spirit implied in the *shanshui* discourse encourages us to question the very validity of this predestination and to find fault with the state, government and society that have brought history to its current state. This incongruence between the two discourses, however, does not mean that they are totally incompatible. In many ways, the two discourses are also mutually causative and dependent. It can be argued that the promising *fengshui* signs of Hangzhou are exactly the reasons that lead to the political corruption and moral depravity in the Southern Song government and society, because good *fengshui* often presupposes beautiful *shanshui* and beautiful *shanshui* is often regarded as detrimental to the state and society. In the light of this, the *shanshui* discourse can be viewed as a natural extension of the *fengshui* discourse, in the sense that it not only picks up a similar topic of discussion—mountains and rivers, but also amplified the political criticism implicit in the *fengshui* discourse and expanded it to the social realm. By the same token, it can also be argued that the social and political corruption criticized by the *shanshui* discourse was destined to happen because they are the necessary phases through which the predetermined fate of the Southern Song can be materialized.

This simultaneous incongruence and dependence between the *fengshui* and *shanshui* discourses produce ambiguity in our reading of the text. A question that we constantly need to confront during our reading is: What made the history of the Southern Song, or more specifically, the decline of it, the way it was? While this question may sound urgent to us, the text itself does not seem to want to rush toward any quick conclusion. Instead of choosing either the deterministic answer provided by the *fengshui* discourse or the sociopolitical answer provided by the *shanshui* discourse, the text seems to be more willing to vacillate between the two. Such a vacillation makes the meaning of the text not only indeterminable but also malleable. We are thus given more freedom to read, to savor, and to play with the shifting codes within the text. Because of this, reading the text becomes more like a negotiation, one that constantly goes on between the writer and the text, the text and the reader, and the reader and the writer. The purpose of this negotiation is not to come up with some determinable interpretation or to give the text a definite meaning, but is rather for us to learn to appreciate the text in its uncertainty, or, in Barthes's term, to learn to appreciate the "plural" through which the text is constituted.

Political Trio

Compared to Chapter One, the theme and content of Chapters Two to Six seem to have undergone some fundamental changes. Even by reading the entry titles alone, we will be able to notice the difference. While the entry titles in Chapter One are generally named after historical sites or scenic spots in Hangzhou, those in Chapter Two to Six are usually named after historical persons or events. With this notable change in entry titles, the focus of the text has also been turned towards a new direction. From Chapter Two on, more ink is spilled on power struggles in the central court and military events at the border. Discussions of geographical sites and/or geomantic signs still exist, but the spotlight is not on them anymore. Their decreased appearance in the text represents their reduced importance as explanatory models for the decline of the

Southern Song. In contrast, discussions on political, economic, diplomatic, and military affairs increase significantly in number, indicative of their more direct and powerful impact on South Song history.

Like Chapter One, entries in Chapters Two to Six are also selected and organized in a seemingly random and desultory fashion. Connections between entries often appear tenuous, and the only reason that seems to be able to account for the placement of one entry before or after another is a hardly discernable chronological order, which we have discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation and outlined in the Appendix. Sometimes even this order is interrupted by one or several entries that are temporally “out of place.” It is thus very common for us to find an entry discussing the literary quality of Xin Qiji’s song lyrics placed right before another entry that talks about the furious revenge taken by Yue Fei’s ghost against Qin Gui. By the same token, it should not strike us as unexpected if an official announcement of the birth of a future emperor is followed immediately by a long poem written by a new appointed government official to renounce his office. Such apparent disjointedness in the text, however, does not make the reading of it uninteresting. On the contrary, the relative lack of structural guidance from the text itself encourages us to be active readers. The tenuous connections between the entries turn the text into an intriguing puzzle. While this puzzle will certainly perplex a mind accustomed to obvious textual clues and structures that aim to lead the reader throughout the text easily, it also gives us more freedom and flexibility to choose an angle or an approach, with which we can enter, dwell in, and leave the text in a more rewarding and meaningful way. Needless to say, the angle or approach that we choose by no means exhausts all the possible ways the text can be read. The text is a puzzle that can be solved in multiple ways, and the results and solutions will not always be, and does not always have to be, the same every time.

The angle/approach that I choose to access this part of the text is to look at the “political trio” played out by three interrelated “voices,” through which the power struggle inside and outside the Southern Song court is revealed to us. The three “voices” refer respectively to the dwindling voice of the emperors, the rising voice of powerful

civil ministers at court, and the marginalized but persistent voice of local military commanders.

Reading through Chapter Two to Chapter Six, a careful reader may be surprised by the scarcity of entries that talk about the Southern Song emperors. Of the total of eighty-three entries included in these five chapters, only seven are directly related to the emperors. Since the stories and anecdotes about Southern Song emperors are by no means scarce and were always a favorite subject of historical and literary writing, it indeed seems strange that Liu Yiqing chose not to make more use of them. However, once we look into these seven entries, we may be able to find the possible reason behind Liu Yiqing's choice. As will be shown in the following analysis, most of the entries that talk about Southern Song emperors focus on describing their dwindling control over court policies and state affairs. In the light of this, it is possible that the scarcity of the emperor-related entries in Chapter Two to Six is purposely designed as to symbolize their diminishing power in Southern Song history. In other words, the weakening imperial power in Southern Song history is presented to us not only thematically through the content of the text, but also formally through the reduced presence of the imperial "voices."

The Prosperity of the Chunxi Reign period [1174-1189] [Chapter 2, Entry 1]

When Emperor Xiaozong ascended the throne, Emperor Gaozong retired to the Palace of Virtue and Longevity, Emperor Guangzong was [the Crown Prince] at the Green Palace, and Emperor Ningzong was [as a royal king] in Pingyang. The grandness of the coexistence of these four generations of emperors was unparalleled in history. At that time, Yang Chengzhai worked in the government. He wrote a poem to celebrate Emperor Guangzong's birthday, which read,

"Grandfather Yao and father Shun, the [glory] shall truly last thousands of years.

Son of Yu and grandson of Tang, all of you indeed belong to one family."

The appropriateness of the poem was admired by its readers. He also said,

“Radiantly the will of heaven promotes the virtue of fire;
For three generations the emperors’ births were always in the
year of *ding*.”

This was because because Emperor Gaozong was born in the year *dinghai* [1107], Xiaozong the year *dingwei* [1127], and Guangzong the year *dingmao* [1147]. The word “year of *ding*” alluded to “The Letter of Li Ling,” which was an appropriate allusion.

淳熙盛事

宋孝宗御宇，高宗在德壽，光宗在青宮，寧宗在平陽邸，四世本支之盛，亙古未有。楊誠齋時為宮僚，賀光宗誕辰詩云：“祖堯父舜真千載，禹子湯孫更一家。”讀者服其精切。又云：“天意分明昌火德，誕辰三世總丁年。”蓋高宗生於丁亥，孝宗生於丁未，光宗生於丁卯也。“丁年”字出《李陵書》，借用亦佳。

Emperor Xiaozong’s [Plan of] Recovery [Chapter 2, Entry 2]

During Emperor Gaozong’s reign, there were ministers who determined to recover [the lost territories in the north] but no emperor willing to do so. During Emperor Xiaozong’s reign, there was an emperor who was determined to restore [the north] but there were no ministers willing to support him. Therefore, the expeditionary army had just experienced a few small setbacks, and the entire court vied to find fault with [the military campaign] and humbly begged for peace. Emperor Xiaozong was thus unable to fulfill his ambition. This was truly a pity!

孝宗恢復

高宗之朝，有恢復之臣，而無恢復之君；孝宗之朝有恢復之君，而無恢復之臣。故其出師纔遇少衄，滿朝爭論其非，屈已請和，而不能遂孝宗之志，惜哉！

Imperial Tutor of the Qingyuan Reign Period [1195-1200] [Chapter 2, Entry 5]

During the early years of the Qingyuan reign period, Zhao Zizhi presided over the state. He invited Zhu Wengong²⁴⁷ to become Imperial Tutor and the latter delightfully accepted. [Having assumed his post,] Wengong truly devoted himself and edited a textbook to present to the emperor. Emperor Ningzong was happy about the textbook and ordered to have it punctuated. A few days later, Wengong asked the emperor, and the emperor replied, “I have been reading it a lot while in my palace. The gist of it is about seeking for one’s strayed heart.”²⁴⁸ Wengong then further explained this idea to the emperor, “Since Your Majesty has already mastered the essence of learning, it is my wish that you could try your best to put it into practice.” After he returned, Wengong told his disciples, “The emperor can be taught to do right. If only virtuous persons could be sought to assist him, then there would be hope for the world.”

At that time, Han Tuozhou already started to work in the central court for his self-proclaimed contribution in enthroning the emperor. Wengong remonstrated with the emperor to his face. He also allied with Peng Zishou, the Vice Director of the Ministry of Personnel, to plead to the emperor and reveal Han’s wickedness. In addition, he wrote a letter to Zhao Zizhi, the Grand Councilor, suggesting, “[Han] should be given good rewards for his contribution and should be prevented from interfering with court policies.” Because of this, Han Tuozhou started to plot against him. One day, the emperor issued an edict all of sudden to [Wengong], “I am concerned about your old age. Now that the winter has come, I am afraid that you could not be tutoring me anymore. I have already appointed you as the Palace and Temple Custodian.” The edict was delivered directly by the Palace Attendant Wang Deqian. Councilors, ministers, censors, and court officials all pleaded to let [Wengong] stay, but were all refused.

At that time, Peng Zishou was out escorting an envoy. By the time he returned, Wengong had already left office. Peng Zishou immediately presented a memorial accusing Han Tuozhou, “During the Yuanfu reign

²⁴⁷ Wengong is the posthumous title of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200).

²⁴⁸ The concept of “seeking for one’s strayed heart” was first brought up by Mencius. The original lines in *Mencius* are: “Benevolence is the heart of man, and righteousness is his road. Sad it is indeed when a man gives up the right road instead of following it and allows his heart to stray without enough sense to go after it. When his chickens and dogs stray, he has sense enough to go after them, but not when what strays in his heart. The sole concern of learning is to go after this strayed heart. That is all.” (仁，人心也；義，人路也。舍其路而弗由，放其心而不知求，哀哉！人有雞犬放，則知求之；有放心，而不知求。學問之道無他，求其放心而已矣。). See Yang Bojun anno., *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 (Translation into Modern Chinese and Annotation of Mencius, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), pp.267-68. The translation is D. C. Lau’s. See D. C. Lau trans., *Mencius* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003), p. 255.

period [1098-1100], because Xiang Zongliang and his brothers colluded with foreign emissaries and leaked state secrets, Chen Guan memorialized the emperor and impeached them, saying, 'Ever since the ancient times, signs of a declining dynasty start to show when state power begins to be encroached upon by imperial relatives, and the reason for a failing empire is rooted in the fact that court policies are interfered with by the emperors' kin. Policy-making at the level of prefectures and counties is also the same. All in all the power must be firmly controlled by the governors. If a kin or relative is allowed to conspire with government officials, then wicked persons will be encouraged and good officials will start to complain.' These words truly cannot be unheeded. Now what Han Tuo Zhou is doing is even worse than that of Xiang Zongliang, but there is no Chen Guan in the court who dares to come out and remorse him. During the reign of Your Majesty's father, when Jiang Teli was first promoted, the ministers at court were still capable of driving him out of office. Later when Yuan Zuo was used, the censors could still make him fear their words. But to my surprise, as bright and perceptive as Your Majesty was at the beginning, you could still allow a person as wicked as this to stay in your court, and no one dared to criticize him. Thus his power over the court is indeed notable." [Having seen this memorial,] the emperor talked to the Grand Councilor, "Han Tuo Zhou is my relative, and Peng Guinian is my old classmate. This situation is tough to deal with." The Grand Councilor suggested the emperor to retain both, "Because Peng Guinian has a strong personality, it is my wish that [Your Majesty] could issue an announcement to retain him." The emperor replied, "This person [Peng Guinian] has a straightforward character and he is also one of the four old ministers from the previous court. Of the four, two were removed from office and one left in mourning. Peng Guinian was the only one who would still come to say things to me. It is indeed better to compromise like this." By the night, however, an edict was suddenly issued to demote Peng Guinian to Yu Prefecture, and even the Grand Councilor did not know about this. From that time on, all other virtuous officials were slowly driven out of the court.

Although Emperor Ningzong was misled by Han Tuo Zhou at beginning, he remained benevolent and diligent throughout the thirty-one years of his reign. Every time there was a sign of disaster from heaven, he would fast and pray in the morning dew. He also replaced all the silver drinking utensils in his palace with ones made of tin. Once on a New Year's Eve, the emperor sat alone beside a candle. The eunuchs asked, "Why doesn't Your Majesty start the banquet?" The emperor said sadly, "Do you know that common people outside the palace do not even have food to eat? How can I drink in peace?" The other day the emperor visited

the Garden of Gathered Views. On his way back at night, the city dwellers and viewers vied to enter the gate and some were stamped to death. Having heard about this news, the emperor regretted it so much that he refused to leave the palace ever again. Wengong's teaching about rectifying the heart still did not completely die out in the emperor.

慶元侍講

宋慶元初，趙子直當國。召朱文公為侍講。文公欣然而至。積誠感悟，且編次講義以進。甯宗喜，令點句以來。他日請問，上曰：“宮中常讀之，大要主求放心耳。”公因益推明其說曰：“陛下既知學問之要，願勉強而力行之。”退謂其徒曰：“上可與為善，若舉得賢者輔道，天下有望矣。”

然是時韓侂胄自謂有夾日之功，已居中用事。公因進對面諫，又約吏部侍郎彭子壽請對白，發其奸，且以書白趙丞相云：“當以厚賞酬其勞，勿使干預朝政。”侂胄於是謀逐公。忽一日，御批云：“朕閱卿耆老，當此隆冬，恐難[立]講，已除卿宮觀。”內侍王德謙徑遣付下。宰相、執奏、台諫、給事爭留，皆不從。

時子壽出護使客，回則公已去矣。即上章攻侂胄云：“昔元符間，向宗良弟兄止緣交通賓客，論泄機密，陳瓘上章劾之，謂‘自古戚里侵權，便為衰世之象；外家干政，即是亡國之本。亦如州縣之政，只要權出守令。若子弟親戚交通關節，則奸人鼓舞，良民怨謗。’此言不可不察。今侂胄所為，不止如宗良，而朝無陳瓘，莫能出力排之。在太上皇朝，始用姜特立，大臣尚能逐之使去。復用袁佐，諫官尚能論之使懼。不謂陛下始初清明，有臣如此，乃無一人敢出狂語，則其聲勢可知矣。”上謂宰相曰：“侂胄是朕親戚，龜年是朕舊學，極是難處。”宰相進兩留之說，且謂：“龜年性剛，乞宣諭留之。”上曰：“此人質直，兼是隨朝舊僚，四人兩人罷，一人憂去，只有龜年有事肯來說。如此區處甚好。”其晚忽降省劄，直批彭龜年于郡，宰相亦不知也。自是眾君子皆逐矣。

上始初雖為侂胄所誤，然三十一年敬仁、勤儉如一日。天文示變，齋心露禱。禁中酒器，以錫代銀。上元夜嘗熒燭清坐，小黃門奏曰：“官家何不開宴？”上愀然曰：“爾何知外間百姓無飯吃，朕飲酒何安？”嘗幸聚景園，晚歸，都人觀者爭入門，蹂踐有死者。上聞之深悔，自是不復出。文公格心之效，終不可泯。²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ The entry is originally included in Luo Dajing's *Helin yulu*, pp. 5181-5182.

Emperor Lizong's Death (Chapter 5, Entry 10)

In October, the winter of the *jiazi* year [1264] of the Jingding reign period [1260-1264], Emperor Lizong passed away. Since the emperor ascended the throne, he had promoted the Neo-Confucian doctrines proposed by scholars like Zhou Dunyi, the Chen brothers, Zhang Zai and Zhu Xi. Because of this, he had earned his posthumous title “Lizhong [Emperor of Doctrines],” his tomb was named the “Tomb of Solemnity,” his study the “Chamber of Illustrious Literature,” and his secondary ancestral temple the “Palace of Bright Luminance.” Emperor Lizong rose from a humble origin, but he promoted Confucianism and was open to remonstrance. During the Baoqing and Shaoding reign periods [1225-1233], he entrusted his power to Shi Miyuan, who had made big contributions in enthroning him, and humbly refrained from dealing with state affairs. It was not until after Shi Miyuan died that he began to rule the country by himself. He recruited virtuous officials like Zhen Dexiu and Wei Liaoweng to work at court and changed the reign period to Duanping [1234-1236], and it was like a lesser Yuanyou reign period [1086-1094].²⁵⁰ However, after [Emperor Lizong] ascended the throne, the city of Xiangyang, the Huai region, and the entire Shu area were captured by enemies, and the three borders suffered heavy loss. In the *genzi* year [1240], there was a serious drought. In the *renzi* year [1252], a huge flood devastated Jianning, causing thousands of deaths in the inner prefecture. In the *jiwei* year [1259] of the Kaiqing reign period [1259], the northern army the third monthed south and the empire almost perished. Nonetheless [Emperor Lizong] did not witness this in person, which could also be called good fortune.

理宗升遐

景定甲子冬十月，理宗崩。上自臨御以來，始終崇獎周、程、張、朱諸儒義理之學，故得廟號曰“理宗”，陵曰“穆陵”，御書閣曰“顯文閣”，原廟殿曰“章熙殿”。理宗興於側微，崇儒納諫。寶紹間，以史彌遠有擁立功，于萬幾謙遜無所預。彌遠卒，始親政。召真德秀、魏了翁諸君子于朝，號端平，為小元佑。然自即位以來，失襄、失淮、失全蜀，三邊流血。庚子大旱，壬子建寧大水，內郡之民，死者相枕藉。開慶己未，北兵南來，社稷幾已矣，而猶不親身見之，亦可謂福。

²⁵⁰ During the Yuanyou period in the Northern Song, the conservative party who was against Wang Anshi's New Policies presided over state power.

These four entries are placed at different parts in the text, with the first three entries at the beginning of Chapter Two and the last one near the end of Chapter Five. Reading them separately, we may find nothing special about them except that they contain some records and/or comments on the emperors' lives. But if we put them side by side to each other as I have done here, we will clearly sense a progression that tells us much about Liu Yiqing's conception of the deterioration of imperial power in the Southern Song.

The essence of the first entry rests in the poem written by Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127-1206) to celebrate Emperor Guangzong's (1147-1200, r. 1190-1194) birthday.²⁵¹ At first glance, the tone of the poem is eulogistic, with the poet extolling the unprecedented prosperity of the Chunxi reign period and comparing the four generations of Southern Song emperors to the legendary kings in antiquity. However, what is hidden beneath this apparent eulogy is in fact a subtle criticism discernable only to an informed reader. This criticism is implied in the last two words, *dingnian* (丁年, the year of *ding*), of the poem. Though professedly referring to the birth years of the first three Southern Song emperors, the word actually alludes to a famous line in a letter written by Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 B.C.E.), a famous Han dynasty general who surrendered to the Xiongnu after being cornered and defeated in battle, to Su Wu 蘇武 (140 B.C.E.-60 B.C.E.), a Han diplomat well-known for his loyalty to the Han while he was detained by the Xiongnu after an unsuccessful diplomatic mission. The line reads, "at the prime time of your life, [you] were entrusted with a diplomatic mission; but it was not until your hair became white that you were allowed to return (丁年奉使，皓首而歸)." Literally, this line describes the long years of hardship that Su Wu experienced during his detainment in the north by the Xiongnu. But the sentiment in it is in fact much more complex if we read it in its original context, that is, Li Ling's letter.²⁵² In that letter, Li Ling first confessed to Su Wu how he missed his life in his home country and how he felt

²⁵¹ The entry is originally in Luo Dajing's *Helin yulu*, p.5359

²⁵² Li Ling's letter can be found in Yang Jinding 楊金鼎 ed., *Guwen guanzhi quanyi* 古文觀止全譯 (A Complete Translation into modern Chinese of the Finest of Ancient Prose; Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1984), pp.519-31.

extremely uncomfortable and guilty after defecting to the Xiongnu and living among the foreigners. Then he moves on to explain the reasons for his surrender, saying that he was originally planning to seek a chance to strike back against the Xiongnu, but his good intentions were misinterpreted by Emperor Wudi (156-87 B.C.E.) of Han, who ordered his entire family executed. This ruthless execution forced him to decide to defect. Near the end of the letter, Li Ling lamented the fact that many capable and loyal officials like Su Wu were also mistreated by the Han emperors, whereas those who were wicked and good at vilifying people were entrusted with important positions. This made him become disillusioned with the Han government and decide not to go back to his home country. Interpreted in this light, the word *dingnian* seems to have acquired at least two more layers of connotation. It can be used to describe the homesickness that people living under a foreign rule may have experienced; it can also denote the sense of unfairness felt by capable and loyal officials who are misunderstood or mistreated by their country. Whatever connotation may be invoked here, it is clear that Yang Wanli chose this particular word in his celebrative poem for a reason. Given Yang's strong personality and his hawkish stance against the Jurchen invasion,²⁵³ it is quite possible that he was using this phrase as a veiled criticism of the military weakness or weak-willedness of his country at the time. The poem's eulogistic tone and the prosperity depicted are superficial. What is behind them is an implicit but no less sharp critique of the Southern Song emperors for their lack of determination to use capable persons to fight against the Jurchens to recover the lost territory in the north, and also for their unwillingness to alleviate the pain and homesickness felt by the Chinese who were under Jurchen rule.

This largely veiled criticism of the Southern Song emperors will become much more visible in the second entry quoted above, in which the writer directly criticizes Emperor Gaozong and Emperor Xiaozong for their failure to recover the land taken over by the Jurchens. Upon first look, the narrative in this entry seems to be more in favor of

²⁵³ For a comprehensive study of Yang Wanli's life, please refer to J. D. Schmidt, *Yang Wan-Li* (Boston Twayne, 1976). See also Zhang Ruijun 張瑞君, *Yang Wanli ping zhuan* 楊萬里評傳 (A Critical Biography of Yang Wanli; Nanjing: Nanjing da xue chu ban she, 2002).

Emperor Xiaozong, for in contrast to Emperor Gaozong's unwillingness to fight for the lost territory in spite of all the support that he could gain from his ministers, Emperor Xiaozong was more determined to retaliate against the Jurchens but his plan was constantly throttled by the peace-seeking officials in his court. However, if we look closely at the idea that Emperor Xiaozong was unable to fulfill his ambition simply because the peace-seeking officials would gripe every time the anti-Jurchen campaign experienced a setback, then we will see that the weakening of imperial power had already started to become an issue at that time. In other words, both emperors seem to have their own special weakness. While Emperor Gaozong's weakness was manifested in his hesitation or inability to fight for what the empire had lost, Emperor Xiaozong's weakness is exposed in his ineptitude in dealing with the peace-seeking officials. In light of this, it becomes quite unclear whether the writer's defense of Emperor Xiaozong in the entry is truly a defense, or is rather an implicit criticism of his lack of skills or strong will to control his ministers and carry through on his recovery plan.

This criticism of declining imperial power will become the main point of discussion in the third entry selected above. Focusing on the power struggle during the early years of Emperor Ningzong's (1168-1224) reign, the entry tells how the emperor was secretly controlled and manipulated by Han Tuo Zhou 韓侂胄, who started to rise to power at the time. At the beginning of the story, Grand Councilor Zhao Ruyu 趙汝愚 (1140-1196) invited Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), a leading Neo-Confucian scholar of the time, to become Emperor Ningzong's Imperial Tutor. The emperor and Zhu Xi were on good terms until Zhu allied with Peng Guinian 彭龜年 (1142-1206) to impeach Han Tuo Zhou and tried to prevent him from interfering with state affairs. This was leaked to Han, whereupon he started to plan to drive Zhu Xi out of court. One day, Emperor Ningzong issued an edict to release Zhu Xi from office. After Peng Guinian knew about this, he immediately memorialized the emperor accusing Han Tuo Zhou of misconduct. Having seen this memorial, Emperor Ningzong consulted Zhao Ruru, who advised him to retain both Peng Guinian, who was the emperor's old classmate, and Han Tuo Zhou, who was the emperor's relative. Emperor Ningzong accepted this suggestion. However, on

the same night, an edict was issued by the emperor without the knowledge of Zhao Ruyu, demoting Peng Guinian directly to the Yu Prefecture. What is worth noting here is that the text deliberately conceals Han Tuo Zhou's direct involvement in both Zhu Xi and Peng Guinian's demotions, and makes it look like that Emperor Ningzong was making these decisions by himself. But a careful reader will notice the suddenness and unexpectedness of these decisions, which will make him/her suspect that there may be more than meets the eyes. The fact that the text is reticent at certain points is in fact revealing of the dangerous political situation of the time, namely, while the emperor remained the nominal head of the empire, his power had already been slowly and secretly usurped by domineering ministers like Han Tuo Zhou. The entry ends with a somewhat sympathetic apology for Emperor Ningzong, claiming that he was still a diligent and benevolent emperor despite his manipulation by Han Tuo Zhou during the early years.

Such a sympathetic apology, however, is missing in the last entry, which provides a critical assessment of Emperor Lizong's rulership during his reign. According to the entry, Emperor Lizong entrusted most of his power to the hand of Shi Miyuan 史彌遠 (1164-1233), who stayed in power as Grand Councilor for more than twenty years due to his contribution in enthroning Lizong.²⁵⁴ Shi's dominating position in the court made Emperor Lizong, during his early years, more like a figurehead than the real ruler of the empire. After Shi Miyuan died, the country went back on the right track for a short period of time. But soon after, invasions and heavy territorial losses raised alarms at the borders and severe natural calamities started to strike the empire from inside. All of these things testify to the military and political incompetence of Emperor Lizong's administration. In 1259, the Mongol invasion almost completely extinguished the empire. In an effort to negotiate a truce, Jia Sidao pledged allegiance to the Mongols and promised a large annual tribute in exchange for peace.²⁵⁵ Reportedly, these

²⁵⁴ In addition to his biography in the *History of the Song Dynasty* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), a recent study of Emperor Lizong can also be found in Zhang Jinling 張金嶺, *Song Lizong yanjiu* 宋理宗研究 (Research on Emperor Lizong of Song; Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008).

²⁵⁵ This detail is not mentioned in this entry but can be found in the third entry in chapter four, as well as in Jia Sidao's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 474.

humiliating concessions were made without the knowledge of Emperor Lizong, who still rested assured that his empire was in good hand. This misplaced confidence explains why the entry ends with an ironic comment, “In the *yiwei* year of the Kaiqing reign period, the northern army the third month south and the empire almost perished. Nonetheless [Emperor Lizong] did not see this in person, which could also be called good fortune.”

One thing that we may notice in the four entries discussed above is that though they are all about the Southern Song emperors, none of them is spoken in the voice of the emperors, nor do they speak for the emperors. In contrast to this reduced representation of the imperial voice, the large number of entries related to domineering ministers at court is indicative of their overwhelming influence in Southern Song history. Of the eight-three entries included in Chapter Two to Six, nearly sixty entries contain stories and comments that concern these powerful ministers. And of these sixty entries, nearly fifty are about those who have been historically labeled as “nefarious ministers.”²⁵⁶ Although not all of these entries speak about the dominance of these ministers over the court, their overwhelming and concentrated textual presence is itself telling of the powerful influence possessed by these persons over Southern Song politics.

The Secret under the Eastern Window Was Disclosed [Chapter 2, Entry 4]

Qin Gui was about to kill Yue Fei and plotted with his wife under the eastern window of [his house]. Lady Wang, said, “It is easy to catch a tiger but difficult if you release it.” These words made up Qin Gui’s mind. Later when Qin Gui was boating on West Lake, he caught a disease. [In

²⁵⁶ Most of the ministers discussed here have biographies included in the *History of the Song Dynasty* in the chapters titled “*Jianchen* 姦臣 (nefarious ministers)” (See the *History of the Song Dynasty*, chapter 471-474). These ministers are also the ones being condemned in historical accounts and literary stories related to the Southern Song. To label them as such perhaps tells us more about people’s preference for binary thinking than the historical reality itself. I choose to leave this binary way of thinking uncriticized here, because it tells us much how history was conceived and constructed in the text of *Qiantang yishi*. For an excellent discussion on the creation of the category of “nefarious ministers” in the *Songshi*, please see Charles Harman, “A Textual History of Cai Jing’s Biography in the *Songshi*” in Patricia Ebrey and Maggie Bickford ed., *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 517-565.

his illness,] he saw a person with disheveled hair snarling at him, “You betrayed your country and harmed your people. I have already reported this to heaven and got permission [to kill you].” Qin Gui then died. Shortly after, his son Xi also died. Qin Gui’s wife missed them and had a sorcerer set up an altar [to summon their spirits]. Through spiritual communion, the sorcerer came upon Qin Xi wearing an iron cangue. The sorcerer asked where Qin, the Grand Tutor, was. Xi replied, “My father is now at Fengdu.”²⁵⁷ The sorcerer followed his word and went there, whereat he indeed saw Qin Gui and Moqi Xie both wearing an iron cangue and suffering different kinds of pains. [Upon seeing the sorcerer,] Qin Gui said, “Please deliver this word to my wife: The secret under the eastern window has been disclosed.”

東窗事發

秦檜欲殺岳飛，於東窗下謀其妻。王夫人曰：“擒虎易，放虎難。”其意遂決。後檜遊西湖舟中，得疾。見一人披髮厲聲曰：“汝誤國害民，我已訴於天，得請於帝矣。”檜遂死。未幾，子熺亦死。夫人思之，設醮。方士伏章，見熺荷鐵枷，因問秦太師所在。熺曰：“吾父見在酆都。”方士如其言而往，果見檜與萬俟卨俱荷鐵枷，備受諸苦。檜曰：“可煩傳語夫人，東窗事發矣。”

Han Pingyuan’s Guest Retainer [Chapter 2, Entry 8]

When Han Pingyuan [Han Tuozhou] was the Commandant at Nanhai, he once recruited a scholar to be his guest retainer who was very virtuous and good at literature. After Han left the position, he lost contact with the person. Later when Han Pingyuan presided over the state, he often missed this guest. One day, the guest retainer came to visit Han Pingyuan all of sudden. It turned out that he had changed his name and passed the civil service examination several years ago. Han Pingyuan was very delighted to see the guest retainer and treated him extremely well. Once late at night after they had finished drinking, Han dismissed his servants to have an intimate conversation with the guest retainer, whereupon he asked, “How do outside people think about my management of the state?” The guest retainer sighed and replied, “Your honor’s entire family is in as much peril as a pile of eggs. What more can I say?” Astounded, Han begged the guest retainer for the reason, to which the guest replied, “This is not difficult to know. Since the selection of the

²⁵⁷ Here Fengdu 酆都 refers to Luofeng Mountain, where all the ghosts and demons reside. It is also the place where people go after they die. See Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803-863), *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (Miscellanies of Youyang) included in *Tang Wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 566-67.

empress did not come from you, the empress must have a grudge against you. And the choice of the crown prince also did not come from you, therefore the crown prince must have a grudge against you too. All the capable and virtuous persons such as Zhu Xi, Peng Guinian, and Zhao Ruyu were either dismissed or persecuted to death, so the scholar-officials must have a grudge against you. Moreover, conflicts at the borders have started to become serious and thousands of soldiers died, leaving their wives and children crying in despair. The three armies must have grudges against you. Finally, commoners at the borders died of plunder and those in the interior died of exorbitant taxes and levies. This means all the people in world must have a grudge against you. With all these grudges piling up, what can you do to defend yourself?" Having heard this, Han Pingyuan fell into silence for a long time and then asked, "What can you instruct me to do then?" The guest retainer refused to answer, but Han Pingyuan insisted on asking. The guest retainer then said, "I only have one suggestion. Since the emperor cares not about the Yellow Canopy,²⁵⁸ if you quickly build the Green Palace,²⁵⁹ explain the family rites of the three sages,²⁶⁰ and ask the emperor to make place for the crown prince, then the grudge of the crown prince can be turned into gratitude. At that time, because the empress will be retiring to the Palace of Virtue and Longevity, even if she still has a grudge against you, there is nothing she can do. After that, you can assist the new emperor to start from scratch. For those virtuous persons who were driven out by you, you can make compensation to the dead and summon back the ones still alive. To pacify the conflicts at the borders, you can send diplomats to the north to iron out grudges and seek for peace. You can also give generous rewards to the armies and the dead soldiers, eliminate exorbitant taxes, and abolish all unnecessary levies that were used to expand the army, and thus give the common people new hopes to live on. After you have all these done, you can choose a famous Confucian scholar and give away your title of Grand Councilor to him, whereupon you can retire into the mountains. In this way you can pull yourself out of danger and change your adversity into bliss. If not, then your days are numbered." Han Pingyuan hesitated and could not decide what to do. He wanted to keep the guest and appoint him as the Keeper of Security. The guest retainer insistently refused and left in the end. Shortly after, disasters happened.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ The word "*huangwu*" refers to the Yellow Canopy on top of the emperor's carriage. It is used to mean the "throne" here.

²⁵⁹ The Green Palace is where the Crown Prince resides. Here the guest is suggesting Han Tuozhou to force the emperor to abdicate the throne to the Crown Prince.

²⁶⁰ The three sages refer to Yao 堯, Sun 舜, Yu 禹. They can also refer to Yu, Duke Zhou 周公, and Confucius.

²⁶¹ Han Tuozhou was assassinated under Shi Miyuan's instruction.

韓平原客

韓平原嘗為南海尉，延一士人作館客，甚賢而文。既已，音問杳不通。平原當國，常思其人。一日，忽來上謁，蓋已改名登第數年矣。一見歡喜，館遇極厚。嘗夜闌酒罷，平原屏左右，促膝問曰：“某謬當國秉，外間議論如何？”其人太息曰：“平章家族危如疊卵矣，尚復何言？”平原愕然問故，對曰：“是不難知也，椒殿之立，非出於平章，則椒殿怨矣。皇子之立，非出於平章，則皇子怨矣。賢人君子，自朱子、彭龜年、趙汝愚，斥逐貶死，不可勝數，則士大夫怨矣。邊釁既開，三軍骸骨，孤兒寡婦之哭聲相聞，則三軍怨矣。並邊之民死於殺掠，內地之民死於科需，則四海百姓皆怨矣。叢是眾怨，平章何以當之？”平原默然，久之曰：“何以教我？”其人辭謝，再三固問，乃曰：“僅有一策，主上非心黃屋，若急建青宮，間陳三聖家法，為揖遜之舉，則皇子之怨可變而為恩。而椒殿退居德壽，雖怨無能為矣。於是輔佐新君，渙然與海內更始，曩時諸賢，死者贈恤，生者召還。遣使聘北，釋怨請和，以安邊境。優犒諸軍，厚恤死士，除苛解撓，盡去軍興無名之賦，使百姓有更生之意。然後選擇名儒，遜以相位，乞身告老，為綠野之游，則易危為安，轉禍為福矣。或者其庶幾乎？”平原猶豫不能決。欲留其人，處以掌故。其人力辭，竟去。未幾禍作。²⁶²

Shi Miyuan [Chapter 2, Entry 13]

In the *dingmou* year [1207] of the Kaixi reign period [1205-1207], Shi Miyuan was appointed the Vice Director of the Ministry of Rite. After Empress Dowager Yang had Han Tuozhou executed, the thing was kept top secret and even Emperor Ningzong did not know about Han's death. It was not until a few days later when the emperor asked where Han Tuozhou was that his servants dared to tell him the truth. The emperor deeply mourned him.

[At that time] Shi Miyuan went in and out of [Empress Dowager's] palace, causing a huge disturbance both inside and outside the court.²⁶³ There was a poem, which said,

²⁶² The entry is originally in Luo Dajing's *Helin yulu*, pp. 5247-5248.

²⁶³ A story about the secret affair between Empress Dowager Yang and Shi Miyuan can be found in Wu Wei 吳蔚, *Song shi yiyun 宋史疑雲* (Suspicious Cases in Song History; Taipei: Shidai wenhua chubanshe, 2008), pp. 362-378. Stories about the affairs between the two are most likely untrue, given the big age difference between the two.

Coming and going, he has the moon as his company.
Expanding and contracting, even heaven is in the dark.

The poem mocked Shi Miyuan by comparing him to cloud. During the seventeen years when Shi Miyuan served as Grand Councilor, officials like Zhen Dexiu and Wei Liaoweng were all driven out of court.

The King of Ji held a strong grudge against Shi Miyuan about his affair with Empress Dowager Yang. One day he wrote on his study table, “Shi Miyuan should be banished eight thousand miles away.” The king’s servants leaked this to Shi Miyuan, and the latter kept this in mind. After Emperor Ningzong became sick, [Shi Miyuan] decrowned the King of Ji and enthroned Emperor Lizong. Had the coup led by Pan Ren and Pan Ping [to enthrone the King of Ji] succeeded, could there still be a place for Shi Miyuan?

After enthroning Emperor Lizong, Shi Miyuan worked as Grand Councilor for another nine years. He used people like Yu Tianxi, Liang Chenda, Li Zhixiao, and planted them all over the court. Those who were most relied on were Xue Ji, Hu Ju, Nie Zishu and Zhao Rushu, who were known at the time as “the Four Woods”.²⁶⁴ After Emperor Lizong took over the government, the Censorate vied to accuse Shi Miyuan of his faults. Nonetheless the emperor still remembered his contributions and did not even forget to promote his nephew Shi Songzhi.

史彌遠

史彌遠開禧丁卯，為禮部侍郎。自楊太后誅侂胄，其事甚秘，侂胄死，寧宗不知也。居數日，上顧問侂胄安在，左右乃以實對。上深悼之。彌遠出入宮禁，外議譁然，有詩曰：“往來與月為儔侶，舒卷和天也蔽蒙。”蓋以雲譏彌遠也。彌遠為相十七年，如真德秀、魏了翁者皆遭斥逐。

楊后之事，濟王嫉之，一日書於幾上曰：“彌遠當決配八千里。”左右以告彌遠，彌遠銜之。及寧宗疾，革廢濟王而立理宗。使潘壬、潘丙之謀成，彌遠將何所容其身哉？

理宗之立，又獨相九年，用余天錫、梁成大、李知孝等，列布於朝。最用事者薛極、胡榘、聶子述、趙汝述等，時號“四木”。及上親政，台諫爭言其非，上思其功，不忘復進其侄嵩之。

²⁶⁴ Because their names all contain the character wood (mu 木).

Jia Sidao's Monopolization of Power [Chapter 5, Entry 16]

In the *dingmao* year [1267] of the Xianchun reign period [1265-1274], Jia Sidao was appointed the Manager of Important National Security Matters, and the Duke of Wei, Ye Mengding, was appointed Right Grand Councilor. At that time, Jia Sidao monopolized power of the government and Ye Mengding was just a place holder. Jia Sidao attended the imperial lecture three times a month, and had an audience with the emperor every three days, whereupon he would go and work in the Hall of Palace Secretary. [At that time,] the emperor just ascended the throne and entrusted the management of all state affairs to the ministers. Jia Sidao became even more dictatorial. The emperor called him “Master Minister” and the entire country called him “Master Councilor,” or “Grand Patriarch.”

Jia Sidao was bestowed a mansion on Ge Hill beside West Lake. He would only go to the court every five days, riding on his wheeled boat. He refused to work in the office, but instead asked the clerks to bring the documents to his mansion for him to view and sign. What he did was simply signing on the paper. For daily consultation he relied on his guest retainer Liao Yingzhong; in dealing with external matters, there was his Headquarter Executive Weng Yinglong. Things like the cases of impeachment from the Censorate, promotion and demotion of government officials in different departments, and the management of public affairs in the capital or Office of Transport must be made known to him first; otherwise nobody dared to make a decision. Those at court who dared to act against Jia's will were all driven out. Later after Ye Mengjing and Jiang Wanli both retired, Jia Sidao started to manage important state and military affairs remotely and leisurely in his lakeshore mansion. There was poem written on this,

In the court there is no Councilor,
On the lake there is the Manager.

似道專政

咸淳丁卯，賈似道平章軍國重事，魏國公葉夢鼎為右丞相。時賈似道專政，夢鼎充位而已。似道一月三赴經筵，三日一朝，赴中書堂治事。上初立，朝政一委大臣，似道益自專。上稱之曰“師臣”，通國稱之曰“師相”，曰“元老”。

居西湖葛嶺，賜第。五日一乘車船入朝。不赴都堂治事。吏抱文書就第呈署，宰執書紙尾而已。朝夕謀議則館客廖瑩中，外則堂吏翁應龍。諷台諫彈劾，諸司薦辟舉削，及京戶、畿漕處斷公事，非關白，不敢

自專。在朝之士忤意者，輒斥去。後葉夢鼎、江萬里皆歸田，軍國重事，似道於湖上閒居遙制。時人語曰：“朝中無宰相，湖上有平章。”

The entries quoted above are about the four most notoriously domineering ministers—Qin Gui, Han Tuozhou, Shi Miyuan, and Jia Sidao—in the history of the Southern Song, and three of them have their biographies included in the chapters titled “Nefarious ministers” in the *History of the Song Dynasty*.²⁶⁵ The first three entries are taken from Chapter Two of *Qiangtang yishi*, whereas the last one is from Chapter Five. There is actually a reason behind this asymmetrical placement of the four entries. As I will discuss in the next section of this chapter, the number of the entries concerning Jia Sidao far exceeds that related to the other three domineering ministers. This textual emphasis on Jia Sidao’s life and political career is indicative of Liu Yiqing’s conception of Jia’s importance in the history of the Southern Song. For Liu Yiqing, although the presence of domineering ministers was a persistent problem in Southern Song politics, it was the use of Jia Sidao that became the last straw that broke the camel’s back.

The main character in the first entry, Qin Gui, has long been regarded as one of the biggest traitors in Chinese history due to his persecution and execution of the anti-Jurchen general Yue Fei.²⁶⁶ According to the description in the entry, before Qin Gui decided to execute Yue Fei, he plotted with his wife, Lady Wang, by the eastern window of their house. At that time, Qin Gui was still worried that he might have to release Yue Fei because the latter refused to confess to all the false charges placed against him. But Lady Wang persuaded Qin to proceed with the execution. After Yue Fei was executed, Qin Gui became sick. In his sickness, Qin saw Yue Fei’s ghost shouting at him, saying that he had already reported Qin’s crimes to heaven. Qin died of fright. Lady Wang later hired a sorcerer to summon Qin’s spirit. Upon seeing the sorcerer, Qin Gui, who

²⁶⁵ Shi Miyuan is the only one of the four who has not been labeled by the *History of the Song Dynasty* as a “Traacherous Minister.” His biography is included in Chapter 414.

²⁶⁶ Recent studies of Qin Gui and Yue Fei include Han Xishan 韓西山, *Qin Gui yanjiu* 秦檜研究 (A Study of Qin Gui; Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2008), and Gong Yanming 龔延明, *Yue Fei yanjiu* 岳飛研究 (A Study of Yue Fei; Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2008). Besides, Japanese scholar Toyama Gunji 外山軍治 also published a study on the relationship between the two. See Toyama Gunji, *Gaku Hi to Shin Kai* 岳飛と秦檜 (Tokyo: Fuzanbo, 1939).

was then being severely punished in Fengdu (underworld), asked the latter to send Lady Wang a message, telling her that “the secret under the eastern window has been disclosed.” For readers with Chinese history, stories about Qin Gui and Yue Fei like this one are by no means unfamiliar. Such stories usually demonstrate strong sympathy towards Yue Fei and hatred against Qin Gui. It is therefore very common for Qin Gui to end up being severely punished in the underworld, as told in this story. However, the fact that Qin Gui could only get the punishment that he deserved in the underworld is telling of his untouchable status in the Southern Song government when he was alive. If we also take into consideration that Qin Gui was able to persuade the emperor to call back Yue Fei from the battlefield, in spite of his continuous victories against the Jurchens, and execute him on a fabricated charge, then Qin’s power and dominance in the Southern Song court can become very obvious.²⁶⁷

That the imperial decision was often manipulated by domineering ministers at court becomes more notable in the second entry selected above. Although the story is originally about how Han Tuo Zhou was admonished by his former guest retainer to avoid political peril, the entry nonetheless allows us to see Han’s powerful influence over government decisions on important political and military affairs. According to the guest retainer, there were five things that jeopardized Han Tuo Zhou’s dominating position in the court, the first two of which were that the selection of the empress and the crown prince were not backed by Han.²⁶⁸ In the view of the guest retainer, although their enmity against him could undoubtedly harm Han’s interests at court, they could still be taken care of if Han could force the emperor to abdicate his throne in favor of the crown prince. Despite the fact that Han Tuo Zhou never had the chance to put this plan into action before he met his end, the suggestion itself is telling of the potential power that Han had to change the dynasty’s future. Compared with these first two things, the last three things mentioned by the guest advisor are probably even more

²⁶⁷ Nowadays historians believe Qin Gui was but a puppet put forth by Emperor Gaozong to take all the moral blames, and that Emperor Gaozong was the one who really wanted to put Yue Fei to death so as to secure his position as emperor.

²⁶⁸ This detail can be found in the biography of Empress Yang included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 243.

revealing of Han's direct influence on Southern Song politics. The first of the three talks about Han's power in promoting and demoting government officials. The other two refer to his relentless military policies at the border and the heavy taxes and levies that he ordered imposed on the common people. These three things let us catch a glimpse of how Han Tuozhou managed to expand his power to both inside and outside the Southern Song court and consolidate his control over the government on important political, economic and military affairs. It goes without saying that an automatic result of Han's power expansion was the significant weakening of imperial power, a fact that will be more obvious in the discussion in the third entry quoted above.

The focus of the third entry is on the life and political career of another domineering figure in Southern Song history, Shi Miyuan, who plotted with Empress Dowager Yang (1162-1233) to assassinate Han Tuozhou in 1207 and replaced him to become the new Grand Counselor. Strong-willed and extremely thirsty for power, Shi Miyuan monopolized the seat of Grand Counselor for nearly twenty-six years. During these years, he managed to get rid of everyone threatened to his position, even if he/she was from the imperial family. A telling example of this is the fate of King of Ji, Zhao Hong 趙竑 (?-1225), who was originally selected to be the crown prince to succeed Emperor Ningzong. Unable to tolerate Shi Miyuan's arrogance, Zhao Hong articulated his dissatisfaction with Shi on his study table, saying that "Shi Miyuan should be banished eight thousand miles away." These words were leaked to Shi Miyuan, whereupon he started to see Zhao Hong as a thorn in his side. After Emperor Ningzong died, he conspired to uncrown Zhao Hong and enthroned instead Zhao Yun (Emperor Lizong). Later Pan Ren 潘壬 (?-1225) and Pan Bing 潘丙 (?-1225) plotted a coup against Shi in order to reinstate Zhao Hong, but the coup was quickly suppressed and Zhao Hong was forced by one of Shi's guest retainers to strangle himself.²⁶⁹ This incident provides us with a vivid example of what kind of power Shi Miyuan possessed over the Southern

²⁶⁹ A detailed discussion on this coup and Zhao Hong's death, which is not directly mentioned in the entry, can be found in Zhao Hong's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 244. A shorter discussion can also be found in chapter two of *Qiantang yishi*. See the entry titled "Ji Wang" 濟王 (King of Ji).

Song court. He was not only capable of controlling the court's policy making, but also had the power to enthrone, dethrone, banish and execute even members of the imperial family.

Unlike the previous three entries, the fourth entry quoted above portrays Jia Sidao's increasing dictatorship over the court in such a leisurely fashion that it looks as if it came effortlessly. According to the entry, Jia Sidao only came to have an audience with the emperor every three days and attended the imperial lecture three times a month. Later when his position in the government became even more secure, he would visit the court every five days and spent the rest of the time in his mansion located at Ge Hill near West Lake. Even during the days when he did go to the court, he would not work in the office. Instead, he had someone bring the writs and documents to his mansion to sign them at home. This, however, did not mean that Jia Sidao lessened his dominance of the government. As indicated in the entry, the reason that he could work largely in his retreat was exactly because he had had the emperor and the government firmly in his control. Like his notorious predecessors, Jia Sidao was the real puppet puller behind the curtain, and the entry makes it look like as if his power had become so dominant that he did not even have to pull the wires by himself.

So far we have seen how the power of the emperors and the domineering civil ministers has been presented to us as either dwindling or rising through their reduced or increased/concentrated textual utterance. In contrast to both of them, the voice of the regional military commanders is presented in the text as one that has been largely marginalized but nonetheless remains persistent. Most of the entries about local military commanders are confined to Chapter Three, and in this sense the textual presence of their voice is certainly not as prevalent or powerful as that of the domineering civil ministers. But their voice is definitely stronger than that of the emperors, because not only does the number of the entries concerning them exceed those related to the emperors, but there is also a touch of heroism discernable in these entries, which one can never find in the entries about the emperors. In many ways, the

voice of the regional military commanders is comparable to a strong military fortress built at the borders, marginalized but nonetheless firmly holding its ground. Like a dim light of hope, the eleven entries in Chapter Three which depict the bravery, loyalty, and rectitude of the regional military commanders allow us to see an aspect of Southern Song history that is still promising and respectable. This light of hope will start to diminish as the voice of the domineering ministers begins to take up most of the textual space, but it does not die out easily. When we read Chapter Seven and Eight, where the text is lit up by the flames of battles that filled the last few years of Southern Song history, the bravery, loyalty and rectitude of the regional military commanders will be brought up again, adding an elegiac note to the account of the dynasty's sad demise.

Zhao Fang's Fame [Chapter 3, Entry 10]

During the Jiading Reign period [1208-1224], Zhao Fang was a military commander in the Huai region. His bravery was so well-known that the Jurchens called him "Lord Zhao" and warned each other not to offend the borders. Zhao had a strange face, with his two eyes not on the same level, one looking at heaven and the other at earth. This strange look scared most people away and no one dared to look up at him. One day, when he was taking a bath in hot water, the servants saw a huge serpent curling around in the hot tub. No one dared to say a word about this. The night-watches were not sounded at all for that night. The next morning, the soldier who was responsible for sounding the night-watch was brought in for questioning. Thinking that he was going to die anyway, the soldier reported, "There was a huge serpent curling around the drum, and I dared not come close." Because of this, everyone started to call [Zhao Fang] "Serpent Demon." During the years when [Zhao] guarded the border, no dust was stirred up by battle. His two sons, the Sixth Auxiliary and the Seventh Auxiliary, also worked by his side. People in the Huai region called them "the Sixth Horn and the Seventh Horn." Zhao's fame had already become wide spread. Later when he was about to offer incense at Wudang Mountain, the Daoist Patriarch wrote a couplet, which read,

Zhao Fang from Xiangyang is about to come to Wudang,
Little demons at Fengdu without being wished will burn incense.

When Zhao Fang first passed the civil service examination and became the Commandant, he visited Xin Jiakuan [Xin, Qiji] and stayed in his place

for three days. The two chatted freely about military strategies and government policies. Xin liked Zhao very much and he told his wife, "I recently made acquaintance with a capable person, but it is a pity that I do not have present to give to him." His wife replied, "I still have ten bolts of silk left." Xin then sent this to Zhao Fang as a gift, along with several recommendation letters that could help him seek position in different government offices. Zhao Fang was extremely grateful for this. Later when Xin died, his son was on Zhao Fang's staff. Zhao was then the Military Commissioner in the Jinghu area. Everybody thought that Zhao Fang would give good support and promotion to Xin's son because of his indebtedness to his father. But surprisingly, he was treated more harshly than everyone else and monitored all the time, to the point that he could hardly endure it anymore and went back to cry with his mother. After his three years of office were eventually completed, Xin Qiji's son went to bid farewell to Zhao Fang. Zhao said, "You can stay for one more day." Zhao then held a banquet and invited his mother and wife to his house, upon which Zhao told Xin's son and his mother, "It was not that I deliberately treated your son so harshly in the past three years. I was deeply indebted to his father and was afraid that he would rely on this and not care about his own work. Now, I have managed to get him seven recommendation letters from the various government offices and sent them to the central government. I will offer travel money for him go to his new appointment." [Upon hearing this,] Xin Qiji's son and his mother expressed their gratitude without end. This was how a truly virtuous person repaid the debt of gratitude to his old friend by nurturing and educating his posterity like this.

趙方威名

趙方，嘉定年間為淮閩，威望表聳，金人相戒不敢犯邊，皆以趙爺爺呼之。貌古怪，兩眼高低，一眼觀天，一眼觀地，人皆望而畏之，不敢仰視。一日浴湯，伏事祇窺見一巨蛇蟠於桶中，皆不敢漏泄。一夕更鼓不鳴。詰朝申舉，當更軍人自分必死，及執覆謂：“有巨蛇蟠於鼓，故不敢近。”以故皆謂“蛇之精”。鎮邊數年，一塵不驚。兩子六直閣、七直閣隨侍立。淮北人有六隻角、七隻角之呼。其威名已遠暢矣。後欲上武當山燒香，上真降筆曰：“襄陽趙方欲上武當，酆都小卒不請燒香。”

方初登第作尉時，嘗訪辛稼軒，留三日，劇談方畧，辛喜之，謂其夫人曰：“近得一佳士，惜無可為贈。”夫人曰：“我有絹十端尚在。”稼軒遂將添作驢儀，且奉以數書，云諸監司覓文字，趙極感之。後辛死，其子遇趙作荊湖制置，適在幕下，僉屬謂趙以乃父曩疇之故，賜以提挈，不料待之反嚴，無時程督，幾不能堪，至與其母對泣。幸三年官

滿，辭趙告歸。趙曰：“且可留一日。”即開宴請其母、夫人同來樽前，與其母子曰：“某三年非待令嗣之薄，吾受先公厚恩，正恐其恃此，不留心職業故爾。今已為經營到諸監司舉紙七狀皆足，並發放在省部訖。自即當奉少費，請直去改官。”辛母子方感謝無涯。大賢之陶鑄後進、報稱舊恩如此夫。

Meng, the Emperors' Guardian [Chapter 3, Entry 5]

Meng Gong, style name Wu'an, was the fourth of his brothers and was therefore called "the Fourth Meng." He was a man of ideas and strategies, unmatched in his time. He once led an army of forty thousand soldiers to attack the Great Jin Empire and defeated it at Caizhou, whereupon his fame became even more well-known. He was appointed the Commander-in-chief at Jinghu, and was very good at controlling his army and winning the heart of his soldiers. He cared little about money and was eager to make friends. He knew thoroughly of the situation around him, and kept a good eye on the top secrets and confidential information of the neighboring states. He liked Buddhism. At night, he would sit cross-legged and asked fifty to seventy of his subordinates to join him. They would spread a carpet on the ground and sit on it. Then each of them, from top to bottom, would pick up a topic to talk about. The topic could be anything, from current events to funny things that had happened in the market place. If the story was indeed funny, then everyone would laugh out aloud. The only forbidden topic was other people's privacy. Because of this, Meng knew everything about his troop from top to bottom. Things like the secrets in his camp or conspiracies in the outside world could never escape his ears. Meng worked as a border commander for a long time and the government relied on him. Later Meng Hong died a natural death. His elder brother, Jing, who was known as "the Third Meng," was once the Prefect in Ezhou and had a benevolent personality. His younger brother, "the Tenth Meng," was the Prefect of Yueyang and was also like his brother. His son, Jin, worked at court and was an especially righteous person. During the reign of Emperor Lizong, every time people spoke of border commanders, they were bound to mention the Mengs.

孟保相

孟珙，號無庵，兄弟中第四，故稱四孟。機畧沈鷲，世罕能及。嘗攻大金，公統兵四萬，至蔡州勝之，由是威名浸盛。為荊湖制帥，善御眾，得士卒心，輕財結客，對境虛實，莫不周知。外國機要，間探尤密。性好佛，夜則趺坐，召偏裨以下五七十人，施氈褥，俱席地，自上而下各舉一話，或目前事，或市井笑謔事，無不可言者，言有可笑，

輒相與大噓。惟不得訐人陰私。於是上下之情無不通者。軍中私密，外間詭詐，皆入其耳。久任邊帥，朝廷賴之，後無疾而逝。兄璟稱三孟，嘗知鄂州，性寬厚。第十孟知岳陽，皆然。子之縉立朝，尤有大節。理宗朝，邊稱帥者，必曰諸孟云。

Zhao Xin'an

Zhao Kui, style name Nanzhong, courtesy name Xin'an, was the youngest son of the Duke of Loyalty and Solemnity.²⁷⁰ He had a bold and heroic personality. When he was the Assistant Prefect at Haoliang, one day he learned that his maid servant had an affair with his guest retainer. He waited until the maid sneak out at night, and then followed her, hiding a sword in his sleeves. [Upon capturing the maid and her lover,] with one stroke, he cut off this man's head and dumped it in the moat.

In the *xinmao* year [1171], Li Quan was defeated and killed, and [Zhao Kui's] military success at Wei Yang area was reported to court. After the Campaign of the Three Capitals, Zhao stayed at home for several years and it was not until the *kuimao* year [1243] of the Chunyou reign period [1241-1252] that he was summoned back and entrusted with important positions.²⁷¹ He was appointed the Participant in Deliberation about Court Policy, and memorialized the throne from time to time. The Imperial Diarist Muling once discussed secretly with him regarding the choice of the Crown Prince. Zhao Kui attended to the matter closely and said, "If the crown prince ascends the throne, then it will not be a very good thing, but this is especially difficult to speak of."

Zhao Kui was appointed Right Grand Councilor. In spite of his persistent refusal, the court pressed him to come to accept the position.²⁷² Later when Zhao arrived at the capital, he was impeached on the basis that a Grand Councilor should be someone who was a scholar. After Zhao knew about this, he went straight out of the capital gate and quickly returned to his home. He wrote a song lyric to the tune "Nanxiang zi" on the wall about this, which read,

Ever since I tied up my hair, I commanded the western borders,
With millions of brave soldiers in my control.
When I was summoned to the court, I was offered nothing,
But impeachment.

²⁷⁰ The Duke of Loyalty and Solemnity was the posthumously title for Zhao Fang.

²⁷¹ A detailed description of the Campaign of the Three Capitals can be found in Chapter Two of *Qianyang yishi*, and also in Zhao Kui's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 417.

²⁷² This detail can also be found in Zhao Kui's biography.

Yesterday I was a government official and today I am at leisure.

At dawn I left Chang'an.

I do not want to wait for the cold western wind to cut my face like knives.

I am also too ashamed to face the willow trees beside the Qiantang River,
No face.

I can only travel across the distant mountains, on a donkey drugged by my skinny servant.

Later he presented a memorial to the throne, in which he said, “[Like] Huo Guang, I am not learned or skilled, and I often think Zhang Yong’s words and feel ashamed. ‘What books did Houji read?’ How dare I use Zhao Bian’s words to apologize for myself?”²⁷³ Although these were words of anger, they were written with an eye to the circumstances. After Zhao Kui returned, he was in charge of local government. He extended his benevolence to the common people and refused to lay a single whip on them. Once on a holiday Zhao stopped by at Yuelu Academy. Liu, the senior head of the Academy, led him to his seat, bowed to him and said, “Councilor, please take the master seat.” Zhao shook his hand and said, “What is the use of official title in a place like this?” Having said so, he walked directly to the guest seat, sat there, drank as he pleased and then left.

Later, Zhao Kui resided in Liyang. Shortly after the war broke out in the *jiwei* year [1259] and Zhao Fang assumed his position as ordered. In the year of Bingyin when everything was settled down a little bit, Zhao pleaded to retire to his hometown. Before the boat set out, he sent letters to his countrymen and the scholars in the National and Imperial Academies. All the scholars and his friends were happy to know about this. In Changsha, young kids ran in the street and yelled, “The Councilor

²⁷³ The first sentence refers to an anecdote included in Kou Zhun 寇准 (961-1203)’s biography (See the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 281). According to that anecdote, Kou Zhun was often criticized by his best friend Zhang Yong 張詠 (946-1015) because of his lack of knowledge. One day Zhang advised Kou to read the biography of Huo Guang 霍光 (?-68 B.C.E.) included in the *History of the Han Dynasty*. Kou Zhun followed his advice and read it. When he came across the line which read, “Huo Guang learns not and knows not.” He laughed and immediately realized that his friend was mocking him again. The second sentence alludes to a story included in Shao Bo’s 邵博(d.1158), *Shaoshi jianwen lu* 邵氏見聞後錄 (A Sequel to Things Seen and Heard by Mr. Shao). According to the story, Wang Anshi once argued with his colleagues about the advantages of the New Policies, whereupon he insulted them by saying, “You guys do not even read.” Upon hearing this, Zhao Bian 趙抃 (1008-1084) refuted, “What you said is wrong. At the time of Gao, Kui, Ji, Qi [all of them were ancient sage kings], what books did they read?” Reportedly, Wang Anshi immediately apologized after hearing Zhao’s refutation. See Shao Bo, *Shaoshi jianwen houlu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p.154.

is about to come back.” On October 26th in the winter, during the midnight, a tremendous flash of lightning tore the sky like a huge candle, after which Zhao Kui passed away.

趙信庵

信庵趙葵南仲，忠肅公幼子，意氣豪邁。倅濠梁，日有婢與客私，公知之，伺婢夜出，袖劍出帳中，一揮斷之人頭，棄之城溝。

辛卯，李全送死，維揚奏功。自三京之役，家居數年，至淳佑癸卯優詔起，復畀以重任，為叅預，時有奏對。日記穆陵與之密議儲事，公再三贊決，且云：“如陛下即位，便不是好樣子，尤人所難言也。”

除拜右相，葵屢上辭免，而朝旨促赴闕益急。後葵到京，以宰相須用讀書人劾之。葵已知之矣，乃徑出國門，疾馳而歸。題《南鄉子》壁間云：“束髮領西藩，百萬雄兵掌握間。召到廟堂無一事，遭彈。昨日公卿今日閑。拂曉出長安。莫待西風割面寒，羞見錢塘江上柳，何顏？瘦僕牽驢過遠山。”後有表奏曰：“霍光不學無術，每思張詠之語以懷慚，後稷所讀何書，敢以趙抃之言而自解？”是雖有激而云，然亦見機而作矣。

歸領鄉郡，推心愛民，一鞭不妄施。暇日過嶽麓精舍，舍長劉某年差長，將坐，揖曰：“相公主席。”公搖手曰：“到這裡說甚相公？”竟就賓席，取酒盡歡而去。

後居溧陽。己未難作，聞命即出。丙寅，時事粗定，告老還鄉。舟未發，以書報鄉人及兩學，士友無不歡悅。長沙兒童日呼舞於市曰：“相公歸云。”冬十月二十六日至齊安，中夕電光如燭，空中燦然有聲，遂薨。

Focusing on the anti-Jurchen military hero Zhao Fang (?-1221),²⁷⁴ the first entry selected above recounts two interesting anecdotes that show different aspects of Zhao's personality. One of these stories talks about Zhao Fang's unusual appearance, namely, that his two eyes looked in opposite directions. While this unusual appearance is already enough to scare people away, what is truly frightening is the fact that Zhao Fang might not be a human being at all. Witnessed by his servants, Zhao Fang once revealed himself to be a huge serpent while bathing in a hot tub. This story made Zhao

²⁷⁴ The *History of the Song Dynasty* contains a biography of Zhao Fang in Chapter 403.

Fang's fame even more well-known, whereupon he was called the "snake demon." Of course, the story may not be entirely true. But the fabrication of the story itself is telling of how Zhao Fang's prowess was awed by his subordinates and enemies. In contrast to this kind of demonic mystification in the first story, the second story shows us a much more "humanistic" aspect of Zhao Fang's personality. According to the story, Zhao Fang was once helped by Xin Qiji (1140-1207) when he began his political career. After Xin Qiji died, his son became a member of Zhao's staff. At that time, everybody expected Zhao Fang to treat Xin's son with special care, but to their surprise, not only was Xin's son treated more harshly, but he also was constantly monitored and pressed to do better. After three years of service, Xin Qiji's son finally got the chance to leave. The day before his departure, Zhao Fang invited his family to his house, whereupon he revealed the true reason for having training him so strictly. Zhao told Xin's son that the harsh treatment was the only way that he could repay Xin Qiji's kindness, for it would prevent Xin's son from leaning too much on his special relationship with Zhao and forgetting his proper duty. Now that Xin's son was leaving his office, Zhao managed to get him seven recommendation letters and sent them to the central government. What Xin's son needed to do now was to simply take the travel money that Zhao had prepared for him and go to assume his new office. It was not until that time that Xin Qiji's son realized Zhao Fang's thoughtfulness in the past few years. Unlike most people who would repay the debt of gratitude to their friends with nice words and small gifts, Zhao reciprocated Xin Qiji's friendship through the strict training and guidance of the latter's son so that he could always be on the right track. For Zhao Fang, this was the only thing that a righteous person should do to requite his friend.

In addition to prowess and loyalty to friends, there are many other commendable qualities that we can find in the life and personality of local military commanders. This can be seen from the second entry quoted above. The entry concentrates on another heroic figure in the Southern Song, Meng Gong (1195—1246),²⁷⁵ whose name became widely known after he led an army that participated in

²⁷⁵ Meng Gong's biography can be found in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 412.

the destruction of the Jin dynasty in 1234. Meng Gong was a man of both courage and ideas. According to the entry, he often invited his subordinates to his camp at night and chatted with them about almost everything. In this way, he gained knowledge of all the things that were happening around him. In spite of the openness of their conversation, however, Meng Gong would not allow his subordinates to disclose and attack other people's private affairs. This in turn earned him the trust of his soldiers. Because of Meng's extraordinary talent at controlling his troops, he remained one of the most vigilant and successful commanders throughout his military career. His bravery and righteousness, as well as his openness and integrity, earned him great respect from his subordinate. It is worth pointing out here that such bravery, righteousness, openness, and integrity are something that we can seldom find in the portraits of those domineering ministers at court in *Qiantang yishi*. The text deliberately depicts these two groups of officials as sharply contrastive to each other, with the regional military commanders standing for the bright side of the picture, while the domineering civil ministers represent an aspect of Southern Song history that is filled with dirty power struggles and covert schemes.

The third entry selected here tells of Zhao Kui (1186-1266), Zhao Fang's youngest son. Spending almost his entire childhood fighting with his father at the border, Zhao Kui had long been known as a valiant soldier and a capable general. According to the description in the entry, Zhao was also a straightforward person who could not tolerate any misconduct. His short temper can be seen from his execution of his maid servant upon knowing of her adultery with his guest retainer. In spite of his fame and military accomplishment, Zhao Kui's political career was filled with ebbs and flows. In 1249, he was appointed by the emperor as the Right Grand Councilor. Though he insisted on declining the appointment, the court pressed him to come to assume his new office. By the time Zhao arrived at the capital, however, he was informed that he had been impeached and dismissed from the position to which he was just appointed. The reason was that someone argued that a Grand Counselor should be a scholar (*dushu ren* 讀書人, lit. a person who reads). The groundlessness of this impeachment could not be

more obvious, once we know that Zhao Kui was well-known for his mastery in painting and poetry, two things that testified to his refined education and literary taste.²⁷⁶ But such a groundless impeachment was nonetheless accepted by the emperor, making the whole thing appear even more absurd. Although the text does not say who actually made the impeachment, it should not prevent us from suspecting that the whole thing, from Zhao Kui's unsought appointment to his unfounded dismissal, may be a telling example of the intense factional struggle prevalent in Southern Song history, an example that also tells us much about the entrenched enmity between the war and peace parties, between the domineering civil officials and the largely marginalized local military generals.

The “political trio” played out by the three interrelated “voices” of the emperors, the domineering ministers at court and the regional military commanders provides us with a useful angle to look into the otherwise loosely structured and tenuously connected text in Chapter Two to Chapter Six in *Qiantang yishi*. Viewed from this angle, the text reveals to us a picture of Southern Song politics that is generally unpromising. In this picture, the authority of the emperors has been largely usurped and manipulated by domineering ministers at court. Concerned more about their own personal power than the wellbeing of the country, these domineering ministers spend most of the time devising secret plans to control state power, dispel their opponents, and maximize their political gains. The depiction of this vicious and self-interested conduct forms a sharp contrast with the prowess, generosity, and rectitude that characterize the heroic portrayal of the regional military commanders. But unfortunately, the latter's commendable personalities and achievements cannot change their marginalized status in this unpromising picture of Southern Song history. In spite of the fact that the Song Empire's safety and prosperity relied heavily on the bravery and loyalty of the regional

²⁷⁶ Zhao Kui was very good at painting and poetry-writing. *Quan Song shi* 全宋詩 (A Complete Collection of Shi Poetry in the Song) contains a collection of his poems in Chapter 3022. *Quan Song ci* 全宋詞 (A Complete Collection of Ci Poetry in the Song) also includes one of his *ci* poems. One of his well-known paintings titled “Du Fu *shiyi tu*” 杜甫詩意圖 (A Painting of the Poetic Meaning in One of Du Fu's Poems) is preserved until today.

military commanders, their influence is by and large confined to the battlefield and has little impact on the policies made in the central government.

As demonstrated above, this unpromising picture of Southern Song politics is presented to us not only thematically through the content of the entries, but also formally through the selection and organization of these entries in the text. What makes Chapter Two to Six of the text special is the revealing match between the message that the text strives to convey and the textual form through which the message is conveyed. Because of this match, the dwindling power of the Southern Song emperors can be discerned not only from the content of the relevant entries, but also from these entries' scarce and scattered appearance in the text. Similarly, the aggrandizing influence of the domineering ministers can also be perceived from their overwhelming and concentrated textual presence, just as the marginalized status of the regional military commanders in history is represented by their equally marginalized placement in the text. This conformity between content and form makes this part of the text informative in both ways. As readers, we need to pay close attention to not only what the text says, but also how it says it, for what remains unsaid in the content of the text is often said by its form.

Needless to say, for an informed reader, this "political trio," as well as the unpromising picture presented through it, may not always be the most faithful representation of the historical reality of the Southern Song. After all, we can only gain access to history through its textual representation, and this textual representation, no matter how faithful that it claims or strives to be, cannot be equalized with the reality of history. Having said this, we have to admit that even as a textual representation, the "political trio" still cannot account for the full complexity of history itself. A careful reader may have already noticed the derivativeness of this "political trio," as similar narratives about the weakening imperial authority, power usurpation by treacherous court ministers, and marginalization of military officials can often be found in other historical or literary accounts on Southern Song history. Rather than being a sign of lack of originality, this derivativeness is in fact a by-product of the conflict between our

eagerness to make sense of history and our inability to match our understanding of history with its complexity. That is to say, it is through a derivative narrative on history like the “political trio” that we start to convince ourselves that we can understand history through its so-called “structure” or “rules,” but in the process of doing so, we also inevitably lose sight of things that may counter or even overturn our historical vision. The charm of Liu Yiqing’s text, viewed in this light, rests in the fact that it allows us to keep an eye on both the usefulness and limitation of the historical narrative that we choose. Reading through Chapters Two to Chapter Six, we are constantly reminded that the “political trio” is but one of the many ways in which we can probe into the otherwise heterogeneous and disjointed surface of the text. Although the text allows, at some point even encourages, our reading of this “political trio” into it, it does not totally sanction it. On the contrary, the effectiveness of the “political trio” is often challenged by the presence of inconsistent or even contradictory details in the text, thereby constantly pressing us to stay alert about the very limitation of our reading.

A Mosaic Portrait

In the first three chapters of *Qiantang yishi*, the narrative is by and large evenly distributed between the historical accounts of different political and military figures in the Southern Song. Even the most influential ones like Han Tuozhou and Shi Miyuan usually do not receive special textual attention that exceeds three entries. From Chapter Four on, however, this distributed narrative starts to undergo some fundamental changes. The textual spotlight starts to be turned towards and concentrated on one person, Jia Sidao, a controversial figure in Southern Song history whose personal and political life has often been closely tied to, and even held responsible for, the fall of the dynasty. Out of the seventy-seven entries included in Chapter Four through Chapter Seven, forty-two are related to Jia Sidao. Of the forty-two entries, twenty-nine are placed in Chapter Four and Five (the two chapters contain a total of thirty-five entries), making the two chapters in many ways “one man’s story.”

This nearly exclusive focus on Jia Sidao, as argued in the previous section, can be regarded as a textual indicator of his powerful influence in Southern Song history. But given the fact that many other persons who were no less influential than Jia do not receive the same textual attention as he does, there may be more that we can learn from Liu Yiqing's particular interest in Jia's life and political career. Indeed, it seems that Liu Yiqing was not content with just *writing about* Jia Sidao as he did with other political figures in Southern Song history. The extensive and concentrated depiction of Jia Sidao's private and public life in Chapters Four to Seven looks in many ways more biographical than anecdotal. Reading this depiction alongside with Jia Sidao's official biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, we will find many similarities between the two. However, these similarities do not mean that we can simply equate the two. Rather than a carefully tailored biography that provides us with a more consistent and coherent narrative on a person's life, this part of *Qiantang yishi* in fact looks more like a "biography in the making," in the sense that it presents us with more chances to look into the ruptures in the text that tear up the narrative rather than make it seamless. What this "biography-in-the-making" produces is an account where traces of its production have not been and cannot be totally covered up. Reading this account, we are thus given the choice to either look at the big picture or dwell upon the details that cannot be entirely subdued or assimilated by the big picture.

The best way to look into this "biography-in-the-making" of Jia Sidao is to carefully examine all the relevant entries included in this part of the text. Such a task is obviously impractical given the limited space of the present study. What I can do here instead is to provide a succinct summary of each of the entries where the name "Jia Sidao" appears. It needs to be clarified from the outset that this summary is not intended to be exhaustive. My focus is on Jia Sidao and Jia Sidao only. For convenience of discussion, each summary is labeled by its chapter number and entry number in the respective chapter.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ Full translations of some of these entries are also provided in other parts of this dissertation.

1. Entry 4.1: In 1259, Möngke Khan launched a massive attack against the Southern Song. His army crossed the Yangtze River and besieged Erzhou. The Grand Councilor of the time, Ding Daquan, deliberately held back this news from Emperor Lizong, and the latter did not know until Wu Qian 吳潛 (1196-1262) told him about it. Emperor Lizong appointed Jia Sidao as Pacification Commissioner at Jinghu to reinforce Er'zhou. Later Jia was promoted to Right Grand Councilor while he was in the army. Möngke Khan died in battle and the siege of Er'zhou was lifted.
2. Entry 4.3: In 1259 after Möngke Khan died at Diaoyu cheng, Jia Sidao secretly sent an envoy to the Mongol military camp to negotiate a truce. Jia promised a large amount of annual tribute to the Mongols in exchange for peace. The Mongolian army retreated and the siege of Ezhou was lifted.
3. Entry 4.4: Due to his jealousy of local military commanders, Jia Sidao ordered a nationwide audit of their financial expenses. Because of this financial audit, many local military commanders, along with their families, were sent to prison and persecuted to death. At that time, Xie Bingde assembled an army of two thousand men and pleaded to lower the taxes on the recruitment money so that he could buy rice for his soldiers. Jia Sidao, however, not only ordered a financial audit on the recruitment money but also tried to impose taxes on the rice. Xie had no choice but to pay this out his of own pocket.
4. Entry 4.5: After Ding Daquan (1191-1263) was demoted and killed at Tengzhou in 1263, Jia Sidao tried to tempt his son to give himself up but did not succeed. Previously Jia also did the same thing to the former Grand Councilor, Xie Fangshu 謝方叔 (?-1272), telling him that the emperor missed him and needed him back. Xie trusted Jia's words and almost got killed.
5. Entry 4.6: Wu Qian, who replaced Ding Daquan as Grand Councilor, was impeached by Jia Sidao and demoted to Xunzhou. Before that, Wu Qian once assigned Jia Sidao to Huangzhou, a pivotal military fortress near the border.

Jia thought that Wu was intended to place him in a deathtrap and nursed a grudge against him. After Wu was demoted, Jia sent a military clerk to poison him. After several failed attempts, the military clerk finally managed to invite Wu Qian to his house to have dinner with him, after which Wu died of an unknown illness.

6. Entry 4.7: After Jia Sidao became Grand Councilor, he managed to dispel powerful eunuchs from the court and prevent imperial relatives from interfering with government affairs. While his achievement in this aspect was recognized by his contemporaries, he was also criticized for being too harsh and revengeful. Jia ordered letter boxes set up for people to place accusations of other people in. He also implemented strict laws, encouraging political prosecution.
7. Entry 4.8: In 1260, Li Tan 李壇 (?-1262), son of the former defected Southern Song general Li Quan 李全 (?-1231), sent letters to Jia Sidao expressing his intention to return to the Southern Song. In 1262, Li Tan's request was accepted and he was reappointed as a military commander in the Southern Song. On the day when Li Tai officially returned, an imperial poem was bestowed upon Jia Sidao complimenting his contribution in this.
8. Entry 4.9: In 1238, Jia Sidao was allowed to take the palace examination only because his sister was an imperial consort at the time. After he became Grand Councilor in 1260, Jia passed strict rules regarding taking provincial and palace examinations. These rules caused widespread complaints among the examinees. Someone wrote a poem mocking Jia Sidao, saying that he could never have become Grand Councilor had the same strict rules been implemented when he took the examinations.
9. Entry 4.10: In 1260 when Jia Sidao just became Grand Councilor, somebody wrote a poem admonishing him to hold up the "sky" firmly because many other people were watching him with cold stares.

10. Entry 4.11: Xiang Shibi 向士璧 (?-1261), a military commander at Changsha, was vilified by Pi Quanlu 皮泉淥 (dates unknown) who had had a personal grudge against him. Jia Sidao took this opportunity to have his henchmen impeach Xiang at court. Xiang was then demoted and persecuted to death.
11. Entry 4.12: Liu Zheng 劉整 (1212-1275), a military commander at Luzhou, defected to the Mongols in 1262. Prior to that, Jia Sidao instructed Deng Xing 鄧興 (date unknown), one of Liu Zheng's former enemies, to send a clerk to audit Liu Zheng's military expenses. Liu was scared and tried to bribe Zheng, but was refused. After Xiang Shibi was persecuted to death by Jia Sidao, Liu Zheng became even more fearful and decided to defect to the Mongols.
12. Entry 4.13: In order to cover up his secret negotiations with the Mongols made in 1259, Jia Sidao detained the Mongolian emissary, who came to collect the annual tribute promised by Jia, in Zhenzhou. This incident enraged the Mongols and caused them to launch another attack against the Southern Song.
13. Entry 4.14: Chen Cangyi 陳藏一 wrote a satirical song lyric about snow to criticize Jia Sidao's usurpation of state power and his persecution of righteous officials.
14. Entry 4.15: During the Xianchun reign period [1265-1274] of Emperor Duzong, Wang Lixin 汪立信 wrote a letter to Jia Sidao, suggesting three plans that could be used to save the Southern Song. The first plan advises Jia to move all military forces to the borders in order to defend against Mongol attack. The second plan suggested that Jia should send the detained Mongolian emissary back, bribe him with good money to make him persuade the Mongol emperor not to attack the Southern Song. The last one advised Jia to surrender to the Mongols if the first two plans failed. Obviously, the purpose of the last plan was to force Jia Sidao to use the first two. But Jia was enraged by this last plan, and had Wang Lixin removed from office.

Later when the Mongolian army crossed the Yangtze River, Jia Sidao met Wang Lixin again, and cried to him in regret for failing to listen to his suggestions. Someone wrote a poem to mock Jia Sidao, saying that his pettiness eventually led him to use the third plan suggested by Wang Lixin.

15. Entry 5.1: In 1262, two officers from the Palace Bureau memorialized the emperor to implement the Public Field Law. Viewing it as an effective way to fill the national treasury and strengthen the military, Jia Sidao became a big supporter of this proposal. The emperor himself was hesitant at first and wanted to wait for a while, but Jia Sidao threatened to resign if the law was not implemented. The emperor had to approve the law, but he advised that it should start from the Zhexi Circuit (the economic center of the Southern Song) and proceed from there to the rest of the country. In order to promote the Public Field Law, Jia Sidao sold thousands of acres of his own fields in the Zhexi circuit. Jia's example was then followed by other imperial members and government officials, and people dared not utter any objection against the law anymore. The only exception was Xu Jingsun 徐經孫 (1192-1273), Minister of Rites, who memorialized the emperor about the disadvantages of the Public Field Law. Because of his memorial, the implementation of the Public Field Law was eventually confined only to the Zhexi circuit. The original intention of the Public Field Law was to restrain the rich and powerful landowners. But as the law was gradually enforced, even moderate and small landowners were affected by it.
16. Entry 5.2: To enforce the Public Field Law, the government assigned special officers and county functionaries to supervise its implementation.
17. Entry 5.3: The enforcement of the Public Field Law led to the use of force in some areas. Some local governors were impeached and punished for failing to effectively implement the law. Public complaints against this law increased.

18. Entry 5.4: Every year, designated officials would collect grain levies from the public fields to fill the national granary. For every levy collected from the public fields, there was twenty percent discount, which means that local officials only needed to turn in eight *dou* of grains to fulfill the one *dan* levy requirement (1 *dan* = 10 *dou*). But some local officials boosted their numbers and reported an amount that far exceeded their actual collection. When they were asked to turn in the reported grain, they could only force the landowners to fill in the gap. In some places, if the public fields were infertile or the tenants were hard to deal with, the officials would ask the landowners to change them. All these things had caused numerous trouble for the landowners.
19. Entry 5.5: Pi Longrong 皮龍榮 (?-1265), a former courtier in Emperor Lizong's reign, retired to Tanzhou in order to avoid being persecuted by Jia Sidao. One day Emperor Duzong asked about him. Fearing that the emperor was going to reinstate him, Jia Sidao secretly instructed one of his followers, Lei Fen 雷奮, to impeach Pi Longrong, accusing him of being corrupted and arrogant. Pi was then demoted again and banished to Hengzhou, where he was forced to commit suicide by drinking poisoned wine.
20. Entry 5.6: In 1264, Jia Sidao ordered the issue of a new paper currency to replace the old one. The layout on the new currency resembled the Chinese character "Jia," which was Jia Sidao's surname. On the upper half of the currency, there were some decorative patterns that looked like wagon covers and banners. People associated the decorations on the currency with a poem written by Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770) to Ge Shuhan 哥舒翰 (?-757), a Tang (618-907) Turkic general who was killed by An Lushan 安祿山 (703-757). Because of the close connection between the Turks and Mongols, people regarded this as an omen of the Mongols' later invasion of the Southern Song.
21. Entry 5.7: Xie Bingde 謝枋得 (1226-1289) was banished under Jia Sidao's order because of his open attacks on government policies.

22. Entry 5.8: After Jia Sidao had state power in control, he ordered the implementation of the “Land Demarcation and Measurement Law” (a law that aimed to increase fiscal income by imposing precise measurement and strict taxation upon the land) which he had failed to implement during Emperor Lizong’s reign. Two satirical poems were written about this event. One was a *shi* poem commenting on the absurdity of Jia Sidao’s land measurement policy because two-third of the Song’s territory was already taken by the foreign states in the north. The other was a *ci* poem criticizing the bad timing of Jia’s policy because the entire Song nation was then facing imminent danger of foreign invasion.
23. Entry 5.9: In the seventh month, 1264, a comet (which was regarded as an omen of impending disaster) was seen in the sky. Government officials used this opportunity to press the emperor to abolish the Public Field Law, which they believed was the source of coming disaster. Having heard about this, Jia Sidao threatened to resign again. Emperor Lizong persuaded Jia to stay, saying that he had already been warned of all the possible troubles that the law might cause. Now that the law had already been implemented and paying the country’s military expenses depended on it, Jia should stick to it and not let himself be easily frustrated by people’s complaints and criticism. The comet later turned out to be a sign of Emperor Lizong’s death.
24. Entry 5.14: In 1266, a few scholars in Lin’an submitted a letter accusing Jia Sidao of monopolizing imperial power, harming the people, and jeopardizing the state. Enraged by this letter, Jia Sidao secretly ordered another scholar to accuse them of using the color gold to paint the board in their study house, and had all of them banished.
25. Entry 5.15: After Jia Sidao presided over the state, he only used timid scholars and people that were easy to control in the Censorate. They dared not to comment on important state policies and only picked on petty officials in distant areas or small places as their target of criticism.

26. Entry 5.16: In 1267, Jia Sidao was appointed Manager of Important State and Military Affairs. After that, Jia Shidao only came to have an audience with the emperor every three days and attended the imperial lecture three times a month. Because the new emperor just ascended the throne, he treated Jia with great respect and bestowed upon him a mansion at the Ge Hill beside West Lake. Jia spent most of his time in this mansion. In spite of his absence from court, Jia still had state power firmly in his control. All important events or government decisions must be made known to him first. Later when the other two Grand Councilors retired, Jia started to control the government remotely from his lakeshore mansion.
27. Entry 5.17: Jia Sidao had a pavilion built in his mansion which he named “Half-Leisure Pavilion.” Some sycophant wrote a *ci* poem praising Jia’s leisurely life. Dissidents accused Jia of jeopardizing the state by living a leisurely life at a time when the entire needed him to run around and perform his duty as Grand Councilor.
28. Entry 5.19: Jia Sidao invited Ma Tingluan 馬廷鸞 (1222-1289) and Ye Mengding 葉夢鼎 (1200-1279), two Grand Councilors of the time, to his house to play a drinking game. The game required each one of them to choose an object, give this object to a person, who had to requite him with a poetic couplet. Jia Sidao’s object was a chess game, which he gave to a chess player, and the chess player requited him with a poetic couplet which said that he had not met a true rival ever since he left his retreat, and he would be lenient on people whenever it was possible. Ma Tingluan’s object was a fishing rod, which he gave to a fisherman. In return the fisherman sent him a poetic couplet, which said that the night was quiet, the water was cold and the fish would not take the bait, therefore his boat must return, empty of fish but full of moonlight. Ye Mengding’s object was a furrow, which he presented to a farmer. In return, the farmer sent him a poetic couplet, which said that all he wished was to have an inch of soil which he could leave to his

posterity to plough. Having heard Ma and Ye's poetic couplets, Jia Sidao stopped the game unhappily.

29. Entry 5.20: One day Jia Sidao was enjoying the sight of West Lake in his mansion, when one of his accompanying concubines saw two young men on the bank. Attracted by the young men's beauty, the concubine cried out involuntarily, "How beautiful they are!" Upon hearing this, Jia Sidao asked the concubine if she would marry either of the young men. The concubine said she would. After a while, a servant brought forth a box. Jia Sidao told his concubines that this was the engagement gift that he prepared for the new couple. When the box was opened, they saw the concubine's head in it. The latter part of the entry contains a poem commenting on Jia Sidao's Public Field Law.
30. Entry 6.6: (When Xiangyang was besieged by the Mongols in 1268,) Jia Sidao volunteered to go to the battlefield to supervise the army, but secretly he also instructed his followers to urge the emperor to keep him from going.
31. Entry 6.7: In 1269, Grand Councilor Ye Mengting submitted his resignation but was denied. He nonetheless left the capital. Jiang Wanli 江萬里 (1198-1275) and Ma Tingluan were appointed as new Grand Councilors, but Jiang Wanli could not get along with Jia Sidao, and eventually resigned.
32. Entry 6.8: Jia Sidao was a debauched youth. Even after he became Grand Councilor, he still frequented the brothels from time to time. Other Southern Song officials also became involved in scandals like this, and the prosecution of these scandals became a popular way used by the censors to fulfill their duty. As for the truly wicked persons in the government and harmful events, no one dared to say a word.
33. Entry 6.9: Other than turning in several letters of resignation, Jia Sidao could do nothing to relieve the siege at Xiangyang, which had lasted for nearly three years by 1270. One day, when the emperor asked about the siege, Jia Sidao lied to him by saying that the Mongols had already retreated. He then

asked the emperor for his source of information. Having found out that the information was leaked to the emperor by one of his maid servants, Jia framed her and had her killed under the emperor's orders. After that, no one dared to say anything about the war at the border.

34. Entry 6.10: In 1272, Emperor Duzong went out to offer sacrifices to the ancestors. On his way back, there was a heavy rain. Hu Xianzu 胡顯祖, an older brother of Imperial Consort Hu, suggested the emperor follow the precedent of Emperor Ningzong, who returned to the palace in rain in an imperial sedan. He also told this to Jia Sidao, but Jia wanted to wait until the rain stopped. Hu Xianzu replied to the emperor, saying that Jia Sidao had already consented. The emperor therefore returned in spite of the rain. After Jia Sidao knew about this, he threatened to resign again. In order to persuade Jia to stay, the emperor had to dismiss Hu Xianzu from office and sent his sister, Imperial Consort Hu, out of the court to a nunnery.
35. Entry 6.12: In order to put a curb on the increasing cases of fraud and cheating in the civil service examinations, Jia Sidao ordered all the examinees to register their names in their provinces and sign on the registration paper in their own handwriting for future verification. This regulation had been put in force since 1270. Irritated by this regulation, someone wrote a *shi* poem complaining that Jia Sidao was unable to relieve the siege at Xiangyang, but instead spent his time trying to pick on the examinees. A student in the Imperial University also wrote a *ci* poem blaming all the troubles on Jia Sidao's examination policies.
36. Entry 6.14: In 1273, Jia Sidao volunteered again to go to the battlefield to supervise the army. He also accused the military generals of making unfounded claims about their lack of money or manpower, saying that he had solid records regarding their military expenses. Later when Jia Sidao returned to his house, he dreamt of a man with a round face and a square mouth, who came to tell him that his earlier accusation was too harsh. The

man also told Jia that he could stay in his position for another three more years, and six years later the man himself would also disappear from human world. Jia woke up enraged, without knowing the meaning of the dream. Three years after, Jia Sidao was dismissed from office. Six years after, the currency that was circulated in the Southern Song was also abolished. It turned out that the man was in fact the “god of money.”

37. Entry 6.16: After the fall of Xiangyang and Fancheng in 1273, Jia Sidao volunteered several times to go to the battle front to supervise the army, saying that he was the only person who could save the situation. But secretly he instructed his followers to memorialize the emperor, saying that Jia should not leave the emperor’s side for a single day.
38. Entry 7.5: In 1274, Jia Sidao was appointed as General Commander, responsible for leading the Southern Song army to resist the Mongolian attack. Jia had no intention to engage the Mongols until he heard about Liu Zheng’s death. In 1275, before Jia Sidao left the capital, he presented the emperor a Memorial of Military Expedition.
39. Entry 7.6: On the 17th of the first month, 1275, Jia Sidao sent an envoy to the Mongol military camp to beg for a truce. The envoy returned with an invitation from the Mongolian general, asking Jia Sidao to come in person. Jia sent two other persons to go instead. The negotiations ended up in failure. The Mongolian army the third monthed further south and the Southern Song army could not hold them back.
40. Entry 7.9: On the 22nd of the first month, 1275, Jia Sidao’s army was routed at Wuhu. Jia tried to stimulate the morale of his soldiers by promising them promotion and increased salaries. But no one cared about this and the army was eventually defeated. Jia Sidao fled to Yangzhou, but the commander of the city refused to let him in.
41. Entry 7.16: On the 3rd of the third month, 1275, Jia Sidao was dismissed from office. The emperor issued an announcement listing Jia’s faults. On the 14th,

Jia Sidao sent a clerk to return the seal of General Commander. In May, the Empress Dowager issued an edict, urging Jia Sidao to return to his hometown. Left Grand Councilor, Wang Yue 王燾 (1199-1275), impeached Jia Sidao for deliberate delay in his departure from the capital.

42. Entry 7.17: On the 12th of the sixth month, 1275, the Censorate presented a memorial accusing Jia Sidao of monopolizing state power and jeopardizing the country. The emperor demoted Jia Sidao again and moved him to Jianning. Upon knowing this, Weng He 翁合 (dates unknown) memorialized the emperor, saying that Jia Sidao should be banished to an even more remote place, because people in every place would feel ashamed if they had to let Jia stay with them. The emperor issued another edict banishing Jia Sidao to Zhangzhou (where he was killed by the escort officer).

Reading these entries side by side with Jia Sidao's official biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty* will reveal to us interesting connections between the two.²⁷⁸ These connections are manifested first and foremost on the content level. Of the forty-two entries discussed above, twenty-five contain information and stories that have been incorporated, sometimes edited and sometimes almost verbatim, in the official biography of Jia Sidao, taking up nearly two-thirds of the biographical text. Given the relatively late compiling date and the preparation done before the compilation of the *History of the Song Dynasty*,²⁷⁹ it is possible that Jia Sidao's biographer might have known and even used some of the materials in *Qiantang yishi*. At least, he must have come across the same source of information as Liu Yiqing had, for both texts rely heavily on the historical materials preserved from the previous dynasty.

In addition to their similar content, the two texts also relate to each other in terms of their structure and organization. The following numerical sequence gives us a

²⁷⁸ See the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 474.

²⁷⁹ See the Introduction in the *History of the Song Dynasty*. According to the Introduction, the compilation of the *History of the Song Dynasty* started in 1243 and finished in 1345. But the preparatory work started much earlier, dating back to the beginning of the Yuan dynasty.

general idea of how the historical materials concerning Jia Sidao contained in *Qiantang yishi* have been placed in the text of Jia Sidao's biography:

32,8,1,2,5,3,10,12,6,15,18,17,20,23,24,22,26,34,30,37,38,39,40,41,42

(These are the numbers of the entry summaries provided above).

As we can see from this sequence, the order of the materials in *Qiantang yishi* is not fundamentally different from that of appearance in Jia Sidao's biography. The biggest discrepancy that we may notice here is the placement of Entry 32 (6.8), Entry 8 (4.9), and Entry 6 (4.7) in the biographical text. The reason for this discrepancy is that all of these entries contain information about the early years of Jia Sidao's life and/or political career. Other than this notable discrepancy, the two texts show great similarity in terms of their placement and organization of materials. As we look deeper into the two texts, we will find that the primary reason for this similarity is because both texts use a chronological order as a backbone of their structure. The presence of this chronological order, in both texts, indicates a desire to construct a meaningful continuum, a continuum that can not only help the texts organize the otherwise fragmentary and disjointed facts and stories, but also enable them to generate an intelligible pattern, a noticeable structure, or a revealing coherence, through which the text can acquire a purpose of existence beyond its mere collection of information. It is in this conscious construction of the meaningful continuum that we can discern the "biographical impetus" innate in both texts, in the sense that the two texts, in spite of their generic and stylistic difference, are both trying to tell us not simply *stories about a man*, but *a story of a man*. The difference between the two types of stories lies in the fact that the former only contains loosely structured anecdotes and gossips, which are used more to satisfy our craving for interesting stories than our desire in knowing about the person involved in them, whereas the latter aims to bring the scattered stories about a person into a cohesive narrative, to make into form a recognizable portrayal of the person around whom the stories revolve. Interestingly, although the entries about Jia Sidao

included in *Qiantang yishi* appear to be like, and are often believed to be like, the former type of *stories*, upon scrutiny we will find that they are in fact the latter type of *story*. They are intended to tell us about Jia Sidao the person rather than to just relate stories to him, and for this they are indeed more “biographical” than “anecdotal.”

This “biographical impetus” in these entries related to Jia Sidao can also be seen from the critical perspective imbedded in them regarding Jia’s personal and political life. This critical perspective reminds us of the existence of a carefully planned or pre-conceived argument behind the text’s collection of historical facts and stories. Presented through this critical perspective, these facts and stories are no longer just facts and stories, but have been turned into evidence and proof used by Liu Yiqing to convince his readers of the validity of his conception of Jia Sidao’s life and personality. If we value Susan Tridgell’s observation that all biographies are more like arguments than transparent containers of facts,²⁸⁰ then we shall indeed call these facts and stories “biographical,” in the sense that they are intended not only to inform us, but also to convince us of the truthfulness of their description. The same critical perspective can also be found in the official biography of Jia Sidao, suggesting another level of similarity between the two texts.

I hope by now it is clear that the entries about Jia Sidao should by no means be treated only as a collection of historical facts and stories. Through their constant attempt to construct a meaningful continuum and their conscious adoption of a critical perspective, these entries demonstrate great resemblance to the official biography of Jia Sidao included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*. However, this resemblance does not mean that the two texts can be equated. The differences or even contrasts between these texts are obvious, and because of these differences, even if we want to read the entries in *Qiantang yishi* as forming some sort of biography in their collectivity, they can be at best called a “biography-in-the-making.” It goes without saying that what

²⁸⁰ See Susan Tridgell’s *Understanding Our Selves: The Dangerous Art of Biography* (Oxford, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2004), Chapter one. In the earlier section of the chapter, Tridgell uses the examples of three different biographies of Bertrand Russell to show that the ideal of a definitive, objective biography is impossible, that how a biography is written is as important as what is written in it, and that any biography is as argumentative as much as it is informative.

this “in-the-making” status indicates is the entries’ lack or shortage of some important biographical features, but this lack or shortage by no means make them in any way inferior to a standard biography. On the contrary, the “in-the-making” status makes the entries about Jia Sidao a more interesting biographical text to read. Unlike the official biography, this “biography-in-the-making” provides us with more freedom and opportunities to savor the discordances and discrepancies in the text, which are usually covered up in a well-written biography. It is a text that invites us to dwell and ponder upon its ruptures rather than its continuities, its inconsistencies rather than its coherence. Through these ruptures and inconsistencies, the text brings our attention to things that would normally pass unnoticed in our reading of a well-structured and well-written biography. We are thus encouraged to look at not so much a unified textual portrait of the biographee, but rather the traces, strokes, or “footprints” that have been left uncovered in this portrait. In other words, in reading the “biography-in-the-making,” we are looking neither at a completed puzzle nor at the unsorted puzzle pieces, but rather the very process through which the puzzle is being pieced together.

One of the major differences that we will notice between the entries in *Qiantang yishi* and Jia Sidao’s official biography is their different treatment of the heterogeneous details, opinions and voices in the text. As we have discussed earlier, in their depiction of Jia Sidao’s personal and political life, both texts adopt a critical perspective. But how this perspective is revealed to us in the two texts is quite different. In Jia Sidao’s biography, this critical perspective has been largely assimilated and naturalized into the narrative. The text generally maintains a factual style of narrative in order to conceal its judgmental tone, and it also deliberately avoids selecting or dwelling too much on things or comments that could otherwise undermine its apparent objectivity or expose its selectivity. In contrast, the entries in *Qiantang yishi* do not conceal, but sometimes even highlight their tone of judgment, moments of subjectivity, and traces of selection. Functioning collectively as a “biography-in-the-making,” these entries, while striving to present us an intelligible portrait of Jia Sidao, also invite us to look at the very process through which this portrait is made. It is in this process that we often discern the

existence of various diverse voices, contrastive opinions, and conflictive details that do not always conform to the text's search for unity and continuity.

The Implementation of the Financial Audit [Chapter 3, Entry 4]

Jia Sidao was jealous of the local commanders at the time, so he passed the Law of Financial Audit in order to vilify them. Xiang Shibi governed Tanzhou, and his expenses were audited by the commander at Zhexi. Zhao Kui governed the Huai region, and the audit against him was entrusted to Ma Guangzu, Commander of Jiankang. Shi Yanzi, Xu Minzi, Du shu, and Li Zengbo, who were commanders of the Jiang, Huai area, and Guang regions, all suffered from money problems caused by the audit. Shi turned in the requested money, but his wife and children were put in prison anyway. Xu, Li, Du were all thrown into prison. Du died, but [the government] still pursued [his family] for the money [he owed.] At that time, Xie Bingde at Jiangdong led Deng Chuan and his two thousand soldiers to revolt. Xie was promoted to Archivist in the Ministry of War. Tax was reduced on his recruitment money and rice was provided to his soldiers. Jia Sidao not only ordered the auditing of the recruitment money but also imposed taxes on the rice provided. Xie Bingde paid ten thousand *chu* out of his own pocket, but could not afford the rest. He wrote a memorial to Jia Sidao, which said, "A thousand taels of gold were spent on buying a stick of wood; the purpose was just to win over people's trust.²⁸¹ Dismissing a city-conqueror simply because of two eggs; how could this be made known to the neighboring countries?²⁸²" He was then exempted.

行打算法

賈似道忌害一時任事之閫臣，行打算法以污之。向士璧守潭，費用委浙西閫打算；趙葵守淮，則委建康閫馬光祖打算。江閫史岩之、徐敏

²⁸¹ This refers to a story recorded in the biography of Shang Yang 商鞅 (ca. 390-338) included in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji*, Chapter 68, pp. 2133-2147. According to the story, when Shang Yang was about to implement the New Laws, he had a stick erected outside the south city gate, and promised that anyone who could move this stick to the north city gate would be awarded ten taels of gold. No one dared to move the stick at the beginning. Shang Yang then raised the award to fifty taels of gold. After that, one guy came out and moved the stick. And Shang Yang indeed awarded him fifty taels of gold. The reason why Shang Yang did that was because he wanted to earn the trust from the people.

²⁸² This refers to a story recorded in Kong Fu's 孔鮒 (ca. 264-208 BCE)'s *Kong congzi* 孔叢子. According to the story, Zi Si 子思 (ca. 483-420 B.C.E.) once recommended a general to the King of Wei. The King of Wei hesitated about using the general because once when the general collected taxes from the commoners, he ate two of their eggs. Zi Si advised the King of Wei that he should not refused to use a capable general just because he had some small flaws (in this case, the two eggs). See Kun Fu, *Kong congzi*. Ed. Yang Lianggong, Huang Jie, et al. (Zhongguo zixu mingzhu jicheng bianyin jijinhui, 1977), pp 41-42.

子，淮閩杜庶、廣帥李曾伯皆受監錢之苦。史亦納錢，而妻子下獄。徐、李、杜並下獄。杜死，而追錢猶未已也。時江東謝枋得率鄧傳二千人舉義，擢兵部架閣，科降招軍錢，給義兵米。似道打算招軍錢，並征所給米，枋得自償萬楮，餘無所償。乃上書賈相云：“千金為募徒木，將取信於市；二卵而棄千城，豈可聞於鄰國？”乃得免。

The Half Leisurely Pavillion [Chapter 5, Entry 17]

Emperor Duzong bestowed upon Jia Shidao a mansion near the Lake. Jia Sidao [built a pavilion in it] and named it “Half Leisure.” He also called himself “Daoist of Cloud and Water.” Every time he came back from work, he would sit meditating in the pavilion. Some sycrophant wrote him a song lyric to the tune “Tangduo ling” and Jia Sidao was extremely pleased by it. The critics said, “It was a time when even the sage had to run around in order to catch up with his work. How could Jia Sidao live his life in a half leisurely way?” The song lyric read,

A star in exile from heaven,
The black buffalo just passed the border,²⁸³
Beyond imagination this Penglai garden of immortality was
created,
Beyond the flowers, there are bamboos.
Beside the bamboos, there are mountains.

For a noble official, leisure only comes by accident.
And it is the hardest thing to get in life,
For true leisure could never be found on earth.
Half of it was taken by immortals,
The other half,
Was left for you to enjoy.”

Jia Sidao was an important government official of the time. How could he spend his day and night living a leisurely life like this? And how could the world not become worse?

半閑亭

²⁸³ The first line of the poem alludes to Li Bai 李白 (701-762), who, according his biography included in *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書, was an exiled star god from heaven. See Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), *Xin Tangshu* (A New History of the Tang Dynasty; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), chapter 202, pp. 5762-5764. The second line of the poem alludes to Laozi 老子 (ca. 580-500 B.C.E.), who rode on the back of a black buffalo and left out of the western border of China. This story can be found in Sima Qian's *Shiji*, Chapter 63, pp. 2043-2055.

度宗賜賈似道第於湖上。似道扁亭曰“半閑”，自稱“雲水道人”。每治事罷，則入亭中，習打坐。有佞之者上《糖多令》詞，大稱似道意。議者謂：“其時乃聖哲馳驚而不足之秋也，曾謂似道可以半閑自處乎？”其詞曰：“天上謫星班，青牛初度關，幻出蓬萊仙院宇，花外竹，竹邊山。軒冕倘來閑，人生閑最難，算真閑不到人間。一半神仙先占取，留一半，與公閑。”似道為國之重臣，而乃可以閑中消日月耶？天下烏得不壞？

Grand Councilor Jia Sent Out the Troops [Chapter 7, Entry 5]

In the twelfth month of the *jiaxu* year [1274], Jia Sidao was appointed as Chief Military Inspector, and Huang Wanshi and Li Yu Military Consultants. A Call-to-Arms was sent out, asking the armies to listen to the deployment from the Office of Military Inspector. The government also allocated one hundred thousand taels of gold, five hundred thousand taels of silver, and ten million strings of *guanzi* [a type of money certificate] from the Emergency Fund for Jia Sidao to use. At that time, reports from the borders became more and more urgent every day, but Jia Sidao did not have any intention to leave. It was not until he heard about Liu Zheng's death that he started to talk about dispatching the army.

On the 15th of the first month of the *yihai* year [1275], Jia Sidao presented a Memorial on Sending Out the Troops to the emperor. The summary of this memorial read, “In my old age and sickness, I suffered the adversities of our time. How can I still pull myself together and encourage myself to work hard.... I always think even though I am personally in danger, I can still push myself to make effort; even though things are urgent, they can still be solved with radical measures.... Liu Zheng the traitor had benefitted from the benevolence of our country for generations, but all of sudden he turned against us and treated us as enemies. He was but a petty coward who chased after profit every time he saw an opportunity. How could heaven have anything to do with him? During the past five to six years since Xiangyang was in danger, I donot know how many times I requested to go to the border, but the former emperor would not allow a single one of my requests. When Xiangyang was captured and Yingzhou became isolated, I again requested numerous times to go, but the former emperor still would not allow me. Shortly after I suffered a loss [in my family], but the imperial order prevented me from going back to wear the willow [to mourn for his deceased family member]. I do not remember how many times I pleaded to resign, but none of them was permitted. Privately I thought I lived up to the standard of not evading my duty in

times of war.²⁸⁴ Ever since Your Majesty ascended the throne, the situation at the border has become worse every day. I have proposed to use harsh military measures, because the river is thousands of miles long, and on the river there are dozens of military stations that are not very well connected. Unless I supervise them by myself and deal with the problems accordingly, there will be no way to prevent [the Mongol army] from crossing the river. Now it turns out that my words are unfortunately correct. If only the former emperor, the Two Palaces, and the ministers and officials at court could trust my words and follow my advice, then things would never have become this bad. But the past is past. Even if we try hard to make up for it, it is already too late. Is it still viable to hold me back? If I were held back, then I could do nothing but to keep the capital and the people safe for a day or two. This is not good for the country in the long run. I can only beg Your Majesty to allow me to follow the precedent of Wang Dao to supervise our army.²⁸⁵ However, the Mongol troops have entered our territory for more than a month. No matter how hard I try, without eating or sleeping, I cannot make the situation become better. Truly 'you cannot use an arrow that already hit the target to catch the opportunity that is still in your sight.' Compared with waiting for the Mongol army to come and do nothing, how about [Your Majesty] allows me to go out and have a life-or-death duel with the enemy? The reason for this is obvious and not difficult to understand. I can only respectfully hope that the virtue and bliss of our ancestors that has lasted for more than three hundred years does not end, and the benevolence and love of the Two Palaces can prevent me from doing anything wrong. Relying on these, as well as on my devoted and submissive heart, I believe I can accomplish my task. This is not to say that I do not care about my emaciated body. It is because I have pledged my sole loyalty [to you] so that I will stick to it till the end. I have left my three sons and three grandsons in the capital, under the care of Your Majesty, in order to show that I do not care about my family. Otherwise I would be ashamed to death if I have to live a meaningless life. I hereby present my words with my deepest sincerity and exigency. I am about to leave after presenting this memorial...."

賈相出師

²⁸⁴ The phrase "*jinge wubi*" can originally be found in *Liji* 禮記 (The Book of Rites), meaning a general who has military responsibilities should not leave the battlefield for home even if he needs to attend a funeral or wake. See Sun 孫希旦 *Xidan* anno., *Liji jijie* 禮記集解 (Collected Annotations of Liji; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), p. 549.

²⁸⁵ The story of Wang Dao (276-339) that Jia Sidao alludes to here can be found in his biography included in Fang Xuanling's *Jinshu* 晉書 (History of the Jin Dynasty; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), chapter 65, pp. 1745-1754.

甲戌十二月，以賈似道為都督軍馬，黃萬石、李珣參贊軍事，檄召諸路軍兵，聽督府調遣，于封樁庫撥金十萬兩、銀五十萬兩、關子一千萬貫，充都督公用。時邊報轉急，似道猶未有行意。聞劉整死，乃議出師。

乙亥正月十五日，似道上出師表，略曰：“臣以老病之身，遭時多艱，豈復能以驅馳自勉云云。每念身雖危，可以奮勵振；事雖急，可以激烈圖云云。逆整世受國恩，一旦反噬而仇視我。役役貪生畏死，視便則趨，天亦何有於彼哉？自襄有患，五六年間，行邊之請不知幾疏，先帝一不之許。襄陷郢單，臣憂心孔疚，請行又不知其幾疏，先帝復不之許。頃罹孔棘，詔既奪情，臣辭亦不知幾，迨不獲命。竊自附于金革無避之義。陛下踐阼以來，邊劇日駭，臣請悉力政，以江流數千里、江面數十屯，而脈絡不貫，非臣督視，隨機上下，是必有不遏其渡江者。今不幸臣言中矣。向使先帝以及兩宮、下至公卿大夫士，早以臣言為信，聽臣之出，當不使如此。往者不可諫，及今汲汲圖之，恨其晚。尚可強臣之留耶？臣留，不過使都民苟安旦暮，而非所以為宗社大計也。陛下惟命臣以王導故事，都督中外諸軍。然兵入吾境，亦既兼旬。臣苦心處置，忘寢廢食，未能少強人意。誠“以注的之矢，難留在目之機”易見。與其坐待其來，於事無補；孰若使臣決于一行，以求必勝。事理較著，有不難知者。恭惟祖宗三百餘年德澤，其來未艾，兩宮仁慈孝愛，動無闕失。臣恃此，感發信順之心，斷可憑藉以辦此事。臣羸弱之軀，非不知自愛，孤忠自誓，終始以之。臣有三子、三孫，留之京師，日依帝所，以示臣無復以家為意。否則苟免而已，寧不愧死。於斯言哉，深切迫切，拜表即行云云。”

These three entries are selected here because they provide us with a good opportunity to see how the heterogeneous voices, comments and details that have been suppressed by the narrative in Jia Sidao's official biography are disclosed and highlighted in the text of *Qiantang yishi*. The first entry, selected from Chapter Four, talks about how Jia Sidao ordered a nationwide audit on the military commanders' financial expenses and how some of the commanders were impeached and severely persecuted because of this. The major portion of the entry is presented in a plain, third-person narrative, making us believe that the text is trying to tell us nothing but the facts. However, this overall objectivity does not mean that the text is devoid of any moral judgment. From the opening statement which interprets Jia Sidao's ordering of the financial audit as being motivated by his jealousy of the military commanders, we

already know that the text is going to present us with a more or less one-sided, if not entirely biased, story. This same detail also appears in Jia Sidao's official biography but is handled very differently. Instead of providing an opening statement, as in the entry, which clearly reveals the writer's stance and judgment, the biographer adds another story that tells us about how Jia Sidao was humiliated by some military commanders during the early years of his political career.²⁸⁶ The addition of this story artfully plays down any judgment or preconception that the biographer may hold against Jia Sidao. Unlike the entry writer who revealed his dissatisfaction with Jia Sidao from the very beginning, the biographer purposely concealed his personal opinion but instead used a story to convince us that Jia's ordering of the financial audit was indeed to take revenge against the military commanders who had humiliated him in the first place.²⁸⁷ We are thus left with the impression that the biographer was doing nothing but let the fact speak for itself, an impression that will probably blind us as to the possibility that this so-called fact has already been sifted by the biographer's preconceptions and tailored to suit his writing agenda.

In contrast to the generally unified third-person narrative in the first entry, the second entry, selected from Chapter Five, allows us to see diverse views and opinions revealed through different layers of the text. At the first layer, we are made to know about the existence of two contrasting views regarding Jia Sidao's "Half Leisurely Pavilion," held respectively by the subservient sycophant and the critic(s). While the sycophant writes a eulogistic song lyric to praise Jia's leisurely life, the critic(s) complains about the inappropriateness of Jia's life-style as he was not fulfilling his duty of Grand Councilor in a time of national crisis. These two contrastive views are presented to us through a third-person narrative, which may be regarded as the third layer of the text. At the first glance, the voice of the narrator sounds quite neutral, but a careful reader

²⁸⁶ See Jia Sidao's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 474.

²⁸⁷ Historians now interpret Jia's financial audit as an effective measure to curb the military corruption of the time and to increase the state's fiscal income. For a detailed discussion of this, please see Herbert Franke's article "Chia Ssu-tao (1213-1275): A "Bad Last Minister"?" The article also offers an important, and in many ways also very convincing, defense for Jia Sidao in terms of his personality, political career, and domestic and foreign policies.

will immediately notice the narrator's use of such derogatory term as "*ning zhi zhe*" 佞之者 (lit. person who is good at flattering) to characterize the song lyric writer. The use of this term tells us much about the stance that the narrator is taking with regard to the whole matter. If the narrator's criticism still remains more or less veiled, then the critical voice of the implied author, revealed to us through the third layer of the text, cannot be more obvious. Discarding the objective mask which the narrator is assuming, the implied author steps directly into the text at the end of the entry and utters his dissatisfaction of Jia Sidao's life in leisure. This dissatisfaction set the tone for the entire entry, and it almost makes us forget that the entry is originally a multi-layered text where different voices and opinions are brought to interact with each other. What is worth pointing out here is that such an interaction of multifaceted and multi-layered voices is something that we cannot always find in a standard historical or biographical text like the official biography of Jia Sidao. In those texts, not only is the voice of the (implied) author from time to time effaced from the narrative in order to make text sound less subjective, but comments from third parties are also reduced to minimum so as to make the text appear less judgmental but more factual. Instead of standard history or biography, the other place where we may be able to find such interaction of multifaceted and multi-layered voices is a literary text such as a historical novel. But this by no means implies that we can read *Qiantang yishi* as a historical novel. We have to admit that a large portion of *Qiantang yishi* is still presented to us through a factual style of narrative. But at the same time, we cannot completely deny the existence of non-factual elements in the text. This ambiguity again testifies to the text's "in-the-making" status. Standing at the liminal stage between standard history/biography and historical novel/fiction, the text of *Qiantang yishi* possesses the potential to become both, but at the same time it also has its freedom to become neither.

The third entry selected above, originally placed in Chapter Seven, includes excerpts from a Memorial on Sending Out the Troops written by Jia Sidao on the 15th of the first month in 1275. In terms of its content and style, the memorial is very well written, comparable even to those two famous Memorials on Sending Out the Troops

written by Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234) in 225 and 226.²⁸⁸ Although the genuineness of the feeling expressed in the memorial is made questionable by the fact that Jia Sidao, fearing defeat by Liu Zheng, was unwilling to dispatch his army until he heard about Liu's death, it nonetheless provides an opportunity for Jia Sidao to speak up for himself in the text. Such an opportunity is never made available to Jia in his official biography. The narrator's voice remains dominant throughout the biographical text, and Jia Sidao, even though he is the main character, has almost never been given the freedom to speak up. Jia's textual silence makes him largely vulnerable to the narrator's voice and the biographer's judgment. In a biographical text, the narrator and the biographer are dictators, who control almost all the power of description and moral assessment. In contrast to this, the text of *Qiantang yishi* sometimes offers its characters a chance to express him/herself, no matter how limited these chances are. As can be seen from this entry, although Jia Sidao's self-eulogy expressed through his well-composed memorial is immediately discredited by the narrator by the context it is put in (e.g., Jia refused to dispatch his army until Liu Zheng died), he is still given the chance to let his voice compete with that of the narrator. It is true that the result of this competition does not change Jia Sidao's textual image very much, but it reminds us of the existence of all those things that may have been left out, suppressed, or disenfranchised in our writing of standard history or biography.

In his study on nineteenth-century English biographies, Joseph Reed describes how biographers used their pens to give form and continuity to the life of their subject,

The biographer gives form and continuity to the disjointed, seemingly irrelevant confusions of life as it is lived. The biographer looks on the man, examines his documents, and connects threads into a coherent pattern. The whole story can never be told coherently, because the whole story—without the touch of a biographer's selectivity, without organization—is only the confusion of all a man's days. Selection and form are his art. In

²⁸⁸ Both Memorials of Military Expedition by Zhuge Liang can be found in Yang Jinding 楊金鼎 ed., *Guwen guanzhi quanyi* 古文觀止全譯 (Complete Translation of the Finest of Ancient Prose), pp.555-69.

order to select, he must omit; to give form, some things must be emphasized, others glossed over.²⁸⁹

The same thing can be said, but with different degrees of relevance, about the texts of *Qiantang yishi* (particularly the portion concerning Jia Sidao) and Jia Sidao's official biography. In their effort to create a narrative continuum, both texts demonstrate similar desires to give "form and continuity to the disjointed, seemingly irrelevant confusions of life as it is lived."²⁹⁰ In order to make this narrative continuum coherent and, most importantly, meaningful, both texts also, through the selection and organization of certain facts and stories, shapes their narrative into not only a biographic account that describes but also a biographical argument that evaluates the biographee's life. However, while the official biography of Jia Sidao is trying every means to cover up its selective and evaluative nature, the text of *Qiantang yishi* leaves notable traces behind for us to ponder upon the moments when the ruptures in the text have been filled, the countering evidences have been assimilated, and the rival voices have been suppressed. These notable traces are what make the text of *Qiantang yishi* special. Rather than being a standardized biography or a simple collection of unsorted facts and stories, *Qiantang yishi* reside between the two. This liminal status, however, does not mean that the text is preliminary, in the sense that it is simply a pile of notes waiting to be transformed into a more formalized writing. On the contrary, it is where the value of the text resides. It is in this transitional status that we discern the text's constant struggle to transcend its "preparatory" status as a repository of stories and information, and it is also in this transitional status that we sense the text's persistent resistance against a finalized or determined form that will either undermine its flexibility or limit its possibility of being read.

In many ways, the text of *Qiantang yishi*, especially the part concerning Jia Sidao, is comparable to a "mosaic picture," in which the grand image of a person is made visible only through the collage of numerous smaller images which does not always

²⁸⁹ Joseph W. Reed, *English Biography in the Early Nineteenth Century, 1801-1838* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 150.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

conform to each other or to the big picture. The charm of this “mosaic picture” lies in the fact that we have the freedom to choose to either look at the big picture or dwell upon the small images from which the big picture is composed. We can look from a distance, from where we will be able to see the big picture, the general trend and the overall meaning; or we can “zoom in,” which will enable us to see the details, the segments, and the particulars that may or may not comply with the big picture. Such a freedom gives us the opportunity to approach the text from different angles, to delve into it at different moments and from different points of entrance. But the existence of this freedom does not mean that our approaches to the text can be entirely anarchic. The possibilities of reading the text are still largely confined, though not restricted, by the “big picture,” or by the persistent urge for us to uncover what the text is trying to tell us in general. As a result, our reading is simultaneously pulled towards in two directions. While we are given the freedom to dwell upon the countless intriguing details in the text, we are also constantly asked to give the text a more cohesive or coherent reading. The text is a product of tension that cannot be solved by either type of reading. It is, as mentioned before, a “mosaic picture” that at the same time invites us to look macroscopically at the big picture and microscopically at the small images.

South across the Border, North into Memory

Starting from the end of Chapter Six, words like *xia* (下, to capture), *po* (破, to breach), *kui* (潰, to be routed), *bai* (敗, to be defeated), *dun* (遁, to flee), *xiang* (降, to surrender), *guifu* (歸附, to succumb to), *sijie* (死節, to die in loyalty) start to appear more frequently in the entry titles. In Chapter Six, for example, these phrases appear a total of three times, all towards the end of the chapter (*xia*, 3). In Chapter Seven, their occurrence increases to twelve (*xia*, 4; *po*, 1; *bai*, 3, *kui*, 1; *dun*, 3). In Chapter Eight, the number drops to seven, with the disappearance of words like *xia*, *po*, *kui*, *bai* and the increased occurrence of such words as *dun* (1), *xiang* (2), *guifu* (2), *sijie* (2). If we include the occurrence of these words in the main text of the entries, then the number may be

even bigger. But even by counting their appearance in the entry titles alone, we will be able to get an idea of what Liu Yiqing was trying to tell us. With the increased presence of these words in the entry titles, a tragic picture of the fall of the Southern Song dynasty is unveiled to us. Filled with lamentable defeats, humiliating surrenders, disgraceful flight, and unyielding but futile resistance, the last few years before the dynasty's de facto demise in 1276 were a mixture of tears and blood. The southeastward progression of the Mongolian army across the border was almost unstoppable. In the face of the Mongol formidable military force, the fate of the Southern Song, in spite of its admirable economic, political and cultural achievement in the past, seemed so delicate and fragile, as if it could be broken into pieces at any moment.

In depicting the military defeat and downfall of the Southern Song, Liu Yiqing did not forget to add a touch of chiaroscuro to the otherwise gloomy portrayal of the demise of the dynasty. If we compare the Mongol attack to a destructive storm sweeping across the vast land in south China, then this storm had brought up a series of different reactions, some of which, as we will see in the following examples, are humiliating, despicable and cowardly, while others are dignified, respectable and heroic.

The Capture of Raozhou [Chapter 7, Entry 7]

In the first month the *yihai* year [1275], the Great Army [the Mongolian army] arrived at Raozhou. Prefect Tang Zhen did his outmost to defend the city. After the city was breached, Zhen was killed by the northern soldiers and died in the Yuzhi Hall in the city government. On the 21st day, the city was breached, but it was not until the 27th day that Administrative Assistant Wu found Zhen's body. The body was still warm as if he was alive. People dressed the body and buried it.

Former Grand Councilor, Jiang Wanli, sojourned in Raozhou. When everybody fled, Wanli stayed behind to set a model for other people. When the soldiers entered his house, he drowned himself. His younger brother, Wangqing, who came to visit him from Nankang, was captured by the northern soldiers. Because he refused to surrender, he was chopped to death. He cursed the enemy until his death.

Before this, Zhan Shijie came to Raozhou and drank with Jiang Wanli. Shijie asked, "Now our country is like this. Grand Councilor, what are you planning to do?" Wanli replied, "Because I do not have the power to protect the government, all I can do is to die for it." Shijie said, "Truly as you said. I already know very well what it is going to be like in 'their house.' You hold up a cup on your knees, but may not be able to have him take the cup. Even if he takes it, you may not be able to have him drink it. How could we humiliate ourselves by serving the others? I will do my best to fulfill my duty. As long as I can hold up for one day, the world is still the Zhao's world. If not, I can only die, so that I can still face the Zhao emperors in the underworld." Judging from this conversation, we can see Jiang Wanli had already made up his mind to die a loyal death.

下饒州

乙亥正月，大兵至饒州。守臣唐震竭力守禦，城破，震為北兵所害，死於州治之玉芝堂。二十一日，城破，二十七日，鄔判官始得其遺體，溫然如生，遂具衣冠而葬之。

前丞相江萬里寄居饒州，州人皆遁，萬里坐守，以為民望。兵入其第，赴水而死。萬頃自南康來，省兄遇兵，不屈，遂以礮死，至死罵聲不絕口。

先是，張世傑至饒州，萬里與之大醉，世傑曰：“國事如此，丞相如何？”萬里曰：“力不能以報朝廷，惟有死爾。”世傑曰：“丞相之言是也。他家事，世傑盡知之。拿一個盞，跪在地，不能得他接，接了未能得他飲，安能忍辱事他人耶？吾盡吾職分，延得一日，也是趙家一日之天下，如不可為，亦只有一死，庶幾可見趙皇於地下。”觀此，則萬里從容就義之心先決矣。

The Rout at Wuhu [Chapter 7, Entry 9]

On the 22nd day of the first month in the *yihai* year [1275], the army led by Jia Sidao was routed at Wuhu. On that day when the drum was beaten for the third time, Sun Huchen came to Jia Sidao's boat to report the emergency. He cried, "The enemy's pursuing army is close." Xia Gui also said, "The enemy's number far exceeds ours. It is really hard to resist them." After that, he cried and left. Jia Sidao sent out an announcement to stimulate the army, promising promotion and increase of government salaries. The army reviled [the idea], "What is the use of government salaries? In the years of *yiwei* [1259] and *gengshen* [1260],

where were the government salaries?”²⁹¹ The army then beat the retreating gong and retreated to Zhujinsha. An army of one hundred and thirty thousand soldiers was thus routed. Having lost his army, Military Commissioner Jia Sidao fled to Yanzhou, but Li Tingzhi shut the city gate and refused to let him in.

蕪湖潰師

乙亥正月二十二日，賈似道潰師於蕪湖。是日三鼓，孫虎臣告急，至似道舟中泣告曰：“追兵已迫。”夏貴亦曰：“彼眾我寡，委難抵當。”垂泣而去。似道撫諭三軍，遂許唱轉官資。諸軍詬曰：“要官資做甚？己未庚申，官資何在？”鳴鑼一聲，退兵于珠金沙，十三萬軍一時潰散，督府之師已失，似道奔入揚州，李庭芝閉城不納。

These two entries are placed very close to each other in Chapter Seven, separated only by another entry describing the Mongol army crossing the Yangtze River. Both entries involve a high-ranking government official of the Southern Song and both talk about how they reacted in the face of defeat. The first entry speaks of the death of the former Grand Counselor, Jiang Wanli 江萬里 (1198-1275). A sojourner in Raozhou, Jiang was forced to taste the bitterness of defeat when the city was captured by the Mongols in 1275. Many people in the city fled before the Mongolian army came, but Jiang Wanli stayed behind. When the Mongolian soldiers entered his house, he jumped into water and committed suicide. At that time, Jiang Wanli had already resigned his office as Left Grand Councilor, but his loyalty to the Southern Song did not die with his resignation. As can be seen in his earlier conversation with Zhang Shijie 張世傑 (?-1279), he had already made up his mind to die for his dynasty when the day came. In contrast to Jiang Wanli's uncompromising death, the choice made by Jia Sidao, Grand Councilor of the time, in the face of his defeat was much less resolute and heroic. Pressed by the pursuing Mongolian force, Jia made a stupid move by trying to stimulate the morale of his army with promises of promotion and salary increase. Unsurprisingly, the army was

²⁹¹ Yiwei was the year when the Mongol army crossed the Yangtze River and besieged Ezhou. Gengshen was the year when the Mongolian army retreated and the siege at Ezhou was released, allegedly because Jia Sidao promised annual tributes to them. Records of this detail can be found in Jia Sidao's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 474.

irritated by this promise. Indeed, who would care about promotion and money at the moment of life and death? Moreover, having seen how Jia Sidao had wasted government money on the annual tribute promised to the Mongols in 1259 and 1260,²⁹² the commanders and soldiers in the army interpreted this promise rather as a gesture of humiliation than stimulation. Because the entire army had no incentive to fight, they were easily routed by the Mongolian troops. Having lost the support of his army, Jia Sidao fled, but no one was willing to accept him. This rout at Wu Hu thus marked the humiliating end of Jia's political career.

The Defeat at Wumu [Chapter 7, Entry 15]

On the 2nd day of the third month, the northern army entered Changzhou. Prefect Wang Zongzhu fled away, and Provisional Prefect Wang Liangchen surrendered with the city. In the fifth month, Zhang Yan and Liu Shiyong recovered Changzhou and Wang Liangchen was defeated. Later, the Guangde Fortress was also recovered. In the ninth month, Wang Dechen led the northern army to attack Changzhou. Prefect Yao Yin and Commander-Generals Liu Shiyong and Wang Anjie successfully defended the city. In October, Changzhou was in danger. Wen Tianxiang sent Yin Yu, Zhu Hua, Zhang Quan, and Ma Shilong as reinforcement. On the 26th day, the [reinforcement] army battled at Henglin but was defeated. On the 27th day, it battled at Wumu but was defeated again. Zhang Quan did not shoot a single arrow. Yin Yu and Ma Shilong died in battle. Wen Tianxiang tried to send another reinforcement but the road was blocked. On the 16th day of the eleventh month, Changzhou ran out of food. Liu Shiyong broke through the siege and fled to Pingjiang. Changzhou was taken and people in the entire city were slaughtered. Prefect Yao Yin died defending the city. Wang Anjie was captured alive and executed for refusal to surrender. Yao Yin was the son of Yao Xideng and Wang Anjie the son of Military Commissioner Wang Jian. The Judicial Commissioner of the Jiangxi Circuit Yin Yu was a true general. He fought with the northern soldiers, and killed thousands of them. He then gathered five hundred survivors and fought with the enemy for another night. When he was defeated, he himself killed more than seventy enemy soldiers before he died. His subordinates and soldiers then fought vehemently with the northern soldiers and died together. Not a single one of them surrendered. [After Yin Yu died,] the court bestowed upon

²⁹² This promise of annual tributes may not be real. See Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-dao(1213-1275): A "Bad Last Minister"?"

him a posthumous title of Military Training Commissioner of Haozhou and his two sons were also appointed to office.

Changzhou was captured on the 2nd day of the third month, recovered in the fifth month until the northern soldiers came again in the ninth month. Yao Yin gathered militiamen from the city and personally ascended the ramparts to inspect the army. Flags and banners waved [on the ramparts] like rolling clouds, and the beating of the war drums rent the air. [Yao Yin] secretly sent Liu Shiyong and Wang Anjie to go out to attack the enemy, and won a huge victory. The next day, the northern army arrived at the city gate. [Yao Yin] opened the gate and engaged them. Under the converging attack of two of Yao's armies, the northern army suffered a great loss and had to give up their attack and retreated. Liu Shiyong ambushed the retreating army on their way back and killed more than half of them. Although the city of Changzhou was able to withstand the enemy's attack, but in the counties under its jurisdiction, houses were burnt down and people were plundered. Civilians who were captured alive were killed. Their flesh was smashed and fried and made into oil cannonballs, which were then thrown at the feet of the city wall to make the oil splash on the wooden defensive works. A few days later, flame arrows were fired at the oiled defensive works to enflame them. Some civilians were captured, and forced to haul earth to the outside of Changzhou to build fortresses. Many of them were buried alive under the fortresses. What people in the surrounding counties of Changzhou suffered was truly a catastrophe. In the eleventh month, the city ran out of food and was breached. Alas! If, after the northern army crossed the Yangtze River, all other local prefects could fight like Yao Yin, stay loyal to their country and defend their cities till the last, how could the sovereignty of the Song be lost?

五木之敗

北兵入常州。時三月初二日，知州王宗洙遁，權守節幹王良臣以城降。五月，張彥、劉師勇復常州，王良臣敗走，又復廣德軍。九月，王良臣以北兵攻常州。知州姚峇，統制劉師勇、王安節拒守，攻城不克。十月，常州告急。文天祥遣將尹玉、朱華、張全、麻士龍赴援。二十六日，戰于橫林，敗績。二十七日，戰於五木，敗績。張全不發一矢，尹玉、麻士龍死之，天祥調兵再往，道不通。十一月十六日，常州糧盡，劉師勇以騎突圍，出奔平江府，遂破常州，屠其城。知州姚峇死之，生獲王安節，不屈而死。峇，乃姚希得之子。安節，乃節度王堅之子。尹玉，江西憲司，將也。與北兵戰，殺數千人。復收殘兵五百，又角一夕，兵敗，手殺七八十人，遂死之。其麾下與北兵戰，並死，無一降者。朝廷贈濠州團練使，官其二子。

常州自三月二日陷，至五月再復，九月北兵再至。知府姚嵩糾集民義，登城巡視，旌旗雲擁，鼓聲震天。潛遣劉師勇、王安節等出師迎敵，大捷。次日，北兵至城下，開門引戰。二陣夾擊，攻城之兵為其掩殺，攻城不克而遁。劉師勇又于歸路設伏以待之，殲者過半。常州雖能保城，而管下屬縣，屋宇焚蕩，人民虜掠殆盡，生獲百姓，殺之，爓其肉，煎油作炮，擲入常州城下，使膏油散在牌杈木上，積日，使火箭射之，牌杈自焚。又俘其人，使之運土於城外築堡，傾泥並其人填之。常州屬縣之民，遭此橫禍。十一月，糧盡，城始破。嗚呼！使北兵渡江之後，一州有守臣如姚嵩者，忠於國家而死守封疆，宋鼎又安得而轉移耶？

Court Officials Fleeing at Night [Chapter 7, Entry 16]

In the first month of the *yihai* Year, martial laws were imposed on the capital and court officials followed each other in fleeing the city at night. The Great Army was approaching the suburbs, but reinforcements still had not come. Everybody was deeply worried. The Prefect of Lin'an, Zeng Yuanzi, and Vice Transport Commissioner of the Liangzhe Circuit fled. Supervisor of the Zhedong area, Wang Linlong, fled. Dozens of court officials including magistrates like Wen Jiweng and Ni Pu, censors like Pan Wenjing, Ji Ke, Chen Guo, and Xu Qingsun, and attendants like Chen Jian, He Menggui, and Zeng Xiyan all ran away. The court was almost empty.

An announcement was posted in court, which said, "Meng Ke [Mencius, Mengzi] said, 'When the prince regards his ministers as stalks of mustard, they regard him as a mere fellow-countryman.'²⁹³ He also said, 'When the remonstrance is not accepted by the prince, they take their leave and travel with all their strength before they stop.'²⁹⁴ Nonetheless, a learned person would not still regard this as representing the proper relationship between emperors and their ministers. Our dynasty has lasted for more than three hundred years and during all these years we treated our

²⁹³ This quote is related to *Mencius*. The original sentence is “君之視臣如手足，則臣視君如腹心；君之視臣如犬馬，則臣視君如國人。” (If a prince treats his subjects as his hands and feet, they will treat him as their belly and heart. If he treats them as his horses and hounds, they will treat him as mere fellow-countryman.) See D.C. Lau's translation in *Mencius*, p. 173, and the original text in Yang Bojun's *Mengzi yizhu*, p. 186.

²⁹⁴ This quote is also related to *Mencius*. The original sentence is “予豈若是小丈夫然哉？諫於其君而不受，則怒，悻悻然見於其面。去則窮日之力而後宿哉？” (I am not like those petty men who, when their advice is rejected by the prince, take offense and show resentment all over their faces, and, when they leave, travel all day before they would put up for the night.) D.C. Lau's translation in *Mencius*, p. 69, and the original text in Yang Bojun's *Mengzi yizhu*, p.108.

scholar-officials with respect. Now the Crown Prince and I are facing serious adversities, but none of you ministers will come forward to offer a single word that could save our country. What did I do wrong to make you treat me like this? Now ministers inside the court have betrayed their duty and fled, generals outside the court have discarded their seals and abandoned their cities. Those who are my eyes and ears cannot criticize and correct this for me; neither can the few magistrates set up a model for the rest. Moreover, you conspire and follow each other to flee at night. In times of peace, all of you brag about your knowledge of the sages' books. Then how come at time of adversity you are [all so shameless] to do things like this? Even if you manage to steal a few more years of your life in the countryside, how can you still have the face to talk to other people? And after you die, how can you not feel ashamed to see the former emperor? The mandate of heaven has not changed yet and the laws of our country still exist. I will make the Imperial Secretary write this down and show it at court. Those courtiers and civil and military officials who stay with me in the capital will receive a special promotion of two ranks. Those who have betrayed the country and abandoned me will be investigated and revealed to the public by the Censorate. I hereby have this announcement posted in the court, in order to reveal my mind."

朝臣宵遁

乙亥正月，京師戒嚴，朝臣接踵宵遁。大軍已迫畿甸，勤王兵不至，人情恟恟。知臨安府曾淵子、兩浙運副自遁，浙東提舉王霖龍遁，機政文及翁、倪普，台諫潘文卿、季可、陳過、徐卿孫，侍從以下陳堅、何夢桂、曾希顏數十人並遁。朝中為之一空焉。

朝堂榜云：“孟軻謂：‘君視臣如草芥，則臣視君如國人。’又謂：‘諫於其君而不聽，去則窮其力而後止。’識者猶以為非君臣之正誼。我朝三百餘年，待士大夫以禮，吾與嗣君遭家多難，爾小大臣未嘗有出一言以救國者，吾何負於汝哉？今內而庶僚畔官離次，外而守令委印棄城。耳目之司，既不能為吾糾擊；二三執政，又不能倡率羣工。方且表裡合謀，接踵宵遁，平日讀聖賢書自負，謂何乃於此時作此舉措？或偷生田裡，何面目對人言語？他日死，亦何以見先帝？天命未改，國法尚存，可令尚書省別具。見在朝臣、在京文武，並予特轉二官；其負國棄予者，令御史台覺察以聞。其榜朝堂，明吾之意。”

These two entries, placed right next to each other in Chapter Seven, show us another contrast between the reaction of some military generals at the battlefield and

that of some civil officials in the central government in face of the coming of the Mongolian army. The first entry provides a vivid description of the ruthless battles taking place around the city of Changzhou. According to the entry, the city was first surrendered to the Mongols in the third month but then recaptured by the Southern Song in the fifth month. After the city was recovered, Yao Yin 姚訢 (?-1275) became the new Prefect. Under his lead, the city was able to hold back the vehement attacks of the Mongolian army for nearly three months. It was not until the eleventh month when the city completely ran out of food that it was captured again by the Mongols. Yao Yin died in the battle and people in the city were massacred. In spite of this final defeat, Yao Yin nonetheless managed to fight off the Mongols several times while he was alive. Of course, the price paid for these victories was heavy. Houses in the surrounding counties were burnt and people were slaughtered by the Mongolian soldiers. Some of them were buried alive; others were made into oil cannonballs to be tossed under the feet of the city wall and burnt with flame arrows. The catastrophic description tells us much of the brutality in the battlefield. But even in this difficult situation, there were still people, like Yao Yin and his subordinates, holding firmly to their ground, fighting to protect every inch of the country. Compared to Yao Yin's bravery and determination, the reaction of some court officials was quite cowardly and despicable. As shown in the second entry selected above, many government officials fled out of the capital upon hearing the approach of the Mongolian army, leaving the court almost empty. Although the capital was still relatively safe at that time and not yet turned into a warzone, none of these fleeing officials seemed to be brave enough to stay behind to defend the city and protect the emperor. With their hasty escape, the emperor was truly turned into a "lone man" (*guaren* 寡人).²⁹⁵ Seeing how he was callously abandoned by his ministers, the emperor could do nothing but to post an announcement in the already empty court. In the announcement, the emperor promised to promote those who were still staying behind in the city and to punish those who had abandoned him. But at a time when the

²⁹⁵ A self-addressing words used by the emperors, usually translated as "royal me."

entire Southern Song Empire was on the edge of collapse, such a promise sounds not only helpless, but almost tragic.

The Surrender of the Capital [Chapter 20, Entry 20]

On the 20th day of the first month in the *bingzi* year [1276], the Great Army entered Lin'an. The Grand Empress Dowager pleaded to surrender, and the Empress Dowager issued an edict to the prefectures in the Jiangnan area requesting their submission. The edict said, "Now that the root has been pulled out. Although all the cities still want to resist, why should the people be made to suffer? Upon seeing this edict, you should surrender your cities, to save the civilians from the torment of war." Jia Yuqing ordered the Institute of Academicians to issue this edict, asking every city to submit to its decision. A government letter was also attached to the edict. Jia Xuanwen was the only one who refused to sign onto the letter, while Wu Jian followed just as Jia Yuqing ordered. In anger, Cheng Pengfei was about to arrest Jia Xuanwen. Xuanwen said, "The Palace Secretary does not have the right to arrest a magistrate." Having said so, he returned to his private room and waited for Cheng to come, but Cheng did not dare to do anything to him.

From the twelfth month of the *yihai* year to first month of the *bingzi* year, emissaries had been traveling to and fro [between Southern Song and the Mongols], but no agreement on peace had yet been reached. On the 24th day of the first month, the northern emissary requested the [Southern Song] councilors and magistrates to go to pay respect to [the Mongolian emperor] at Yanjing. Hence Wu Jian, Jia Yuqing, Jia Xuanwen, Liu Jie, and Wen Tianxiang were appointed as Peace-seeking Envoys. Other court officials either stayed or fled, and the court was almost empty. On the 1st day of the second month, weapons in the capital were all confiscated under the direction of Bo Yan, Grand Councilor [of the Yuan]. On the 12th day, court servants like the court maids, royal attendants, and court musicians were gathered and sent to the Lotus Pond. The deaths were many. On the 20th day, the northern emissary asked the Three Palaces to move north. On the 22nd day, Emperor Shaodi ordered Empress Dowager, Lady Longguo Huang, Beauty Zhu, Lady Wang and over a hundred or so people to follow him to the north. Prince Fu Yurui, Participants in Determining Governmental Matters Xie Tang and Gao Yingsong, Commandant-Escort Yang Zhen, Government Censors Duan Dengbing, Zou Hong, and Chen Xiubo, Prefect of Lin'an Weng Zhongde and thousands of other government officials and hundreds of students from the National and Imperial Universities were also in the

envoy party. Only Grand Empress Dowager was allowed to stay in the Imperial Palace because of illness.

京城歸附

丙子正月二十日，大兵入臨安府，太皇太后請降。太皇后詔江南諸郡歸附。詔云：“今根本已撥，諸城雖欲拒守，民何辜焉？詔書到日，其各歸附，庶幾生民，免遭荼毒。”賈余慶令學士院降詔，俾天下歸附之。各付一省筭，惟家鉉翁不肯署押，吳堅一如賈余慶之命，程鵬飛作色欲縛鉉翁。鉉翁云：“中書無縛執政之理。”歸私廳以待，程竟不敢誰何也。

朝廷自乙亥十二月至丙子正月，信使往來，和議未決。正月二十四日，北使請宰執親往燕京朝覲。於是以吳堅、賈余慶、家鉉翁、劉岳、文天祥五人為祈請使，朝廷百官或在或遁，至是為之一空矣。二月初一日，伯顏丞相指揮，收京城軍器。至十二日，索宮女、內侍、樂官諸色人等宮人赴蓮池，死者甚眾。二十日，北使請三宮北遷。二十二日，宋少帝令太后、隆國夫人黃氏、朱美人、王夫人以下百餘人從行。福王與芮、參政謝堂、高應叅、駙馬都尉楊鎮、台諫段登炳、鄒珙、陳秀伯，知臨安府翁仲德等以下數千人、太學宗學生數百人，皆在遣中。惟太皇太后以疾留大內。

Loyal Death in Tanzhou [Chapter 8, Entry 21]

In the first month of the *bingzi* year, the Great Army took Tanzhou. Prefect of Tanzhou Li Fu tried his best to defend the city for eight to nine months. During this time, Li Fu had achieved quite a few victories. But the attack of the Great Army became more vehement day by day and at last even Li Fu could not withhold it anymore.

On the day when the city was taken, [Li Fu] ordered to have a bunch of firewood piled under a tower, and then asked his family to join him in a huge banquet on the tower, with gold and silver piled all around them. Li sat with the guest retainers and the rest sat on either side. After a few drinks, Li summoned two executioners to come forth. After the executioners came, Liu ordered them to take all the gold and silver to distribute to their families and then bring two blades back. One of executioners refused to take the money; the other, knowing what Li was going to do, took the money without any question and went to distribute it to his family. Shortly after, the second executioner came back with a blade. General Li asked him to come forward, and told him, "You can start the killing from the front. When you reach the end, you then kill me. Just wait for my signal when I nod my head." Having said so, he resumed

his drinking. After quite a while, he nodded his head. Only a guest retainer and a concubine escaped by jumping out of the. The concubine broke one foot. At last, Commander Li offered his own head for execution. The executioner then set first on all sides of the tower and disemboweled himself. After Tanzhou was captured, Hengzhou, Chaling Fortress and Yuanzhou fell one after another.

Later Li Liangshan wrote a poem titled “Inscriptions at an Inn in Tanzhou to Commemorate Li Kenzhai,”²⁹⁶ which read,

Heavenly fortune has its ebb and flow,
But there can never be a dual loyalty, life is but a trifle [in the face
of that].
If one does not die protecting one’s country,
What is point of living as a woman or a man?
Twisted and broken, the Cardinal Guides must be reinstated,
Through disasters of calamity, they alone shone through.
You should truly be placed in the Temple of Qu Yuan to partake of
the sacrifices,²⁹⁷
To enlighten people’s minds and to open a new era of peace.

(Qi Yuan died in water and Kenzhai in fire.)

潭州死節

丙子正月，大兵破潭州。李芾守潭，竭力備禦，凡八九月。其間出戰屢捷，而大兵之攻日增，芾不能支。

城破之日，命積薪樓下，於是攜家人盡登樓大宴，積金銀於兩畔。李與館客廟坐，其餘列坐左右。數杯後，命喚二劊子來。既至，則令將此金銀去，與你家口，取法刀來，一不肯受，一會意，徑受之，攜去分付家人。後須臾，將法刀至。李帥呼之至前，分付：“先從頭殺入，到尾殺我，待我點頭時下手。”復飲酒，良久，點頭。惟館賓與一妾墜樓而走，妾折一足，最後李帥伸頭受刃。此劊子遂四面放火，自刳其腹而死。潭州陷，衡州、茶陵軍、袁州相繼而下。

後李兩山有詩《題潭州驛懷李肯齋》曰：“天運由來有廢興，義無兩
大一身輕。封疆社稷若不死，婦女鬚眉何用生。紐解綱常重接續，灰

²⁹⁶ Kenzhai is the style name for Li Fu.

²⁹⁷ Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340 BCE - 278 BCE) used to serve under King Huai of Chu as the Sanlǚ Dafu 三閭大夫, whose duty was to manage the affairs of the Sanlu—the three (Chu) royal clans, Zhao, Qu and Jing. He was known for his loyalty to his country and his kings in spite of the unfair treatment that he received.

寒萬劫獨光明。便當配食三閻廟，啟迪民彝開太平。”（三閻水死，肯齋火死）

In these two entries, again placed next to each other in Chapter Eight, we see another contrast between the gutless surrender of the central government and the unyielding death of a local military commander. According to the first entry, on the 20th day of the first month, 1276, the Mongolian army entered Lin'an, the capital of the Southern Song. The Grand Empress Dowager issued an edict asking the remaining uncaptured cities in the Jiangnan area to surrender. This edict was followed without much resistance, except for Jia Xianweng 家鉉翁 (1213-?), who refused to sign onto the notice. On the 24th, the Mongolian emissary asked the administrative officials in the Southern Song to the third month north. On the 1st day of the second month, all weapons in the capital city were confiscated. On the 12th, hundreds of court servants were forced to die. On the 22nd, members in the royal family, except for the Grand Empress Dowager who was sick, were all asked to move to the north, and this trip marked the official transference of sovereignty from the Southern Song to the Mongol Yuan. Except for a few resistance such as Jia Xianweng, the narrative in this entry portrays the surrender of the Southern Song government generally as a smooth and peaceful process. Even the cruelty of the execution of the court maids, royal attendants, and court musicians is somewhat downplayed by the use of the Buddhist euphemism *fu lianchi* (赴蓮池), which literarily means “going to the lotus pond.” All the disturbance, brutality and humiliation that we would expect to find in this surrendering process are subdued by the plainness of the narrative, making us wonder if the story of the dynasty could just end in such a lackluster way. But just as we are about to become disappointed with this bland narrative, the next entry timely adds a strong, and poetic as well, note to this dynasty's tragic ending. In contrast to the plainness of the first entry, this new entry provides a vivid description of the death of Li Fu 李芾 (?-1276), who was Prefect of Tanzhou and a famous anti-Mongol military commander. According to the entry, on the day when Tanzhou was taken, Li Fu led all his family onto a tower, surrounded by firewood and filled with gold and silver, to have a final banquet. After drinking with his

family and retainers, Li asked two executioners to come forward, gave the gold to them, and asked them to bring two knives. One executioner refused to accept the money, while the other took the gold and did what he was told. After the executioner returned with a blade, Li Fu asked him to kill all the persons in the banquet ending with himself. This extremely violent scene is followed by a passionate poem written by Li Siyan 李思衍 (ca. 1240-1300), which praises Li Fu's fearless death and undying loyalty. This poem adds another level of contrast between the plain, prosaic narrative of the Southern Song government's tame surrender depicted in the first entry and the emotional, poetic portrait of Li's unyielding resistance described in the second.

It is perhaps worth pointing out here that the presence of all these contrasts by no means implies that Liu Yiqing was trying to pose a dichotomy in his depiction of the fall of the Southern Song dynasty. The limited examples selected above may leave us with the impression that Liu was creating a contrast between the former and present government officials, between the civil officials at court and the military commanders in the battlefield, or between the central court and the local government, but the actual picture conveyed through this part of the text is much more complex than this simple dichotomy. Reading through Chapter Seven to Chapter Eight, we will find numerous contrasts like the ones discussed above, many of which will probably lead us to different or even contradictory interpretations of the text than what we may have inferred from the analysis above. These internal differences and contradictions prevent us from jumping too quickly into any dichotomized or stereotyped conclusion. Instead, we are constantly required to devise an accommodative way of reading that can acknowledge the text's contrastive nature but at same time still not lose sight of its complexity. In other words, we are asked to admit that the presence of these contrasts are indeed intended to guide us to a meaningful and structured reading of the text. But at the same time, we are also reminded not to make this meaningful and structured reading the only meaning and structure of the text. The text, after all our attempts to decipher it, remains a intriguing puzzle, one that at the same time invites and refuses to be defined by our reading.

That this part of the text is designed like this is not entirely unrelated to the subject of its description, namely, the chaos and turbulence that prevailed in the last few years of Southern Song history. The big picture that the text is trying to show us is one that has been largely distorted by the brutality and sadness of war. This wartime disorder has been presented to us not only through the content, but also through the very form of the text. In many ways, the apparent disjointedness among the entries, as well as the internal incoherence of narrative entailed by it, is a perfect match for the overall chaotic picture that the text is trying to describe for us. However, being chaotic does not necessarily mean being totally structureless. Chaos is only one of the many aftermaths of wars. Apart from this chaos, war does sometimes have its structure and themes that allow it to be turned into a narrative. That is why we see the presence of all these meaningful contrasts in the text. While these contrasts are certainly not prominent enough to overcome the overall chaotic picture that has been conveyed to us through the content and form of the text, they provide us with an opportunity to look into some of the recurrent themes, such as courage and cowardice, faithfulness and disloyalty, that do not easily die out even in the wartime chaos. These recurrent themes let us catch a glimpse of some of the most basic elements in humanity, elements that cannot be simply wiped off, and sometimes may even be amplified, by the brutality and disturbance of wars.

In addition to these contrasts, an implicit spatiotemporal order underlying the description of wartime chaos in Chapter Seven and Eight also add another meaningful structure to the text. One thing that we may notice in reading these two chapters is that as the geographical location discussed in the entries moves further and further southeastward, the history of the Southern Song also moves closer and closer to its end. The same type of spatiotemporal migration also appears in Chapter Nine, which contains an official diary of the Southern Song government's peace-seeking journey (surrendering journey) to the Mongolian Yuan capital in 1276. In contrast to the southeastward movement depicted in the previous two chapters, however, the

geographic migration in Chapter Nine is towards the north. Along with this northward movement, the glory of the Southern Song is slowly but steadily phased out of history and pushed into people's memory.

This notable contrast in the spatiotemporal migration turns these two parts of the text (Chapter Seven and Eight on the one hand and Chapter Nine on the other) into another interesting contrastive pair. And as we look further into the entries included in these chapters, we will find out that the difference between them is by no means limited only to this spatiotemporal movement underlying the narrative. As a matter of fact, the formal and stylistic difference between these two parts of the texts, or between Chapter Nine and all the previous chapters in the book, is so great that it makes us wonder if we should read Chapter Nine as an appendix rather than a part of the main text.²⁹⁸ While this type of reading is certainly viable, I choose, however, to place Chapter Nine side by side with the previous two chapters for a contrastive reading. This is because thematically Chapter Nine continues and completes the narrative in the previous chapters on the history of the Southern Song. Furthermore, even if this chapter is indeed intended to be an appendix, nothing prohibits us from reading it along with or as a part of the main text.

During the *bingzi* year [1276] in the Deyou reign period [1275-1276], on the 9th of the second month, Left Grand Councilor and Grand Master for Court Service, Wu Jian, went out of the north gate from the abbot's quarter in the Tianqing Temple to bid farewell to Jia Yuqing—Right Grand Councilor, Palace Secretary and Grand Master for Consultation, Xie Tang—Palace Secretary and Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon, Liu Jie—Grand Academician of the Duanming Hall, Grand Master for Palace Attendance, and Temporary Peace-seeking Emissary, Yang Yingkui—Gentleman for Discussion, Investigating Censor, and Temporary Officer for Holding Capitulation and Surrendering Territory, and Zhao Ruoxiu—Gentleman for Court Service and Temporary Officer for Holding Capitulation and Surrendering Territory. When they were about to board the boat, Ai Li, Discussant between the Northern and Southern Courts, delivered an order from Bayan, asking Wu Jian to board the boat as well. The boat moored at the

²⁹⁸ Unlike the previous chapters which are composed of individual entries, Chapter 9 contains one diary of the pilgrim of peace-seeking taken by the Southern Song government after its defeat.

Beixin Bridge and Wu cried all night. The northern army sent Suoduo, Minister Duke, to console him. On the same day, Wen Tianxiang made a passionate speech about the difference between *yi* and *xia* in front of the army. Enraged by the speech, Grand Councilor of the northern dynasty sent some head soldiers to guard him.

德佑丙子二月初九日，宣奉大夫左相吳堅自天慶觀方丈出北關門，送通議大夫右丞相兼樞密使賈餘慶，銀青光祿大夫樞密使謝堂，端明殿大學士中奉大夫充祈請使劉岳、丞議郎守監察御史充奉表納土官楊應奎、朝奉郎充奉表納土官趙若秀。當登舟時，南北朝阿里議事傳巴延丞相命，留吳相登舟。泊於北新橋岸下，終夜流涕。北軍差軍前索多相公勉諭之。此日，會文天祥于軍前，忠義激烈，分辨夷夏，遂激北朝丞相之怒，遂點差堅戰頭目守之。

On the 10th, Xie Tang, Palace Secretary, bribed the Mongols and was allowed to return to the south. That night, the boat moored at Xiecun.

初十日，樞使謝堂納賂免行，遂回。是夕泊謝村。

On the 14th, the boat arrived at Pingjiang. The Pacification Commissioner from the northern court went to the reception station in Suzhou, asking the consorts to prepare drink and food. Wen Tianxiang and Wu Jian did not attend [the banquet]. At night, [the envoy party] was urged to board the boat. More than three hundred cavalymen escorted [the envoy party] to Wuxi County along the river.

十四日，舟次平江府。北官宣撫使就閘門接官亭，令妓置酒侍。吳文二相不赴，晚催登舟。馬軍三百餘人，沿塘護送至無錫縣。

On the 15th, the boat arrived at Wuxi. This day was Brigade Commander Temo'er's birthday. The four offices all sent him birthday presents. The envoy party arrived at the Sandeng Cang Bridge and Temo'er danced to propose a toast. At night, [the boat] moored at Shili Town in Changzhou.

十五日，舟次無錫。是日，特穆爾萬戶生日，四府俱送壽儀，就三登倉橋上，特穆爾舞勸。夜泊常州十里鎮

In the morning of the 16th, the boat arrived at Changzhou. The road was completely buried in ashes of burnt houses, and the river was filled with stinking bodies, more than any other place. [The enjoy party] then

passed Benniu Town. [The boat] moored at Lucheng for the night, where white bones were piled up like mountains.

十六日早，舟次常州。毀餘之屋無路，殺死之屍滿河，臭不可聞，惟此最多。次過奔牛鎮。夜泊呂城，白骨堆積如山。

In the morning of the 17th, [the envoy party] passed the Lucheng Weir, and changed boats. [The boat] then arrived at Danyang County, and moored at Qilimiao.

十七日早，過呂城堰，換舟到丹陽縣，泊七里廟。

On the 18th, when [the envoy party] passed Xinfeng, they ran across a boat, on which was Liu, Preceptor of State and Assistant Grand Councilor from the northern dynasty, who proposed a toast. Later [the envoy party] arrived at the house of King of Hanqin in Zhenjiang, wherein Bandit-suppression Commissioners Shi Zuzhong and Zhang Langzhou brought in lion dancers and singing girls to propose a toast. [The envoy party] was welcomed by them into the local government office, and stayed with Temuer in the back hall of that office. The boat was moored at the back of the Danyang Inn.

十八日，行過新豐市，遇一舟，有北朝國師劉叅政舉酒勸之。次至鎮江府韓蕲王廟前，有招討石祖忠、招討張郎中，攜妓樂師豹勸酒，迎入府治，同特穆爾留客於府治後堂，泊舟丹陽館後。

On the 19th, the governors led the rest of the officials to cross the Yangtze River to Guazhou. [The envoy party] met Ashu,, Administrator [of Yuan], and then was invited to a banquet in the house of Zhang Langzhou, Tulu Brigade.

十九日，府第率眾官渡揚子江，入瓜洲，見阿朮平章，留宴于禿魯萬戶張郎中房子。

On the 20th, Commander Ashu, leading the ministers and attendants, along with Grand Empress Dowager, arrived in succession. Wu Zhongyi, Audience Attendant, and Sun Tongzhi, Battle Commander, carrying a handwritten edict, led thousands of cavalymen from the northern dynasty to the city of Yangzhou. When [the army] arrived at the Yangzi Bridge, they were greeted with a series of cannonballs. Later when they reached the city gate, the sound of the cannons cracked the sky. On the city wall, battle banners waved around like piled up clouds. Battleships charged out, and crossbow arrows flew down like heavy rain. When the

cannon was fired again, black clouds began to gather from the four directions and cold rains started to pour down in torrent. The army could not proceed. Grand Councilor Ashu requested [the envoy party] to return to Yangzi Bridge. After dinner, [the envoy party] arrived at Guazhou.

二十日，阿朮元帥統諸臣、從官，同太皇太后續差到閣贊吳忠翊、督戰孫通直，齎手詔，帶北朝馬數千往揚州。至揚子橋，炮聲連響；繼至城下，一炮震天，城上旗幟雲擁，軍船放劃，車弩密如雨；再一炮響，陰雲四合，冷雨大作，驟如傾盆，勢不可進。阿朮丞相請回揚子橋。茶飯罷，入瓜洲。

On the 21st, there was heavy rain and snow. A fierce wind gushed and the river was boiling with surging waves. No one dared to sail out the boat and [the envoy party] moored at Guazhou again.

廿一日，雨雪大作，疾風驟發，江濤洶湧，不敢發舟，再泊瓜州。

On the 22nd, the snow stopped. The envoys went back to Pingjiang.

廿二日，雪霽，諸使回鎮江府。

On the 23rd, Audience Attendant Wu, Sun Tongzhi, and Administrator Azhu wanted to order the envoys to write a letter, urging Li Tingzhi, Military Commissioner of Yangzhou, to surrender. Everyone agreed except Grand Councilor Wen Tianxiang, who refused to sign the letter. After a while, Administrator asked for the draft. When the letter was completed, it could not be delivered into the city [of Yangzhou], because there were soldiers guarding the place and patrolling cavalry came in and out. [The envoy party] put up in the boat for the night.

廿三日，吳閣贊、孫通直、阿朮平章欲命諸使親劄，勉揚州制置李庭芝納降。眾從之，獨文丞相不畫名。繼而平章先索稿，及諸官劄成，無計可達。其地分各有軍馬把截，時有遊騎出從。夜宿舟中。

On the 24th, [the envoy party] had a banquet at the local yamen in Zhenjiang, and put up in the boat for the night.

廿四日，宴於鎮江府治，夜宿舟中。

On the 25th, [the envoy party] put up in the boat for the night.

廿五日，夜宿舟中。

On the 26th, Bayan's wife returned from Lin'an. [The envoy party] put up in the boat for the night.

廿六日，巴延夫人自臨安回。夜宿舟中。

On the 27th, [the envoy party] put up in the boat for the night.

廿七日，夜宿舟中。

On the 28th, Jiao, Assistant Commissioner, and the envoys put up in the local yamen in Zhenjiang.

廿八日，焦僉省諸使宿鎮江州治。

On the 29th, [the envoy party] crossed the river and put up in the boat for the night. Grand Councilor, Wen Tianxiang, escaped during the night.

廿九日，渡江，夜宿舟中。至夜文丞相脫去。

The passages selected above represent the first one-fourth of Chapter Nine. A general glance at these passages will reveal their fundamental difference from the entries included in Chapter Seven and Eight. Unlike in the previous chapters where history is presented to us in a selective manner, events in Chapter Nine are recorded on in the form of a diary. In this day-to-day record, it is the indifferent progression of time, rather than the historical significance of the events, that has been prioritized as the central thread of narrative. As we read through, we will find that most are just routine records of the traveling, banqueting and lodging of the peace-seeking envoy party. Things that took place during this journey are generally unremarkable. Except for a few instances of resistance from the remaining Song forces and weather problems, the envoy parties' northward journey is generally undisturbed or uninterrupted. During this prolonged journey, days pass by without leaving many memorable moments to be written down. Just like the uneventful passage of time, the narrative in this diary also crawls forward in a manner that is as emotionless and nonchalant as time itself. The phrase "put up in the boat for the night," for instance, occurs several times in the text,

in consecutive fashion. Its repetition in the text turns it into a key phrase that best represents the very repetitiveness and indifferent qualities of the events that it describes.

This placidity of the envoy's northward trip described in Chapter Nine forms a sharp contrast to the ferocity and fierceness that characterize the southeastward military invasion of the Mongolian army depicted in the previous two chapters. This contrast can also be viewed as one between life and death on at least two levels. On the first level, while the Mongolian's military invasion caused numerous deaths on Southern Song soil, this peace-seeking journey provided the common people an opportunity to live on. On the second level, in spite of all the death and torment suffered by the Southern Song people during the war, we can nonetheless discern the dynasty's desperate yearning for life, whereas what this envoy's northward trip represents is the Southern Song government's submissive acceptance of its. Here the meaning of life and death, as well as the meaning of war and peace, has been fundamentally twisted. What is most ironic in this twist is the fact that it is from the devastating war that we see the Southern Song's persistent desire to survive, whereas in peace the empire is but slowly the third monthing to its decline and death.

On the 1st day of the fourth month, the envoys and the attendants arrived at the Huitong Mansion to attend to the daily life of the emperor and the empress.

四月初一日，諸使率屬官詣會同館，起居兩宮。

On the 2nd, Jiao, Assistant Commissioner, came to visit the envoys.

初二日，焦僉省來訪諸使。

On the 3rd, the envoys gathered to discuss the peace-seeking issues.

初三日，諸使會，議祈請事宜。

On the 4th, the envoys invited Jiao, Assistant Commissioner, to a banquet.

初四日，諸使宴焦僉省。

On the 5th, the envoys visited Chen, Participant in Determining Government Matters at the Palace Secretariat.

初五日，諸使訪樞密院陳叅政。

On the 6th, the envoys visited Deputy Zhao.

初六日，諸使訪趙同僉。

On the 7th, the Assistant Commissioner came to visit the envoys.

初七日，僉省來訪諸使。

On the 8th, the envoys led the attendants to go to the Principal Temple of Celebrating Sublime Longevity on Imperial Birthdays in the Palace of Longevity, and met the patriarch, who was in charge of the eight hundred Daoist priests in the palace.

初八日，諸使率屬官詣長壽宮恭賀崇壽聖節本觀，見有一真人，掌觀宮內道眾八百人。

On the 9th, Xie, Palace Secretary, and the King of Yi invited the envoys to a banquet.

初九日，謝樞密，沂王宴諸使。

On the 10th, the empress visited the envoys, discussing the date to visit Shangdu.

初十日，中宮訪諸使，議赴上都日子。

On the 12th, the envoys and the attendants left the Tongxuan Gate on horses and carriages, and arrived at Changping Station at night. From this point on, every inch of the soil was desert. Twenty persons were selected from the government departments and academies to accompany the envoys, and the rest were asked to stay at Yanjing.

十二日，諸使及官屬乘鋪馬出通玄門，晚抵昌平站，自此以往，步步皆沙漠之地，省院諸色人，點差一甲隨行，餘留燕京。

On the 13th, [the envoy party] travelled on horses and carriages and put up at Yulin Station for the night. On the same day, [the envoy party] crossed the notch.

十三日，車馬行。晚宿榆林站，是日過隘口。

On the 14th, [the envoy party] travelled on carriages and put up at Huailai Station for the night.

十四日，車行。晚宿懷來站。

On the 15th, [the envoy party] put up at Hong Station. On the same day, the Empress Dowager, the Heir Apparent, the King of Fu, the King of Yi, and Palace Secretary Xie also left Yangjing for Shangdu.

十五日，晚宿洪站。是日，太后、嗣君、福王、沂王、謝樞密離燕京，亦赴上都。

On the 16th, ten miles past Hong Station, [the envoy party] arrived at Yunzhou. There was no city there, except for some people living in an alley. Twenty miles from Yunzhou, there was place called Guimen Mountain. Steep cliffs loom up facing each other, and there were very powerful deities there. [The envoy party] put up at Diaochao Station during the night.

十六日，離洪站十里，到雲州，無城，一闕人家。至州二十裡，地名龜門山，峭壁對峙，有神甚靈，晚宿鵬巢站。

On the 17th, [the envoy party] travelled on horses and carriages and put up at Dushi Station at night. From Changping Station to Dushi Station, the broken walls, grass and dust [possibly refer to the shabby stations] were all managed by Han attendants, and therefore were called “Han Stations.”

十七日，車馬行。晚宿獨石站。自昌平站至獨石站，亡牆草塵，皆是漢兒官人管待，名“漢兒站”。

On the 18th, [the envoy party] put up at Niuqun Station. From this point on, there was all grassland. And [the stations] were managed by Tartar attendants, therefore were called “Tartar Stations.” There were no houses, only camps. The Tartars usually eat horse and cow milk or cheese made from milk of ewe or goat. They did not eat much rice. If they were hungry, they ate meat. Every ten miles on the road, there was

an express post office, from which [letters] were sent out to the rest of the world.

十八日，宿牛羣站。此去皆草地。此乃韃靼家官人管待，名“韃靼站”。並無房子，只是氈帳。韃靼人多吃馬牛乳羊酪，少吃飯，饑則食肉。路中每十里一急遞鋪，九州自此通路去。

On the 19th, [the envoy party] put up at Ming'an Station. There were only beds and curtains, but no houses.

十九日，晚宿明安站，有床帳，無人家。

On the 20th, [the envoy party] put up at Liangting Station. There were no houses, no water. Water can be fetched from ten miles away. Horse manure was burnt instead of firewood.

二十日，宿涼亭站，亦無人家，無水，可吃取水於十里外，只燒馬糞。

On the 21st, [the envoy party] put up at Lisan Station. There were no houses.

廿一日，宿李三站，無人家。

On the 22nd, [the envoy party] travelled on horses and carriages for forty miles and reached Kaiping of Shangdu. [The envoy party] entered the city from the Zhaode Gate and put up in a government house on the 3rd Street in the city. From Yanjing to Shangdu, there is eight hundred miles. The land became higher and higher. The wells were dozens of feet deep. The water in them was extremely cold and would freeze even in the sixth month. In the fifth and sixth months, all you could get from the wells was ice. In The sixth month, hails poured down like cannonballs. There were snow and rain all year long and people dared not to open their doors. The cows and goats were frozen to death, and people's faces, ears, and noses were cracked by the cold. The snow piled up during the autumn and winter would not melt until the fourth month in the next year. The houses had low roofs and usually people used cellars as houses. [When they built the cellars,] they would dig into the ground for more than ten feet, cover the bottom with battens and the roof with couch grasses, and then planted wheat and vegetables on top of it. There were also underground houses, which were built into the ground three to four feet deep and surrounded by mud walls. The place was extremely cold. Every year in the sixth month, the emperor would stop by to spend the

summer here. The ices could be as thick as several feet. Because of the high altitude of the place, the stars looked quite big during the night.

廿二日，車馬行四十里，至上都開平府，入昭德門，泊城內第三街官房子。自燕京至上都八百里，一步高一步，井深數十丈，水極冷，六月結冰，五月六月汲起冰，六月雹如彈丸大，一年四季常有雨雪，人家不敢開門，牛羊凍死，人面耳鼻皆凍裂，秋冬雪積可至次年四月方消，屋宇矮小，多以地窟為屋，每掘地深丈餘，上以木條鋪為面，次以茨蓋，上仍種麥菜，留竅出火。有地屋，掘地三四尺，四圍土牆。此地極冷。每年六月皇帝過此避暑，冰塊厚者數尺，夜瞻星象頗大，蓋地勢高故也。

From the 23rd to the 27th, private travel was not allowed. No record made.

廿三至廿七日，不許私行，不錄。

On the 28th, Empress Dowager, Heir Apparent, palace servants and supervisors arrived at and rested in an official house inside the Zhaode Gate. King of Fu stayed at Lady Longguo's place, Palace Secretary Xie under the house. His wife stayed in the Huitong Mansion at Yanjing. The King of Yi did not enter the city because of illness.

廿八日，太后、嗣君、宮人、宮使至昭德門裡官舍安歇，福王子傳制在隆國處安泊，謝樞密在房子下，夫人留伴燕京會同館，沂王以疾不入城。

On the 29th, the King of Yi's illness greatly worsened.

廿九日，沂王疾亟。

On the 30th, the Palace Secretariat asked the Empress Dowager, the Heir Apparent, administrative officials, palace servants and attendants, and Imperial Commissioners to exit the west gate, face north, to pray to the Imperial Ancestral Temple on the grassland on the first day of the [next] month.

三十日，樞密院以月旦日請太后、嗣君、福王同宰執、屬官、宮人、中使並出西門外草地，望北拜太廟。

These passages, constituting the last one-fourth of Chapter Nine, record what happened during the last thirty days in the envoy party' journey to the Yuan capital. As we can see from these passages, the same bland, repetitive narrative is used again to describe the tedium and eventlessness of this prolonged trip. But in addition to this boredom, there is also something more that has been added to the narrative, which makes the journey become even more unbearable.

In the passages selected above, we can see that the records for the first ten days is still filled with bland descriptions of the travelling, banqueting and lodging of the envoy party. But from the 12th day on, more ink is spilled over the depiction of the bleakness of the environment. At the beginning, what the envoy party faced was a desolate view of the north, represented by the vast desert, looming cliffs, and broken walls at shabby travel stations. While this desolate view would certainly arouse feelings of discomfort in the travelers' mind, as it was in sharp contrast to the delicate beauty of the south, it was in no way comparable to the real hardship that the envoy party was about to experience in the next few days. As the envoy party traveled further north, what troubled their mind and bodies was not only the desolate view, but some real problems of living caused by the lack of food, water and livable places. This difficult situation was aggravated by the adversity of the weather, which, according to the description in one of the passages, was so cold that the snow accumulated during the winter would not melt even in the fourth month. All mental and physical hardships added to the bitterness of the trip, making it more and more unbearable for the royal members and government officials in the envoy party who used to be so "spoiled" by the affluence and delicacy of the south. This hardship experienced by the envoy party, during the last thirty days of their journey forms another contrast with their relatively comfortable life in the first twenty days. If those twenty days are comparable to a sentimental farewell to the luxurious and leisurely life in the south, then these thirty days are more like an ordeal in which the defeated are made to taste the agony of loss. Both the sentiment in the farewell and the hardship in this ordeal are amplified by the slow-paced narrative, through which the northward trip is described. The day-to-day

diary form in Chapter Nine slows down the narrative time in the text, making the moment of farewell even more moving and the endurance of the ordeal even more unendurable.

Like all the previous chapters in *Qiantang yishi*, the text in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine can also be approached and read from different angles. The angle that I used to approach this part of the text is by looking at the contrasts. The division of the three chapters into two parts, with Chapter Seven and Eight in one group and Chapter Nine in the other, creates an opportunity for me to examine the contrasts that exist not only between these two parts of the text but also within each one of them, allowing me to look into the dialectics among the entries from both the inter-chapter and intra-chapter level.

On the inter-chapter level, the first contrast that we may notice between these two parts of the text is a spatiotemporal one. This refers to the contrasting difference between the narrative in Chapter Seven and Eight, which describes the southeastward progression of the Mongolian army, and that in Chapter Nine, which records the Southern Song's northward peace-seeking trip to the Yuan capital. Accompanying these contrasting narratives on space are two equally contrasting depictions of Southern Song history. If the history of the dynasty is depicted as moving closer and closer to its end with the southeastward progression of the Mongolian army, then it starts to move further and further away from its past glory and into people's memory with the northward surrendering trip taken by the Southern Song government. These spatiotemporal contrasts underlying the narratives, as we have discussed above, is further amplified by the thematic and stylistic differences between these two parts of the text. The content of Chapter Seven and Eight is fundamentally different from that of Chapter Nine, with the former focusing on depicting the violence and chaos of war while the latter focuses on the generally uninteresting and uneventful journey of the Southern Song envoy party. The forms of these two parts of the text are also dissimilar, in the

sense that the apparent disjointedness that characterizes Chapter Seven and Eight forms a striking contrast to the orderly diaristic style of narrative used in Chapter Nine.

If we turn our sight to the intra-chapter level, we will be able to see the presence of various smaller contrasts that constantly speak to, but do not always conform to, the “grand narrative” of the respective chapter(s).²⁹⁹ In Chapters Seven and Eight, for example, while the “big picture” has been largely distorted and disoriented by the wartime chaos, the smaller contrasts within these chapters allow us to see some regularities in war as well as some recurrent themes that let us catch a glimpse of some most basic elements in humanity. Similarly in Chapter Nine, while the envoy party’s northward journey is generally recorded as one that has been regulated or routinized to the point of being almost insipid, the contrastive descriptions in the former and latter parts of this chapter nevertheless provide us with a chance to probe into the different mentality and feeling that the travelers might have had at the beginning and the end of their journey. The presence of these smaller contrasts, as discussed above, does not overturn the grand narrative of the respective chapter(s), but it does provide us with an opportunity to think about how history could be presented differently if it is looked at from different perspectives. The same thing can also be said about the entire text of *Qiantang yishi*. Indeed, while the text’s miscellaneous appearance, heterogeneous content, and disjointed organization seem to want us to believe that history should be just read as it is, that is, as “one damn thing after another,” the interactive discourses, implicit structure and prevalent contrasts in the text urge us to think that there may still be a meaningful pattern or a purpose running beneath the course, or at least the narrated course, of history. As a result, we are given the option to read history either as a series of tenuously related events or as a structured and meaningful continuity. The charm of the text of *Qiantang yishi* lies in the fact that it never really forces us to make a choice between the two. Instead, we are given plenty of time, during or after our reading of the text, to dwell and ponder upon the very hesitation that we feel in our

²⁹⁹ My use of the term “grand narrative” is related to but not entirely the same as Jean-François Lyotard uses it in his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

choice. For some readers this feeling of uncertainty may be a painful experience, but for others it is exactly where the pleasure of reading rests.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POETIC EYES

The famous Chinese idiom *hualong dianjing* (畫龍點睛, literally, “Dotting in the pupils of a painted dragon”) originates in a record included in Zhang Yanyuan’s 張彥遠 (618-907) *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (*Records of Famous Paintings across the Ages*).³⁰⁰ It recounts an interesting story about a prominent painter living in the Liang dynasty (502-587) named Zhang Sengyao 張僧繇 (fl. 6th century). According to the story, Zhang once visited a temple in Jinling (present-day Nanjing) and painted four dragons on a temple wall. While painting the dragons, he finished all the parts of them except for the eyes, which he deliberately left blank. Perplexed, his viewers asked him why he did not fill in the eyes, to which Zhang replied, “If I filled in their eyes, the dragons would fly away.” Of course no one believed him. In order to prove it, Zhang took up the brush and painted in the pupils for two of the dragons. No sooner did he put down his brush than a lightning rumbled down from the sky and cracked the wall of the temple. Before everyone realized what had happened, the two dragons whose eyes had been painted burst out of the painting and flew into the sky. The other two dragons, whose eyes were left blank, still stayed painted on the wall.

What we are invited to see in this story is the wide-spread belief among Chinese artists that an artwork can be “brought to life” if a crucial final touch could be added to it. Inspired by this story, writers and literary critics begin to talk about the “eyes” in different types of literature, especially in poetry. Words like *shiyān* 詩眼 (eyes of a poem), 詞眼 *ciyan* (eyes of a song lyric), 曲眼 *quyan* (eyes of a drama),

³⁰⁰ Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai Minghua Ji* (*Records of Famous Paintings across the Ages*), included in *Xuejin taoyuan* 學津討原, vol. 11, (Shanghai: Hanfen lou, 1922), chapter 7.

and 文眼 *wenyan* (eyes of an essay) start to appear in literary writing and critiques.³⁰¹ Near the end of the 11th century, Fan Wen 范溫 (fl. late 11th and early 12th centuries), who was Huang Tingjian's 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) disciple and Qin Guan's 秦觀 (1049-1100) son-in-law, wrote a book titled *Qianxi shiyan* 潛溪詩眼 (*Eyes of Poems at Qianxi*). While the book itself was lost and has not been transmitted, excerpts of it have survived through transcriptions into other literary texts. In a recent study on these excerpts, Yu Hong 余虹 argues that the phrase "poetic eyes" was used by Fan Wen to convey at least two layers of meaning. On the one hand, the "poetic eyes" refer to the "eyes" within a poem, that is, the crucial words that serve as the focal points of the poem where its vitality resides or its essence is revealed; on the other, they refer to the "eyes" possessed by poets or poetry critics, which means their unique aesthetic taste or literary perception that enable them to either grant the "eyes" to a poem or discern them in it.³⁰²

This notion of "poetic eyes" has been widely applied in later studies on Chinese poetry and poetics. For instance, in his influential work on Chinese literature and literary theories, *Yigai* 藝概 (*Summary of the Arts*), Liu Xizai 劉熙載 (1813-1881), a Qing-dynasty scholar and literary critic, plays with this concept and comes up with the following argument,

There are different kinds of poetic eyes--the eyes of a poetic anthology, the eyes of a poem, the eyes of several lines, and the eyes of a single line. Sometimes the poetic eyes consist of several lines, sometimes one line, and sometimes one or two words.

³⁰¹ See Chen Zhipeng 陳志朋, "Mantang shiyan he ciyan" 漫談詩眼和詞眼 (Leisurely Discussions on the "Eyes of Poetry" and the "Eyes of Song Lyrics"), *Zhonghua huoye wenxuan* 中華活頁文選, 2007.6: 20-22, Zhang Qihuang 張其煌 and Han Zhongqiang 韓中強, "Shiyan, ciyan, quyan, wenyan" 詩眼, 詞眼, 曲眼, 文眼 (The Eyes of Poetry, Song Lyric, Drama and Essays), *Yuedu yu xiezuo* 閱讀與寫作, 2002.10: 30-31.

³⁰² Yu Hong 余虹, "Qianxi shiyan de meixue sixiang jianlun 《潛溪詩眼》的美學思想簡論 (A Brief Discussion on the Aesthetics in the *Poetic Eyes at Qianxi*)," *Journal of Sichuan shifan daxue (Social Sciences Edition)*, 2001.28: 46-51.

詩眼，有全集之眼，有一篇之眼，有數句之眼，有一句之眼。有以數句為眼者，有以一句為眼者，有以一、二字為眼者。³⁰³

In spite of its brevity, Liu Xizai's argument in fact extends the notion of the "poetic eyes." The idea of "poetic eyes" is not only limited to specific words within a poem, but has also been expanded to include phrases, sentences or even poems that serve as the "eyes" of an entire collection. The function of the "poetic eyes" has also been stratified. This stratification enables us to perform the search for the "poetic eyes" at different levels of the text, from the microscopic level of a single poetic line to the macroscopic level of an entire poetic anthology.

My study in this chapter, at some level, is inspired by this extension of Liu Xizai's, but tries to add more twists to it. To be more specific, what I attempt to do here is to search for the "poetic eyes" in the text of *Qiantang yishi* that will not only help us understand the poems included in it, but also enable us to grasp the gist of its narrative, the truth behind its description, and the essence of its structure. I believe that the various poems included in *Qiantang yishi* enable us to look into as well as to look beyond the text. They are the sources of life of the text, the moments of revelation, and the keys. Through the doors that they unlock for us, we can gain access not only to the text itself, but also to the rich historical and literary world that the text opens up to.

In the following pages, I will focus my analysis mainly on four entries included in the text of *Qiantang yishi*, all of which contain poems. While the two poems included in the first two entries demonstrate for us how different layers of interpretations can be invoked and mobilized by the insertion of certain poems to reveal the true meaning of the text, the three poetic couplets discussed in the third entry provide us with a good example of how we can use poetry to probe into the political reality of the past that otherwise remains unarticulated or underarticulated in the narrative. In addition to these two functions, the poems in *Qiantang yishi* also play significant structural roles. As I shall discuss in the third section of this chapter, the three song lyrics written by Xin Qiji not only help to establish a tripartite perspective for us to look into Southern Song

³⁰³ Liu Xizai, *Yigai* (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1986), p.237.

politics, but also provide important structural clues for us to anticipate and understand what will be discussed in the remaining part of the text.

The Poetic Message

Cold Spring Pavilion [Chapter 1, Entry 11]

The Cold Spring Pavilion is located right in front of Lingyin Temple. The water in the spring is extremely clear and transparent. Originating from under Feilai Mountain, the spring passes Jiulongsong and flows into West Lake. There was a poem written about it, which reads:

So clear is the spring that one's poetic mind can be rinsed in it.
Cold or warm human relations are, only the spring water knows
about it.
Flowing out into West Lake, the spring is loaded with song and
dance.
Looking back, it can never be like when it was still in the
mountain's depths.

冷泉亭

冷泉亭，正在靈隱寺之前。一泓極為清泚，流出飛來峰下，過九里松，而入西湖。或題詩云：“一泓清可浸詩脾，冷暖人情祇自知。流去西湖載歌舞，回頭不似在山時。”

At first glance, there seems to be nothing special about this short entry. The entry starts with a brief description of the Cold Spring Pavilion located near Lingyin Temple (Temple of Soul Retreat), which was one of the largest and wealthiest Buddhist temples in China at the time. Historically, the pavilion was built by Yuan Xu 元夔 (fl. 8th-9th centuries), but it did not get its current name until Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846), a famous Tang-dynasty poet who succeeded Yuan to become Governor of Hangzhou, wrote the two characters “*lengquan* 冷泉” on a board and had it hung above its front door. In addition to giving the pavilion a name, Bai Juyi also wrote an essay commemorating the beauty of the spring and its surroundings. The essay was later

inscribed onto a stele to be erected in the pavilion. Over time, both the location and the appearance of the Cold Spring Pavilion have changed a lot. Originally the pavilion was built in the middle of the spring. At that time, the water in the spring was said to come from the depth of Feilai Mountain 飛來峰 (Flying Down Mountain), and therefore remained extremely clear and cold even during the hot season. In the early tenth century, however, the pavilion underwent some significant reconstruction, after which the board containing Bai Juyi's calligraphy of the pavilion's name went missing. By the early sixteenth century, the water in the spring had become seriously clogged, and the pavilion had to be moved to from inside the water to the bank. This movement changed the place of the pavilion to its current location. As we can see here, the Cold Spring Pavilion that we see nowadays is in fact completely different from what and where it used to be. The only thing that survives is its name, which now serves as the only link that connects the history of its past to the look of its present.

After this short description of the Cold Spring Pavilion, there is a quatrain written by Lin Zhen 林稹 (fl. 1076), a talented Northern Song scholar and poet, about whom little is known except that he passed the civil service examination in 1076. The quatrain is as short as the description that precedes it, which makes it susceptible to being overlooked as a poetic ornament to the entry. However, it is exactly this seemingly ornamental poem that provides us the key to understand the hidden message in the entry. As we will see in my following analysis, the two couplets in the quatrain work together to bring forward a contrastive depiction of the original state of the spring while it is still in the mountain and what it has been turned into when it flows into West Lake. What this contrastive depiction reveals to us is not only a spatial difference between the spring's origin and destination, but also an irrevocable change taking place during the time from the spring's past to its present. This spatial and temporal entanglement enhances the sociopolitical critique imbedded in the quatrain, adding to it a critical dimension that is both synchronic and diachronic.

The cold spring depicted in the first couplet of the quatrain is characterized by its purity and self-containment. According to the first line of the couplet, the water in the

spring is so clear and clean that one can rinse one's poetic mind in it. The poem does not explain the reason behind the water's purity and cleanness, but we are invited to speculate from the description in the second line that it may have something to do with the isolated status of the spring in the mountain. Within the mountain, the spring is meandering through a relatively secluded sphere of nature. Though its self-containment and tranquility may be interrupted by the presence of occasional travelers who stop by, it by and large still stays to itself. This isolated state of the spring enables it to remain detached from the hustle and bustle of the mundane world and keep a cold eye on the fickleness of human relationships. It helps the spring attain a special kind of calmness that makes it a perfect place for purging one's distractive thoughts, just as Bai Juyi described in his essay,

In spring days, I love the genialness of the grass and the liveliness of the trees, which can appease my mind, purify my essence, and revitalize my vigor. In summer nights, I love the tranquility of the spring and the coolness of the wind, which can disperse my worries, sober my mind, and raise my spirit. The mountain trees are my covers, and the rocks my screens. Clouds arise from my roof beams and water levels with the rafters of my house. When I sit and play with the spring, I can wash my foot in it just below my bed; when I lie down to become intimate with it, I can fish in it with my head on my pillow. Moreover, the water in the spring is clean and transparent, cold and smooth. Whether a Daoist or a layman who comes to see the spring, the dust in his eyes and ears and the dirt in his heart and on his tongue will be immediately cleansed, without even having to have them rinsed in the spring. Like this, [the spring] has so many hidden benefits that one can never count all of them.

春之日，吾愛其草薰薰，木欣欣，可以導和納粹，暢人血氣。夏之夜，吾愛其泉淅淅，風泠泠，可以蠲煩析醒，起人心情。山樹為蓋，岩石為屏，雲從棟生，水與階平。坐而玩之者，可濯足於床下；臥而狎之者，可垂釣於枕上。矧又潺湲潔澈，粹冷柔滑。若俗士，若道人，眼耳之塵，心舌之垢，不待盥滌，見輒除去。潛利陰益，可勝言哉！³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846), *Bai Juyi quanji* 白居易全集 (Complete Works of Bai Juyi, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), p. 637.

Originating in the depth of the mountain and wandering across a Buddhist temple, the spring is a place where people can cast away their secular thought and immerse themselves in the peace and idleness of nature. The most commendable feature of the spring is its extreme purity. Because of it, everybody, from a worldly layman to an enlightened Daoist, can have their “dusted mind” rinsed clean in it. As a matter of fact, the person does not even need to rinse his “dusted mind” in the spring. According to Bai Juyi, the extreme purity of the spring water has ensured that as soon as he looks into it, “the dust in his eyes and ears and the dirt in his heart and on his tongue” would be immediately expunged.

The extreme purity of the spring, however, does not last throughout its course. According to the second couplet of Lin Zhen’s poem, as the spring gradually flows outside of the mountain and into West Lake, it has been slowly transformed into a secular site where people gather to entertain themselves. The artificiality of human entertainment has replaced the naturalness of the spring to become its new primary feature. With the loss of its naturalness, the purity that characterizes the spring’s existence in the mountain also slowly fades away. The spring is no longer a site for people to contemplate and expunge their “dusty” thoughts which they collect from the secular world, but has become, like most other waters in the city of Hangzhou, the exact center of secularization, where people assemble to gratify their insatiate thirst for worldly comfort and pleasure. This secularization, in the eyes of Lin Zhen, has irrevocably “contaminated” the spring, making it unable to retain or retrieve its original purified state in the mountain. This “contamination” has degraded the spring to a place of secular entertainment, and vulgarizes everything that is associated with it. Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597-1679) talked about this quite vividly in his essay on the Cold Spring Pavilion:

During the summer when we enjoyed the coolness of night, we moved our pillows and beds into the [Cold Spring] Pavilion to lie down under the moonlight. The water of the spring flew across, making sounds of metal and stone [as if it came from musical instruments]. When Zhang

Gongliang³⁰⁵ heard the sound, he chanted the poem written by Lin Danshan,³⁰⁶

Flowing out into West Lake, the spring is loaded with song and dance.

Looking back, it can never be like when it was still in the mountain's depth.

He said that since the sound of the spring already contained musical elements in it that were ideal for singing and dancing, where could the spring go except West Lake? I used to say such things about people living near West Lake: There was no one who did not indulge in singing and dancing, no mountain that was not filled with singing and dancing, and no water that was not loaded with singing and dancing. Luxury and pleasure [were what filled people's life], and even country women and Buddhist monks could not be exempt from it. This reminded me of Meigong's words,³⁰⁷ "In West Lake, there are famous mountains but no virtuous recluses; there are old temples but no eminent monks; there are pretty girls, but no elegant ladies; there are flowery mornings, but no moonlit nights."

夏月乘涼，移枕簟就亭中臥月。澗流淙淙，絲竹並作。張公亮聽此水聲，吟林丹山詩：“流向西湖載歌舞，回頭不似在山時。”言此水聲帶金石，已先作歌舞矣，不入西湖安入乎！余嘗謂住西湖之人，無人不帶歌舞，無山不帶歌舞，無水不帶歌舞。脂粉紈綺，即村婦山僧，亦所不免。因憶眉公之言曰：“西湖有名山，無處士；有古剎，無高僧；有紅粉，無佳人；有花朝，無月夕。”³⁰⁸

Zhang Dai's essay on the Cold Spring Pavilion was written in the seventeenth century, more than eight hundred years after Bai Juyi wrote his. The vast span of time between the two writers possibly explains the huge difference between their depictions of the spring that revolves around the pavilion. In Bai Juyi's essay, the spring is depicted as a clean and purified source of water, where travelers can stop by and rinse off the

³⁰⁵ The style name of Zhang Mingbi 張明弼 (1584-1653), a Ming dynasty poet.

³⁰⁶ The style name of Lin Zhen.

³⁰⁷ Meigong was the style name of Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558-1639), a Ming dynasty writer, painter and calligrapher.

³⁰⁸ Zhang Dai, *Xihu meng xun* 西湖夢尋 (In Search of Dreams on West Lake; Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1984), pp. 76-77.

“dust” in their mind which they collect from the mundane world. But in Zhang Dai’s essay, even the spring’s original purity becomes questionable, as the sound of “metal and stone” that the spring makes in the mountain already foreshadows its destiny to flow into West Lake and become vulgarized by human singing and dancing. This contrast between Bai’s and Zhang’s depictions is quite revealing. It is as if the vulgarizing power that originates from humans’ insatiate pursuit for worldly comfort and pleasure has an ability to perpetuate itself. With the lapse of time, this power is able to trace back to the source and erode whatever is originally pure and sacred. If at Bai Juyi’s time there was still a place in the depth of the mountain for one to retreat to and stay away from worldly temptations, then by the time when Zhang Dai wrote his essay, even in such a place one was no longer exempt from being tempted by the world. Written in between Bai Juyi and Zhang Dai’s essays, Lin Zhen’s poem captures a moment when the battle between men’s pursuit for spiritual purity and their desire for worldly comfort reaches a crucial point. The spring that embodies the two sides of the battle is correspondingly divided into two parts. While the upper reaches of the spring inside the mountain remains a haven of peace and purity detached from the disturbance of the mundane world, its lower reaches that flow into West Lake have been “contaminated” by human singing and dancing and transformed into a vulgarized carrier of secular entertainment.

When Lin Zhen’s poetic lament on the spring’s inability to retain its purity throughout its course is transplanted into the text of *Qiantang yishi*, it starts to display a new layer of sociopolitical meaning that it only vaguely hinted at before. The key to grasp this sociopolitical meaning is to understand the cultural connotation that lies in the Chinese word *gewu* 歌舞. In traditional China, the word *gewu* means much more than just “singing and dancing,” two common forms of human entertainment. It is also used to designate a hedonistic lifestyle that is often believed to be detrimental to both human life and the healthy development of society. The logic behind this line of belief is that if a man indulges too much in singing and dancing, or more precisely, in the pleasure that they induce, he will naturally lose his interest in fulfilling his moral duty to

himself and to society, and if a society is full of such people, it will naturally embark on the road towards decline and decadence. This type of logic has led many traditional Chinese historians and scholars to view *gewu* as a great source of evil, which one should try to avoid at all cost. If not, not only one's own moral integrity will be harmed by it, but the society and state may also be corrupted and ruined by the life of debauchery induced by it.

While this layer of moral undertone implied in the word *gewu* remains more or less veiled in Lin Zhen's own poem, it becomes much more visible when the poem is read side by side with other entries in *Qiantang yishi* that also talk about singing and dancing. At the very beginning of *Qiantang yishi*, there is statement which says,

It was a great mistake that Emperor Gaozong did not choose Jiankang but Hangzhou as the capital. Apart from indulging themselves in the beautiful landscape and the pleasure of singing and dancing, the scholar-officials paid no attention to state affairs. This eventually led to huge loss of military forces, misguidance of the emperors, cession of territory, and surrender of their country. All these things were indeed regrettable.

高宗不都建康而都於杭，大為失策；士大夫湖山歌舞之餘，視天下事於度外，卒至喪師誤主，納土賣國，可為長嘆惜也。³⁰⁹

It is true that this statement may be too stereotypical to account for the real reason behind the fall of the Southern Song, but it nonetheless let us catch a glimpse of what type of role that "singing and dancing" played in some people's view and assessment of Southern Song history. In this statement, the excessive indulgence in singing and dancing has become the source of all evil. The moral delinquency that it causes among scholar-officials is not only believed to be the reason behind the various kinds of sociopolitical corruption in Southern Song government and society, but is also associated with the decline and eventual downfall of the dynasty. This sociopolitical criticism on singing and dancing creates a new frame of reference for our understanding of Lin Zhen's quatrain. Within this new frame of reference, the purity of the spring that

³⁰⁹ See Liu Yiqing, *Qiantang Yishi*, p. 17.

Lin describes in the first couplet starts to acquire a new didactic layer of meaning, which can be said to stand for the Song scholar-officials' moral integrity that has not yet been contaminated by their pleasure-driven lifestyle. Sadly though, this original mental purity does not remain for long. Just as the nature of the spring has been gradually transformed on its way from the depth of the mountain to West Lake, the scholar-officials' mindset is also destined to be influenced and changed by the lifestyle they choose. In the light of this, the spring's eventual change into a vulgarized carrier of secular entertainment is perhaps symbolic of the Song scholar-officials' final loss of moral rectitude and sense of responsibility. Rolling in wealth and rioting in pleasure, they have long forgotten their duty to the state and society, and can never again become the morally good persons that they used to be.

I hope by now it is clear to us that the key to understand the entry discussed above is to grasp and digest the hidden meaning possessed by Lin Zhen's poem placed at the end of it. Culturally rich and literarily provocative, this poem provides us with a perfect example of how different layers of interpretation can be invoked and mobilized to add more diversity to our reading of the text by artfully inserting poems into the originally plain narrative. As we can see from the analysis above, the adding of Lin Zhen's poem has not only enriched the content of the entry, but also transforms it from a brief and disinterested description of a scenic spot in Hangzhou to a subtle but incisive sociopolitical critique of Southern Song government and society. It is perhaps worth pointing out here that this "transformation" caused by the insertion of poetry is by no means unusual in the text of *Qiantang yishi*. In the following entry discussing the Hall of the Three Worthies in Hangzhou, we can also find a similar example.

The Hall of the Three Worthies [Chapter 1, Entry 10]

In the *bingxu* year [1226] of the Baoqing reign period [1225-1227], Yuan Jiao, Governor of the Capital, sold wine in the Hall of the Three Worthies. Someone wrote a poem about this, which said:

Hejing, Dongpo and Bai Letian,³¹⁰

The three were like autumn chrysanthemums grown in cold spring water.

Now their faces are all covered with dust,
And were used by Yuan Jiao to make profit with wines.

三賢堂

寶慶丙戌，袁樵尹京於三賢堂賣酒。或題詩云：“和靖東坡白樂天，三人秋菊薦寒泉。而今滿面生塵土，卻與袁樵趁酒錢。”

Like the entry about the Cold Spring Pavilion, this entry also starts with a short and disinterested statement, which describes a small event taking place in 1226. In that year, Yuan Jiao 袁樵 (fl. 13th century), Governor of Hangzhou, decided to sell wines in the Hall of the Three Worthies. The author of the entry did not make any direct comment on this event. It is not until when we read the poem, or more precisely, the sarcastic doggerel placed at the end of the entry that we start to realize the bitter irony implied in the preceding narrative.

In order to fully understand the sarcasm in the poem, we need to first know a little bit about the Hall of the Three Worthies. Here the three worthies are, respectively, Bai Juyi, Lin Bu 林逋 (967 or 968-1028), and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), who all resided in the city of Hangzhou at some time during their lives. When they were in Hangzhou, they lived different styles of life. Because of this, they were remembered by people in the city as worthies for different reasons.

Living most of his life as a recluse in the Mountain of Solitude (*Gushan* 孤山) near West Lake, Lin Bu was remembered primarily for the aloofness of his lifestyle and the moral impeccability that that lifestyle stood for. According to his short biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Lin Bu started to live as a recluse in the Mountain of Solitude when he was forty. For the remaining twenty years of his life, he

³¹⁰ Hejing 和靖 was the style name of Lin Bu, Dongpo 東坡 the style name of Su Shi, and Leitian 樂天 the style name of Bai Juyi.

never set foot in the city.³¹¹ Lin's biography states that he did not have any wife or children throughout his life.³¹² This gives rise to another beautiful legend, which claims that Lin was "married" to plum trees and treated two cranes as his sons.³¹³ This legend may be exaggerated,³¹⁴ but it is not entirely without basis. Lin Bu was indeed a plum tree lover, as can be seen from the numerous poems that he wrote about plum trees.³¹⁵ According to another anecdote included in Shen Kuo's *Mengxi bitan* (Brush Talks from Dream Brook), Lin raised two cranes in his yard.³¹⁶ Every time a guest came to visit him, his servant would loosen the cranes and let them fly into the sky to send Lin a message, who was sailing on West Lake. Upon seeing the flying cranes, Lin would return to his house to welcome the guest. Another unverified story suggests an even closer relationship between Lin Bu and his cranes. According to the story, whenever Lin played a zither or chanted poems, the cranes would dance to the music or the rhythm of the poems to entertain Lin and his guests. When Lin Bu died, the two cranes refused to leave his tomb. They cried in such a saddening voice that everyone who came to mourn Lin was moved to tears. Sorrow-stricken, the two cranes eventually died in front of Lin's tomb. In order to praise their loyalty, people buried them together in a small tomb beside Lin's. The tomb was later called *hezong* 鶴塚, meaning "Tomb of the Cranes."³¹⁷ It goes without saying that most of these stories are probably fabricated, but they nonetheless let us see how Lin Bu has been remembered by his

³¹¹ See Lin Bu's biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, chapter 457, pp. 13432-13433. Also see Zhong Ying 鐘嬰, *Lin Hejing Yu Xihu* 林和靖與西湖 (Lin Hejing and West Lake; Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004).

³¹² See Lin Bu's biography in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 457.

³¹³ See Zhong Ying, *Lin Hejing Yu Xihu* (*Lin Hejing and West Lake*), pp. 55-77, 101-119.

³¹⁴ Some modern scholars have challenged this detail. See Jin Wenming 金文明, "Lin Bu jiuqing youmeiyou qi er? " 林逋究竟有沒有妻兒? (Did Lin Bu Have Wife and Children?), *Dagong bao* (大公報), March 22, 2002.

³¹⁵ The most well-known poem that Lin wrote about plum trees is the one titled *Shanyuan xiaomei* 山園小梅 (Small Plum Tree in a Garden in the Hills), which contains the widely cited lines "疏影橫斜水清淺, 暗香浮動月黃昏," (Sparse shadows slant across waters clear and shallow; /Hidden fragrance floats under moonlight dim and yellow). The translation is modeled upon Roland Egan's translation included in Cai Zong-qi, ed, *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 309.

³¹⁶ See Shen Kuo, *Mengxi Bitan*, p. 83. A similar record can also be found in Zhang Dai, *Xihu mengxun*, p.127.

³¹⁷ *Lin Hejing yu Xihu*, pp.101-110.

contemporaries and later generations. In traditional China, both plum trees and cranes were symbols of purity and nobleness associated with hermit life. In light of this, the fact that they have been related to Lin Bu perhaps has more symbolic implications than factual ones. That is to say, the stories about them are not so much meant to provide us with any real account of Lin's life, but are rather used as effective means, through which Lin's life as a recluse can be meaningfully mythicized. Because of these stories, Lin Bu's life in the Mountain of Solitude has been changed into an edifying myth, one that is remembered and revered by us as an idyllic ideal that stands in contrast with the busy and boisterous life that people live in the city.

Unlike Lin Bu who remained for most of his life detached from the city, Bai Juyi and Su Shi are remembered by people in Hangzhou exactly because of their close attachment to urban life. Both Bai Juyi and Su were appointed Prefect of Hangzhou, and while they were in that position, both made commendable contributions to the city and its residents.

Bai Juyi served as Prefect of Hangzhou from 821 to 824. During the tenure of his office, he had put through a series of projects that benefited the city and its people. One of these projects was the repairing of the six wells built by Li Bi 李泌 (722-789) about forty years before. The six wells were originally used to draw water from West Lake to provide drinking and irrigation water to Hangzhou, but when Bai Juyi went to the city, all of the wells had suffered serious blockage and could not function properly. Having seen the problem, Bai Juyi immediately ordered the six wells dredged and repaired. The completion of this project benefited the city tremendously. Even until the end of the 13th century, the six wells still functioned as one of the major water supplies in the city. Another project led by Bai Juyi that benefited the development of Hangzhou was the building of a causeway on West Lake. The construction of this dam enabled the residents in Hangzhou to properly control the water flow in West Lake during flood and drought seasons, and by doing so, they could save enough water for the city's use throughout the year. Bai Juyi was the major proponent and supervisor of this project. Though the completion of this project was not without impediment, he

managed to see it through. When the project was about to finish, Bai wrote an essay explaining the reasons for building this dam, the methods to use it, and various other things that need to be taken care of by later governors of the city. The essay was later inscribed onto a stele to be erected on the bank of the West Lake. After the dam was built, it proved extremely useful for the people living in the city. Because of this, people decided to call it *Baigong di* 白公堤 (Mr. Bai's Causeway), in order to commemorate Bai Juyi's contribution to it. Nowadays, the dam is no longer existent, but Bai Juyi's name is still remembered by people in Hangzhou. As a matter of fact, they are so grateful to Bai that they choose to abbreviate the name of another dam, originally called "*Baisha di* 白沙堤 (White Sand Causeway)," to *Baidi* 白堤 (Bai's Causeway) in order to continue to memorialize Bai Juyi's dedication to the city.³¹⁸

Like Bai Juyi, Su Shi has been remembered by people in Hangzhou as a righteous and diligent official who put the well-being of the city in the first place. Su Shi was posted to Hangzhou twice in his life. The first time was from 1071 to 1074 as Controller-General and the second time from 1089 to 1091 as Prefect. In both terms of office, Su Shi did a lot for the city and its people. Among these things, the most well-known one was the water project on West Lake that he planned and supervised. When Su Shi first came to Hangzhou, West Lake had suffered from serious clogging problems caused by rotten water plants which turned into muddy fields. People called these fields "*fengtian*" 葑田 (literally, fields of water bamboo), as they looked like real fields except that nothing could grow on them. The problem of *fengtian* aggravated as time went by. By the time Su Shi was assigned to Hangzhou for the second time, the acreage of *fengtian* had already increased to more than 670 acres (4100 *mu*), which amounted to almost half of the size of West Lake. Had this problem of *fengtian* continued to develop, West Lake would disappear from the city entirely within twenty years. Having understood the severity of the problem, Su Shi took a series of measures to have West Lake dredged and the *fengtian* cleared. He requested funds from the central government, planned

³¹⁸ For a detailed discussion, please refer to Yu Jin 余霏, *Bai Juyi Yu Xihu* 白居易與西湖 (Bai Juyi and West Lake; Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004), pp. 30-45.

and supervised the water project, and mobilized workers to scoop out mud from the *fengtian*. The scooped-out mud was not simply discarded. Instead, Su Shi ordered to have it gathered and built into a causeway on West Lake. This causeway was later named the “Su Causeway” (Sudi 蘇堤) to commemorate Su Shi’s contribution in its construction, and it is still in existence today. But this was still not the end of the story yet. It has been said after several months of hard work when the clogging problem in West Lake was finally solved, Su Shi asked his subordinates to send meat and wine to the workers on the lake to celebrate. The meat was cooked using a special recipe invented by Su Shi himself, called *dongpo rou* 東坡肉 (literally, Dongpo’s Pork). The recipe has been handed down and turned into a famous dish in the local cuisine of Hangzhou, which indicates that Su Shi has been remembered by residents in the city not only as a capable official but also as a talented chef.³¹⁹

Although the descriptions provided above cannot account for all the reasons why Bai Juyi, Li Bu and Su Shi have been remembered as the worthies by the residents in Hangzhou, they let us see some of the most important aspects of their lives that make them memorable figures. As I mentioned before, the three persons have been remembered differently for their different lifestyles. While Lin Bu is remembered mostly for his self-contained life in the Mountain of Solitude and the moral impeccability that this lifestyle stands for, Bai Juyi and Su Shi have been recognized primarily for their dedication to the development of Hangzhou and their thoughtfulness of the wellbeing of the residents in the city. This difference has divided the three persons into two types of idealized personalities, each representing an important aspect that qualifies a worthy person. While Lin Bu may be said to represent a worthy person’s constant pursuit of self-discipline and self-improvement in his personal and moral life, Bai Juyi and Su Shi’s stories let us see another important quality of being a worthy, that is, their selfless concern for the wellbeing of the common people. In any case, it is certain that all three were noble and righteous persons. This is why they are compared to autumn

³¹⁹ See Zhu Hongda 朱宏達 and Zhu Lei 朱磊, *Su Dongpo Yu Xihu* 蘇東坡與西湖 (Su Dongpo and West Lake; Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2004), pp. 87-100 and 206-217.

chrysanthemums, a cultural symbol of virtue and nobility in traditional China, in the first couplet of the poem. According to the couplet, the only place where chrysanthemums can grow is in the cold spring water, for the cold spring water, originated from the depth of the mountain, is an immaculate product of nature, uncontaminated by any “dust” in the human world.

The noble and virtuous characters of Bai, Lin and Su form a sharp contrast with the covetousness of Yuan Jiao, who served as Governor of Hangzhou during the early 13th century. Unlike Bai, Lin and Su, historical records about Yuan Jiao are extremely scarce. As a matter of fact, except for what is described in this entry—that he had ordered set up booths to sell wine in the Hall of the Three Worthies, we know almost nothing about his life. Yuan’s anonymity in history is probably telling of the low respect that people in Hangzhou have held for him. This is hardly surprising because what he had done in the name of the three worthies was indeed despicable. Yuan chose the Hall of the Three Worthies to sell wine because he believed that the fame of Bai Juyi, Lin Bu and Su Shi could bring him more profit. But it never occurred to him that what he had done in the name of the three persons was exactly opposite to the values that they would like to stand up for. We could imagine that if Lin Bu were alive, he would probably be enraged by the fact that his name as a self-disciplined recluse was used by Yuan Jiao for profit-making. Similarly, were Bai Juyi and Su Shi able to see the wine booths set up in front of their statues, they might also frown upon the fact that Yuan, as a local governor of Hangzhou, put his greed for money ahead of his concern for the city and its people. This sharp contrast between the noble characters of the three worthies and the contemptible deeds of Yuan Jiao explains the presence of sarcasm in the last couplet of the poem. Ironically, the fame and moral values that the three sages lived by had been exploited by Yuan Jiao in the exact opposite way. The sages’ disdain for materialistic gain was used by Yuan as a good cover to make more money, and their fame as selfless persons became a perfect tool for him to collect more profit through wine selling.

To blame Yuan Jiao alone for trading virtue for money, however, would be unfair. The zeal for money was pandemic in Hangzhou at the time and Yuan Jiao was but following the trend. According to a record included in Zhou Mi's *Wulin jiushi* (*Former Things in Wulin*), the Hall of the Three Worthies had long become a famous commercial site by the late 12th century,

During the Chunxi reign period [1174-1189], Emperor Xiaozong used the entire world to support [his parents].³²⁰ Every time he visited the Imperial Palace of Virtue and Longevity,³²¹ he rode on huge dragon boats and made a big tour around the mountains and rivers along the route. [Accompanying him, there were] government magistrates, royal courtiers, palace eunuchs, imperial servants, capital prefectures, and disciplinarians, who also rode on hundreds of big boats. By that time, the world had long been in peace and prosperity, and people were happy. From business to sightseeing, nothing was forbidden. Painted oars and light boats danced [across the Lake] like flying loom shuttles. As for fruits and vegetables, soups and wines, gambling games, ornamental plants, playing tools, merchandise rods, flower baskets, painted fans, colorful flags, sweetened fish, rice flour cakes, seasonal flowers, clay figurines, they were called "indigenous products of the Lake." In addition, there were also pearl and jade headgear, golden silk and satin, ornaments made of rhinoceros horn, oil paint, cane furniture, pottery utensils, and toys, etc. Everything was displayed on the market. Market places like the Hall of Former Worthies, the Hall of the Three Worthies, and the Temple of the Four Sages were the busiest and most spectacular.

淳熙間，壽皇以天下養，每奉德壽三殿，遊幸湖山，御大龍舟。宰執從官，以至大璫應奉諸司，及京府彈壓等，各乘大舫，無慮數百。時承平日久，樂與民同，凡遊觀買賣，皆無所禁。畫楫輕舫，旁舞如織。至於果蔬、羹酒、關撲、宜男、戲具、鬧竿、花籃、畫扇、彩旗、糖魚、粉餌，時花、泥嬰等，謂之“湖中土宜”。又有珠翠冠梳、銷金彩段、犀鈿、髹漆、織藤、窯器、玩具等物，無不羅列。如先賢堂、三賢堂、四聖觀等處最盛。³²²

³²⁰ This refers to Emperor Gaozong.

³²¹ This was where Emperor Gaozong resided after he abdicated the throne.

³²² See Zhou Mi, *Wulin Jiushi* (Former Things in Wulin), p. 37.

As we can see from this passage, the Hall of the Three Worthies had long stopped being a place where people came to perform solemn worship to the three virtuous persons enshrined in it. Instead, the place had been turned into a lively market square where people gathered and browsed through a glittering array of items and goods. In spite of the fact that the statues of the three worthies might still be placed in the hall and likely still enjoyed people's sacrifices, their function as moral guides for the city had long been neglected by people who came to visit them. This explains why in the third line of the poem, the poet laments that the faces of the three worthies are all covered with dust. At a time when all people were busy chasing after wealth and pleasure, the moral virtues that they used to abide by would inevitably lose their hold in such people's minds. The extravagant life-style in Hangzhou during the early years of the Southern Song made people forgetful. From local governors to common people, almost everyone in the city immersed him/herself in a feverish pursuit of materialistic gain, and stopped worrying about the wellbeing of the city, the people, and the state over the long run. It was this myopic zeal for profit that concerned the poet the most. This concern in turn elevated the poem that he wrote from a simple criticism of Yuan Jiao's profit-driven character to a more encompassing cultural critique of the sumptuous, hedonic, and decadent social ethos that prevailed in Hangzhou as well as the Southern Song society at the time.

Politics through Poetry

Grand Councilor Jia Holds a Drinking Game [Chapter 5, Entry 19]

One day, Qiuhe³²³ invited Ma Tingluan, style name Biwu, and Ye Mengding, style name Xijian, to come over to play drinkers' wager game with him. [The rule of the game was that] every time a drinking order was raised, [the person who raised the order] must talk about an item that he [imaginatively] gave to someone and the person who received the item must return the favor with a poetic couplet.

³²³ Qiuhe was the style name of Jia Sidao.

Qiuhe started, "I have a game of chess, which I give to a chess master. Upon receiving it, the chess master presents me with a poetic couplet, which says,

Having never met a true rival since I left my cave retreat,
I will be lenient whenever I can."

Biwu continued, "I have a fish rod, which I give to a fisherman. Upon receiving it, the fisherman presents me with a poetic couplet, which says,

The night is quiet, water is cold, and the fish won't take the bait,
The boat returns, empty of fish but full of moonlight.'

Xijian concluded, "I have a plough, which I give to a farmer. Upon receiving it, the farmer presents me with a poetic couplet, which says,

Do preserve at least a square inch of soil,
To leave for posterity to plough."

Sidao was displeased and called off the game.

賈相舉令

一日，壑翁招碧梧馬廷鸞、西礪葉夢鼎行令。舉一令，要一物與人，得物者還以一聯詩。

秋壑云：“我有一局碁，付與棋師，棋師得之，予我一聯詩：‘自出洞來無敵手，得饒人處且饒人。’”碧梧云：“我有一釣竿，付與漁翁，漁翁得之，予我一聯詩：‘夜靜水寒魚不餌，滿船空載月明歸。’”西礪云：“我有一張犁，付與農夫，農夫得之，予我一聯詩：‘但存方寸地，留與子孫耕。’”似道不悅而罷。

It needs to be clarified from the outset that what is described in the entry might have never happened in history. But an informed reader will know how to appreciate the subtlety of this story in spite of its potential falsehood. Real or not, the story provides us with a good opportunity to probe into the subtle relationship among the three persons--Jia Sidao, Ma Tingluan 馬廷鸞(1222-1289) and Ye Mengding 葉夢鼎 (1200-1279)--involved in it. The subtlety of their relationship is in turn representative of

the even more complex reality of the political situation at the time. It is worth noting here that the subtle message in the story is not revealed to us directly through its narrative, but rather tactfully through the three poetic couplets that Jia, Ma, and Ye, respectively cited in the drinkering game.

In order to understand this subtle message, we need first to have a look at the historical background of the three persons involved in it. Since I have already conducted a relatively detailed study of Jia Sidao's life and political career in the previous chapter,³²⁴ I shall focus more on Ma Tingluan and Ye Mengding here. Like Jia Sidao, both Ma Tingluan and Ye Mengding were appointed Grand Councilors at certain points of their lives, and the time of their appointments in fact overlapped with that of Jia Sidao. But unlike Jia Sidao who was usually condemned by historians as a treacherous minister, Ma and Ye were generally regarded by their contemporaries and later generations as righteous officials, who always put the interest of their country ahead of their own.

Ma Tingluan was a native of Raozhou, and his fame as a diligent scholar and filial son had been known ever since he was young. He passed the *jinshi* examination in 1247. A few years later he was given an opportunity to meet the emperor to have a palace interview for his future assignment. At that time, Ding Daquan 丁大全,³²⁵ who was then County Magistrate of Fuliang, admired Ma's talent and learning very much and tried several times to recruit him into his camp, but Ma refused. Ma's refusals displeased Ding, who secretly instructed an old colleague of Ma to spy on him and sabotaged his interview with the emperor. Ding also leaked the content of Ma's memorial (which he was going to present to the emperor during the interview), in which Ma advised the emperor to stop allowing powerful eunuchs and imperial relatives such as Dong Songchen 董宋臣 (?-1260), to interfere with state affairs. Not surprisingly, this leakage caused Ma huge troubles and made him many enemies at court. But it also made Ma's

³²⁴ See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

³²⁵ Ding Daquan later became the Grand Councilor in 1255. He was removed from office in 1259 for deliberately hiding the information about the Mongolian invasion. For a detailed discussion, please refer to my previous chapter.

fame as a righteous person more well-known. Because of Ding Daquan's sabotage, Ma was forced to stay at a lower position for several years until he was promoted by Wu Qian 吳潛 to become Editor in the Palace Library in 1259. By that time, Ding Daquan was already removed from office, and several candidates were selected to replace him, among whom Jia Sidao was the most prominent. Because of that, almost everyone in the court tried to make up to Jia, but Ma Tingluan was an exception. He never became or tried to become close to Jia, but on the other hand, he also seldom got into direct conflict with Jia either. The only time when there seemed to be a confrontation between the two was during the last few years of Ma's political career, when Ma suggested changing the strict regulations regarding appointing and promoting border officers in order to stimulate their morale. This suggestion enraged Jia Sidao, who had ordered the passing of a series of laws and restrictions to control the power possessed by local military commanders. Jia Sidao thus viewed Ma Tingluan as a opponent and punished several government clerks to vent his anger. Soon after this incident, Ma resigned his office, in spite of the emperor's persistent requests for him to stay. Seventeen years later, Ma died at home as a commoner.³²⁶ As can be seen from this short description of his life, Ma Tingluan is portrayed a man of principle throughout his life. He attacked what he deemed wrong without reserve and refused to gain political prominence by cliquing with those who were in power. Because of this, his political career was not always smooth, especially during the early years. Later he seemed to become more tactful, especially in his dealing with Jia Sidao, but his upright personality eventually led him into an indirect conflict with the latter.

Like Ma Tingluan, Ye Mengding was known as a person of integrity who would not give up his principles in exchange for political success. The commonality between the two can be seen from the fact that both had warned the emperor not to let powerful eunuchs and imperial relatives interfere with state affairs, and both had refused Ding Daquan's attempts at recruitment. But compared with Ma Tingluan, Ye Mengding was much more straightforward. When fighting against the wrong and

³²⁶ Ma Tingluan's biography can be found in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 414.

wicked, he never cared about how strong his opponent was or what kind of trouble he might get into. A telling example of this would be that when Emperor Lizong died and Empress Dowager was holding court behind the curtain, Ye was among the first group of court officials who uttered objection to this, saying that it was never a good idea to allow the emperor's mother to attend to state affairs. Another example was when Lady Yang, mother of the last emperor of the Southern Song, was promoted to Imperial Consort, Ye was asked to bow to her upon visit. Ye was enraged by this request and refused to do it, saying that it was never appropriate for Grand Councilor to bow to an Imperial Consort. In addition to these two incidents, Ye Mengding's upright personality could also be seen from his open conflict with Jia Sidao. Unlike Ma Tingluan, Ye Mengding was never hesitant to confront Jia Sidao. The first time when the two got into conflict was when Jia tried to issue a new paper currency to replace the old one. Ye thought that this was in fact meant to exploit the common people and therefore refused to do what Jia asked. The second time was when Jia tried to implement the Public Field Law. Again Ye protested on the basis that this would harm the interests of the commoners and persuaded the emperor to have the law implemented only in limited areas. Ye's constant opposition of Jia's policies must have enraged the latter. The two were never on good terms with each other, but the actual breakup of their relationship did not happen until 1267. In that year, Ye Mengding was appointed as Grand Councilor to work together with Jia Sidao. After assuming the office, Ye ordered the exoneration of a dead local official a false charge placed against him when he was alive. But Jia Sidao thought that this grace should be issued by himself, not by Ye, and therefore dismissed several people from the Department of State Affairs to show his disapproval of Ye's action. Ye felt extremely humiliated and threatened to resign. Later Jia was forced to reconcile with Ye, but Ye still insisted on retiring, albeit without success. By that time, Ye had probably already become disillusioned with Southern Song politics. A couple of years later, he grasped another opportunity to propose to resign from his office. His resignation was only partially granted. A few years later, he was asked by the emperor, and Jia Sidao as well, to resume his office as Grand Councilor. This time Ye refused the

appointment every way he could. When his refusal was denied by the emperor, he insisted on not accepting the appointment and directly returned to his hometown on a small boat. People around him tried to warn him of the consequences of doing this, but he replied, “The matter of life and death is small comparable to one’s sense of shame. There is no way I will return to the court.” Reportedly Jia Sidao was furious upon hearing these words, but there was nothing he could do except to let Ye Mengding go into retirement.³²⁷ This short description lets us see that Ye Mengding was just like Ma Tingluan in upholding his principles and in his refusal to compromise with what was wrong. But Ye’s unyielding and straightforward personality led him into more direct conflict with Jia Sidao and other powerful people in the court. Both Ma and Ye resigned from their offices as a result of Jia Sidao’s arrogation of power, and both used their resignation as the last resort to protest against Jia’s tyrannical control, as well as to express their disenchantment with Southern Song politics.

Now that we have acquired some basic knowledge about the three persons’ lives, we can proceed to analyze how the three poetic couplets cited by them in the drinking game convey to us an artful depiction of their complex and subtle relationship.

If we recall that Jia Sidao has often been depicted, both in his official biography and in the entries included in *Qiantang yishi*, as an ambitious person and a scheming politician, we will see that the poetic couplet cited by him in the drinking game suits his personality very well. The couplet was originally taken from a poem written by an anonymous Daoist. According to an anecdote recorded in Yao Kuan’s 姚寬 (1105-1162) *Xixi congyu* 西溪叢語 (Clustered Words from the West Rivulet),³²⁸ the Daoist was very good at playing chess, and every time he played, he would let his opponent play a few moves first. Despite the fact that this might make him lose the chance to strike first, he could always manage to turn the game to his advantage and win in the end. Later this Daoist died in Baoxin. Before his death, he entrusted his burial to a countryman, who

³²⁷ Ye Mengding’s biography can be found in the *History of the Song Dynasty*, Chapter 414.

³²⁸ See Yao Kuan (1105-1162), *Xixi Congyu* (Clustered Words from the West Rivulet), included in *Quan Song Biji* (Complete Collection of Song Literati Miscellanies), Vol. 4, Book 3 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2007).

buried him in person. A few years later after the Daoist's death, the countryman decided to move his tomb. Upon opening the tomb, however, the countryman found nothing but an empty coffin. It was not until then that people started to realize that the Daoist was in fact an immortal, and his mastery at chess-playing and his fake death were both manifestations of the extraordinariness of his immortality. Alluding to this anecdote, Jia Sidao was most likely identifying himself with the immortal Daoist. It was very common for people in China to compare political struggles to chess playing, for both required the players' careful plans beforehand and strategic moves in the process. By identifying himself with the Daoist chess master who never lost a game, Jia Sidao was in fact trying to send his political opponents—Ma Tingluan and Ye Mengding—a strong message, indicating that they should never attempt to play against him, for they were doomed to lose. At the same time, by adding the comforting words that he would be lenient whenever he could, Jia also flaunted his falsehearted kindness to his rivals, showing that it was actually to their advantage if they chose to follow his lead. In short, what the poetic couplet delivered is in fact a double message that Jia Sidao was trying to send to his two strongest political competitors of the time, a message that carries with it a big stick as well as a sweet carrot. This double message let us see Jia's confidence and aggressiveness as a politician. Though he promised leniency to his opponents, such a promise was made on the basis that he knew for sure that he would win the game in the end.

Jia Sidao's poetic couplet can also be read in a different way, that is, as if he was not comparing himself to the master chess player. In that case, the poetic couplet could be interpreted alternatively as a "compliment" that Jia was expressing to his opponents, meaning "since you were both master chess players, please be lenient with me whenever it was possible."³²⁹ The subtlety of this "compliment" lies in the fact that Jia

³²⁹ Here I need to point out that the English translation of the couplet is not entirely accurate, as the Chinese original couplet does not contain any subject words such as "I." Due to the absence of the subject word, the couplet can be translated as what I have translated above, in which case Jia Sidao was probably identifying himself with the chess player; or it can also be translated as "Having never met a true rival since you set my hand on this game, please be lenient whenever you can be lenient," in which case Jia could use this couplet as a compliment to his opponent.

Sidao never meant what he said. At some level, this “compliment” was comparable to the first few moves that the Daoist chess master was willing to let his opponents play in a game. Because Jia was confident that he was going to win in the end, he did not mind pretending to be humble at the beginning by complimenting his rivals. Moreover, these complimentary words might also entice his opponents let down their guard and join the game voluntarily, so that when the game actually started, he could strike them off even harder because they would be unprepared. In any case, it is clear that Jia was not genuine when he said these “complimentary” words. He was rather using them as bait to entice his rivals into the game that he had already carefully planned. Here we see Jia’s wiliness as a politician. He certainly knew when to play “nice” and how to play nice, as long as it could eventually benefit him and enhance his chance of winning.

If Jia Sidao’s poetic couplet displays the arrogance and shrewdness that characterize a generally unlikable image of a politician, then Ma Tingluan’s reply lets us see the smartness of an upright official who refuses to give up his principles in the face of temptation. The poetic couplet that Ma quoted in his turn of the game was taken from a Buddhist hymn written by Chuanzi Decheng 船子德誠 (fl. 8th-9th centuries), a famous Zen Buddhist monk living in the Tang dynasty.³³⁰ The hymn originally contains four lines, which can be translated as follows,

千尺絲綸直下垂
一波才動萬波隨。
夜靜水寒魚不食，
滿船空載月明歸

A thousand-foot-long fishing line drops straight down.
One wave no sooner rises than it is followed by tens of thousands.
The night is quiet, water is cold, the fish won’t take the bait,
The boat returns, empty of fish but full of moonlight.

³³⁰ The poem can be found in Shi Decheng’s 釋德誠 *Chuanzi heshang bozhao ge* 船子和尚撥棹歌 (Songs of Rowing a Boat by the Buddhist Monk Chuanzi; Shanghai: Huandong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1987), p. 11. This book also contains a short biography of Shi Decheng, see pp. 89-91.

The beauty of this Buddhist hymn lies in the fact that each of its lines is as descriptive as it is allegorical. The first line describes a tranquil scene in which a long fishing line hangs vertically in the still water. The extraordinary length of the fishing line and the equally extraordinary depth of the water invite us to speculate that these two images might not be meant to be realistic. The still water may be used to represent the inner tranquility of our mind, and the fishing line a symbol of temptation which extends into our mind from the outside world. The intrusion of this “fishing line” tests the steadiness of our mind. Because of its intrusion, our mind is disturbed at first, as can be seen from the second line of the hymn that depicts the undulation of waves one after another. But eventually it resumes its composure. Like the quiet night and the cold water described in the third line, our mind has returned to its original state of peacefulness. More importantly, no fish, which probably stands for the various thoughts that the “fishing line” has stirred up in our mind, would take the bait. As a result, the “fisherman” has to return empty-handed, in the bright moonlight that lights his fishing boat.

It is worth pointing out here that this interpretation represents but one of the many possible ways that this Buddhist hymn can be read. In an alternative but equally allegorical way of reading, we can identify ourselves with the fisherman, and treat this seemingly futile journey of fishing as an allegory of our persistent searching for the ungraspable truth in Zen Buddhism. In this type of reading, the still water described in the first line can be regarded as standing for the vast pool of knowledge into which our mind of inquiry probes, like the long fishing line. But our zealous effort of searching for the essence of Zen Buddhism avails us nothing. Other than the fact that the pool of knowledge has been stirred up by us, no fish would take the bait of our inquiry. The truth in Zen Buddhism remains uncatchable. Disappointed, we can do nothing but return home empty-handed. But to our delightful surprise, we find our boat lit up by the bright moonlight, which surely serves as a sign of enlightenment. Here the subtlety of the description lies in the contrastive use of the two words *man* 滿 (full of) and *kong* 空 (empty). Their simultaneous appearance in the same line vividly demonstrates for us the most famous paradox in Zen Buddhism, namely, the truth of Buddhism can only be

achieved through the realization of emptiness. In light of this, that we are unable to fish out anything from the vast pool of knowledge may not be a completely bad result. We become “filled with” Zen enlightenment exactly because we returned home empty-handed in looking for it. Our emptiness, in this case, turns into our fullness. Had we really caught “fish” in the pool of knowledge, our accomplishment would lead to an adverse result, in which our knowledge of the truth of Zen Buddhism (our fullness) would become the very proof of our ultimate ignorance of it (our emptiness).

The fact that Ma Tingluan chose a Buddhist poem to respond to Jia Sidao’s poem, which happened to be written by a Daoist, is itself indicative of many things. By quoting a poetic couplet full of Zen implications in his turn of the game, Ma clearly did not intend to acknowledge defeat easily to Jia Sidao as far as learning and wisdom were concerned. But unlike the confidence and aggressiveness that Jia Sidao displayed in his poem, Ma Tingluan’s poetic couplet leaves us with an impression of ease and calmness, which are both indicative of the steadiness of Ma’s own mind. As we have discussed before, Jia Sidao was extremely cunning in embedding into his poetic couplet a double message, one that was used at the same time to show-off his mastery in “chess-playing” and to praise his opponents in order to entice them to play. In either case, Jia was determined to play the game with his rivals. But Jia’s determination turned out to be useless for Ma Tingluan. By using the key phrase “*yu bu er*” 魚不餌 (literally, the fish won’t take the bait), not only did Ma tactfully decline Jia’s falsehearted invitation, but he also incisively pointed out the perilous nature of the game itself, that is, it was like a bait waiting to be taken by any simple-minded and avaricious “fish.” Ma was certainly not like the avaricious fish. He had foreseen the danger of playing with Jia Sidao, and therefore chose not to take the bait. But his avoidance of the game should by no means be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Like the fishing boat that returned empty of fish but full of moonlight, Ma would rather choose a life that was devoid of politic eminence but could make his mind be at peace. This choice to a large extent corresponds to the image that we may get from Ma’s short biography included in the *History of the Song Dynasty*. Deep in his heart, Ma Tingluan was still a man of principles. But in appearance

he was a tactful person (especially in his dealings with Jia Sidao) who would not let his adherence to principles directly harm his life. He chose to stay clean in the filthy mire of politics. And one of the reasons he could do so was because he knew when and how to refuse the ill-intended “bait” that was thrown at him.

In contrast to Ma Tingluan’s tactful answer, Ye Mengding’s response to Jia Sidao’s falsehearted invitation is much more straightforward. The poetic couplet that he quoted was less erudite and allusive than those of Ma and Jia’s. Strictly speaking, the couplet was not even taken from a poem, but from a book of collected Chinese proverbs and sayings. The book is titled *Zengguang xianwen* 增廣賢文 (Expanded Virtuous Sayings), and was primarily used for children’s education in traditional China.³³¹ That Ye Mengding chose to quote from such an entry-level book was most likely meant to be insulting. The message that he was trying to deliver to Jia Sidao was that no matter how smart and learned a person he was, he might still be ignorant of some most basic principles of living that were common knowledge even to an innocent child. Jia Sidao, clever and knowledgeable as he was, would certainly not miss this message. That is why he called off the game abruptly after Ye Mengding spoke out. Yet in addition to this implicit sarcasm, there was a direct message in Ye’s poetic couplet that might have displeased Jia Sidao even more. In order to understand this message, let us first have a close reading of the couplet itself.

An informed reader will immediately notice that the key to understand Ye’s poetic couplet lies in the phrase “*fangcun di*” 方寸地. The phrase has at least two layers of connotations. The first layer of connotation is its literal meaning, that is, a square inch of soil. Interpreted in light of this layer of connotation, the couplet can be translated as follows:

Do preserve at least a square inch of soil,
To leave for posterity to plough.

³³¹ See Xia Chu 夏初 and Hui Ling 惠玲 anno., *Mengxue Shizhong* 蒙學十種 (Ten Books for Elementary Education; Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1990), p. 128.

But this layer of connotation is not the commonly used one. According to Luo Dajing, whenever this phrase is used, it is its second layer of connotation that is most commonly invoked.³³² This second layer of connotation is in fact a metaphor, which is used to refer to the heart. Reading in this way, we can translate the couplet as follows:

Do preserve at least a little piece of your [good] intention,
To leave for posterity to cultivate.

What seems to be most interesting here is that Ye Mengding's poetic couplet can be read in both ways, depending on what context we choose to use for our interpretation. Viewed from the tense relationship between Ye Mengding and Jia Sidao, the couplet will make more sense if we read it in light of its second translation. Here Ye Mengding was criticizing Jia Sidao for not doing the right thing that would benefit later generations. By advising him to preserve piece of good intention for posterity to cultivate, Ye was in fact admonishing Jia not to do what he could not answer for to his own conscience. However, this acute admonishment still does not convey all of Ye's criticism of Jia. In addition to warning Jia Sidao to be a good person, Ye Mengding also used his poetic couplet to advise Jia to be a good politician, in the sense that he should try his best not to let the Southern Song be completely taken over by the foreigners. Here is where the first layer of connotation of the phrase "*fangcun di*" starts to carry weight. A reader familiar with Southern Song history will know about the imminent danger that Southern Song government was facing at that time. The Mongols was coveted for the material prosperity and geographical beauty of the south, but the Southern Song Empire was far from being strong enough to repel the Mongols had they decided to attack. Ye Mengding must have sensed this danger, and therefore admonished Jia Sidao not to turn away from it as well. To Ye Mengding, Jia's ambitious pursuit of political power, as manifested in the poetic couplet he cited, was not only shameless because Jia put his thirst for power above everything else, but also dangerous because the political struggle that Jia might stimulate would make the entire Southern Song vulnerable to the attacks

³³² See Luo Dajing, *Helin yulu*, included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, pp. 5376-5377.

of foreign invaders. It was this double concern that provoked Ye Mengding to use this poetic couplet to criticize and warn Jia Sidao in such a blunt way, because if Jia Sidao continued to focus only on his personal gains and losses in the political game, what he would eventually lose was not only the last bit of his conscience, but also literally the last inch of Southern Song soil.

As stated before, the entire story about this drinking game of Jia Sidao had had with Ma Tingluan and Ye Mengding might never actually have happened in history. Nonetheless, it lets us get an idea of people's imagination of the tense relationship among the three and the special political situation of the time. The specialness of this story rests in the fact that its poetic component weighs much more than its narrative. While the plain narrative only provides us with a general guideline of what is going on in the story, it is the culturally loaded poems that encourage us to dig deeper and uncover their hidden relevance to the political reality of the past.

The Poetic Structure

The poems in *Qiantang yishi* not only reveal hidden messages in the entries and help us probe into Southern Song politics, but also play significant structural roles, in the sense that they can guide us to anticipate and understand what will be discussed next in the text. The following entry, focusing on three song lyrics written by Xin Qiji 辛弃疾, is a good example of this.

Xin You'an's Song Lyrics³³³ [Chapter 2, Entry 3]

³³³ You'an was the style name of Xin Qiji, a well-known Southern Song general and poet. When Xin Qiji was young, he commanded an insurrectionary group and fought the Jurchens alongside another resurgent named Geng Jing 耿京 (?-1162). After Geng was killed, Xin led his insurrectionary group to go to the south and work for Southern Song. Because the Southern Song emperor was surrounded by peace-seeking officials at the time, Xin was pushed aside and never entrusted with important military positions during most parts of his life. In 1203, as the Jurchens pressed harder against the Southern Song border, Han Tuozhou launched an ill-planned and ill-prepared military campaign against the Jurchens, and summoned Xin to work for him. But Han Tuozhou disregarded Xin's advice for effective military moves, and dismissed Xin shortly after. Later when the Jurchens asked for Han Tuozhou's head in exchange for a peace treaty, Han called for help from Xin again. Xin decided to help Han for a second time but unfortunately, he died of old age soon afterwards in 1207. For a detailed discussion of his life, please

A song lyric titled “Late Spring” by Xin You’an reads,

How much more wind and rain
Can it withstand?
In such haste, again spring is departing.
A lover of spring time, I always fear that flowers would bloom too
early
How can I even bear to see so many fallen petals?
O, Spring, please stay for a while.
It is said that
Fragrant grasses spreading towards the end of the world had
blocked your way home.
To my grief, spring did not say a word.
Only the diligent spiders were
Weaving webs under the painted eaves,
Flirting with flying catkins all day long.

The story in the Tall-gate Palace!
Another carefully planned reunion is upset.
Charming beauty did invite jealousy.
Even if I did purchase Xiangrong’s rhapsody with a thousand gold,
To whom could I deliver my tender mood?
You, do not dance!
Have you not seen,
Yuhuan and Feiyan have both turned to dust?
Bitterest is my lone grief.
Do not lean on [the railing of] a high tower,
For it is [where you see] the sun going down
Amid the misty heart-breaking willow trees.³³⁴

The tone of the song lyric is especially resent-filled. The lines about the “setting sun” and the “misty willow trees” are different from that of “There is no need to grieve for the dusk; / For it is but a light shadow at the edge of the sky.”³³⁵ Had this song lyric been written during the Han

refer to Irving Yucheng Lo, *Hsin Ch’i-chi* (New York: Twayne Publisher, Inc., 1971), and Xin Gengru 辛更儒, *Xin Qiji yanjiu* 辛棄疾研究 (A Study of Xin Qiji; Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008), pp. 271-326.

³³⁴ Based on Lian Xinda’s translation with modifications. See Lian Xinda, *The Wild and Arrogant: Expression of Self in Xin Qiji’s Song Lyrics* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 88-89.

³³⁵ These two lines were written by Chen Yi 程頤 (1032-1085), and were sometimes read as a subtle criticism of the political situation of the time. The key to understand these two lines lies in the word “tian,” for it can be used to mean both “the sky” and “the emperor. In light of the second meaning, the “light shadow at the end of the sky” can be interpreted as referring to the difficulty that the emperor and his

or Tang dynasties, wouldn't they have already caused the author the same trouble as with the cases of "Pea-planting" and "Peach-planting"?³³⁶ I heard that when Emperor Xiaozong read this song lyric, he was very displeased. Nevertheless he did not place any blame on Xin Qiji. This was indeed a great virtue. Later, Xin wrote another song lyric titled "Ci Poem Inscribed at Zaokou in Jiangxi," which reads,

Below the Gloomy Terrace flow two rivers clear,³³⁷
The tears of refugees were shed and swallowed here.
I gaze afar towards the city of Chang'an in the northwest,
Alas! I see but hill on hill and crest on crest.

The blue hills cannot thwart
The eastward flow stops not.
While the dusk on the riverside just grieves me,
Deep in the mountains, the singing of the partridges reaches
me.³³⁸

During the first few years when [the Song force] crossed the Yangtze River, the enemy chased Empress Dowager Longyou's boat up to Zaokou. Unable to catch [the empress,] they eventually returned. The line about "the singing of the partridges" alludes to this event, and it is used to lament the fact that the retrieval [of the lost territory in the north] can never be achieved. In another poem titled "A Song Lyric for Qiu Zongqing," [the poet] wrote,

court encountered at the time. But because this difficulty is only "a light shadow," it will soon pass away. Therefore, the tone of these two lines is still more or less optimistic, unlike the lines in Xin Qiji's song lyric.³³⁶ "Peach-planting" refers to a story about Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842) included in the *Old History of the Tang Dynasty*. According to the story, Liu Yuxi once wrote two poems criticizing those who were in power, both containing lines about planting peach trees. The poems were later seen by the people whom he criticized, and as a result, Liu was demoted and forced to leave the central government. For a detailed discussion of this, please refer to Liu Yuxi's biography included in Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946), *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang Dynasty; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), Chapter 160. "Pea-planting" refers to a story about Yang Yun 楊惲 (?- 54 B.C.E.) included in *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑. According to the story, Yang once worked in the central government but was removed from office because of his words. After that, he lived a riotous life in the countryside. His friend wrote to him trying to warn him about this, but he replied with a letter, in which he not only refuted his friend's warning but also criticized the government. The letter contained a poem that talked about planting peas in. The letter was later seen by the emperor, who was enraged by it and ordered Yang executed. For discussion of the story, see Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086), *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), Chapter 27.

³³⁷ The two rivers refer to the Yuan River and the Gan River. See Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘, *Jiaxuan ci biannian jianzhu* 稼軒詞編年箋注 (An Annotation of Xin Qiji's Song Lyrics Chronologically Arranged; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), p. 38.

³³⁸ This is a slight modified version of Xu Yuanzhong's translation included in his *Songs of the Immortals: An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry* (Beijing: New World Press, 1994), p. 261.

Amid mountains and rivers thousands of years old,
 The heroes cannot be found
 In the domain of Sun Zhongmou.
 Dance pavilions and song-filled terraces,
 All romance and charm could not but be
 Beaten by rain and swept away by the winds.
 By the weeds and trees in twilight
 Down in the lanes and alleys of the commoners
 People say this is where Jinu had lived.
 Imagine in those years,
 With golden spears and armored horses
 They had gulped down ten thousand miles like tigers.

Hastily the emperor during the Yuanjia Reign
 Offered sacrifices on the Mountain of Langjuxu.
 All he won was but a panic-stricken glance to the north.
 Forty-three years have passed,
 In retrospect I still recall
 The beacon fires that pervaded the Yangzhou Circuit
 How can I bear to look back?
 Beneath the temple of Bili
 The offering-eating crows and drum-played music of ceremony.
 Who can I depend on to ask,
 “Since Lian Po is indeed old,
 Can he still eat that much rice?”³³⁹

In spite of its vigorous beauty, this song lyric was not included in Xin Qiji's anthology. Zhu Xi said, “If the government had a fair system of reward and punishment, people like Xin Qiji and Chen Tongfu could have all been employed.”

辛幼安詞

辛幼安《晚春》詞云：“更能消、幾番風雨。匆匆春又歸去。惜春長恨花開早，何況落紅無數。春且住。見說道、天涯芳草迷歸路。怨春不語。算只有殷勤，畫簷蛛網，盡日惹飛絮。長門事，准擬佳期又誤，蛾眉曾有人妒。千金縱買相如賦，脈脈此情誰訴。君莫舞。君不見、玉環飛燕皆塵土。閒愁最苦。休去倚危樓，斜陽正在，煙柳斷腸處。”

³³⁹ Based on Grace Fong's translation with slight modifications. See Grace S. Fong, *Wu Wenying and the Art of Southern Song Ci Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 36-37. Irving Yucheng Lo's *Hsin Ch'i-chi* contains a different translation of the poem which I have also consulted. See Irving Yucheng Lo, *Hsin Ch'i-chi*, pp. 71-72. The book also contains a short biography of Xin Qiji which is very useful, see pp. 21-36.

詞意殊怨。斜陽煙柳之句，其與“未須愁日暮，天際乍輕陰”者異矣。使在漢、唐時，甯不賈種豆、種桃之禍哉？愚聞壽皇見此詞，頗不悅，然終不加罪，可謂至德也已。已其《題江西造口詞》云：“鬱孤台下清江水，中間多少行人淚。西北望長安，可憐無數山。青山遮不住，畢竟東流去。江晚正愁予，山深聞鷓鴣。”蓋南渡之初，敵人追隆佑太后御舟至造口，不及而還，因此起興聞鷓鴣之句，謂恢復之事行不得也。又《寄丘宗卿詞》云：“千古江山，英雄無覓，孫仲謀處。舞榭歌台，風流總被，雨打風吹去。斜陽草樹，尋常巷陌，人道寄奴曾住。想當年，金戈鐵馬，氣吞萬里如虎。元嘉草草，封狼居胥，贏得倉皇北顧。四十三年，望中猶記，烽火揚州路。可堪回首，佛狸祠下，一片神鴉社鼓。憑誰問，廉頗老矣，尚能飯否？”此詞集中不載，尤雋壯可喜，朱文公云：“辛幼安、陳同甫，若朝廷賞罰明，此等皆可用。”

In order to understand the structural roles that the three song lyrics play in the book, we need to first have a close examination of them individually.

At first glance, the first song lyric in the entry, written to the tune “Mo yu’er” 摸魚兒, appears to be nothing more than a melancholic lament on the inevitable departure of the spring.³⁴⁰ In first stanza of the song lyric, the poetic persona, speaking in a gentle feminine voice, complains about her inability to retain spring any longer. Her love for the season is so strong that she does not even want the flowers to blossom too early, so that spring can start and end late. However, now because of the wind and rain, the flower petals are all blown down to the ground, which is an unmistakable sign of the irrevocable departure of the spring season. Extremely sad and desperate, the female persona starts to talk to spring, begging it to stay a little longer. Not surprisingly, spring will not respond to her request. Her begging words end up just like the spider webs under the painted eaves, in the sense that all they can catch are the flying catkins, which are another sorrowful sign for the passing of the season.

In spite of its subtle sentimentality, however, the meaning of the first stanza is quite straightforward. This forms an interesting contrast with the second stanza, which, as we can see from the translation, is full of allusions to historical events and literary

³⁴⁰ Lian Xinda’s book contains a detailed discussion of this song lyric. See Lian Xinda, *The Wild and Arrogant: Expression of Self in Xin Qiji’s Song Lyrics*, pp. 88-93.

stories in the past. These allusions require the reader to reach a certain level of familiarity with Chinese history and literature in order to fully understand their implications. The first two strophes of the second stanza allude to a historical anecdote recorded in the preface of Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (176-117 B.C.E.) *Changmen fu* 長門賦 (Rhapsody of the Tall-gate Palace),³⁴¹ as well as in Sima Zhen's 司馬貞 (fl. 8th century) *Shiji suoyin* 史記索引 (A Concordance of the Records of the Grand Historian).³⁴² The anecdote is about Empress Chen (fl. 2 century B.C.E.) in the Han dynasty, who was Emperor Wu of the Han's (156-87 B.C.E., r. 141-87 B.C.E.) first empress. Because of her jealousy of Wei Zifu 衛子夫 (fl. 1 century B.C.E.), who was favored by Emperor Wu of the Han and who later born him a son (Empress Chen was childless), she instructed a sorcerer to place a curse on her. This foolish action infuriated Emperor Wu of the Han, and he ordered Empress Chen deposed and banished to a "cold palace" called "Tall-gate Palace." Empress Chen was extremely sad about the decision. In an effort to regain the emperor's favor, she asked Sima Xiangru, a famous rhapsody writer of the time, to write a rhapsody for her. In return, she paid him a thousand pieces of gold. Reportedly, this rhapsody was later seen by Emperor Wu of the Han. Upon reading rhapsody, Emperor Wu of the Han was deeply moved by the description in it and eventually forgave Empress Chen for her misdeed.³⁴³ Alluding to this event, the poetic persona in Xin Qiji's song lyric compares herself to Empress Chen, for both have had the similar experience of being neglected by the person they love. However, the female persona does not see herself as lucky as Empress Chen. In the second strophe, she claims that even if she manages to get a rhapsody written by Sima Xiangru, it still cannot fully convey the torment that she feels in her heart. One of the reasons for this is her plan to reunite with her lord has been constantly thwarted by her rivals. This makes her feel that she

³⁴¹ See Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531), ed. *Zhaoming wenxuan zhuxi* 昭明文選注析 (Selected Literatures by Prince Zhaoming--Annotated and Analyzed) Anno., Wang Youhuai 王友懷 and Wei Quanrui 魏全瑞(Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 2000), pp. 121-128.

³⁴² See Sima Zhen (fl. 8th century), *Shiji suoyin* (A Concordance of the Records of the Grand Historian), included in *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), p. 159. David Knechtges has also written an article discussing this rhapsody. See David Knechtges, "Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju's 'Tall Gate Palace Rhapsody,'" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 41 (1981): 47-64.

³⁴³ See the preface to Sima Xiangru's *Rhapsody of the Tall-gate Palace*.

has not only been neglected but also abandoned. This feeling of being abandoned makes her unable to bear to see spring going away, because with the gradual departure of spring, her youth and beauty also slowly fades. Here we see the true reason for the sorrow felt by the female persona in the first stanza. It is not that she is really a lover of spring per se. Her love for the season in fact stands for her love for her own beauty and youth, which, without the care of her beloved lord, will wither away like the fallen flower petals. Her rueful lament on the departure of spring, in light of this, is actually a lament over her own fate. Having been abandoned by her lord, she has no other choice but to wait in the deserted palace, hoping to regain her lord's favor. As time goes by, however, this hope becomes dimmer and dimmer. But she still cannot completely give it up. This entangled feeling has aggravated the inner torment that she feels day by day.

Adding up to this tormented feeling is the female persona's realization that her abandonment by her lord is in fact not due to her own fault. As described in the third line of the stanza, the reason why she has been estranged from her lord is that her extraordinary beauty has incurred jealousy among her competitors, and they most likely have vilified her behind her back. This realization adds fuel to the female persona's vexed feeling of loneliness. Although she manages to control her anger up until now, eventually she cannot prevent it from breaking out. That is why in the second half of the stanza, she suddenly changes her rueful tone and bursts out in a straightforward warning to her rivals, "You, do not dance! / Have you not seen, / Yuhuan and Feiyan have both turned to dust?" A reader familiar with the stories of Yang Yuhuan 楊玉環 (719-756) and Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕 (ca. 32 B.C.E.-1 B.C.E.) will know that neither of them has been thought highly of by historians. Their stunning beauty was often regarded as detrimental to the state, for it is capable of seducing the emperors and making him neglectful of state affairs. Moreover, though their beauty indeed earned them favors from their emperors, such favors usually did not last long, as can be seen from the fact that both Yang and Zhao died at a relatively young age. In light of this, by comparing her rivals to Yang Yuhuan and Zhao Feiyan, what the female persona tries to say is that there is no reason for them to feel complacent about the fact that they have managed

to drive her out and steal his favor from her beloved lord. Sooner or later their wicked nature will be exposed and they will end up just like Yang and Zhao, who not only died young but had also been condemned by people for ages after their death.

This bitter curse, however, does not change the overall sorrowful tone of the song lyric. As Lian Xinda rightly points out in his analysis, this statement of anger represents but a short outburst of emotion that the poetic persona expresses in response to the unfair treatment that she has suffered in life.³⁴⁴ After this brief moment of emotional outburst, the poetic persona resumes her rueful lament, saying that she cannot bear to see the saddening scene of sunset among the misty willow trees, for it will truly break her heart. A careful reader will be able to discern the unarticulated sentiment in these lines. Although the sunset marks the end of the day, it by no means marks the end of the female persona's futile longing for her lord and her tormenting feeling of sadness. Into the darkness of the restless night her sorrow will extend. Adding up to this is the cruel realization that another day of her youth again slowly steals away.

A reader familiar with Chinese poetic tradition will immediately notice the allegorical nature of this song lyric.³⁴⁵ In Chinese poetry, the image of an "abandoned woman" is never meant to be read simply as a realistic depiction of a woman who has been cast aside by her beloved lord. This is especially the case if the poem is written by a male poet, who, more often than not, would use the theme of "abandoned woman" to express his thinly veiled complaint about his loss of favor with his patron. By identifying himself with the "abandoned woman," the male poet hopes to touch his patron with the sorrowful lament in his poem, and thereby increasing the chance of winning his favor back. Sometimes, this theme of "abandoned woman" is also combined with other prominent themes in Chinese poetry, such as "love and courtship"-

³⁴⁴ Lian Xinda, *The Wild and Arrogant: Expression of Self in Xin Qiji's Song Lyrics*, pp. 91-92.

³⁴⁵ A discussion of the special characteristics of Chinese allegory can be found in Preminger, Alex and Brogan, T.V.F., *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 36-37. Pauline Yu's book *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* also contains a discussion of this concept. See Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 3-44.

-a poetic theme originating in the *Book of Odes* (詩經)--or the “beautiful woman”--a theme invented and promoted by Qu Yuan 屈原 (340?-278 B.C.E.), who allegorized female beauty as a symbol for moral virtue.³⁴⁶ Combined with these themes, the theme of “abandoned woman” often transcends its original function of allowing a fallen-out-of-favor scholar-literati to implore his patrons to change his mind. It starts to acquire new meanings, and becomes an effective means used by virtuous scholar-officials to express their feeling of injustice as well as their determination to adhere to their moral principles in spite of the unfair treatment that they receive. In the song lyric discussed above, we see a perfect example of this combination of themes. As can be seen from my discussion, by identifying himself with the abandoned female persona, Xin Qiji not only expressed his inner sorrow at being estranged from his patron (i.e., the emperor), but also uttered his strong protest against the treacherous persons who had conspired to alienate him from his patron because of their jealousy against him. This tone of protest explains why Emperor Xiaozong was displeased after reading this song lyric, for no matter how veiled it was, the poem still served as a criticism of him, a criticism that was directed against his inability to discriminate good from bad influence, use and to trust real virtuous officials and to protect them from being vilified by the wicked ones.

Xin Qiji’s protest did not stop at this song lyric. If his dissatisfaction expressed in the first song lyric is still more or less confined to the personal level (against the unfair treatment that he had experienced himself), his heartfelt sorrow revealed in the second song lyric lets us catch a glimpse of his entrenched anxiety about the weakness of the Southern Song Empire in general. The key to understanding this song lyric lies in its title “*Ci Poem Inscribed at Zaokou in Jiangxi.*” According to the narrative that follows this song lyric, Zaokou was the place where the Jurchen cavalry stopped their pursuit of the Empress Dowager Longyou (1073-1131), who helped Emperor Gaozong become the first emperor of the Southern Song. The narrative itself alludes to a historical event that took place during the early years of the Southern Song. At that time, the Southern Song

³⁴⁶ See Cai Zong-qi, ed, *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology*, pp. 1-3, 13-41.

government was just founded, and the Jurchen Jin Empire, having successfully defeated the Northern Song and captured two of its emperors,³⁴⁷ wanted to exploit its victory. In 1127, the Jurchens launched a full-scale attack against the newly founded Song government in the south. Unable to withstand the Jurchens' vehement attack, the Southern Song government started to flee. Empress Dowager Longyou was among the refugees. According to official historical records, the Jurchens chased Empress Dowager Longyou's boat to Taihe County. By that time, all her escorts either escaped or were killed by the Jurchens, and there were only less than a hundred guards left at her side.³⁴⁸ This wretched situation was probably what propelled Xin Qiji to write about "the tears of refugees" in the second line of the song lyric. According to the description in that line, the tears of refugees have filled the two rivers below the Gloomy Terrace, making the site a pillar of shame that perpetually marks the humiliating defeats that the Southern Song suffered in its early years.

In the second strophe of the first stanza, the poet's sadness is further aggravated by the fact that his northwest look at the city of Chang'an is blocked by numerous mountains. Here even a casual reader will notice the allegorical nature of these two lines. The city of Chang'an, as Deng Guangming rightly interprets in his study of this song lyric, in fact stands for Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng), the capital of the Northern Song.³⁴⁹ In trying to look at it, what the poet really wants to do is to look back into the glorious days of the Song dynasty, when the northern part of its territory was still not discurbed by foreign invaders. This spatiotemporal gaze, however, is blocked by the vast ranges of mountains, which are symbolic of the obstacles that stand between the reality of the time and the poet's longing for the glory of the past. As a result, the poet could do nothing but stand lonely on the Gloomy Terrace and look in vain, tasting the very bitterness caused by his sorrowful memory of the past and his futile hope for the future.

³⁴⁷ Historically this is known as the Jingkang Incident (1125-1127). Please see my discussion of this in Chapter Two.

³⁴⁸ See the *History of the Song dynasty*, Chapter 243.

³⁴⁹ See Deng Guangming, *Jiaxuan ci biannian jianzhu*, p. 39.

The beginning strophe of the second stanza adds an ironic twist to the allegorical depiction of mountains and rivers below the Gloomy Terrace in the first stanza. Here the vast ranges of mountains, which used to block the poet's longing gaze into the northwest, are no longer obstacles, because they cannot stop what was flowing eastward. It is worth pointing out here that due to the absence of the subject in this sentence, what is exactly flowing eastward is never clearly specified. From the context, we may infer that it may refer to the water flowing in the two rivers under the Gloomy Terrace. But we can also read the two lines allegorically, interpreting the "eastward flowing" as a symbolic reference to the passage of time. This interpretation becomes especially potent if we take into consideration that time is often compared to flowing water in traditional Chinese literature. Moreover, reading the strophe in this way can also invite us to probe into the complex feeling that the poet was experiencing at that time. The mountains, which used to stand as obstinate impediments between reality and the poet's longing for the past, now become powerless in face of the eastward flowing of time. But rather than making the poet feel in any way relieved, this realization of the mountains' powerlessness in fact aggravates the pain in his heart. Here is where the poet's sentiment becomes paradoxically complex. On the one hand, he hopes that the mountains would be less obstructive in blocking his view into the northwest; on the other, he also wishes them to be more powerful in thwarting the flowing of time, for as the time goes by, his hope to restore the glory of the past (i.e., to regain the lost territory in the north) also slowly loses its luster. This mixed sentiment that the poet is experiencing at the time is what led to his grieving complaint in the third line of the stanza. Standing beside the river and viewing the sunset, the poet could not help but feel the deep grief caused by his realization of the inevitable lapse of time. But as if this view is still not saddening enough, the poet's beaten heart is struck again, as described in the last line, by the sound of the partridges arising from the depths of the mountain. In traditional China, the partridge's singing is believed to sound like the phrase "*xingbude ye, gege* 行不得也，哥哥," which can be literally translated as "it

cannot be done, brother.”³⁵⁰ This sound further reminds the poet of the futility of his hope, making him feel more acutely the pain and anxiety that he has felt towards the past and future of his country.

Compared with his rueful complaint in the first song lyric, the poet’s sorrow expressed in this song lyric transcends the limited scope of his personal experience and has been extended to encompass the history of the entire Song dynasty. This extension lets us see the noble nature of Xin Qiji’s sorrow. Unlike those petty officials who only whined about their personal gain and loss, Xin’s complaint about the injustice that he suffered in life was in fact generated by a much more noble anxiety, one that he felt towards the time in which he lived. It was the fear that he might be unable to help his country recover what it had lost as well as defend itself against future invasion that made Xin Qiji complain about his own “abandoned” status. The purpose of doing so was not to simply regain the emperor’s favor, but rather to look for opportunities that could enable him to participate more actively in the reconstruction and fortification of his country.

Xin Qiji’s dual complaint regarding his “abandoned” status and the weakness of his country receives a much more sophisticated expression in the third song lyric included in this entry. According to Deng Guangming, this song lyric was written in 1205, the year when Han Tuo Zhou started to prepare his ill-fated Northward Expedition against the Jurchens.³⁵¹ As part of the preparation, Xin Qiji was reinstated and appointed as Prefect of Zhenjiang. His responsibility was to fortify the defense at Jingkou. Although it appeared from this appointment that Xin was put into an important military position, what Han Tuo Zhou really wanted was to use Xin’s fame to call for other hawkish officials to support his expedition.³⁵² Reportedly, Xin was also aware of this, and therefore his reaction towards this appointment, as can be seen from this song lyric, was very complicated. The first reaction that Xin had was, of course,

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39. Deng actually offered a counter-argument regarding how to interpret the singing of the partridges.

³⁵¹ Deng Guangming, *Jiaxuan ci biannian jianzhu*, p. 528.

³⁵² See Xin Gengru, *Xin Qiji yanjiu*, pp. 271-326.

delight, for whatever the true reason was, this appointment offered him an invaluable opportunity to do what he had long been waiting to do (i.e. to fight back against the Jurchens and to recover the lost territory in the north). This feeling of delight motivated Xin Qiji to allude to the heroic achievements of two historical figures who both resided in the Jiangnan area where the Southern Song was located in the first stanza of his song lyric. The first of these two persons was Sun Quan 孫權 (182-252, r. 222-252), who was the founder of the Eastern Wu Kingdom (229-280) during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280). The second one was Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422), who rose from a humble background to become the founding emperor of the Liu Song dynasty (420-479). By alluding to these two heroic figures in history, Xin Qiji wanted to convey to us a bright picture of Southern Song history, had the government decided to war with the Jurchens earlier. But now everything was too late. As we can tell from such regretful phrases and statements in the first stanza as “the heroes cannot be found” and “All romance and charm could not but be beaten by rain and swept away by the winds” Xin Qiji did not cherish much hope regarding the prospect of Han Tuozhou’s Northward Expedition. It was his belief that the Southern Song government had already missed its best opportunity to fight against its enemy and to recover what it had lost.

The reason why Xin Qiji believed this was explained, again through a series of allusions, in the second stanza. In the first two strophes of the stanza, Xin used two historical lessons to express his doubt regarding the prospects of this Northern Expedition. The first lesson was the failed military campaign that Liu Yilong 劉義隆 (407-453), the third son of Liu Yu and the second emperor of the Liu Song dynasty, launched against the Northern Wei (386-535) in 450. According to the *History of the Liu Song Dynasty*, the reason why Liu Yilong failed this military campaign was that he mistakenly trusted Wang Xuanmo’s 王謨 (388-468) wrongful estimation of the state of the Northern Wei and launched the attack without adequate preparation and proper plans.³⁵³ As a result, Liu Yilong’s army suffered crushing defeat in the end and the

³⁵³ See Shen Yue 沈約 (441-513), *Songshu* 宋書 (History of the Liu-Song Dynasty; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), Chapter 76.

military strength of his empire was significantly weakened because of it. The second lesson was related to Xin Qiji's own experience in fighting against the Jurchens, which happened around forty-three years prior to the writing of this song lyric. At that time, the Southern Song government was believed to be gaining an advantage in its military campaign against the Jurchens,³⁵⁴ because there were numerous insurrectionary troops in the north, like Xin's, which would fight side by side with the Song army. In Xin Qiji's view, that was the perfect time when the Southern Song could take back what it had lost to the Jurchens. But unfortunately, the Song government did not seize that opportunity. After a few setbacks in the campaign, the Southern Song soon lost its will to fight, and decided to share the Central Plains with the Jurchens on the basis of a newly negotiated peace treaty. The allusion to these two historical lessons lets us catch a glimpse of Xin Qiji's deep doubts about the viability of Han Tuozhou's Northward Expedition. Having lost the perfect opportunity to strike back more than forty years ago, the Southern Song was indeed not in a good position to initiate a large-scale military campaign against the Jurchens. The chance of winning this war would become even smaller if this campaign was ill prepared and ill planned. As history turned out, Xin Qiji's concerns eventually proved well-founded. The Northward Expedition lasted only about two years before it ended in disastrous failure. Han Tuozhou, the originally proposer of this expedition, was also murdered in order to bring the Jurchens back to the negotiation table.³⁵⁵

Of course it would be farfetched to say that Xin Qiji had foreseen this exact result of the expedition when he wrote this song lyric. But it is very possible that he might have noticed some signs of its unfortunate outcome. That is why in the third strophe of the second stanza, he wrote, "How can I bear to look back? /Beneath the temple of Bili, / The offering-eating crows and drum-played music of ceremony." Here the word *Bili* 佛狸, which was the childhood name of Tuoba Tao 拓跋燾, Emperor Shizu (408-452, r.

³⁵⁴ See Xin Gengru, *Xin Qiji yanjiu*, pp. 10-30.

³⁵⁵ For a brief discussion on this failed Northward Expedition and Han Tuozhou's death, please see my discussion in Chapter Two and Three of this dissertation.

423-452) of the Northern Wei, in fact alludes to Wanyan Liang 完顏亮 (1122-1161), the fourth emperor of the Jurchen Jin dynasty. The commonality between the two rests in the fact that both had led armies to attack the south (against the Liu Song and the Southern Song respectively) and both had used the Guabu Mountain, the place where the Temple of Bili was built, as a military stronghold for their military expedition. But what seems to be ironic here is that all the wartime violence and suffering related to the Guabu Mountain seem to be no longer remembered by the people who were still living there. The peaceful scene described by the line “the offering-eating crows and drum-played music of ceremony” is indicative of this forgetfulness. Having left the painful memory of the past behind in their minds, people living in the area have resumed their normal life and immerse themselves again in the happiness during festivals when temple-drums are beaten and divine crows gather to eat the offerings.³⁵⁶ This scene of festivity attests to the correctness of Xin Qiji’s concern, namely, that the Southern Song had already missed its chance and lost its will to mobilize its people to fight back against the Jurchens.

But does this imply that Xin Qiji had completely given up his hope on this Northward Expedition? Of course not. This is why I argued earlier that the feeling expressed in this song lyric is much more complex than it appears to be. In the last strophe of the second stanza, Xin Qiji uses another historical allusion to reaffirm his determination to fight. But even in uttering this determination, Xin’s tone is not entirely optimistic. The strophe starts with a question, “Who can I depend on to ask,” and ends with another one, “Can he still eat that much rice?” The answer to the second question is positive: Anyone who is familiar with the story of Lian Po 廉頗 (327-243 B.C.E.) included in the *Records of the Grand Historian* will know that even at an old age, Lian still did not lose his big appetite, which was indicative of his tremendous valor and

³⁵⁶ Scholars have different interpretations of this strophe. Some choose to read it as describing the noisy scenes that the invaders have made before the wars. Here I choose to follow the interpretation offered in *Xin Qiji yanjiu*, as it more conforms to the general mode of this stanza. See Xin Gengru, *Xin Qiji yanjiu*, pp. 303-304.

energy.³⁵⁷ By comparing himself to Lian Po, Xin Qiji wanted to say that he was still strong and vigilant enough, in spite of his old age, to complete whatever task that the government had entrusted to him. But this firm belief in himself was somehow compromised by Xin's uncertainty of whether the government still wanted to use him or not. This feeling of uncertainty is perfectly expressed through the first question that begins the strophe, which, unlike the second one, does not have a definite answer. At some level, we can argue that this question in fact sums up all the doubts and feeling of injustice that Xin Qiji had experienced in his life. In spite of his talent, valor and determination to help the Southern Song recover its lost territory, Xin Qiji had always been living in uncertainty about whether he could be rightly appreciated and properly used by the Southern Song government. His noble concern for his country and his country's ungrateful negligence of him became painfully entangled with each other, to the point that they were almost inseparable. Throughout his life, Xin Qiji had been living in this torment of entanglement. While he was never really given the chance to do what he wanted to do for his country, neither was he offered the opportunity to completely let go his dreams and hopes that continued to torture his mind.

A careful reader may have already noticed the stylistic difference between this third song lyric and the previous two. Unlike the previous two, this song lyric is distinct for its use of prosaic language and its extensive employment of historical allusions. In his seminal study on the development of the song lyric in the Southern Song period, Shuen-fu Lin insightfully points out that the appearance of some of Xin Qiji's song lyrics, marked by their use of "an intensively propositional language," represents a significant change in the development of the genre.³⁵⁸ Following Lin's argument, Grace Fong further suggests that Xin's use of this propositional language is in fact meant to express his intense emotion, and the way he did it was through the employment of a hypotactic

³⁵⁷ Lian Po's biography can be found in Sima Qian, *Shiji zhuyi* (Records of the Grand Historian, Annotated), Chapter 81. pp. 1883-1897.

³⁵⁸ See Lin Shuen-fu, *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition: Chiang K'uei and Southern Sung Tz'u Poetry* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 183.

syntax” and the “incorporation of many prose elements” into his song lyrics.³⁵⁹ Fong uses especially the third song lyric discussed above to illustrate her point. According to Fong, the original tune pattern of this song lyric, featuring a leisurely cadential movement and a well-balanced structure, is perfect for imagistic description. But when Xin Qiji used this tune title to write his song lyric, he purposefully disrupted its internal ease and balance, and replaced them with a pressing and progressive use of prosaic language, which was ideal for expressing the sudden outburst of strong emotions.³⁶⁰ A prominent example of this can be found in the first strophe. The original tune pattern of this strophe requires it to contain three four-syllable segments, with two pauses in between to divide them into separate entities. But, as Lian Xinda rightly argues in his analysis, when Xin Qiji wrote this strophe, he transformed the original three four-syllable lines into a “breath-taking stretch of twelve syllables,” forcing his readers to read the three lines continuously in a prosaic fashion until they can get a comprehensive view of the poet’s intensive expression of his emotional outburst. According to Lian, Xin Qiji did this because he wanted to let his emotion out in a more forceful way, making his readers feel more acutely the immediacy of his presence in his poem.³⁶¹ While these observations are certainly correct, we must not forget that Xin’s poetic release of his strong emotion is not entirely without impediment. In other words, we must keep in mind that Xin’s extensive use of historical allusions in this song lyric still serves as a powerful shield that prevents his readers from discerning his true intent in a more transparent way.³⁶² Because of these allusions, we are only allowed to peep into Xin Qiji’s inner world through layers of allegorical veils. These allegorical veils make his prosaic expression of his emotional outburst more poetically convoluted. As a result, Xin becomes both outspoken and taciturn in his song lyrics, especially in the third one

³⁵⁹ Grace Fong, *Wu Wenying and the Art of Southern Song Ci Poetry*, p. 36. A discussion of this can also be found in Kang-I Sun Chang, *The Evolution of Chinese Tz’u Poetry* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 40.

³⁶⁰ Grace Fong, *Wu Wenying and the Art of Southern Song Ci Poetry*, pp. 35-38.

³⁶¹ Lian Xinda, *The Wild and Arrogant: Expression of Self in Xin Qiji’s Song Lyrics*, p. 70.

³⁶² According to Yue Ke, Xin Qiji himself also admitted that this song lyric was too allusive to be understood by uninformed readers. See Yue Ke, *Tingshi*, included in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan*, p. 4359. A translation of this passage can be found in Irving Yucheng Lo, *Hsin Ch’i-chi*, p. 36.

discussed above. While he certainly no longer wanted to hide his feelings and voice, he did not wish to express them fully either. In this hesitation we see the emotional torment that Xin was experiencing, a torment that was caused by the very conflict between his undying faith and loyalty and the unpromising reality of the time.

Now that we have examined the three song lyrics one by one, it is time for us to read them as an integrated entirety. Because of the linking narrative in between, the three song lyrics are designed to interact with each other so as to generate a special layer of meaning that none of them could achieve alone. Reading them together, we cannot help but feel the emotional progression that underwrites the composition of all of them.

The first song lyric is characterized by its generally melancholic undertone. Through a series of allegorical complaints about the departing spring, the poet invites us to peep into his inner sorrow caused by his painful realization of his estranged status. This utterance of his inner sorrow, however, remains largely veiled in this the lyric. Assuming the image of an abandoned court lady as his poetic persona, the poet leaves us with the impression that he is rather writing about somebody else's sorrow, instead of his own. The linkage between the two can only be made if the readers are familiar with the poetic tradition in China, to which the writing of this song lyric alludes. In addition, the exact reason behind the poet's loss of favor remains unclarified. It is not until we read the second song lyric that we start to realize that noble reasons have caused the poet to be envied by his peers and estranged by his patron. Like the first song lyric, the second song lyric also carries with it an emotional undertone that is sorrowful overall. But this sorrow has been extended to encompass not only the poet's personal feeling of injustice, but also a grief that he experiences in reflecting upon the past and future of his country. Central to this grief is the poet's bitter awareness of the futility of his hopes to help his government recover its lost territory in the north. Although the poet does not specify the reasons that render his hopes futile, his selection of Zaokou as the site for poetic lamentation betrays his disenchantment with

the Southern Song rulers, who were too weak-willed to seek real revenge on their enemy. Serving in a government that prioritizes momentary ease over national dignity, the poet cannot help but feel the incongruence between his ambition and the spineless actions of the peace-seeking officials who are in control of state power. His strong will and zealous loyalty for his country thus become the very reason why he is alienated and vilified by his peers. This estrangement has made the poet feel even more sorrowful, as he can sense that his ambition and hopes for territorial recovery are slowly fading away due to lack of sympathy from people around him. This sorrowful realization is also what underlines the writing of the third song lyric. Unlike the first two song lyrics, the emotion expressed through this song lyric is much more complex than mere sadness. The lyric starts with a remembrance of the commendable achievements of the bygone heroes living in the Jiangnan area. This remembrance resonates with an emotional undertone that is both reverent and regretful—reverent because these heroes have attained what the poet has been longing for; regretful because no matter what they have accomplished in their lives, in the end they all die and return to dust, like everybody else in the world. This mixed sentiment is further complicated by the poet's mixed feelings towards his own time and experience. Using the stories of two well-known historical figures, Tuoba Tao and Lian Po, the poet on the one hand utters his serious doubt about the viability of the ill-prepared Northward Expedition which he is dragged into; on the other, he also expresses his eagerness to participate in it in spite of its unpromising prospect. This allows us to catch a glimpse of the complexity of the poet's inner world, which is perpetually tormented by the incongruence between what he hopes for and what really is.

Reading the three song lyrics in a series, we will see that what determines the emotional transition from one to another is in fact three interrelated factors. The first one is the poet's feeling of injustice due to the fact that he is estranged and vilified by his enviers at court; the second is his disenchantment with the Southern Song rulers, who were unable or unwilling to fight against the Jurchens to recover what they have lost; the third one is his undying faith and loyalty to his country as a veteran military

commander who refuses to give up his hopes in spite of the unpromising reality. These three interrelated factors remind us of the tripartite structure, which I describe in detail in the previous chapter, in the section discussing the implicit theme of the “political trio” that underwrites Liu Yiqing’s vision of Southern Song politics. In that section, I have argued that the selection and organization of entries in Chapters Two to Six of *Qiantang yishi* is largely informed by the interplay of three “voices,” namely, the dwindling voice of the emperors, the rising voice of domineering civil ministers at court, and the marginalized but persistent voice of regional military commanders.³⁶³ If we compare these three voices with the three factors discussed here, we can clearly sense the connections between them. At some level, we can argue that the poet’s undying ambition and loyalty to his country is in fact a representative of the marginalized but persistent voice of regional military generals. In the same vein, we can also connect the poet’s disenchantment with the Southern Song rulers with the dwindling voice of the Song emperors, and the poet’s feeling of injustice with the rising voice of the peace-seeking civil ministers who have become more and more powerful in the central government.

These connections are by no means accidental. The entry containing Xin Qiji’s three song lyrics is placed as the third entry in Chapter Two. The two preceding entries that describe what happened during the four reigns from Emperor Gaozong to Emperor Ningzong, focusing especially on the Southern Song government’s lack of interest and decisive action in recovering the lost territory in the north. The following eleven entries concentrate on discussing how some of the most notorious “nefarious ministers” in Southern Song history managed to vilify and expel virtuous and capable officials from the court and take control of state power. The discussion of these “nefarious ministers” lets us catch a glimpse of an important power shift taking place at the Southern Song court. Placed right after this chapter that describes politics in Southern Song central government is a somewhat unique chapter that focuses almost exclusively on the regional military commanders, many of whom are praised for their bravery, righteous

³⁶³ See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

personality, and loyalty to their country. As I have argued earlier, this chapter is like a lone military stronghold positioned in the beginning of the entire book. Though it allows us to see a dim light of hope in Southern Song history, its loneliness in the book is historically representative of the marginalized status of the subjects of its description.³⁶⁴ The remaining three chapters in this section (four to six) turn their focus back again onto the power struggles taking place in Southern Song government, focusing especially on Jia Sidao, another powerful notorious minister in Southern Song history who has often been held responsible for the fall of the dynasty. These chapters continue the theme of the “political trio,” but present it in a much more complex way.

From the analysis above, we can see that the entry containing Xin Qiji’s three song lyrics is by no means a casual one discussing only Xin’s poetic writing. Structurally, it also provides important clues for what we shall expect in the next few chapters of the book. The three key factors that propel the emotional transition among Xin Qiji’s song lyrics help to establish a tripartite perspective for us to look into Southern Song politics described in the following chapters. Because of it, Xin Qiji’s poetic lament over his political and military career has been made to transcend its personal scope and become a condensed version of Southern Song politics as depicted in the book. Xin’s complaint about his neglected status as a military general echoes the voice of many regional military commanders in Southern Song history. His grudge against his enviers, who stand for those corrupted and powerful ministers at court, also utters the inner feeling of many capable and righteous officials like him. Last but not least, his lament about the weakness of the Southern Song, especially its inability to recover the lost territory in the north, expresses a tormenting regret that haunts the mind of Southern Song people and loyalists for centuries. Even after the dynasty fell, people like Liu Yiqing still talked about it, using it as a powerful criticism that was directed towards the weak-willed Southern Song emperors and the impotence of the Song government.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

AFTERWORD

In place of a conclusion, I use this short afterword to bring closure to my present study, but not to the reading of *Qiantang yishi*. Although I feel this dissertation indeed reaches a conclusive point, the possibilities through which the text of *Qiantang yishi* can be read and interpreted are by no means exhausted. The text, as I indicate before, is plural, one that can be approached from different angles and with different perspectives. This study represents but a few of them. While I do hope that by highlighting these angles and approaches, I can indeed point out some new ways of reading that will do justice to the text's special plurality and literariness, I am also fully aware that due to this study's limited scope, it can by no means account for all the potential meanings and literary/historical values that the text is about to reveal to us. In light of this, I conclude this dissertation with this by and large inconclusive afterword, with which I hope to remind my readers as well as myself that though my study ends here, the reading still continues.

This dissertation is designed to accomplish two goals at the same time. It aims to be a structural analysis of *Qiantang yishi*, through which I hope to reveal the hidden pattern, form, and meaning that have been buried underneath the text's apparent miscellaneousness. In trying to achieve this goal, however, I also deconstruct my very structural approach by constantly highlighting those points of inconsistency, uncertainty, or contradiction that challenge my very assumption of the text's continuity and unity. These two contrastive methodological approaches may seem incompatible at the first glance, but it is my belief that the combination of them provides us with an effective means to understand and appreciate the text's special literariness. With this combination, I hope my reading can reveal the special suspense or tension within the

text, that is, while the text strives to attain a continuous and unified meaning, its miscellaneous nature and the presence of the various disturbances in it prevent it from settling on a determined reading.

It is worth pointing out here that of the two analytical approaches that I use in this study—structural and deconstructive, the former carries much more weight than the latter. While I argue that one of the most distinct characteristics of *Qiantang yishi* is its formless form, in this study I actually spend more time and effort looking for the “form” than dwelling on the “formless.” One of the reasons for this is that I believe Liu Yiqing was indeed going to tell us something with this text. What makes the things that he tried to tell us appear not so definite is the rather special nature of the genre to which his text belongs. In other words, it is the generic features of the text, not so much authorial intention, that adds a level of indetermination to our interpretation of *Qiantang yishi*. We have to acknowledge that the text in fact reveals its intent much more than it conceals it. As I have discussed in the Chapter Three, the text is like a symphony composed out of discordance. While the discordant details certainly open up the text to different possibilities of reading, the overall message that the text is trying to convey to us is by no means obscured by the presence of these details. Another reason that leads me to prioritize “form” over the “formlessness” is that it is practically difficult, if not entirely impossible, to argue about “formless” in language. The very use of language itself is adding “form” to the “formless,” and any analysis that aims to describe or explain the “formless” would result in making the “formless” become more corporeal and tangible. Because of this, I deliberately reduce the occasions where I have to use language to argue about the formless feature of the text, in case my very analysis will grant “form” to the “formless.” It is true that there may be a way for us to talk about the formless using form-granting language, but that is a direction that I am unable, and unwilling as well, to go to in the present study.

I have suggested that this study of *Qiantang yishi* is intended to be read as an example of my investigation into the special literariness of the genre of *biji*. But a question that haunts me throughout my writing is that: Can my reading of the text of

Qiantang yishi indeed exemplify how the genre of *biji* can be approached and analyzed? At this point, my answer to this question is both yes and no. It is no because, as I have indicated in the Introduction, the miscellaneous nature of *biji* has prevented us from rushing into any quick conclusion about it simply by examining a few so-called “representative” texts, for in almost every *biji* text we will find something that will affect or even challenge our previous assumption and interpretation of the genre. It is yes because I have indeed learned from my study of *Qiantang yishi* that every *biji* text should be approached and analyzed in a particular way that best suits its own particularity. In other words, one of the unifying things that we may find in studying the genre of *biji* is that it is never enough for us to generalize some unifying models or arguments about the genre simply based on our examination of some “representative” texts. Similarly, it is equally inadequate if we try to apply some unifying model or arguments to our analysis of an individual *biji* text. Every *biji* text deserves our special attention, and every text demands a close reading designed specifically for it. It is only by doing this that we will be able to fully understand the uniqueness of the text, and it is only by doing this that we will learn to appreciate the special literariness, the cultural significance, and the poetics of *biji*’s miscellaneousness.

APPENDIX

Translation of the Entry Titles and a Timeline of the Events Recorded

Chapter 1		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	A Prophecy on Tianmu Mountain 天目山讖	From the 3 rd century when the poem was written to 1274 when Tianmu Mountain collapsed
2	Emperor Gaozong Has Zhe Face 高宗浙臉	1107 (Emperor Gaozong's birth year)
3	The Mountains and Rivers of Jinling 金陵山水	Unspecified, probably before 1138 when the Southern Song capital was selected
4	Dreams about the Kings of the Wu Yue Kingdom Taking Back Their Old Territory 夢吳越王取故地	1107 (When the two dreams took place) 1188 (When the two dreams were discussed)
5	Ten Miles of Lotus Flowers 十里荷花	From the 10 th to the 13 th century (based on the persons mentioned in the entry)
6	The Gate of Benevolence and Peace 仁和門	Unspecified, probably before 1138
7	Emperor Gaozong Decides on the Capital 高宗定都	1127-1138
8	Xianqing Temple 顯慶寺	1250 (When the temple was built)
9	A Ci Poem on Sightseeing on West Lake 遊湖詞	1253 (When the poet, Wen Jiweng passed the imperial examination)
10	The Hall of the Three Worthies 三賢堂	1226 (When Yuan Jiao sold wines at the Hall)
11	Cold Spring Pavilion 冷泉亭	Unspecified.

12	The Three Indian Temples 三天竺	Unspecified
13	A Quatrain on the White Pagoda Bridge 題白塔橋	Unspecified
14	The Temple to Wu Zixu 伍子胥廟	1231 and 1253 (When the temple was burnt)
15	Tide-Shooting Arrows 射潮箭	9 th -10 th century (When the story took place)
16	The Shu Causeway and the Zhao Causeway 蘇堤趙堤	1241-1252 (When Zhao Yuchou built the causeway) 1086-1094 (When Su Shi built the causeway)
17	A Poem on the Liuhe Pagoda 六和塔詩	Unknown
18	Arhat in the Jingci Temple 淨慈寺羅漢	Unspecified
19	The Wanhui Brother 萬回哥哥	Unspecified
20	Dragon Soaring Palace 龍翔宮	1244 (when the palace was built) and 1253 (the burning down of the Middle Entertainment Quarter)
21	Ten temples in the Zhejiang area 浙江十廟	Unspecified
22	Emperor Xiaozong Consults He Suoyi, The Fortune-teller 孝宗問卜何蓑衣	1174-1189 (the rough period when the consultation was made)
23	Sacrifices at the Dali Temple 大理寺豕祭	Unspecified
24	Getian Pavilion 格天閣	Early 12 th century (when Qin Gui was alive and controlled the state power)
Chapter 2		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	The Prosperity of Chunxi Reign Period 淳熙盛事	1174-1189
2	Emperor Xiaozong's [Plan of] Recovery 孝宗恢復	1127-1189 (Emperor Gaozong and Emperor Xiaozong's reign)
3	Xin You'an's Song Lyrics 辛幼安詞	1162-1189 (Emperor Xiaozong's reign)
4	The Secret under the Eastern Window Was Disclosed 東窗事發	Between 1142 (execution of Yue Fei) and 1155 (Qin Gui's death)

5	Imperial Tutor of the Qingyuan reign period 慶元侍講	1195-1200
6	Han Pingyuan 韓平原	Around 1194
7	Zhao Zizhi 趙子直	Around 1196
8	Han Pingyuan's Guest Retainer 韓平原客	Around 1207
9	The King of Ji 濟王	Around 1225
10	Battles of the Three Capitals 三京之役	1225
11	"Big" Became "Dog" 大字成犬	After 1225
12	The Fire in the Xinmao Year 辛卯火	1231
13	Shi Miyuan 史彌遠	1164-1233
14	Pincer Attacks against the Liao Jin 夾攻遼金	1231-1234

Chapter 3

Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	Zhao Xin'an 趙信庵	1186-1266 (Chao Kui's date), mainly between 1231-1266
2	An Ziwen 安子文	?-1221 (An Bing's date), mainly between 1207-1219
3	The Reinstatement of Shi Songzhi 嵩之起復	Around 1245
4	The Death of Cui Fu 崔福之死	Unknown
5	Meng, the Emperor's Guardian 孟保相	1195-1246 (Meng Gong's date), mainly after 1234
6	Yu Jiaoyin 余樵隱	?-1252 (Yu Jie's date), mainly after 1242.
7	Yu Hui Governs the Shu Area 余晦帥蜀	Around and after 1254
8	Yu Hui Vilifies Wang Weizhong 晦誣惟忠	Around 1254
9	Peng Daya 彭大雅	After 1243
10	Zhao Fang's Fame	?-1221 (Zhao Fang), mainly after

	趙方威名	1208
11	Liu Xiongfei 劉雄飛	Between 1174-1189 and up until the 13 th century
Chapter 4		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	The Northern Army Crosses the Yangtze River 北兵渡江	1259
2	Discussions on Changing the Capital 議遷都	1259
3	A Secret Promise of Annual Tribute 陰許歲幣	1259
4	The Implementation of the Financial Audit 行打算法	1259-1260
5	The Dismissal of Ding Daquan 丁相罷政	1259
6	Wu Qian Becomes the Grand Councilor 吳潛入相	1259-1262 (when Wu Qian died)
7	Jia Sidao in Control 賈相當國	1259-1264
8	Li Tan Returns to Home Country 李廑歸國	1260-1262
9	Tightening the Rules of the Civil Service Examinations 嚴覆試	1260
10	Shouldering One Load 一擔擔	1260 (when the poem was written)
11	Killing Xiang Shibi 殺向士璧	1261
12	Liu Zheng's Defection to the North 劉整叛北	1261
13	The Detainment of the Mongolian Emissary 拘留北使	1260-1275
14	A <i>Ci</i> Poem on Snow 雪詞	Unspecified, after 1260
15	Zhiyuan's Three Proposals 紫原三策	1265-1274
Chapter 5		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	The Implementation of the Public Field	1262

	Law 推排公田	
2	Special Officers of the Public Field 公田專官	Around 1262
3	Awards and Punishments of the Public Field 公田賞罰	Around 1262
4	Disasters Caused by the Public Field Law 公田之禍	The 5 th month of 1262
5	Demoting Pi Longrong 謫皮龍榮	After 1265
6	Prophecy of the Silver Guangzi 銀關先讖	After 1264
7	Banishing Xie Bingde 竄謝枋得	Around 1264
8	Measuring the Land 推排田畝	Unspecified, after 1262
9	The Ill Omen of the Comet 彗星之變	Autumn and winter of 1264
10	Emperor Lizong's Death 理宗升遐	The 10 th month of 1264
11	Emperor Lizong's Government 理宗政跡	1205-1264
12	Emperor Duzong Comes to the Throne 度宗即位	1265
13	Empress Quan 全后	After 1259
14	People Speak of Jia Sidao 士人言賈相	1266
15	Censors Make Do with Their Duty 台諫應故事	Unspecified
16	Jia Sidao Monopolizes Power 似道專政	After 1267
17	The Half-Leisurely Pavillion 半閑亭	Unspecified, after 1267
18	Imperial Banquets 排當	1266
19	Grand Councilor Jia Holds a Drinking Game 賈相舉令	Unspecified, after 1267
20	Jia Sidao's Cruelty	Unspecified, after 1267

	賈相之虐	
Chapter 6		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	The Birth of the Princes 降生皇子	The 1 st month of 1268
2	Li Guan Hangs up His Black Gauze Cap 李瓘掛冠	1268
3	Examination Questions of Longfei 龍飛賦題	1268
4	The Siege of Xiangyang 襄陽受圍	1268
5	Gao Da Reinforces 高達赴援	1268, after the besiegement of Xiangyang
6	Jia Sidao Leaves the Capital to Supervise the Army 賈相出督	1268, after the besiegement of Xiangyang
7	Discordance among the Grand Councilors 時相不合	1269
8	Play Text Is Lewdness 戲文誨淫	1268-1269
9	Jia Sidao's Forbidden Words 賈相諱言	1270
10	Encountering the Rain at the Hall of Brightness 明堂遇雨	The 9 th month of 1272
11	Zhang Gui Reinforces 張貴赴援	The 5 th month of 1272
12	Province-bonded Examinees 係籍秀才	After 1270
13	The Earth Produces White Fur 地生白毛	1273
14	Dreaming of the God of Currency 錢神獻夢	Spring of 1273
15	Xiangyang and Fancheng Fall 襄樊失陷	The 2 nd month of 1273
16	The Detention of Jia Sidao 勉留賈相	1273
17	Emperor Duzong Passes Away 度宗宴駕	The 7 th month of 1274
18	The Top Three Examinees during the Mourning Period	1274, after Emperor Duzong's death

	諒陰三元	
19	Summoning Troops to Protect the Empeor 詔兵勤王	Winter of 1274
20	Capturing Yingzhou and Fuzhou 下郢復州	The 10 th month, 1274
21	The Northern Army Crosses the Yangtze River 北兵渡江	The 9 th of the 12 th month, 1274
22	The Capture of the Yangluo Fortress 下陽羅堡	1274
23	The Capture of Ezhou 下鄂州	The 18 th of the 12 th month, 1274
Chapter 7		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	The Capture of Jizhou and Huangzhou 下蘄黃州	The 1 st month of 1275
2	The Death of Liu Zheng 劉整死	The 7 th of the 1 st month of 1275
3	The Capture of Jiangzhou 下江州	The 13 th of the 1 st month of 1275
4	The Capture of Anqing 下安慶	1275
5	Grand Councilor Jia Sent Out the Troops 賈相出師	After the 15 th of the 1 st month of 1275
6	Sending an Emissary to Seek Peace 遣使請和	The 17 th of the 1 st month of 1275
7	The Capture of Raozhou 下饒州	After the 21 st of the 1 st month of 1275
8	The Fall of Chizhou 破池州	1275, after the capture of Raozhou
9	The Rout at Wuhu 蕪湖潰師	The 22 nd of the 1 st month of 1275
10	Defeating Jiang Cai 姜才敗績	1275, after the rout at Wuhu
11	The Defeat at Jinshan 金山之敗	1275
12	Zhao Yuke Runs Away 趙與可遁	The 1 st month of 1275
13	Two Grand Councilors Run Away 二相遁去	The 26 th and 30 th of the 1 st month of 1275

14	Executing Han Zhen 誅韓震	The 1 st of the 3 rd month of 1275
15	The Defeat at Wumu 五木之敗	The 3 rd to the 11 th month of 1275
16	Court Officials Fleeing at Night 朝臣宵遁	The 1 st month of 1275
17	Dismissing Jia Sidao 罷賈似道	The 3 rd month of 1275
18	Demoting Jia Sidao 貶賈似道	The 12 th of the 7 th month of 1275
19	Chen Yizhong Becomes Grand Councilor 相陳宜中	The 3 rd to the 10 th month of 1275

Chapter 8

Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	Zhang Shijie Enters to Protect the Capital 張世傑入衛	The 10 th of the 3 rd month of 1275
2	Discussions on Moving the Capital 議遷蹕	Unspecified, 1275
3	Chen Yizhong's Memorial 陳宜中奏	Unspecified, probably in the 2 nd or the 3 rd month of 1275
4	Chen Yizhong Supervising the Army 陳宜中都督	The 4 th month of 1275
5	Imperial Edict to the Three Generals 詔諭三將	The 5 th month of 1275
6	Lu Wenhuan's Response to the Edict 呂文煥回本國書	Unspecified, after the imperial letter was sent out
7	Call to Arms from the Commander's Office 督府檄文	Unspecified, 1275
8	Wang Yue Becomes the Manager of Important Military and State Affairs 王燦平章	The 4 th to 8 th month of 1275
9	The Eclipse 日蝕	The 1 st of the 6 th month of 1275
10	Chen and Liu Serves as Grand Councilors 陳留並相	The 6 th month of 1275
11	Wen Tianxiang Comes to Protect the Capital 文天祥入衛	The 4 th and 9 th month of 1275
12	Generals Are Summoned But Refuse to	1275

	Come 征諸帥不至	
13	The Various Prefectures Surrender One after the Other 諸郡望風而降	The 3 rd to the 12 th month of 1275
14	Presentation of the Instrument of Surrender 納降表	The 12 th month of 1275
15	Imperial Edict on Ceasing Fire 詔罷兵	Unspecified, probably in the 12 th month of 1275
16	The Dismissal of the Militia 罷團結	The 12 th month of 1275
17	Two Princes Sail Out onto the Sea 二王航海	The 12 th of the 1 st month of 1276
18	Chen Yizhong Flees at Night 宜中夜遁	The 18 th of the 1 st month of 1276
19	Wen Tianxiang Refuses to Be the Grand Councilor 文魁辭相	The 19 th of the 1 st month of 1276
20	The Surrender of the Capital 京城歸附	The 20 th of the 1 st month to the 22 nd of the 2 nd month of 1276
21	Loyal Death at Tanzhou 潭州死節	The 1 st month of 1276
22	The Surrender of Jizhou 吉州歸附	The 2 nd month of 1276
23	Loyal Death at Yangzhou 揚州死節	The 5 th to the 8 th month of 1276
Chapter 9		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	The "Northern Hunt" in the <i>Bingzi</i> Year 丙子北狩	1276
2	Diary of the Peace-Seeking Envoys 祈請使行程記	The 9 th of the 2 nd month to the 2 nd of the 5 th month in 1276
Chapter 10		
Entry	Entry Title	Date Mentioned
1	Must-knows about the Five Glories in Passing the Civil Service Examinations 赴省登科五榮須知	Unspecified
2	The Provincial Examinations 省試	Unspecified
3	Distributing Serial Numbers for the Imperial Examination	Unspecified

	御試給號	
4	Oral Examinations on the Red Stairs 丹墀對策	Unspecified
5	Selecting Date to Announce Examination Results 擇日唱第	Unspecified
6	Arranging the Banquet for the Top Examinees 置狀元局	Unspecified

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